

Work begins on creating high-speed internet network for Tulare County students

Working from an aerial lift above the roof of TCOE's Mooney Boulevard office building this week, two technicians installed a four-part antenna to a new mast on the east side of the building. The TCOE antenna is one of four installed in the new Central California Learning Network (CCLN) – a network created to provide high-speed internet access for all Tulare County students at little to no cost. Antennas are being installed at Alta Vista School in Porterville, Strathmore Middle School, and Sequoia Union School in Lemon Cove.

Concrete planning for the CCLN began last year, with support from Kings and Imperial county offices of education and the use of the FCC licenses TCOE has held for over 20 years. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the network's implementation. "The district superintendents and I appreciate the vision of Information Systems department leadership in creating the new network," said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. "The abrupt switch from in-class to distance learning instruction last spring brought to light the difficulties families in rural areas have in providing reliable internet access for their children. District leaders shared countless stories of moms and dads using their phones as hotspots to bring temporary internet service into their homes. Internet access problems in rural areas were compounded for families with multiple school-age children and parents working from home."





Dr. Wayne Lacy, director of Information Systems, explained that the network is in its pilot phase. “We are beginning to test the infrastructure we are putting in place, gain insight to the network range, and determine the amount of data that can be delivered based on topography and altitude. We are also hoping to combine existing private district networks into a single, cohesive network. The challenges we face are delivering service in the foothills and areas of the county operating on a different frequency – challenges we’ll address with a little creativity.”

Project leaders estimate the network may have an additional four to six antennas by the end of the year.

Photos above:

~ Network Engineer Scott Castillo (below) helps pass an antenna to Dr. Wayne Lacy (above) as technicians install the mounts to the new mast on TCOE’s Mooney Boulevard building.

~ This fall, technicians will install 8-10 towers in the new Central California Learning Network to begin providing Tulare County students access to high-speed internet at little or no cost.

11th Annual Red Ribbon Celebration includes release of video series

Educators and parents are invited to access three informative videos next week released to coincide with National Red Ribbon Week. The video series explores the history of the event and the role the death of DEA agent Kiki Camarena had in creating it. The series also contains interviews with various respected community members on the importance of young people living their lives drug, alcohol, and tobacco free. The videos will be posted on TCOE’s Facebook page

(@tularecountyofficeofeducation) and YouTube channel (tcoe.org/YouTube) October 26, 28, and 30 at 9:00 a.m.



“We encourage teachers to incorporate the videos as part of their lessons next week,” said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. “The five-minute videos not only provide some history on the government’s War on Drugs which began in the 1980s, but also the consequences of youth choosing to use drugs and alcohol.”

Annually, TCOE CHOICES Program partners with the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency to host the Tulare County Red Ribbon Celebration – a fun and interactive prevention education event attended by hundreds of students. This year, due to COVID-19 pandemic public gathering restrictions, the event has been reimaged as a virtual event. Other partners in the event include Visalia Unified School District PULSE Afterschool Program, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Tulare County, Family Services of Tulare County, and Family HealthCare Network.

Virtual Excellence in Education Awards recognition set for October 27



Educators, parents, and community members are invited to join in celebrating the men and women recognized in the 2020 Excellence in Education Awards program. On Tuesday morning, October 27, a video will be posted on TCOE’s website (tcoe.org/ExcellenceInEducation), Facebook page (@[tularecountyofficeofeducation](https://www.facebook.com/tularecountyofficeofeducation)), and YouTube channel ([tcoe.org/YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/tcoe.org/YouTube)) honoring the 26 nominees, winners, and finalists submitted to the prestigious awards program by Tulare County school districts.

The nominees were submitted by Tulare County school districts in three categories – Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and School Employee of the Year. The winners include Philip Pierschbacher, assistant superintendent of personnel, Tulare City School District (Administrator/Manager of the Year); Stacy Trapletti, seventh-grade mathematics teacher, Cherry Avenue Middle School, Tulare City School District (Teacher of the Year); and Micaela Macareno, administrative assistant to the superintendent, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District (School Employee of the Year).

“The common trait we see in these fine individuals is that they have taken on responsibilities far beyond their regular duties,” said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. “They have used their talents to advance their schools and their districts, creating extraordinary educational cultures and practices for the benefit of their students. While we’re unable to celebrate with our traditional awards breakfast, it’s extremely important that we – as a community – honor these educators, given the challenges they have faced in the past eight months.”

The 2020 Excellence in Education Awards is a partnership with Educational Employees Credit Union. The first Tulare County Excellence in Education Awards were presented in 1995.

Foster Youth Services completes 100-Day Challenge to help youth find housing



TCOE’s Foster Youth Services was one of several local agencies that participated in a nationwide 100-Day Challenge to house 50 youth within 100 days and assist them with mental health services and employment services, if necessary. The challenge is a program of the Rapid Results Institute, developed to prevent and end homelessness among youth and young adults in the United States. So far, over 40 communities across the nation have participated in 100-Day Challenges.

“We cannot accept homelessness as a situation or problem we can’t solve,” said Beth Wilshire, Foster Youth Services coordinator/homeless liaison. “We can solve this crisis, but long-term answers require everyone, including communities, government, and individuals, to think outside the box and not except we’ve done that before.”

Locally, the challenge team was comprised of representatives from TCOE Foster Youth Services, Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, CSET, United Way, College of the Sequoias, Turning Point, and Kings View Behavioral Health, among others. While time ran out in placing the last ten young people in housing, they will receive housing pending the finalization of their applications. Forty others were placed in housing, 18 received referrals to mental health services, and 11 were referred to employment or job training services.

Distance Learning Resources

- [Arts All Around Us](#)
- [TCOE Learning at Home](#)
- [TCOE's Educational Resource Services Library](#)

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