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Wonderful rail plan could bring 40k jobs

Guinn: Vast expansion would connect the state – and the coasts

JAMIE STEWART
The Shafter Press

SHAFTER

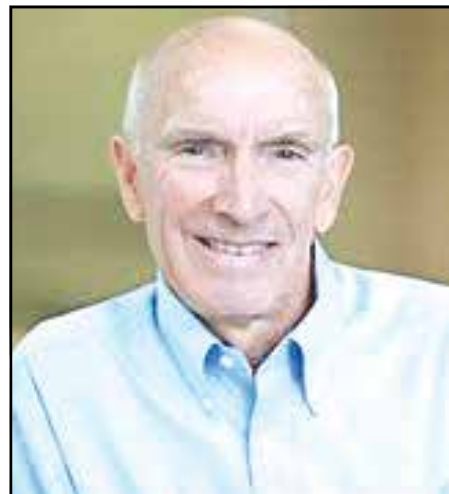
If the Wonderful Company has its way, over the next few years Shafter will become a major hub of industry between northern and southern California – even the east and west coasts – and will provide 40,000 new jobs in a vast inland railway terminal center, expanding its current industrial park at the southern edge of town.

In an interview this week, John Guinn, manager of the project for the agriculture and industrial giant Wonderful and a former city manager who spearheaded the creation of the original park in the 1970s,

detailed plans the company has to create an inland railway terminal that would be on part of 1,600 acres of land that is situated near the BNSF mainline.

Guinn said that the terminal would help move more product from coastal cities by rail, alleviating a lot of the traffic on State Route 99, one of the busiest truck routes in California. “This move would benefit the Wonderful Company, enabling us to move more product, as well as help the city of Shafter, reducing emissions on the highway, as well as producing more jobs for the residents of Shafter.”

He said that just six rail cars could re-



John Guinn, who was city manager for Shafter for 17 years, is helping lead the Wonderful Company in railway hub project.

place 120 tractor trailers.

Wonderful hopes to use the railroad branch now owned by the city, and last used by Baker Hughes when the oilfield

operations company had a facility at the park. At a City Council meeting two weeks ago, City Manager Gabriel Gonzalez said that the city was exploring the options for the railway and “to do what is in the best interest of the city.”

Guinn, who was Shafter city manager for 17 years, said that a couple of decades ago, Shafter was in the position of looking to the future and making sure that the city grew, as well as producing more jobs for the community.

“We decided to invest in the future of Shafter, not knowing at the time the extent that the Wonderful Company would play in its future.”

In the beginning, as the Wonderful Company brought major retailers to the area, such as Target and Ross Stores, and more recently Walmart and Amazon, there was a concern about the ability of Shafter and nearby cities to fill the jobs that were created, including high tech positions. The

See WONDERFUL Page 5



The graduating scholars take their place on stage.

GROW Academy sends off 8th graders

JAMIE STEWART
The Shafter Press

SHAFTER

The GROW Academy of Shafter held its Promotion Ceremony at the Fred Starr Performing Arts Center at Shafter High School on Thursday, bidding farewell to its eighth grade class.

This was the third such ceremony in GROW’s history, opening its doors in 2017.

Principal Lacie Harris welcomed a standing room only crowd to the event, celebrating the promotion of their children to the high school level in their educational careers.

See GROW Page 8

GROW pulls mayor from grad keynote

Givens refuses to cut Bible reference from remarks

JAMIE STEWART
The Shafter Press

SHAFTER

Shafter Mayor Chad Givens was disinvented as GROW Academy’s keynote graduation speaker last week, after he said he refused to remove a Bible reference from his remarks.

Despite being listed in the program for Thursday night’s graduation, school officials announced at the event that Givens was “unable to attend.” School officials had asked to see Givens’ speech before the ceremony took place, the mayor said. The speech, according to Givens, contained a scripture from the Bible. He said a representative from the school asked him to remove the scripture, and when he refused, he was told that he would not be delivering the speech at the graduation. He said they told him “that they were sorry but that they would not need him to speak at the graduation.”

On Saturday, Givens said, “Simply put, I am not going to change who I am to conform to what they want.”

Principal Lacie Harris would not comment on the incident Monday morning,



Mayor Chad Givens at a city council meeting two weeks ago.

The Bible tells us to say to this mountain to move, and it will move. Now as crazy as that sounds, it’s true. But one of the most overlooked facts of that scripture is simply this: The mountain does not go away, it just moves. It merely allows you to conquer it through other means, but is meant to indeed be conquered.
–Scripture reference Mayor Chad Givens refused to remove.

referring a reporter’s inquiries to GROW Marketing Manager Kate Barton. Barton did not return a reporter’s calls and email.

Givens said that he was told that he would not be speaking at the graduation, after refusing to remove the scripture from his speech. Givens, who has two children attending the school, said that they will be thinking about a change. “It is their stance, and this is a problem with them and a position they want to take, then yes, we are absolutely questioning our continuation with GROW.”

Mayor’s planned remarks to GROW graduates

Here is the speech Mayor Chad Givens had prepared for GROW Academy’s 8th grade graduation ceremony:

Class of 2024, Congratulations!!! I am honored to be here with you all

See GROW Page 6

Council hears rail options, Press feedback

JAMIE STEWART
The Shafter Press

The Shafter City Council heard a couple of different options for their Shafter Railway at their meeting last week.

