



SERVING TUOLUMNE COUNTY

MONTHLY UPDATE

April 2021

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In This Month's issue:

Notes From The Program Manager
Page 01

From the County Supervisor's Desk
Page 02

Volunteer Appreciation
Page 03

Groveland CERT
Page 04

So Long, Farewell...
Page 04

Tuolumne Co. COVID-19 Response
Pages 05 & 06

Executive Staff Meeting
Page 07

Wildland Fire Preparedness
Pages 08 through 10

Burn Permits Suspended
Page 10

Member Profile: Jan Morris
Pages 11 & 12

Deployments
Pages 12 & 13

Upcoming Events
Page 13

In Memoriam
Page 13

NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

by Carol Hallett

I sure do love spring, new beginnings, fresh air, cool breezes, flowers popping out from the ground, blossoms on the dogwood...you cannot beat the springs in Tuolumne County. I was told an old wives tail years ago that you know winter is over when you get snow on the dogwood blossoms. I wait for it each year and am amazed because it happens more often than not... and this year was no exception. Just last week the dogwood in my yard had little blossoms opening up and we had a cold streak come through, first it was rain (which smelled so nice and fresh) and then it was corn snow. Now it is officially Spring!

This year spring is especially sweet since more and more people have gotten vaccinated. It is wonderful to see more and more people feeling comfortable to go out and be active in the community again. It does my heart good to be out among people. Even though I am fully vaccinated, I am still cautious. I feel more comfortable in outdoor settings where the sun will help to kill most viruses. I respect our shop owners who, to keep their businesses open must request masks be worn, so I do! I want our businesses to thrive.

Enjoy spring!



FROM THE COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S DESK

by Kathleen Haff, Tuolumne County Supervisor, District 4



Greetings from Kathleen Haff, Tuolumne County's new Supervisor for District 4. Behind me in this photograph is a picture of Hetch Hetchy, one of the most picturesque lakes in Tuolumne County! It is located in District 4. Also included in District 4: Groveland/Big Oak Flat, Lake Don Pedro/LaGrange, Moccasin, Chinese Camp, East Sonora, Standard, and many points in between. It is a geographically enormous district!

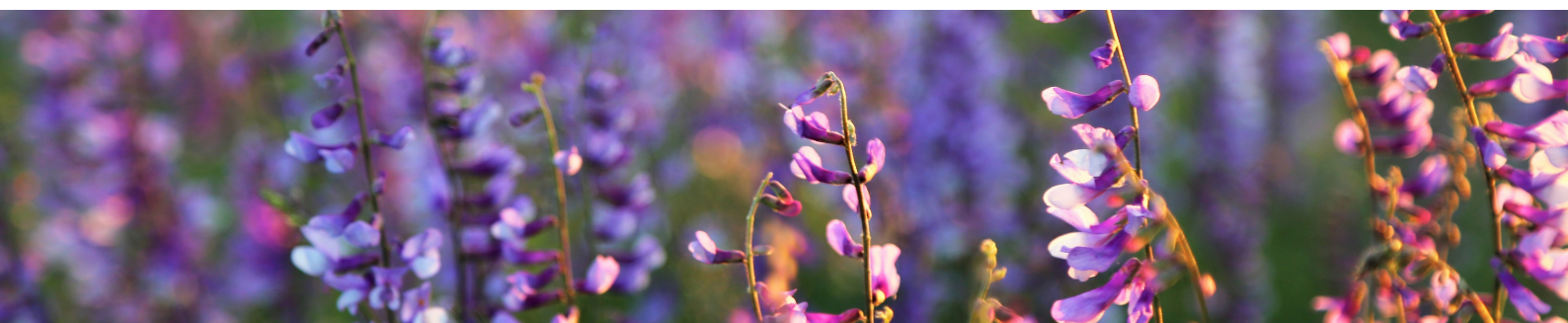
I am very happy to represent District 4 constituents and frankly, all of Tuolumne County. My mission is to continue working as a public servant. Yes, the job of Supervisor has "political" elements to it, but at the core of the job is a calling. A calling to serve. That is my primary mission here, to be a good steward and to serve you.

