

news galleryweek

February 21, 2024

Tulare Kings College and Career Collaborative recognizes outstanding career technical education teachers



To celebrate Career Technical Education (CTE) month, the Tulare Kings College and Career Collaborative (TKCCC) is recognizing outstanding career technical education teachers in Tulare and Kings counties. The Tulare County Office of Education convenes TKCCC to advance career technical education, and college and career readiness across the two-county region.

February is CTE Month – a public awareness campaign hosted by Association for Career and Technical Education and sponsored by National Association of Home Builders.

“Our honorees go above and beyond each day to provide rich, career-focused curriculum to their students,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “Whether the subject is medicine or law, building trades or agriculture, they are teaching leadership and in-demand technical skills valued by today's employers. We thank them for their dedication to our students.”

This year’s TKCCC Outstanding CTE Instructors are:

Sylvia Hermosillo, Academy of Culinary & Hospitality
Burton School District

Karina Powell, Academy of Health Science-Biotechnology
Lindsay Unified School District

Charlie Abee, Agricultural Irrigation Mechanized Agriculture
College of Sequoias

Mauricio Vargas, Welding/Industrial Maintenance Technology
Porterville College

Belinda Duran, Patient Health Care
Corcoran Joint Unified School District

Magdalena Echeveste, Academy of Health Sciences
Porterville Unified School District

Kathryn Walther, Career Pathway Academy of Sustainable Agriculture
Cutler-Orosi Joint Union High School District

Dave Lopes, Animal Science
Reedley College

Nikki Ritchie, Education
Dinuba Unified School District

Jennifer Ferguson, Marketing & Sales Pathway
Tulare Joint Union High School District

Kevy Mendes, Agriscience
Exeter Unified School District

John Coon, Agricultural Mechanics
Visalia Unified School District

Audrey Westbrook, Animal Science
Farmersville Unified School District

Renee Thornburg, Plant Science and Agriscience
Woodlake Unified School District

Brian Combs, Residential & Commercial Construction
Hanford Joint Union High School District

James Rooney, Agriculture/Industrial Technology
West Hills College Lemoore

Edward Ortuzar, Woodworking Pathway
Lemoore Union High School District

In Tulare and Kings counties 58% or 21,613 of TKCCC high school students were enrolled in a CTE course in the fall semester of 2023. These courses are articulated with the four area community colleges to ensure a seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary training and degrees.

Photo above:

~ Renee Thornburg, an agriculture teacher at Woodlake High School, is shown coaching a student in public speaking. Thornburg was one of 17 exemplary Tulare and Kings county teachers honored by the Tulare Kings College & Career Collaborative to celebrate national Career Technical Education Month.

Fun-filled STEAM Expo scheduled for March 2 at Mooney Administration Building



The annual STEAM Expo returns to TCOE's Mooney Administration Building and Planetarium & Science Center on Saturday, March 2. Scheduled from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., this event is free to the public and will feature plenty of hands-on science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) activities for Central Valley families and children of all ages.

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, and chalk drawings. Event organizers are bringing engaging technology and coding opportunities for children to try, including Bee Bits, Dash & Dot, Ozobots, Cubelets, and Sphero indi car robots and robotic components.



The planetarium at TCOE's Liberty Center, where the event had been held for many years, will also be open, offering several shows of *We are Stars*. 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 50 projects created by 73 students that address real-world issues. Judges will select the top projects to advance to the 2024 California Science & Engineering Fair, being held virtually April 16.

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. The Planetarium & Science Center is located at 11535 Avenue 264 in Visalia.

Circle J-Norris Ranch to host annual Biodiversity Festival March 16

The public is invited to attend and participate in fun, hands-on outdoor activities at the annual Circle J-Norris Ranch Biodiversity Festival on Saturday, March 16. The free event is hosted in partnership with Alianza Ecologista, and includes nature walks, bird watching, native plant investigations, BioBlitz, and enjoying the vernal pools filled by this year's abundant rain. The Biodiversity Festival is fully bilingual and is open 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.



A program of the SCICON school of outdoor education, Circle J-Norris Ranch is located at 41893 Yokohl Valley Road in Springville. Circle J offers all grade levels a wide variety of field study experiences.

For more information on the Biodiversity Festival, contact Amanda Driver at circlej@tcoe.org or (559) 539-2263.

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

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Marlene Moreno, Jennifer Fisher, Bill Davis, Therese Arnold, Shelsy Hutchinson, Paula Terrill, Juliana Davidian, Amanda Driver

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