

TULARE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION



Annual Report

2012-2013

Mamie Fidler, President

TULARE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Board of Directors

Term Expires June 30, 2012

- Zone B** **Curt Lange— TREASURER**
Lange Plumbing Supply Inc., 510 East Cross Avenue, Tulare, CA 93274, 686-1693
- Zone B** **Denyse Weaver**
Ely Auto Parts, 215 East Inyo Avenue, Tulare, CA 93274, 686-3811
- Member-
At-Large** **Tony Taylor**
Res●Com, 305 South “M” Street, Tulare, CA 93274, 685-8989

Term Expires June 30, 2013

- Zone A** **Daniel Enriquez—IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**
(Was appointed to Darlene Jensen’s seat and will serve one year as Past-President, then the Board will appoint someone else to the seat.)
Hazel’s Kitchen, 237 North “L” Street, Tulare , CA 93274, 685-0455
- Member-
At-Large** **Don LeBaron**
830 Sycamore, Tulare, CA 93274, 936-3244
- Zone A** **Esther Sanchez**
Déjà Vu Hair & Nail Spa, 124 South “K” Street, Tulare, CA 93274, 688-5121
- Zone A** **Renee Soto— VICE PRESIDENT**
State Farm Insurance, 306 North “K” Street, Tulare, CA 93274, 686-3355

Term Expires June 30, 2014

- Zone A** **Katie Phillips**
Phillips Law, 253 North “L” Street, Tulare, CA 93274, 687-7500
- Zone A** **Gloria McCauslin**
VIP Pizza, 88 Tower Square, CA 93274, 688-2011
- Zone B** **Marmie Fidler— PRESIDENT**
Barnes Memorials, 320 North “M” Street, Tulare, CA 93274, 686-6537

City Appointments

- City
Council** **Craig Vejvoda**
Vejvoda Financial Services, 200 North ‘M’ Street, Tulare, CA 93274, 688-2900
- City
Admin.** **Margee Fallert, Administrative Services Director—SECRETARY**
City of Tulare, 411 East Kern Avenue, Tulare, CA 93274, 684-4203

Members-At-Large are appointed by the TIP Board of Directors. When vacancies occur on the Board of Directors, they are filled by appointment for the balance of the term by the remaining TIP Board members.

Tulare City Council
411 East Kern Avenue
Tulare, California 93274

The Tulare Improvement Program, Incorporated, Board of Directors, offers the following recommendations for the management and operation of activities associated with the Tulare Parking and Business Area during the fiscal year (July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013):

1. Recommend no changes in boundaries or benefit zones.
2. Work closely with City staff in implementing downtown projects and plans and recruiting new businesses to Downtown Tulare.
3. Continue to track real estate opportunities and continue to work with real estate professionals in that effort.
4. Work with the City, Code Enforcement and with the Police Department in efforts to control graffiti and other vandalism and crime in the downtown.
5. Continue to evaluate the results of events and special activities that this organization has produced to better meet the demands of the changing economy and downtown business community.
6. Continue to work with the Tulare Chamber of Commerce as well as other organizations and individuals in their efforts to encourage growth in Downtown Tulare.
7. Support efforts to market and develop attractions in the downtown, encourage the involvement of other groups and individuals in producing events and attractions, implement new strategies aligned with existing strategies to improve the business climate in the downtown .
8. Continue efforts to develop cooperative marketing plans with Association members and the downtown at large.

Attached is an estimate of the cost of providing the improvements and the activities for fiscal year 2012/2013. Included are sources of revenue and contributions.

Mamie Fidler
President
Tulare Downtown Association

Budget goes Here!

THE PAST

TIP's History

A Parking and Business Improvement Area was established by the Tulare City Council in May 1987 at the request of concerned downtown business persons. The district was formed under the provisions of the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1979 (AB-1693) as amended by the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 (SB-1424). The purpose of the district is to promote the economy and physical maintenance of the downtown business district in the public interest in order to create jobs, attract new businesses, and prevent erosion and blighting of the business district.

To fund activities, the Council has authorized the levy of assessments upon the businesses which benefit from these improvements and activities. The Board of Directors of the Tulare Improvement Program, Incorporated has been authorized by the City Council to act as an Advisory Board to annually make recommendations to the City Council on the expenditure of revenues derived from the levy of assessments, on the classification of businesses, and on the method and basis of levying the assessments.