Many of you know about my background. Half of my career was spent in private business sector and the most recent half has been as a public servant...17 of those years with Tuolumne County. You may be interested to know that while I was working as a Senior Analyst in the County

Administrator's Office, I was also the Office of Emergency Services Coordinator. So, now you can appreciate how thrilled I am that the CERT family is growing and thriving in our county! If there is any way I can help you grow and expand your membership, please contact me. Seriously. I am all about helping our county prepare for, respond to (and hopefully mitigate) emergencies as they arise. I also believe in educating the public as much as possible before events occur.

To that end, I would like to invite any of you who are interested to my next Town Hall meeting on May 13th from 6-7 pm on Zoom. The topic will be: "How to Create a Firewise Community in YOUR Neighborhood." If you are interested in attending, please contact me via email and once I have the Zoom login information; I will send it to you! khaff@co.tuolumne.ca.us

Lastly, a heartfelt THANK YOU to THA-CERT, for all the great response work you do for our county...from offloading phone calls from the Sheriff's Dispatch and answering questions during the Moc Fire last year to helping our Public Health Department be as efficient as possible in the mass vaccination clinics they have held this year. I am in awe of you, your volunteer ethic, and YOUR desire to serve.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

by Mary Schreiner, THA-CERT PIO

Did you know that April 18 - 24 2021 was Volunteer Appreciation Week? Neither did we! But that didn't stop people from saying nice things about us, like Supervisor Haff does in her article, above. As has been said before, we don't do it for the recognition, but it sure is nice to be appreciated.

We also received nice acknowledgements from a couple of our local partners.

Twain Harte Community Services District were kind enough to post this on Facebook:

In honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Week we want to thank the dedicated members of the Twain Harte Area CERT Team for their willingness to always go above and beyond and the countless hours spent helping the community!

Members of THA-CERT and THFD
at the conclusion of CERT Basic
Training in January 2020



Petra Henderson, Tuolumne County Health Department Program Specialist sent us this message:

April 18-24, 2021 was National Volunteer Week. On behalf of Tuolumne County Public Health, I would like to express my immense gratitude for the time, care, and expertise you have shared with us during our COVID-19 mass vaccination efforts. We could not do this alone. Your commitment to the effort inspires me and we have been so thankful to have you be part of the team. You have helped facilitate the vaccination of thousands of Tuolumne County residents, helped us refine our POD plan, responded at the last minute with enthusiasm and flexibility...and so much more! It has been such a joy to work alongside each of you.

Michelle Jachetta, Public Health Director, gave a special thank you to our volunteers during the April 20th Board of Supervisors meeting (minute 51:50):

https://tuolumneco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=5&clip_id=506

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Petra

Editor - I'd like to add a big thank you to all of those at both agencies who make working together such a pleasure. And to all who volunteer, regardless of whether you volunteer for an hour, a day, a week, whatever, you help to make a difference in our communities. Thank you, all!



GROVELAND CERT

by **Bob Asquith, Groveland CERT Team Leader/Program Manager**

Groveland CERT is growing. Word of our volunteer program is spreading. We now have 26 people that have either volunteered for Tuolumne County Public Health vaccination clinics or expressed an interest in doing so.

We look forward to including these people in the basic online training soon. Speaking of training, the resident Groveland CHP officer has offered to train Groveland CERT volunteers in traffic control techniques. As soon as we can safely get together, we will do this. Bob Asquith, G-CERT team leader, completed the CERT Program Manager training in April.

The Groveland CERT working with the assistance of their sponsor – GCSD – continue to work on converting a retired ambulance into a firefighter rehabilitation platform.

SO LONG, FAREWELL...

by **Mary Schreiner, THA-CERT PIO**

In April, one of our dedicated volunteers, Kevin Rice, pulled up roots, packed up the dog, his wife Kathy, and all of their worldly goods, and moved to Maryland. Although Kevin was not “officially” a CERT member, through no fault of his own, he didn’t let that stop him from being a dedicated volunteer.

Whether we were helping direct traffic at the Twain Harte Rotary ATCAA Food Pantry, assisting students at Twain Harte School to cross the street safely, or helping to direct traffic at one of the Closed POD COVID-19 vaccine clinics, Kevin was always happy to lend a hand.

We wish Kevin, Kathy, and their dog, Callie, much happiness in their new home.