The first option was to be purchased by BNSF, which is used to connect to their main line.

The second option was to be used by third party transporters for their products, including connecting the two coasts.

[Wonderful Company also has an interest in the railway. See separate story on Page 1.]

There will be further discussion on the topic, with both options having merit, Mayor Chad Givens said.

Because Shafter's facility connects and runs to the BNSF mainline, it could serve

SHAFTER

as an active siding and railcar train storage for BNSF.

The city's market research team contacted BNSF local management to gauge interest in the carrier's use of Shafter's tracks.

Both the local superintendent, who is based in Bakersfield, and the general manager were interested in using the facility. It is likely that they may want to purchase the facility rather than lease or operate it, according to the city.

During the public comment section of the meeting, local historian and the Shafter Press owner Stan Wilson criticized the council on its decision at their last meeting to reject a proposal made by The Shafter Press newspaper.

It was proposed that the city partner with the newspaper promoting Shafter with a full-page paid ads in the paper every other week. The deal would include other benefits, including help with communications with residents. Wilson pointed out that when Reed Print originally closed the paper nearly six years ago, it was then-Mayor Cathy Prout and the city who approached Wilson and several others about saving the city's newspaper.

Wilson also said that it is very important for a city to have a local paper, saying it serves as its voice and vital information for the community. "When approached, several community members stepped up to help with saving the paper. We never intended to make a lot of money on this project, but we did it to save a part of our city's history."

Wilson also said that although social media is very popular now, a lot of people do not use social media. He said that the paper also publishes needed legal notices, publishes articles about local schools, businesses, and clubs.

Mayor Givens commented during council reports. "I have grown up with The Press, looking through the papers. I believe that there are things we and the community can do to support the paper. I do believe that everyone has an ability for free speech, and a community deserves a free press, and I know that something can and will be done."

Givens went on to say that Wilson is one of the main sources of Shafter's story and he believes that something will be done to allow this story to be told, though gave no details.

'We believe we have achieved our goal...'

Shafter-Wasco Publishing owner Stanley Wilson presented these remarks at Tuesday night's Shafter City Council meeting.

My name is Stanley Wilson and I am one of the owners of Shafter-Wasco Publishing, publishers of The Shafter Press and Wasco Tribune.

As you know we had a proposed contract on the May 21st council agenda. I was sorry that I was not here to speak to the proposal. On May 16, I consulted the Shafter city website and found the notice that the May 21st meeting had been canceled. I visited the bulletin board outside City Hall chambers on May 20 and found the same notice. Neither notice indicated the meeting had been rescheduled to May 22, Our editor, Jamie Stewart, ran across the same notice and was not here last council meeting either. I assumed that all had been rescheduled to the June 4 meeting. I know that you were able to get the word out to a number of people due to the all the award recipients being here at the last session. After learning of the rescheduled meeting afterwards, I was able to watch the video posted of the council meeting May 22. The position of



Shafter Press owner Stan Wilson speaks to the council about a partnership proposal between the city and paper.

city management and the Council came through loud and clear – that you were not interested in our proposal.

We had hoped that the proposal would initiate some discussion of how we could help the city publish information on a regular basis. This proposal could have been mutually beneficial to both the city and The Press.

I would like to remind the Council that

SHAFTER

when the Reed Family closed The Shafter Press in December of 2017, it was city management and the mayor who initiated discussion on how to save and continue the paper. Several of your community members stepped up to the plate. Under no circumstance was the investment in the local paper ever considered to be one which would return profits. Instead it was an philanthropic effort to preserve for the Shafter community a newspaper that would reflect what was going on in the Shafter community, not only regarding city government, but to further the sense of community with articles on schools, sports, clubs, businesses and the people of Shafter.

Even though covid caused us to combine The Shafter Press with the Wasco Tribune, we believe we have achieved our goal, doing the best we could with a very limited budget.

There are about 1,400 papers picked up throughout town each week. If one figures two readers per paper, that is 2,800 readers, not counting the papers read and

shared in the barbershops and restaurants. In addition, we are sending out 200 paid mail subscriptions, and there are an average of 1,000 visitors to our website per week. Altogether, we estimate we are reaching approximately 5,000 of your citizens each week. Many of these readers are not using social media to get their information. Our medium is not instant, but for the most part it doesn't have to be. We give advance notice of things to come and review things that have already happened, as well as presenting stories about our local people and businesses.

There is seldom a week goes by that I do not receive a comment regarding articles in the paper. Many people have expressed appreciation to me that we have continued to keep the paper going. However, the business community has not kept up in the use of the paper for local advertising. It was for this reason that we offered a contract with the city. It has become more and more difficult to support continued operation of the paper with limited revenue.

Thank you for allowing me share my comments.

Pool now set to open by end of year

JAMIE STEWART
The Shafter Press

The Shafter Aquatic Center looks like it will re-open by the end of the year after a series of delays.

The project was supposed to be completed by July 2024, giving the residents a summer of swimming. But the project needed more time for planning and design, according to city Public Works Director Michael James.

The project is being funded through a \$6-million grant to the city to resurface the pool, repair the heater and tile work. There also will be improvements to the building, which includes an addition of a concession stand, lockers, an office, showers and a shaded structure.

The center has been closed for several years, beginning with the termination of the agreement between the city and the Shafter Recreation and Parks District, leaving it unclear who would be in charge of maintaining the pool and the structure. With the uncertainty, then covid, the center closed indefinitely.

