

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

April 23, 2010

For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces: Countywide *Excellence in Education* Winners Announced Teacher of the Year, School Employee of the Year and Administrator/Manager of the Year Named

A selection committee of 20 Tulare County business and educational leaders met last week to choose the Tulare County Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year and School Employee of the Year for 2010. The *Excellence in Education Awards* program, now celebrating its 16th year, honors “the best of the best” in three educational categories - administrator/manager, teacher and school employee. A total of 32 nominations were received this year from Tulare County school districts and the College of the Sequoias. Each nomination was reviewed and scored individually by every member of the selection committee.

“The winners are people who work collaboratively to ensure every student’s success academically and socially,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Their dedication extends to the student’s family and the community.”

Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak is pleased to announce the following

Excellence in Education winners:

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Administrator of the Year

Brent Calvin, Dean of Business and Social Sciences, College of the Sequoias (COS)

Visalia native Brent Calvin is currently the Dean of Business and Social Sciences for the college – a position he has held since 2007. Prior to that time, Mr. Calvin was the COS Athletic Director. Before joining the college in 2002, he was the managing partner and president of an engineering consulting firm in the Los Angeles area. COS President Dr. Bill Scroggins praised him in his nomination letter saying, “Brent Calvin is a fellow I can rely on when I need a difficult job done – and done well.” Mr. Calvin is credited for significantly building attendance at the college’s Hanford site, reorganizing COS’s Weekend College program and building a successful business internship program and a partnership with the Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at CSU Fresno.

Teacher of the Year

Katryn Gonzales, Science Teacher, Lindsay High School, Lindsay Unified School District

Katryn Gonzales is a ninth- and tenth-grade Earth Science and Biology teacher at Lindsay High School. She was also the school’s valedictorian in 1993. At her graduation, she pledged to return to Lindsay when she had completed her teaching degree, and she kept her word. Her principal, Mr. Virgel Hammonds said, “in my tenure as an administrator, I have had only one teacher request the ‘lowest achieving’ learners, and that was Katryn.” He adds, “Amazingly, all of her learners leave her class with a wealth of science knowledge, and, more importantly, they have become better people.” She is considered a leader in curriculum reform at the school. On top of all of that,

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Katryn and her husband have formed a charitable organization called The Legacy Scholarship Foundation, which supports Lindsay High School graduates' pursuit of higher education.

School Employee of the Year

Pete Renteria, Physical Education Aide, Rocky Hill Elementary, Exeter Union Elementary

While Pete Renteria is employed as a part-time physical education aide at Rocky Hill Elementary in Exeter, this position is only a fraction of his service to the city's elementary, middle and high school students. Mr. Renteria is an Exeter native who still holds numerous local, valley and state records in football. After graduating from nursing school, he found employment in the medical field and soon began to volunteer for various sports organizations including Pop Warner and Exeter Little League. In the past five years, he has used his experience as a certified Nike SPARQ trainer to create an after-school program for student-athletes. Today, approximately 60-80 elementary, middle and high school students attend his afternoon training sessions. Mr. Renteria is also the high school's assistant football coach, strength and conditioning coach, and assistant soccer coach. He has also developed a program called "Monarch Pals," which uses Exeter High School football players to visit local elementary students and encourage them through literacy and physical activities. He says of his service to the students of Exeter, "...I want to look back on my life and know that I took every opportunity to help as many kids as I possibly could."

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Awards Program

Award recipients, finalists and nominees will be honored at a recognition breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. on October 6, 2010, at the Visalia Convention Center. Event attendees will enjoy a video portraying the work of the overall winners.

“We greatly appreciate the support of our partners in this event – the Educational Employees Credit Union, its President/CEO Beth Dooley, and board of directors,” says Jim Vidak. “Together, we have the privilege of recognizing the many talented men and women who devote their lives to educating children and young adults in Tulare County.”

For more information, contact Christine Chapman, Administrative Assistant, at (559) 733-6302.

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