The Tulare Improvement Program, Incorporated is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation and is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of thirteen (13) members. All TIP Board members serve without pay. Officers of the Board consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Immediate Past President which are elected by the Board of Directors at the annual TIP Membership Meeting which was held on June 15th. Day-to-day management is conducted by a paid Coordinator.

Last year saw many changes with the retirement of long-time coordinator, Jerry Magoon, the passing of President Darlene Jensen and Treasurer, Richard Miller and the departure of Leslie Woudstra, administrative assistant to Mr. Magoon. The Association went without a director for some time, with temporary staff conducting day-to-day operations. The organization moved from its long-time location to new offices in the Chamber of Commerce building.

THE PRESENT

Where TDA is Now

The fiscal year for the Association is Aug 1, and in September a new coordinator came on board. John Harman was hired in a part-time capacity to oversee the operations of the Association. It was also hoped that Mr. Harman, with the Board's direction, could assist in implementing some new strategies to aid in the efforts to support downtown. Mr. Harman immediately started shouldering the responsibilities of the previous coordinator as well as beginning to develop ideas and programs. Since coming on-board, the Board and Mr. Harman have:

- Legally changed the name of the organization from Tulare Improvement Program, Incorporated to Tulare Downtown Association, Inc.
- Worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce so that Mr. Harman and the Board devised a successful strategy to continue the Farmer's Market from the previous year. Mr. Harman successfully acquired the assistance of the Visalia Farmer's Market Association in implementing a new methodology, moving the market from a monthly event to a weekly fixture on Kern Ave just east of Tower Square.
- Minimized steps to increase communicating electronically. Mr. Harman implemented an updated format for the monthly newsletter and has continued to mail it rather than distribute it electronically, on the belief that the membership first needed to see the new edition's format in hard-copy form before moving it to an electronically distributed publication. Plans are to begin conversion to electronic distribution in the near future. Also, Mr. Harman implemented the sale of advertising space in the newsletter as a means to offset the costs of publication.
- Also a part of the year's agenda was the addition of a website. Under the Board's direction, Mr. Harman acquired the domain "tularedowntown.com" and designed and uploaded a web site for the Association. The web site is fully operational allowing members and vendors access to information regarding events, digitized forms and the ability to make online payments.
- TIP continued to issue gift certificates and scrip to be used downtown, but sales were down dramatically in the last year. Upon analysis, the Board and Mr. Harman determined that the established system was cumbersome for both the Association members and office staff and had become antiquated. Mr. Harman researched other gift certificate programs and discovered a system that is more efficient, pleasing to the downtown merchants who honor the certificates and more secure. The new certificates will go into effect in the next 60—90 days. The introduction of the new certificates will be heralded with a new marketing campaign wherein the merchants will register to be on the list of businesses accepting the certificates, new window clings will be distributed to participating merchants for their windows and the certificates will be featured on the web site.

- Additionally, successful events of the last year include:
 - National Night Out
 - Summer Sally
 - Halloween Street Party
 - Downtown Christmas Tree Lighting
 - Cinco de Mayo
- The Halloween Street Party was a new event the Association hadn't produced before. The event turned out to be a hugely successful street event, with some 250 trick-or-treaters visiting stores in the downtown along "K" Street, some 500-600 adults in attendance, merchants volunteering to work as attendants for carnival-style games in the intersection of "K" Street and Kern Ave as well as a costume contest and a big screen movie shown at Jordan Plaza.
- TDA continues to maintain a list of properties available in the downtown area and acts as a resource. Local realtors are contacted to update listings and available properties are listed on the web site.
- TDA continues to coordinate with the Downtown Tulare Revitalization Committee (formerly the 20/40 Visioning Committee) in championing the short term and long term success of Downtown Tulare.
- TDA assists it's members in addressing issues with which businesses owners are unfamiliar or hesitant to address. This last year TDA tackled issues involving:
 - 20-minute parking designations
 - Mediating repairs for damaged private-property parking lots
 - The crow "issue" by investing in materials to control the birds
 - Concern over open-pit barbeque smoke in the downtown
 - Graffiti removal and control
 - Advocating for businesses regarding signage on buildings
 - Control of vagrants in downtown common areas
 - Coordinating with police to curtail criminal activity in the downtown
 - Promote the utilization of the Enterprise Zone designation amongst membership

THE FUTURE

Where TDA is Going

TIP's Board of Director's held a retreat to set goals for the coming year. What resulted was a marketing plan for the Association coordinator and Board to implement in the coming year. To fully understand the importance of the new plan, consider the following:

Repetition is the key to changing consumer behavior. Studies indicate that it takes seven marketing impressions to modify consumer behavior. Based on current practices, if a consumer visited downtown Tulare only for the Association's special events, it would take over a year for that consumer to be exposed to seven impressions.