The grant called for completion of the project by this summer, but the city recently received an extension on the plan, giving them until the end of 2024 for completion.

SHAFTER

This would coincide with the start of the Shafter High School competitive swimming season. Coach Larissa Davis said that she is excited about the prospect of having a home pool to swim in this next season. "The challenges have really dealt a blow to our numbers and have put a big load on the swimmers we do have. They have to deal with going to school, homework, as well as daily trips to and from Bakersfield for swim practice."

Davis said that it would be a big boost to the program to have the pool open and available. It would also help the high school program in the form of their feeder program. The Shafter Stingrays youth team had enjoyed some outstanding seasons before the pool closed, leaving local swimmers with no local club to swim for. Some of the Shafter families signed their kids up for the program in Wasco, Bakersfield and Rio Bravo. Having a healthy Shafter Stingray program would benefit the high school team immensely, said Davis.

Lastly, the entire community would benefit from the opening of the pool. For decades, Shafter residents had enjoyed the open swimming at the community pool and renting the pool for special events such as birthday parties, as well as learning



Work has begun on the renovation project, planning to be completed by the end of 2024.

how to swim at swim lessons.

"I remember going to the pool when I was a kid. Then, my kids and grandkids

loved to go to the pool. It is a shame it has taken them so long to get it up and going again," said Shafter resident Alberto Reina.

ARREST REPORT

From Page 2

Rd for driving under the influence of alcohol. He was booked into the Lerdo Justice Facility.

Armando Joe Macias Jr., 29, was arrested at the intersection of F Street and Poso Drive for unlawful possession of paraphernalia, possession of a controlled substance, and on three misdemeanor bench warrants. He was booked into the Lerdo Justice Facility

JUNE 7

Antonio Avila Perez, 39,

was arrested in the 1100 block of 16th Street for driving under the influence of alcohol. He was booked into the Lerdo Justice Facility.

JUNE 8

Pedro Martinez Canseco, 29, was arrested in the 600 block of F Street for disorderly conduct: alcohol. He was booked into the Lerdo Justice Facility.

Juan Matinez Venegas, 22, was arrested in the 600 block of F Street for disorderly conduct: alcohol. He was booked

into the Lerdo Justice Facility.

Jose Hernandez Bautista, 48, was arrested in the 900 block of F Street for threatening to commit a crime with intent to terrorize, prohibited person owning/possessing ammunition and violation of court order. He was booked into the Lerdo Justice Facility.

Ramon Javier Cadena Jr., 27, was arrested in the 1500 block of 4th Street for operating a vehicle without a valid license and failure to signal. He was cited and released at

the scene.

Angel Adrian Gonzales, 24, was arrested at the intersection of Margalo Street and North Central Avenue on a felony bench warrant and presenting false identification to a peace officer. He was booked into the Lerdo Justice Facility.

David Figueroa, 20, was arrested at the intersection of Poso Drive and Griffith Avenue on a misdemeanor bench warrant. He was cited and released at the scene.

JUNE 9

Trinidad Urrutia Godinez was arrested in the 800 block of F Street on a misdemeanor bench warrant. He was cited and released at the scene.

Aurelio Martinez Montoya, 58, was arrested at the intersection of Poso Drive and East Street on a misdemeanor bench warrant. He was cited and released at the scene.

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WCSA board members Sharon Sharp and Sharon Nicol presented scholarships at the 2023-2024 Winner's Circle Award Ceremony. RIGHT: Diego Acosta, Irais Aguero, Julian Alvarez, Branden Green, Estevan Nieto and Xitlaly Rivera received WCSA scholarships this year.

Scholarship Association awards \$117k

VERONICA JACUINDE
Wasco Tribune

WASCO

For the third consecutive year, the Wasco Community Scholarship Association has awarded over \$100,000 to graduating seniors and alums of Wasco High School. In 2022, WCSA gave \$100,000 for the first time. The following year, the award total was \$107,000. This year, 32 scholarships were provided for a total of \$117,000. "I am thrilled for the Wasco High students who continue to benefit from WCSA scholarships," Wasco High Superintendent and WCSA Director Kevin Tallon said. "The WCSA has had many longtime supporters whose generosity continues to benefit generation after generation of Wasco High students. It is a blessing to many, and I know the students are thankful."

Twenty graduating seniors in the Class of 2024 received \$52,000 in scholarship awards, with the balance going to 12 alumni recipients. Six Wasco High students received two-year scholarships for junior college or trade school, and 14 graduating seniors were awarded scholarships for four-year colleges. The 20 graduating seniors who received scholarships are Emily Alba, Diego Gomez, Esteban Hernandez, Benito Juarez, Isabella Moreno, Amber Newby, Isaac Ocampo, Zayda Orpineda Herrera, Karly Perez, Briseida Ruiz, Armando Saldana, Andy Santana, Maria de Jesus Soto Bravo, Hope Valdivia, Diego Acosta, Irais Aguero, Julian Alvarez, Branden Green, Estevan Nieto and Xitlaly Rivera.