Kevin shows off the traffic wand skills he honed at the Closed POD clinics



TUOLUMNE COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE

by Kristina Herrera, Tuolumne County Public Health Department

One year into the COVID-19 response in Tuolumne County, the Tuolumne County Public Health Department continues to work tirelessly to mitigate the virus and provide the community with much needed support and up-to-date information. Initial planning for COVID-19 began in February 2020 with the formation of our Department Operations Center (DOC), well before Tuolumne County saw its first confirmed case of the virus. To date Tuolumne County has managed over 4,000 total confirmed cases and sadly 62 deaths have been reported.

The 2021 DOC looks drastically different than it did one year ago, having expanded to include multiple divisions and the addition of many new staff members. Case Investigation and Contact Tracing teams have worked diligently over the last year to manage active cases, notify contacts, and provide accurate reporting to the public. The Epidemiology/Data team continuously tracks the progress of the virus and coordinates with local healthcare partners to ensure adequate resources are available during surge events. The Logistics section has provided healthcare partners with necessary personal protective equipment and now plays a large role in the planning and coordination of vaccination sites. Additionally, the COVID-19 Call Center, staffed by both Public Health staff and volunteers (including THA-CERT), is available from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday to provide members of the public with relevant resources and answers to questions.

While each division continues to fulfill their duties, the current focus has shifted to providing Tuolumne County residents with vaccinations. As of April 6th, over 30,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Tuolumne County. The vaccination team, comprised of Tuolumne County Public Health staff, state staff, as well as both clinical and non-clinical volunteers, has utilized the parking lot of Sierra Bible Church in Sonora to hold weekly or biweekly vaccine events since mid-January.

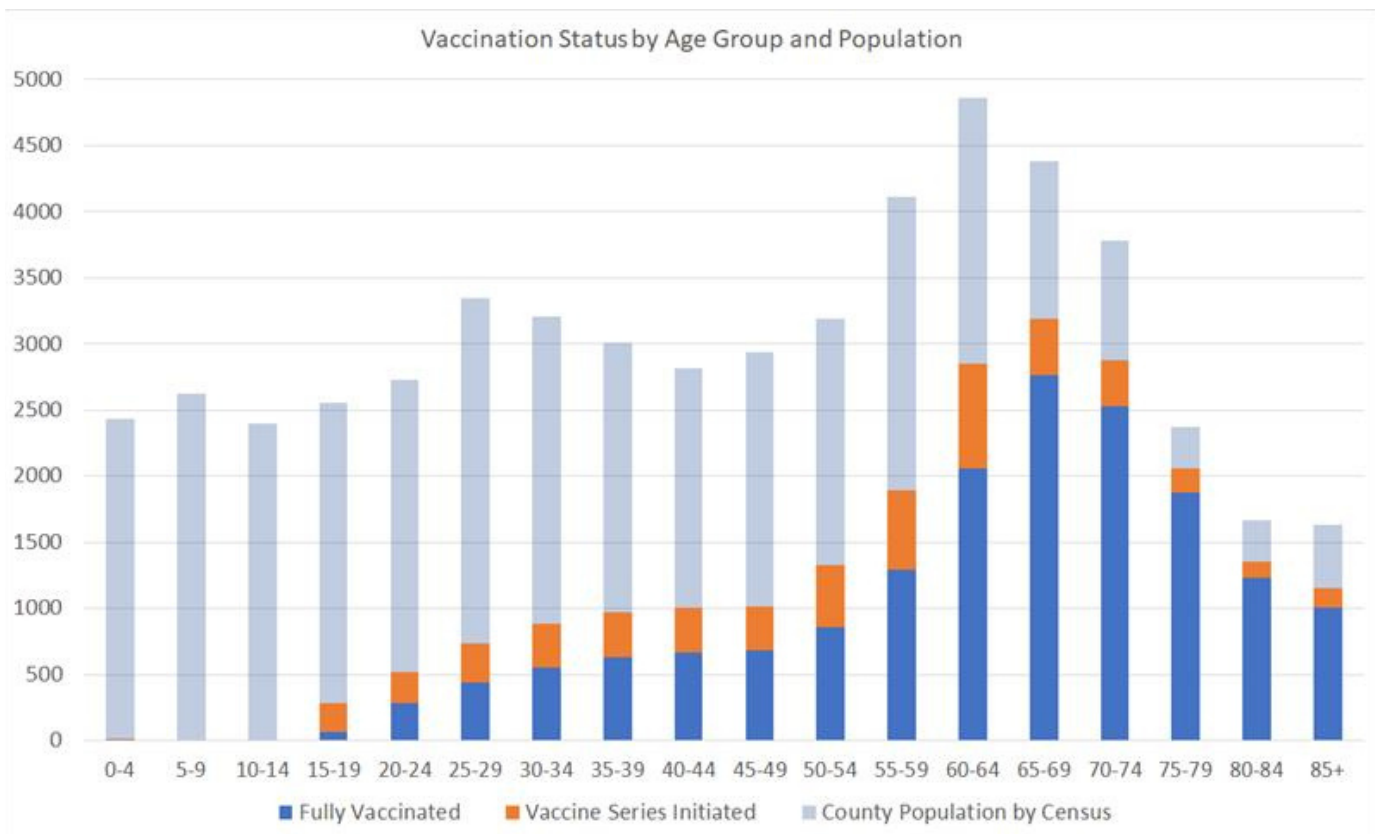
(Below) THA-CERT members (from left) Matt Kain, Mike Mandell, and Lise Lemonnier prepare to start the day at one of Public Health's Closed POD vaccine clinics at Sierra Bible Church



