

news galleryweek

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Fun-filled STEAM Expo scheduled for March 4 at Mooney Administration Building

To better accommodate the crowds expected at the annual STEAM Expo, the event has been moved to the Mooney Administration Building this year. Scheduled for Saturday, March 4, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., the event will feature lots of hands-on science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) activities for Central Valley families and children of all ages.

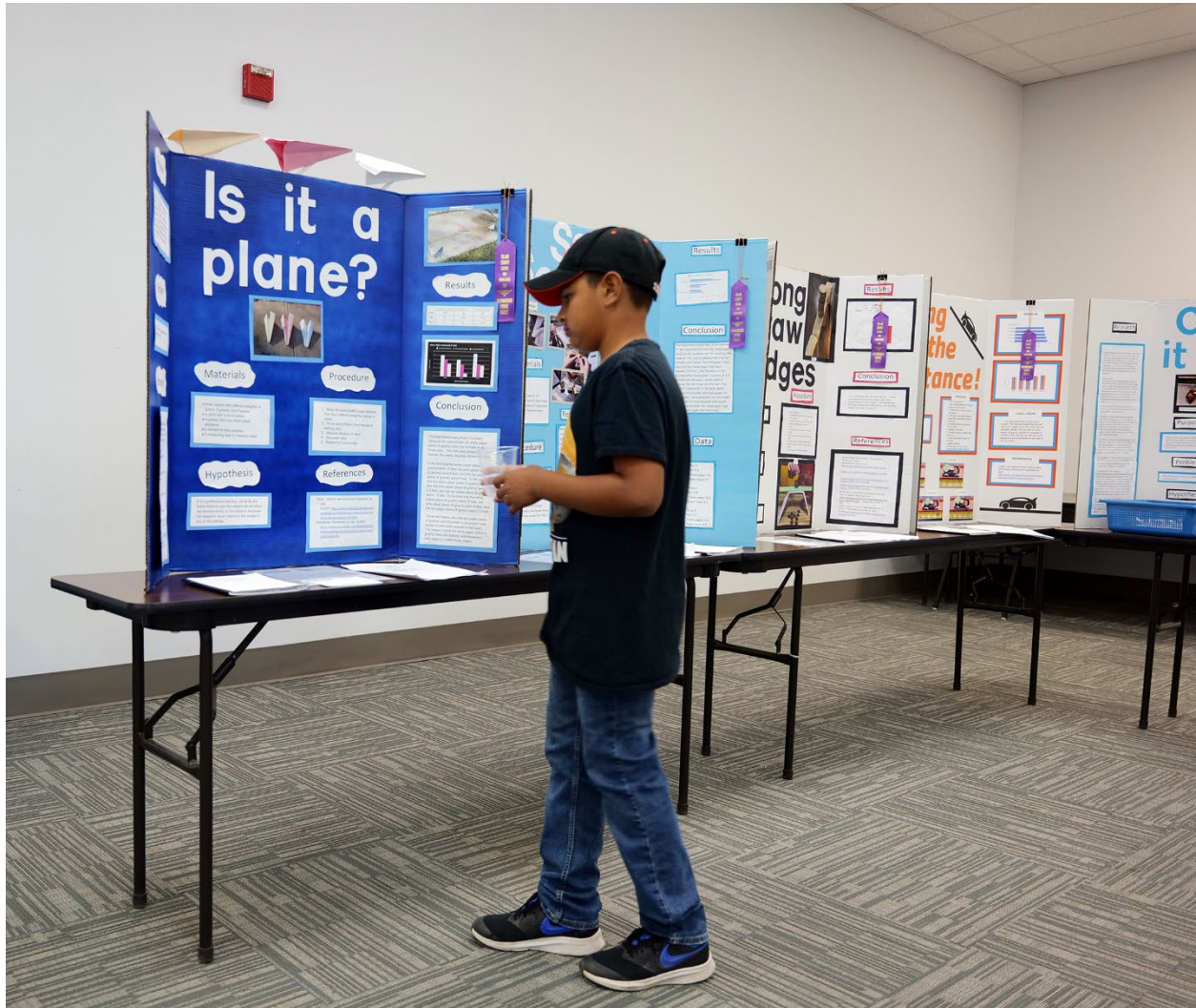
“We were delighted with the response of Tulare County families to last year’s STEAM Expo,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “It was great to see so many children enjoying hands-on activities and learning how STEAM education can lead to jobs that are fun and rewarding.”



Attendees can try their hands at aerospace engineering by designing and launching their own hot air balloons and rockets. A Cardboard Challenge area will be created for families to envision and construct anything they can imagine out of cardboard. Attendees will also have the opportunity to create numerous art-related projects, including Popsicle stick harmonicas, string art, shadow pictures, pattern blocks, shape bubbles, nature tracing, and chalk drawings. Event organizers are bringing plenty of engaging technology and coding opportunities for children to try, including Artie, Dash, Ozobots, and Sphero car robots and robotic components.

A dozen community organizations will be on hand to show students how careers in their respective fields utilize STEAM. Community organizations include Arts Visalia, The National Parks, the Tulare County Sheriff’s Crime Lab, and Sequoia Riverlands Trust.

Lulu's Kettle Corn, Taquizas Gonzalez, and Snackology and More will provide on-site food options.