WCSA President Betsy Rogers said, "We were pleased that we had a large number of applicants this year and wish we could have given out more. The competition was fierce." The selection process is demanding, with applicants required to fill out a rigorous scholarship application, including the student's transcripts, references, school and community activities, and employment history, along with a one-page essay. After the March deadline, the WCSA Awards Committee evaluates the applications, and the scholars are notified in May. Sharon Sharp, a WCSA director, said, "The WCSA is important and valuable. It's important because, even beyond the money, it's investing in the future of these students and telling them that their community believes in them. It's so meaningful to

get a scholarship from your community." WCSA receives donations from current residents, alumni, clubs, organizations and businesses. In addition, it hosts The Jesse Acebedo Annual Memorial Golf Tournament each October. The WCSA has provided scholarships to Wasco High alums and graduating seniors for over 50 years. Since its inception in 1965, the WCSA has given more than a million dollars in scholarships. Its board is mainly composed of Wasco High alumni committed to helping graduates achieve their goals through continuing education. Donations can be made on WCSA website, wascocommunityscholarship.org/donate. Email contact@wascocommunityscholarship.org for more information. The WCSA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.

Aufforth named WUSD Teacher of Year

VERONICA JACUINDE
Wasco Tribune

WASCO

Jennifer Aufforth has almost two decades of experience as an educator at Wasco High School. This year, she is the recipient of the Wasco Union High School District's Teacher of the Year award for her creativity, hard work, contagious spirit, innovative teaching skills and extraordinary commitment and unwavering passion for her students. A WHS alumnus, she said her students have kept her teaching English at her alma mater for so many years. "I love what I do. I'm teaching a subject that I've always loved, and I get to introduce that subject to new students every year. And it never gets boring. The best part of my job is seeing the 'light bulb moment' that the student got it or realized something about the content. It just makes it's fun." She had a few inspirations when it came to entering the profession. "My dad was a teacher. It was something I always knew about. It was always an option for me. When I was little, I would arrange all of my stuffed animals to be students and be at the front of the class teaching them." She said what she enjoys most about teaching is "the students. I get to be with wonderful kids all day, every day." Apart from teaching, she is heavily involved in other activities. She is a club advisor for the Tiger Tales Book Club, co-advisor for the California Scholarship Federation, one of five academic coaches

for the English Department and a mentor to two teachers. She said of being named the 2024 Teacher of the Year, "I think it is very kind. I'm not sure I deserve it. Everybody has been so thoughtful. I was overwhelmed with the love, and I was surprised, but I was also grateful. It does mean a lot to know that your peers think you are doing a good job." When asked what her teaching style is and how she thinks it makes her stand out, she shared, "There is a lot that goes into it. What drives me is I want to do things I love and show my enthusiasm because if I don't, they won't. If teachers do not love what they are doing, they should not be teaching. You have to love it. If you love and enjoy it, they will, too. I try to make it interesting. I decorate around a theme. Sometimes I get into character, or I have the kids get into characters. It makes it fun for me, too." Looking ahead, she has goals and aspirations for the future of her teaching career. "My focus right now is being the best academic coach I can be. Those are the skills I am trying to hone now to help teachers be their best. I know my style now, and my focus is to help other teachers succeed in their classes and find their style." As Teacher of the Year, she hopes to convey the message to her peers and to the broader educational community: "My main message is that students come first, and that should be our motivation. They are our motivation."



Principal Rusvel Prado, 2024 WUUSD Teacher of the Year Jennifer Aufforth and Assistant Principal of Student Affairs La'Steveia Dixon.

Congratulations to '24 Palm Avenue grads

- Dayana Aceves Gonzalez
- Elias Acosta
- Estevan Acosta
- Khloe Adams
- Josue Aguilar Contreras
- Luis Almaraz
- Crystal Alvarado
- Aiden Alvarez
- Israel Alvarez
- Victoria Alvarez
- Cristian Anaya Nahuatt
- Jonathan Aninion
- Hugo Archuleta
- Isabella Arredondo
- Zachary Avila
- Ivan Aviles Ramirez
- Brianna Barrera
- Jayden Barrios
- Anyelin Beltran Molina
- Michael Benavides
- Dominic Castillo
- Mia Castro
- Yerelin Cepeda Rivas
- Juan Cervantes
- MyKaela Chavez
- Giovanni Chavez Alfaro
- Ximena Cisneros
- Julissa Contreras
- Ethan Cortes
- Anthony Cortez

- Dulce Cortez
- Angel Cuevas
- Ashley Curiel Delgado
- Carlos De Dios Ruiz
- Laura Delgado Gonzalez
- Leonuel Diaz Diaz
- Jackson Durfee
- Waylon Durfee
- Desirae Escalera
- Emely Escalera
- Sebastian Espitia
- Ashley Estrada
- Jose Felix
- Alondra Figueroa
- Angela Flores Lopez
- Maurice Frazier
- Theodis Frazier
- Ivette Garcia
- Joel Garcia
- Julisa Garcia
- Melany Garcia
- Noah Garcia
- Yelina Garcia
- Marcos Garcia Olarte
- Bryan Garcia Osorio
- Miley Garza
- Angel Gil
- Emily Gomez
- Jayden Gomez
- Vivianne Guevara