TUOLUMNE COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE, cont'd

Each vaccination event typically administers between 500 and 1000 doses, with the number of available slots determined by vaccine supply for that week. Currently Tuolumne County residents ages 16 and over are eligible to receive the vaccine for Pfizer and those 18 and over for Moderna or the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen). The Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) (both Twain Harte & Groveland CERT volunteers) have been an important partner in implementing the mass vaccinations efforts. CERT staff who assist with traffic control and volunteer with these events have been essential in helping our clinics run smoothly and safely.

Recently, our county moved into the Orange Tier of the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy framework. We are glad to see businesses and activities slowly and safely reopen, and as we move to less restrictive tiers, our individual responsibilities increase. Wearing a mask, physical distancing, staying home when sick, washing hands, getting vaccinated, and limiting exposure to those outside our household bubbles become even more important to keep our community healthy and on the road to the end of the pandemic. For general inquiries or information on upcoming vaccination opportunities please contact our COVID-19 Call Center at (209) 533-7440, follow us on Facebook, or visit our website at <https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/250/Public-Health>.



EXECUTIVE STAFF MEETING

by Carol Hallett, THA-CERT Program Manager

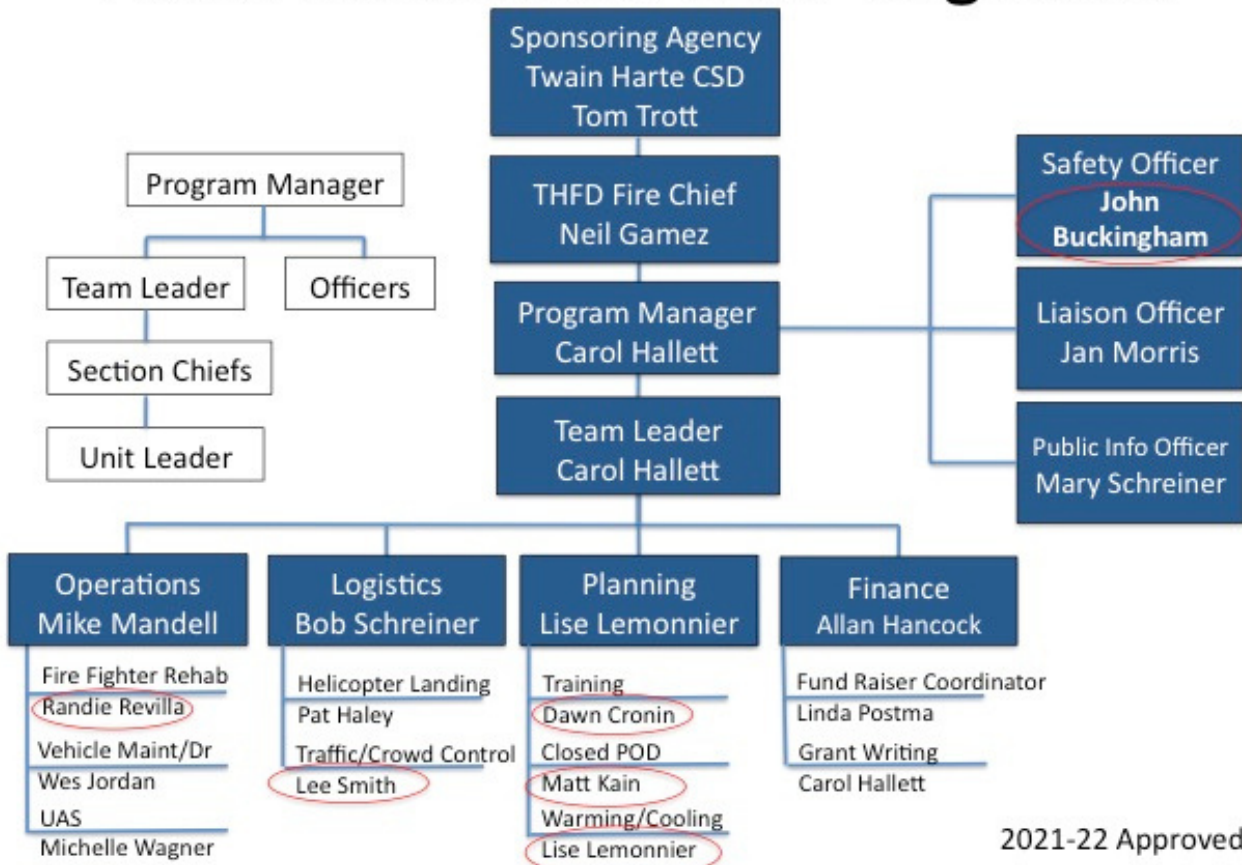
It was such a pleasure to have our Executive Staff Meeting this month; it has been too long. We combined updating our organizational chart with a strategy meeting...the greatest pleasure was when Chief Gamez joined us. The partnership that we are building between Twain Harte Fire Department and CERT is wonderful, exciting and awesome for our community.

