

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:
2001 *Excellence in Education Award* Winners
Recognized at Breakfast Ceremony Tomorrow
Visalia Convention Center November 1, 2001**

*Tulare County Administrator of the Year Tulare County Teacher of the Year
Tulare County School Employee of the Year*

The Seventh Annual Tulare County Excellence in Education Awards Recognition Breakfast will be held at the Visalia Convention Center Thursday, November 1, 2001. The event is a partnership between Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak and the Educational Employees Credit Union. This year, thirty nominations were submitted in the categories of teacher, administrator and school employee. "We're delighted with our winners and finalists," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "These awards are a nine-month process — from nomination to award to recognition. Through the process, it's a treat to get to know each of these extraordinary people better and share in their achievements."

Tulare County Administrator of the Year honors go to Carlyn Lambert. With 31 years of service to the Visalia Unified School District, Carlyn is currently assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Educational Services. Because of her trust-worthiness and history with the District, she was appointed

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Acting Superintendent from August to October 2000. She began her career as a kindergarten teacher at Crestwood School in Visalia and is described as a person who empowers others to be their best.

Mrs. Lambert is active in her church; is president of Soroptimist International of Visalia; and a board member for both the Creative Center and the Very Special Arts Festival.

Terri Fishbough, a third-grade teacher at the Oak Valley Elementary School District for 15 years, is the recipient of the Tulare County Teacher of the Year honors. In addition to her full-time class responsibilities, she is curriculum coordinator and lead teacher. Students have nicknamed her Mrs. Frizzle, after the cartoon science teacher who takes her class on exciting journeys. Terri Fishbough takes that as a compliment. She orchestrates educational opportunities that constantly relate subject matter to the “real world.” Mrs. Fishbough is currently working toward a Clear Administrative Credential and Masters in Education Administration through Fresno Pacific University.

Janie Elson, Tulare County School Employee of the Year, has been the director for Healthy Start at the Lindsay Unified School District since 1993. She coordinates a rich array of services that were previously not available to residents of Lindsay. In addition to her regular responsibilities, Ms. Elson serves as secretary of the Lindsay Recreation Authority Board; is founder of the Tulare County Recreation and Teen Center Directors' Collaborative; and is an active member of the First Presbyterian Church. One of her greatest assets is the ability to work with children and families from many different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. She treats them all with dignity and respect.

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Administrator of the Year finalists are Frances Holdbrooks, assistant superintendent from Lindsay Unified, and Dale Norton, dean of Academic Services at the College of the Sequoias. Teacher of the Year finalists include Pam Babcock, a first-grade teacher from Burton Elementary in Porterville, and Becky Richert, a first-grade teacher with Linwood Elementary in Visalia. School Employee of the Year finalists are Steve LaMar, a theater technician with the College of the Sequoias, and the late Manuel Rico, Director of Custodial and Grounds for Visalia Unified. The Tulare County Office of Education is pleased to announce the winners of the 2001 Excellence in Education Awards program.

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