- Alexa Gutierrez
- Liliana Gutierrez Medina
- Gabriel Gutierrez Moreno
- Analia Haller Carbajal
- Diego Hernandez
- Gabriel Hernandez
- Jacob Hernandez
- Zoe Hernandez
- Adelyn Hernandez Diaz
- Jairo Hernandez Milanes
- Shaila Herrera Duran
- Cedric Herring
- Alexander Hidalgo
- Eduardo Hinojosa
- Aiden Hulsey
- Dana Ibarra Garcia
- Suley Ibarra Monroy
- Angelina Jaime
- David Jimenez Corona
- Jason Jimenez Salgado
- Keyla Jimenez Vasquez
- Kimberly Landeros
- Gracie Larue
- Diego Leon
- Paulette Leon
- Iliana Leon Ramos
- Anthony Lopez
- Isaac Lopez Cardenas
- Juan Lopez Gallardo
- Leah Lorenzo

- Gabriella Lucano
- Natalie Lule
- Eaden Macias
- Dayanara Magallanes
- Jesus Magallanez Gallardo
- Elizabeth Manzo Armenta
- Gabriel Martinez
- Jasline Martinez
- Adriana Medina
- Antonio Medina
- Samantha Medina
- Luis Mendoza Camarillo
- Carlos Mendoza
- Yarely Meza
- Evelyn Moncada
- Salvador Moncada
- Cesar Mora
- Alejandro Morales
- Nicholas Morse
- O'Neil Myrie
- Angel Navarrete
- Sopheea Nunez Ruiz
- Elijah Emmanuel Ocampo
- Malyke Orosco
- Nathan Orozco
- Pablo Ortega Garcia
- Allison Ortiz
- Isabella Osorio
- Brayan Osorio Cruz
- Desmond Pack

- Gabriel Padilla
- Itzia Palacio Salazar
- Angelina Palomares
- Estefani Pena
- Damian Perez
- Daniel Perez
- Leslie Perez
- Brian Perez Munoz
- Teagan Perkins
- Carlos Quezada
- Daniel Race
- Daniella Ramirez
- Emily Ramirez
- Ulises Ramirez
- Christopher Ramos Rodriguez
- Karime Raya
- Fatima Raya Raya
- Yazlen Raya Troche
- Alexander Reyes
- Jayden Rodriguez
- Luis Rodriguez
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- Gloria Rodriguez Toledo
- Brianna Romero
- Nathan Romero
- Brianna Rosales
- Parker Rosales
- Annabelle Rubio
- Sadie Ruiz

- Alfredo Sanchez
- Fabian Sanchez
- Bryan Sanchez Madrigal
- Octavio Santiago Perez
- Aileen Soto
- Katey Tapia
- Alyssa Torres
- Rosemarie Torres
- Xitlali Torres
- Armando Tovar
- Angel Trevino
- Carson Trevino
- Julie Urena
- Zeek Valenzuela Sandoval
- Joseph Vargas
- Sergio Vargas
- Lizbeth Vargas Ortiz
- Anna Vega
- Andy Verdoza
- Emily Verdoza
- Angelia Villagomez
- Raul Villanueva
- Mia Villasana Cabrera
- Trinity Villegas
- Deenah Wimberly
- David Zapata
- Santiago Zarate
- Camila Zendejas
- Kathleen Zuniga



The event will have music, food, and activities for the entire family.

First Fridays coming back downtown

JAMIE STEWART
The Shafter Press

SHAFTER

Shafter's First Fridays return to downtown on June 14, from 5 to 9 p.m. The event will include live music, a variety of food vendors, games, activities and shopping.

The First Friday events were started last year, the brainchild of Mayor Chad Givens and a committee charged with improving and attracting business downtown. Despite a lukewarm reception from some in the city, Givens told the members of the

City Council and the committee that the events would attract entire families to the downtown area, having the residents spend their Friday nights in Shafter, participating in some fun and spending their dollars in Shafter instead of heading out of town for an activity.

At the first First Friday event last June, Givens was quoted as saying, "I was kind of criticized when I first suggested the idea, but just look at the turnout. What do you see? You see a lot of residents here

with their families. Shafter has a very large number of residents with young families, and they are here enjoying themselves, instead of spending their dollars in a different city."

Several organizations were on hand at the event, including the Shafter Recreation Department, who is beginning their tennis lessons, tennis camp, and a number of other summer activities.

This year's inaugural event will include vendors El Michoacano, Candelaria's Bakery, Korean BBQ, Semper Fries

and other food vendors. There also will be live music, games for the kids, and information booths set up by organizations including the Shafter Recreation Department, Shafter Police Department, Shafter Library and Learning Center, and Community Action Partnership.

The Friday events will continue in August and September, skipping July for the community fireworks celebration.

God, Where art thou?

When my grandparents were in school, prayer was a regular part of the school day. But little by little, God has seemed to be squeezed out of the school system. I do agree with people who say that they shouldn't be required to pray if it is not part of their lives. There are many different religions, belief systems and cultures in the United States, and I think that all of them have a right to practice their religion, as long as it doesn't impede on someone else's rights or beliefs.

I covered a story a few months ago in which a number of graves at the Shafter Cemetery had been vandalized. When questioned, an officer at the Shafter Police Department said that it was a case of someone practicing their religion.

Well, it turned out that it was a case of vandalism because it caused harm and involved people who did not believe or practice that religion.

For Christians, we have fought hard to keep our children, and now

EDITOR'S NOTE | Jamie Stewart

our grandchildren, God-fearing, loving people. But, it seems that more and more, we are fighting against entities that we never thought we would have to fight against, such as our schools.