We have some changes that are happening with the team and I am proud to present the new organizational chart to the community. When we have new people in positions it always gives a new perspective on what we might be able to accomplish. I want to thank the new members of our Executive staff for stepping up and taking on their new roles.

Please check out the new org chart for CERT I have circled the new people so that you can congratulate them when you see them around town.

The strategy part of the meeting was very exciting. We discussed ways that CERT can help our community be more prepared for emergencies. We talked about doing video messaging for training, recruitment and preparedness. We will be working on getting the message out about CERT and growing our group of volunteers. We are looking forward to supporting our fire department in projects that will make our town more safe utilizing volunteers as well as our sUAS (small unmanned aircraft system) Unit. All in all it was a great meeting; what do you expect from a great group of individuals?

Twain Harte Area CERT Org Chart



WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

by Captain Joe Schuller, Twain Harte Fire Department

The fire season is a year-round reality, requiring firefighters and residents to be prepared for the threat of wildland fire. Fire is, and always has been, a natural occurrence. Hills, canyons, and forests burned periodically long before homes were built. Wildland fires are fueled by a build-up of dry vegetation and driven by seasonal hot and dry winds, which are extremely dangerous and difficult to control.

Many people have built homes in the Wildland -Urban Interface (WUI) -- a high-risk wildfire area containing natural fuels where houses are built, without fully understanding the impact a fire may have on their lives. Few have adequately prepared their families and homes for a timely evacuation in the event of a wildland fire. Planning Saving Lives and Property Through Each year, wildland fires consume hundreds of homes in the WUI.

Studies show as many as 80 percent of the homes lost to wildland fires could have been saved if their owners had followed simple fire-safe practices. In addition, wildland fire - related deaths occur because people wait too long to leave their homes.

The Twain Harte Fire Department takes every precaution to help protect you and your property from wildland fire. However, in a major wildland fire event, there simply may not be enough fire resources or firefighters to defend every home. Successfully preparing for a wildland fire enables you to take personal responsibility to protect yourself, your family, and your property.

In this Action Guide, we provide tips and tools you need to prepare for a wildland fire threat, to have situational awareness when a fire starts, and to act early, as directed by local emergency management officials The Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) Program works in collaboration with Twain Harte Fire's wildland fire public-education efforts. Please visit [THFD+RSG+Action+Guide.pdf](#) at twainhartecsd.com for more information on wildland fire preparedness.

THFD respond to wildland fire in Tuolumne County



WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS, cont'd

Before a wildfire threatens your area:

In and around your home:

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Remove dead vegetation and other items from under your deck or porch, and within 10 feet of the house.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, do not let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Wildfire can spread to treetops. Prune trees so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
- Do not let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screens with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

Creating an emergency plan:

- Assemble an emergency supply kit and place it in a safe spot. Remember to include important documents, medications and personal identification.
- Develop an emergency evacuation plan and practice it with everyone in your home.
- Plan two ways out of your neighborhood and designate a meeting place.



WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS, *cont'd*

In your community:

- Contact your local planning/zoning office to find out if your home is in a high wildfire risk area, and if there are specific local or county ordinances you should be following.
- If you are part of a homeowner association, work with them to identify regulations that incorporate proven preparedness landscaping, home design and building material use.
- Talk to your local fire department about how to prepare, when to evacuate, and the response you and your neighbors can expect in the event of a wildfire.
- Learn about wildfire risk reduction efforts, including how land management agencies use prescribed fire to manage local landscapes.
- Learn how you can make a positive difference in your community.

During the time a wildfire is in your area:

- Stay aware of the latest news and updates from your local media and fire department. Get your family, home and pets prepared to evacuate.
- Place your emergency supply kit and other valuables in your vehicle.
- Move patio or deck furniture, cushions, door mats and potted plants in wooden containers either indoors or as far away from the home, shed and garage as possible.
- Close and protect your home's openings, including attic and basement doors and vents, windows, garage doors and pet doors to prevent embers from penetrating your home.
- Connect garden hoses and fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs, or other large containers with water. Firefighters have been known to use the hoses to put out fires on rooftops.
- Leave as early as possible, before you are told to evacuate. Do not linger once evacuation orders have been given. Promptly leaving your home and neighborhood clears roads for firefighters to get equipment in place to fight the fire and helps ensure residents' safety.

BURN PERMITS SUSPENDED

by **Mary Schreiner, THA-CERT PIO**

Cal Fire Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit have suspended all burn permits for the area effective 8 a.m., Monday, May 3rd, 2021, and ban all residential outdoor burning of landscape debris, including branches and leaves, for all residents. Continuing drought conditions have created increased fire danger throughout this region.

Cal Fire suggest finding alternatives to burning such as chipping, composting, or drop-off at your nearest green waste disposal site.

For more information on preparing your home and property for wildfire, please visit: www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

MEMBER PROFILE: JAN MORRIS, LIAISON OFFICER

by Mary Schreiner, THA-CERT PIO

From the very earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, CERT members have been making a difference in our community. Some have gone above and beyond to help out. This month, I sat down for a chat with THA-CERT Liaison Officer Jan Morris.

Jan has lived in Tuolumne County full-time since she retired from nursing in 2011; previously, she had lived here for about a year and a half, in 1987-1988. Jan first came to Tuolumne County in 1972, when she learned to ski at Dodge Ridge. Her nursing career began when she graduated with an AA degree from Delta College in Stockton. After working a few years, Jan returned to school and graduated with a bachelor's degree in nursing from Stanislas State in 1987.

Prior to that, Jan had enjoyed a variety of occupations, from electronics assembly, working for the Shasta County Library, and working for the welfare department, to hospital administration, and phlebotomist.

So what prompted her to come out of retirement to work with Public Health in the Closed POD clinics? Jan says she saw an ad while answering phones at Public Health and, since she still had a valid nursing license, she felt she was being called to apply.

Going back to work was challenging, at first, Jan admits. Getting used to new computer software and just a new organization is to be expected and Jan says that everyone at Public Health was so friendly and helpful that she was up to speed in no time. She says it has helped stimulate her brain and she enjoys the routine and being on a schedule.

Jan loves the vaccine clinics. She says, "That's what nurses do. They know how to keep things organized and how to keep people safe." She prides herself on not having leftover doses of the vaccine at the end of the day. Jan says working in the vaccine clinics requires good communication skills and being a member of CERT has helped that. Having had practice with CERT on using radios came in handy for the drive-through clinics, where everything is spread out and communication via radio is essential.

Jan would like to mention that former CERT Safety Officer Bill McManus predicted that pandemic would be one of our biggest threats here in Tuolumne County. Our THA-CERT have practiced for Closed POD at our meetings; the drive-through clinics are what we practiced, but on a much larger scale.

Jan also says she has great admiration for Carol Hallet, Program Manager for THA-CERT, for her commitment to the community. Carol is the one who envisioned the "Call A Day" program and who has worked tirelessly to find ways in which CERT can help our community during this prolonged emergency.

