

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Theatre Company to perform world premiere of *Rancho Tesoro* at L.J. Williams Theater this summer Seven Shows Offered July 23-30

Visalia – The Tulare County Office of Education’s Theatre Company will present the world premiere of a beautiful new musical entitled *Rancho Tesoro*, written by Theatre Company director Brian Roberts. *Rancho Tesoro* will be performed seven times in July at the L.J. Williams Theater in Visalia. It is the Theatre Company’s 13th annual summer production.

Rancho Tesoro is the story of people who live and work on a 150-year-old California cattle ranch. While the characters have personal struggles that threaten the existence of the ranch, they find strength and support from one another. One lyric that captures the spirit of *Rancho Tesoro* is, “Every star in every night proves in darkness there’s still light. Keep looking up and you'll find your way back home.”

“We designed the show around rich, real characters facing life’s challenges,” says Brian Roberts.

“They face them together in a way that celebrates community. For that, they are stronger together.”

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The leading roles are played by Tulare County students, including:

Moriah Escobedo (Central Valley Christian High School) plays Rosa, the matriarch of Ranch Tesoro. Rosa is concerned for the future of the ranch and her daughter's happiness.

Makenda Bickmore (2010 Mt. Whitney High School graduate) plays Katy, Rosa's daughter. She is caught between her sense of duty to the ranch and her dreams of a life beyond.

Jeff Prosser (Golden West High School) plays Davis, a wise, old cowboy who knows how to bring in a stray.

Adam Rodriguez (Golden West High School) plays Javier, a man of strong tradition and the ranch's foreman. He and his wife Maria have two daughters.

Kate Moon (home schooled) plays Maria, Javier's wife and the ranch's chief cook and housekeeper. She is Katy's cousin and best friend.

Steven Braswell (Redwood High School) plays Matt, an angry teenager court-ordered to work the ranch following a DUI conviction.

Evan Huckabay (2010 Redwood High School graduate) plays Bill, Matt's father. He is struggling to help his troubled son, while mourning the death of his wife.

The process of writing scenes for Rancho Tesoro began over four years ago. Brian Roberts and songwriter Bill Thornbury of Fresno then began co-writing the songs over two years ago. "The songs have simple, beautiful melodies — the kind that you'll hum after the show is over," says Brian Roberts. The show was orchestrated by Fresnan Dan Kehler.

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“Tulare County audiences are very lucky to be the first to see something this special,” says Dan Pessano, co-founder and managing director of Fresno’s Good Company Players. “Brian Roberts and everyone involved in this project are absolutely top notch. It has been amazing to watch the creation of an idea this exciting.”

Cast members are currently rehearsing each afternoon at the Theatre Company’s facility at 7000 Doe Avenue in Visalia. “Rancho Tesoro is a unique challenge for our students,” says Mr. Roberts. “They are learning completely unfamiliar material for a brand new production. But, they are doing an absolutely amazing job of it.” Prior to rehearsals, many students also assist in constructing and painting the sets at the shop operated by the Tulare County Organization for Vocational Education (TCOVE).

“We are tremendously proud of Brian and the work he has done on this incredible new musical,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “We are also proud of the 38 talented Tulare County cast members for their work on *Rancho Tesoro*.”

Seven performances of *Rancho Tesoro* will be held at the L.J. Williams Theater in Visalia. The theater is located at 1001 W. Main St., Visalia on the Redwood High School campus. Matinee performances will be performed at 2:00 p.m. on July 24 and 31. Evening performances will begin at 7:30 p.m. on July 23, 24, 29, 30 and 31. General admission tickets are \$10 per person and VIP seating is \$20 per person. Tickets are available at either of the Tulare County Office of Education’s

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Visalia facilities: 2637 W. Burrel Avenue (near the Tulare County Courthouse), or 7000 Doe Avenue, Suite A, (north of Goshen Avenue on Shirk to Doe Avenue), Monday – Friday, 8:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. Tickets will also be available at the L.J. Williams Theater box office one hour before each performance. All ticket sales are final. No refunds or exchanges will be offered.

For information about the Theatre Company and the summer musical production, *Rancho Tesoro*, call (559) 651-1482.

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