Recently, Mayor Chad Givens was barred from speaking at a commencement ceremony at GROW Academy because he refused to remove a reference to scripture that he had included in his speech. It was a wonderful speech that was both inspiring and encouraging.

There is no telling how many parents and students missed out on hearing this speech that would have loved it. I don't think that the inclusion of the scripture in any way offends anyone or forces a certain belief on anyone else.

It is amusing when I think of the many times I have covered events at the elementary schools and the high

schools in which there were mentions of different beliefs and cultures, "preaching" an attitude of tolerance and acceptance. At this year's Richland Junior High graduation ceremony, Cain Maldonado not only quoted a Bible verse, he also spoke at least a paragraph of how God had created their children, and he even quoted, "God created you for a purpose and made you in His own image." And this was an eighth grade graduation, same as GROW's, but so much different in that respect.

I am not against tolerance or acceptance, but it really seems hypocritical when agencies or groups champion for freedom of speech, but only if they are speaking for their cause.

I applaud Givens for his decision to stand up for his beliefs and taking a stand for it.

Jamie Stewart is editor of The Shafter Press. The opinions expressed here are his own, and may not reflect those of the paper or its management.

Wonderful rail terminal plan could mean 40k jobs

From Page 1

economic development director for the city at the time, Bob Meadows, when asked what percentage of jobs would be able to be filled by Shafter residents, said, "We really don't know, because a lot of the jobs are for highly skilled workers, some including automation positions" which the city didn't have.

Guinn estimated that of approximately 10,000 jobs now supported by operations at the industrial park, about 3,000 are held by Shafter residents.

To answer this dilemma, Wonderful Company created the Occupational Learning Center, housed inside the Wonderful Industrial Park complex, providing training for residents to gain the skills necessary to fill those positions.

Equipped with classrooms, this center teaches courses in automation, engineering, warehouse management, and other technical skills that are needed to operate the new facilities.

One such worker is Ramon Hernandez, who has been em-

ployed at the Wonderful Company Industrial Park for over four years. "I started out as a forklift driver, making \$17 an hour. But I knew that the companies were moving to more automation and high tech operations. I decided to get more training, and now I am working as an automation analyst, operating machines that I didn't believe that I would ever be able to do." Hernandez now makes \$27 an hour and is also prepared to fill a variety of positions that these new companies may have available.

Free Summer Meals

NO REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!

Richland School District is please to announce its continual participation in the Seamless Summer Program.

The Nutritional Services Department will be offering **FREE MEALS** daily (Ages 18 and under)

Redwood/Richland Jr. High Cafeteria
331 N. Shafter Ave. Shafter, CA 93263
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June 10, 2024- July 19, 2024

Monday-Friday
Breakfast - 7:45 am - 8:45 am
Lunch - 10:30 am - 11:30 am

Meals must be eaten in the cafeteria.
Adults accompanying children may purchase a lunch for \$5.00, exact change only

*Closed June 19th & July 4th
*Last day Friday July 19th

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State Farm Indemnity Company
Bloomington, IL
State Farm County Mutual Insurance Company of Texas
Richardson, TX

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Wasco City Council is recruiting one (1) individual to serve on the **Wasco Planning Commission** due to the resignation of the appointed member, Petra Rueda, to fill the remainder of the term through December 31, 2024.

Members are nominated and appointed by the full City Council. They must be residents of the City throughout their term and attend a monthly meeting.

Applications are available online on the City website:
<https://www.cityofwasco.org/FormCenter/Applications-9/Commission-Committee-Board-Application-50>

Applications will be accepted for submission until the open position is filled.

For any questions or assistance regarding this appointment, please don't hesitate to contact the City Clerk's Office at (661) 758-7215 or by email at cityclerk@cityofwasco.org.

We are here to support you throughout the application process.

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Zale Mantas makes SHS golf history

JAMIE STEWART
The Shafter Press

A Shafter High golfer made history this year, becoming the first SHS golfer to qualify for the Southern California Regional tournament.

Zale Mantas, a sophomore at SHS, placed seventh at the Regional, the first General to medal in the tournament, just missing the cut for the State tournament.

As a team, the Shafter Generals won the SSL, but missed out on advancing to the Regional team playoffs by a few strokes. The Regional has all of the divisions in it, from the large school Division I to Division VI.

Mantas practically grew up with a golf club in his hand. He began playing at the Riverlakes Junior Golf Academy at age 7.

"He was naturally gifted with his driver and putting. It wasn't long before Zale was beating his father in rounds of golf," said his mother, Megan Mantas. She said that Zale's love of golf grew as he got older. He then played recreationally for years, competing in small youth tournaments. Man-

SHAFTER

tas also had the opportunity to train with local PGA player Chad Sorenson, at the Buena Vista Golf Course.

Since beginning high school, he has trained more rigorously and played rounds daily, sometimes twice a day. "When I am on vacation, I golf; when I am at home, I golf." Megan said that he probably dreams about golf when sleeping.

The South Sequoia League Championship was held at the Buena Vista Golf Course, which Mantas has so much experience on. He placed first overall, carding the top score of 81, allowing him to advance to the Regional Championships. Mantas was named, not surprisingly, the MVP for the Shafter High team and also received the Principal's Athletic Scholar award for spring sports with a 3.85 GPA.

The Regional was held in Lemoore and was a challenging course, yielding only one score below an 80, which was winner Jayden Sosa of Clovis East, who scored a 75.