"We couldn't have been this successful without CERT", Jan says, "I'm so thankful to have such dedicated volunteers. Everyone works together so well. There is a real team approach and you never feel like you're alone."

MEMBER PROFILE, cont'd



Jan's graduation photo, Delta College



Jan working at a recent Public Health vaccine clinic

DEPLOYMENTS

by Mary Schreiner, THA-CERT PIO

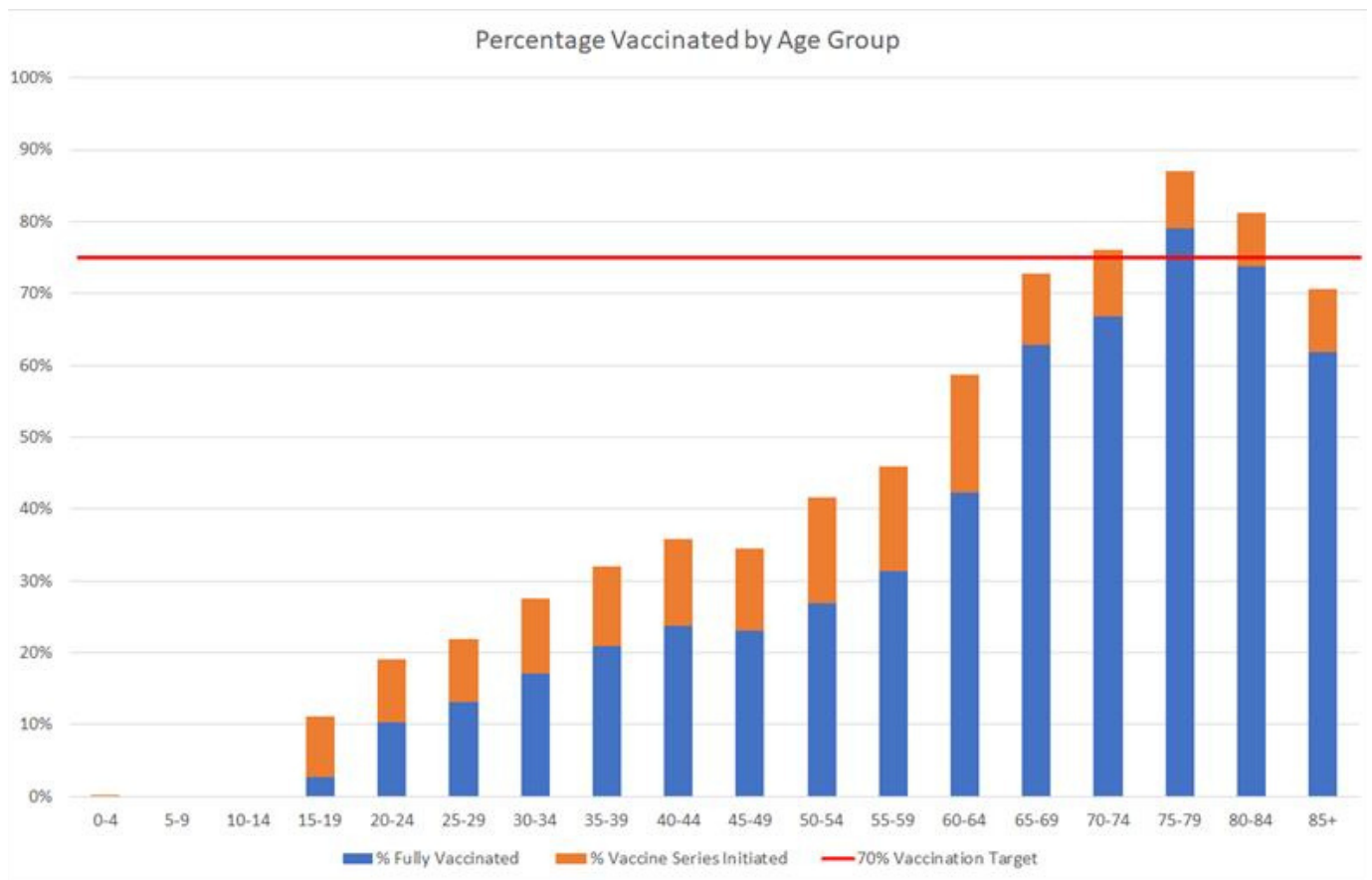
This month, Public Health tried something a bit different and, thanks to the cooperation of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, one of the COVID-19 vaccine clinics was held at Westside Pavillion in Tuolumne. We were able to enjoy the wide open spaces and lovely shade trees on a fairly warm day.