Smaller, more frequent events are more powerful marketing tools. The key to all successful downtown programs is staging smaller, regular events. Weekly Farmer's Markets, extended "open house" promotions, special "series" events are all smaller, less expensive events that can be easily produced and provide the frequency necessary to quickly change consumer's shopping habits.

The key to any successful marketing program is stake-holder "buy-in." Smaller more frequent events allow participating businesses two important opportunities: 1) To see their assessment at work; 2) the ability to participate as an affordable investment.

The Board came to these conclusions.

- Currently staged events lack the necessary frequency to initiate significant change.
- Currently staged events are becoming increasingly harder to produce because of associated costs and management requirements.
- Based on a proposition posited by Mr. Harman, that the Association's primary function is to put "a dollar bill in the cash registers of the downtown merchants," analysis of the existing events revealed a low level of return on investment. Contrasted to the large events, the Halloween Street Party was a low-cost event which produced a high ROI for participating merchants. The Board concluded the downtown would be better served by lower-cost, smaller, more easily produced events.
- Mr. Harman demonstrated that using the funds exhausted to stage the five existing events the Association could produce 21 smaller, lower-cost events, significantly reducing the amount of time required to produce the seven crucial marketing impressions. The Board concluded the funding would be better utilized by producing the smaller, more frequent events.
- The Board concluded that because Mr. Harman had successfully staged the Halloween Street Party and was instrumental in securing the participation of the Visalia Farmers Market Association for Tulare's own Farmers Market, and because Mr. Harman reaffirmed that he could produce frequent, smaller

events on the same or similar funding, the Board decided to follow Mr. Harman’s advice and move to modify the larger events and follow a plan with smaller and more frequent events. Consequently, Mr. Harman established a plan for implementation.

Implementation of new downtown marketing plan

From the coordinator’s office, the following plan has been implemented for downtown:

- **Tulare Tuesdays**—because the Farmers Market group wanted to do their market in Tulare on Tuesdays, the Association capitalized on the alliteration of the “T”s by implementing this phrase as the main marketing thrust. The Chamber of Commerce has also agreed to cooperate in the promotion.
- **Farmers Market** — The Visalia Farmers Market Association will hold an open-air Farmers Market every Tuesday evening from May 1 thru Oct 16.
- **Traders Market** — to accommodate other vendors selling merchandise other than produce, the Traders Market is scheduled to be implemented on June 12 and run concurrently on Tuesdays with the Farmer’s Market. The Traders Market will continue however, weather permitting, until December 18.
- **Taste n Tunes Concert Series** — scheduled to start in June, this is a joint effort by the TDA and the Chamber of Commerce. It’s a restaurant promotion for downtown eateries combined with music. The series will end the Tuesday before school resumes.
- **Cinco de Mayo** — largely because of tradition, the TDA hosted this event. However, it was almost entirely funded thru sponsorships and booth sales and the coordinator meets with the committee after this year’s event to pass on the torch to another organization better able to handle such a large promotion.
- **Incorporation of events into Tulare Tuesdays** — The plan is to absorb the older events of TIP into the new format; Summer Sally will be moved to October and take the form of Oktoberfest at the suggestion of a board member. Next year, Cinco de Mayo will take the form of a Southwestern-themed Tulare Tuesday.
- **Community Tree Lighting** — incorporated into Tulare Tuesdays, it will be the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.
- **Downtown Open House** — the open house tradition will continue with Tulare Tuesdays, as this promotion will start the Tuesday after Thanksgiving and continue until the last Tuesday before Christmas.

Additional Marketing and Projects

Kern Ave Promenade — The Association will also do marketing outside the Tulare Tuesday promotion with the new Kern Ave Promenade. The Promenade will be a street fair that runs from “K” Street to “M” Street on days when events are held in Zumwalt park. A “people-mover” such as a tram or trackless train will be used to transport people from the park, down to “K” Street with booths available for shoppers.

Performing Arts Center — Mr. Harman, on behalf of the Board, is soliciting foundations and other philanthropic individuals and groups to acquire the existing theater building in Tower Square for conversion to a performing arts center for Tulare.