Mantas's summer will also include



The Generals as a team won the SSL but just missed advancing to the Regionals.

plenty of golf. He is scheduled to play in the Player's Tour of Los Angeles for the JPGA. He is planning on playing in sev-

en tournaments. And he plans to be back at Shafter High in the fall, playing on the team as a junior.

Mario Uresti: A passionate WHS educator

VERONICA JACUINDE
Wasco Tribune

Dr. Mario Uresti is the coordinator of special education services for Wasco High School. He is an educator who pours his heart and soul into his profession and is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the children he serves. He also loves Wasco and moved to the town after falling in love with what he calls "a magical place."

"I monitor the special education department, which includes the special ed teachers and instructional aids, and work with other administrators on campus to ensure that our kids have all the support and services they need to be successful at Wasco High."

He said the best part about his role is "seeing the kids coming in their freshman year struggling academically and behaviorally, watching them grow and mature, and seeing them graduate their senior year."

Uresti has a degree in psychology from Sacramento State University. "After I graduated from Sac State, I started as an instructional aide, and then I became a teacher. Then, I got a job as a program specialist for Kern County Superintendent of Schools, where I worked for 11 years be-



Hudson, Jennifer, Madison, Mario and Inez Uresti.

fore coming to Wasco High School. I've been at WHS since 2017."

He is also a college professor at Bakersfield College, "I teach education, doing the summer bridge there, which is an

WASCO

orientation for the incoming freshmen. It will be my third year this summer. I've also been teaching at Cal State Bakersfield for about ten years for the special education department."

He received his doctorate in educational leadership from a Cal State Bakersfield/Fresno State joint program, which he and his wife attended together.

Uresti is from a little town of Woodville, near Porterville, and went to Monache High School. He found his way to Wasco after he and his wife got their doctorate degrees. "We were looking for a new job, and she was supposed to apply for the position at Wasco High. I always liked Wasco when I worked for the county. I spent a lot of time working in Wasco and always thought it was a charming town, and when she told me she wasn't going to apply, I applied. And it was the best decision I made in my career."

He sees all his students as having a lot of potential, and his job is helping them reach their maximum potential. "They have a lot of good skills that just need somebody to pull it out of them. My role is to try to get to know them, especially in our department; I try to know all of their names and try my best to get to

know who their parents are. And so, I can say without a doubt that at the end of the school year, I knew every kid's first and last name."

He is proud of the department's accomplishments. "At WHS, our teachers and our aides have a really strong team, and for me, that is really important. To help students succeed, we have to work really well as a team. At the end of four years of high school, another one of our goals is to ensure our students are college or career-ready, and this year, about nearly 80% of our students will attend college or are working one year out after high school."

He has a long-term vision for himself. "I see myself here at Wasco High, probably until I retire. My daughter, who attends Wasco High, is graduating next year, but I also have two little ones, three and four. I told my wife I love it here and will retire when the youngest one graduates from Wasco High School. On a personal level, it is a lot of work because I live in Bakersfield, and my daughter is very involved, but driving here is very worth it. I come to Wasco sometimes twice a day, but there are times when it's three times a day. All of that driving and time is worth it. Wasco High School truly is a magical place."

GROW pulls mayor from grad keynote

From Page 1

tonight, and have the ability to stand on this stage with such distinguished young men and women from GROW Academy. As was stated, my name is Chad Givens, and I serve as mayor for the great City of Shafter!

Graduation is not about completion, but about starting. This is your moment to shine in your success in what you've accomplished, and grow from that, giving you the opportunity to have a new, a new perspective, a new opportunity in this race called life. Yet, in every race there are obstacles that we face, some greater than the others, but nothing that cannot be conquered. The Bible tells us to say to this mountain to move, and it will move. Now is crazy as that sounds, it's true. One of the most overlooked facts of that scripture is simply this: The mountain does not go away, it just moves. It merely allows you to conquer it through other means, but is meant to indeed be conquered.

You cannot run from your circumstances, your obstacles, your mountains, but you can be creative and find ways to move the mountain to get to the next step. We grow from these moments that are carved into our person, and they give us the ability to be better for it, but always keep that moment in our hearts and minds so we never forget where we came

from, but always remember there is more to us when we can see past our mountains.

You, Class of 2024, you have done just that. You have proven to your teachers, your parents, and most importantly, yourself, that you CAN accomplish what you set out to do, you can overcome adversity, you can grow when you put your heart and mind into it. Remember, it is only impossible if you don't do it.

Now parents and family, I hope you are listening to this next piece. As you move into your next phase of life know this, there will be distractions, there will be obstacles, and they will be in front of you, of your opportunity for success. Don't give up, don't give in, don't run, but stand and stand tall. Know that this staff and your family has trained you and taught you for this moment. Remember that you can accomplish all things that you set out to do, you just have to TRY! Don't lose yourself for the bad days, but know they exist, and know that you can move past them, shrugging them off to get to the next.

I have watched my own daughter doing her studies time after time into the late hours of the evening and morning, I have listened to her complaints about teachers and subjects. We have pushed her to her limit, seen her breakdown with the "it's just too hard" moments. Those times come, they exist; don't for one minute

think it doesn't, it does.

We have changed career paths a couple times; thank goodness it stayed in the same industry! We have vetted colleges and locations, we have seen heartbreak with boys and memories created with friends. But if I could give any advice at this moment I would give this. Do it all! Be a part of everything you want to be a part of.