"Just a shout-out to all you CERT volunteers! All the folks at Public Health couldn't do these outdoor clinics without you, and I hear a lot of positive comments from the paid staff and the public. It gives me a chance to see some of you as I supervise the vaccine drawers up in the covered patio area by the church. Thank you for supporting our community!" - Jan Morris, R.N. (and CERT volunteer)

Unfortunately, not enough people are taking advantage of these *free drive-through clinics* (seriously, it couldn't be any more convenient!). While the vaccination numbers for those over 65 are good, the rates drop off rapidly for each age group under 65. The consensus is that we need a vaccination rate of at least 70% of the population to reach "herd immunity". If we don't reach that goal, it's unlikely that things will be getting back to anything close to normal any time soon.

Deployments, cont'd

If you, or anyone you know still haven't received a vaccine and wish to do so, please visit: <https://myturn.ca.gov/> or call: 1-833-422-4255.



UPCOMING EVENTS

As things start to open up, you're probably asking, what's next? We're glad you asked!

Here are a couple of events to put on your calendar for May:

Flag Raising

A Memorial Day Celebration is scheduled for Monday May 31, at 11:30 am at the Arch in Twain Harte.

Memorial Service

A memorial service for Nancy Stevens will be held on Saturday, May 22, at 2 p.m. in Eproson Park, Twain Harte

If you or your organization have upcoming events that you would like to have posted in a future CERT newsletter, please submit them to twainhartecert@gmail.com for consideration by the Executive Board.

IN MEMORIAM

by Mary Schreiner, THA-CERT PIO

This month, CERT lost a dedicated member and a friend to all who knew her. Nancy Stevens passed away on the 27th of April. Because of her extensive service to CERT, a few days were just not enough time to prepare a fitting memorial for our dear friend. A full tribute will appear in our May 2021 issue.

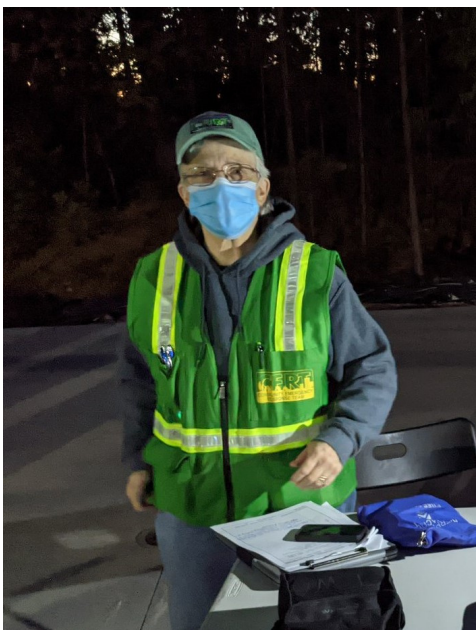
In the mean time, I'd just like to say that I, personally, will miss Nancy more than our relatively brief acquaintance should warrant. But, over the past several months, I've come to really know and appreciate what a treasure we had in her. Nancy was "volunteered" to be my proofreader for this newsletter by Program Manager Carol Hallett, back in August of 2020.

Like she did for anything that needed doing with CERT, Nancy gave it her all. Not only was she my proofreader, she was my sounding board, my shoulder to cry on, and my voice of reason when I was frustrated with uncooperative software or people who just couldn't seem to grasp the concept of a "deadline".

After discovering a mutual appreciation for fine bourbon, I promised Nancy that, once we were all vaccinated and we could congregate again, I'd have her and Patricia come over to my house and we'd raise a glass together while sitting out on the deck. Sadly, we never had the opportunity. I will always think of Nancy when I'm enjoying my "John Wayne bourbon".

I will miss her wit and humor, her gentle way of showing me all of my spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors in the newsletter, and, most of all, I will miss her unflagging support. She was the world's best cheerleader and had a knack for sending me a note to boost my confidence just when I needed it most.

To Nancy's partner, Patricia, I send my deepest and most sincere condolences. I hope you find comfort in your memories of your years together and in knowing just how much we all cherished Nancy.



Nancy prepping equipment for night training with UAS (left) and at "Helicopter Landing Zone" training with THA-CERT (right)