The planetarium at TCOE's Liberty Center, where the event has been held for many years, will also be open, offering six shows of *Wildest Weather in the Solar System*. Planetarium seating is very limited. Free tickets for the shows will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at the STEAM Expo. Once planetarium doors close for a show, no late seating and no reentry is permitted.

The annual Tulare County Science & Engineering Fair will also be held. This year, the event will feature 40 projects created by 66 students to address real-world issues. Judges will select the top projects to advance to the 2023 California Science & Engineering Fair, being held April 11 in Los Angeles.

The STEAM Expo is a free, open house-style event. For more information, visit www.tcoe.org/STEAMExpo.

TCOE's Administration Building is located at 6200 South Mooney Boulevard in Visalia.

Palo Verde clinches Anti-Tobacco/Marijuana Bowl titles



Twelve teams of sixth and seventh graders battled it out this morning in the annual Anti-Tobacco/Marijuana Challenge Bowl. The game show-style Challenge Bowl is an important element in the [CHOICES Program](#)'s Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) program. Each team competed in two rounds with students answering questions about the harmful effects of tobacco and marijuana use, and the industries that promote their use.

The Challenge Bowl was held today at the Galaxy Theatres in Tulare – a new venue for the event. Galaxy Theatres hosted the event at no cost to the CHOICES Program. Freddie Gonzalez, general manager of the theaters said, “As a parent, it’s very meaningful to me and my team that...every sixth grader and seventh grader know that they get to rejoice with their friends and do a challenge is out of the ordinary at any other venue.”

Through the experience, Vincent, a seventh grader at Palo Verde Union School, said, “I learned the dangers of tobacco use, or any other drug-related product, and how they can result in death or other injuries. And I just gained trust with my friends.”

The Challenge Bowl and CHOICES’ classroom-based TUPE programs present critical information to students at a time when they may be tempted to use tobacco and/or marijuana products.

In the annual Anti-Tobacco/Marijuana Challenge Bowl, Palo Verde Union School in Tulare swept the competition – winning both the sixth- and seventh-grade categories. In second place in the sixth-grade category was West Putnam Elementary in Porterville. In second place in the seventh-grade category was Sunnyside Union School in Strathmore.

In the Soapbox video competition, students were challenged to create public service announcement videos on the dangers of tobacco use. The winner of the Soapbox competition was Monson-Sultana Joint Union School.



Photos above:

~ Palo Verde Union School took first place in both the sixth- and seventh-grade categories.

~ Monson-Sultana Joint Union School won the new Soapbox public service announcement video competition.

Exeter Union High School wins Mock Trial



Last Wednesday, Exeter Union High School (EUHS) defeated University Preparatory High School (UPHS) at the Mock Trial finals held at Granite Hills High School's Justice Center in Porterville. Exeter will now represent Tulare County at the state finals scheduled for March 17-19 in Los Angeles.

Exeter students were all smiles and hugs after their big victory, including senior Gaby Rodriguez, who played the pretrial defense attorney. Afterward, Rodriguez said she felt everything went well and was proud of her team.

"I thought that our whole team did a really good job, and I was really proud of everyone's witness performances and their arguments," she said. "I feel really proud of my whole team."

Exeter's team was comprised of: Holly Decramer, Eden Diaz, Trinity Elliott, Ethan Gonzales, Wyatt Jardon, Carter Lang, Iani Martinez, Natalie Oneto, Marin Parker, Isabella Payne, Mia Regalado, Gaby Rodriguez, Lizette Rodriguez, Alex Romero, Ryder Stimpel, Megan Thompson, and Gemma Valero.

The team was coached by Heidi Carmen, with assistance from attorneys Adam Clare and Roger Wilson.

This year's fictitious case was *People v. Franks* – the trial of Jordan Franks, who was accused of stealing a fellow actor's signet ring – a ring once owned by William Shakespeare. The prosecution was presented by UPHS, and the defense by Exeter.

"It was definitely a really steep learning curve because you learn a lot about the legal process," Rodriguez said about the experience. "And it's all about trial and error. Seeing what works, seeing what doesn't. And I think it's such an important academic opportunity for everyone."

Also announced last Wednesday were the winners of the courtroom artist's competition and the courtroom journalist's competition.

The winning artists advancing to the state competition are Rylee Correa of UPHS and Ester Calderon of Redwood High School.

The winning courtroom journalist advancing to the state competition is Kari Pendegraft of UPHS.

Rodriguez, who plans to follow a career in chemistry, said that the Mock Trial experience taught her how to conduct arguments and have confidence in whatever she wants to do.

"I think that having this experience is one of the most valuable things I've had," she said.

For the complete list of winners and their winning projects, visit www.tcoe.org/MockTrial/Results.

Photos above:

~ Exeter Union High School defeated University Preparatory High School last Wednesday at the Tulare County Mock Trial finals held at Granite Hills High School Justice Center in Porterville.

Editor: [Robert Herman](#), Communications Director

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Marlene Moreno, Jennifer Fisher, Paula Terrill, Juliana Davidian, Frank Silveira, Brittaney Quinonez, K.C. Pearce, Lauren Pearce

To receive the News Gallery Week, sign up [here](#), or contact Jennifer Fisher at jenniferf@tcoe.org or (559) 733-6172.