You have now graduated junior high, only to move into the next phase of your life; don't miss the opportunity that you will regret not having later in life, you don't get a second chance. Be connected with everything high school gives you and all the many things that will happen over the course of these next four years. And if you think I am talking to the graduate you are mistaken.

Parents, that message was for you! Your child will come home wanting to be a part of so many things. It is your responsibility to stop and listen. Listen to the stories that are told, and the moments that are felt. Engage in the conversation, add to it. Don't let them back out of it, but push them to pursue those moments, it's their one chance. Take the time to go to the event with them. If they're in sports, be there. Arts, theater and music, be there. Support them with your time. These are not only memories for them, they are memories for you.

The next thing you know you will look up and they will be graduating high school. That memory, that long-term memory, will be but a blip on a radar that if you don't push them to take it, you will not have either. You will want to hear about the dance, the classroom experience, the bus trip to the track meet or the football game. You will want to sit around the room, and just talk about what went right and what went wrong. And you will want to be just as strong for them as you can be, pushing them to never give up.

Lastly, for all of you who are going to Shafter High School, know this: You will be one of only a few. Yes, you are the GROW graduating class of 2024, BUT you will become the graduating class of 2028 of Shafter High School, the 100-year anniversary class of Shafter High School. So get involved, get connected and enjoy making memories that will last for the rest of your life! So with all that said, graduating Class of 2024, congratulations on your achievement, on not just making it this far, but setting the bar high and being ready to go far into the future.

You are an amazing group of young people, with the ability to conquer all that you set out to do. Dream big and stand tall, and in the famous words of Dr. Seuss - oh the places you'll go, and the things you'll see.

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
Fictitious Business Name Statement
M.G.R. Farm Labor Contractor
2024-B2807
4757 Coronado St West
Bakersfield, CA 93314
County: Kern
4757 Coronado St West
Bakersfield, CA 93314
Jesus Aguilar Reyes
4757 Coronado St West
Bakersfield, CA 93314
The business is conducted by:
Individual
Date the business commenced:
08/12/2019
/s/ Jesus Aguilar Reyes, Owner
Date Statement Filed: 05/01/2024
Date Statement Expires:
05/01/2029
Aimee X. Espinoza
Auditor-Controller-County Clerk
By: Z Arellano
Publish Wasco Tribune May 30, June 6, 13, 20, 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Wasco Mini Storage
451 N. F Street
Wasco, CA 93280
ONLINE Auction
StorageTreasures.com
Ending 6/14/24 @9am
Cleaning Deposit \$50
72 Hours clean-out
U0521 Antonio Estrada
household
U0513 Pedro Gaspar
household
U1415 Michael Munoz
Household
Publish Wasco Tribune June 6, 13, 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Wasco Union Elementary School District
1. Proposed budget will be available for public inspection:
DATE(S) June 6, 2024
LOCATION/ADDRESS

1102 5th Street
Wasco, CA 93280
2. Public Hearing:
DATE(S) June 11, 2024
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION/ADDRESS
440 Griffith Avenue
Wasco, CA 93280
3. Budget/LCAP Adoption Date:
June 18, 2024
/s/Oscar Luna,
Assistant Superintendent
Date 4-12-24
Publish Wasco Tribune June 6, 13, 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
WASCO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING AN INCREASE IN STATUTORY (LEVEL 1) SCHOOL FEES IMPOSED ON NEW RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

CONSTRUCTION PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 65995 AND EDUCATION CODE SECTION 17620
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Trustees ("Board") of the Wasco Union High School District ("School District") at its regular board meeting to be held in the Wasco Union High School District Board Room, 1900 Seventh Street, Wasco, California 93280, on Thursday, June 20, 2024, at approximately 6:00 p.m., or soon thereafter, will consider approving an increase in statutory school fees ("Level 1 School Fees") that may be imposed on new residential and commercial/industrial construction located within the boundaries of the School District pursuant to Government Code Section 65995 and Education Code Section 17620.
A report entitled "School Fee Justification Study" was prepared

pursuant to and in accordance with applicable law, which includes information and analysis demonstrating the relationship between new residential and commercial/industrial development and the School District's need for the construction of school facilities, the estimated cost of the school facilities, and justification for the levy of Level 1 School Fees on new residential and commercial/industrial development.
The School Fee Justification Study and any related documents regarding the proposed adoption of the Level 1 School Fees are available for public review during normal business hours at the School District's administrative office located at 1900 Seventh Street, Wasco, California 93280.
Questions and/or comments should be directed to Nelly Sanchez, Chief Business Officer (661) 758-8447.
Posted: June 6, 2024
Publish Wasco Tribune June 13, 20, 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Fictitious Business Name Statement
La Imperial Taqueria
2024-B3609
441 F. St
Wasco, CA 93280
County: Kern
422 James St Suite #11
Shafter, CA 93263
Marcela's Investments
422 James St Suite #11
Shafter, CA 93263
State of incorp. or org.: CA
The business is conducted by:
Corporation
Date the business commenced:
07/01/2023
/s/Marcela A. Garcia, C.E.O.
Date Statement Filed: 06/06/2024
Date Statement Expires: 06/06/2029
Aimee X. Espinoza
Auditor-Controller-County Clerk
By: Z Arellano
Publish Wasco Tribune June 13, 20, 27, July 4, 2024

