

## Editorial board

- ▶ Amy Pack, president and publisher
- ▶ Linda Green, executive editor
- ▶ Paul Hurley, senior editor, community conversation

## VIEWPOINT

## First Amendment quote

"We live in an age when silence is not only criminal but suicidal. If they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us at night."

— James Baldwin, author, 1971

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# TCAG serves multiple county needs

The Tulare County Association of Governments is a regional agency composed of representatives from the county and its eight incorporated cities.

## TCAG:

- ▶ Obtains and administers state and federal funding.
- ▶ Oversees regional planning to comply with state and federal requirements.
- ▶ Maintains the long-range transportation model for the county and its member agencies.
- ▶ Researches and analyzes air quality issues related to transportation and other features that affect air quality.

TCAG is also the primary agency for executing the provisions of Measure R, the half-cent sales tax dedicated to transportation projects.

We asked TCAG Executive Director Ted Smalley to respond to questions regarding his agency's function and activities.

**Viewpoint:** Could you provide details such as: budget, number of employees and scope of duties?

**Smalley:** TCAG currently has 13.5 positions (two are not filled). TCAG's operating budget is



RON HOLMAN

Ted Smalley

▶ Another example is the extension of SR-190 improvements west to SR-99 in the Porterville area. Caltrans is working with TCAG to fund the \$21 million project, with \$4 million in Measure R funds. Without that local funding, the project could not be constructed.

▶ Another major consideration is project readiness. Last year, the Visalia Ben Maddox over-crossing project was ready to go to bid at the time the federal stimulus funding became available. The



STEVE R. FUJIMOTO

In this June 2009 file photo, a crew from Lee's Paving John Gonzales, left, Ramon Ramirez, and Joe Garcia work on raising manholes up to the new asphalt level at Road 80 and Ferguson Avenue. The widening of Road 80 (Plaza Drive) between Goshen Avenue and Avenue 328 is part of Measure R.

beyond spring 2007 levels. Bike and pedestrian projects are also prioritized by individual agencies based on public input and member agency plans. The Santa Fe Trail connecting Visalia to Tulare is a regional bike project included in the approved Mea-

**Valley Air Pollution Control District and state air board policies?**

**Smalley:** Air quality planning is a major function of TCAG. TCAG is the sole agency responsible for demonstrating that Tulare County meets increasingly stringent air quality conformity

a great job advocating with the HSR authority for station stop in the Hanford/Visalia/Tulare area. TCAG is currently coordinating an effort regarding the potential placement of the station in Kings County and the transit planning to and from Tulare County.

**Viewpoint:** What projects do you have in the works, and what are on the drawing board for longer term?

**Smalley:** For the short term, the attached exhibit shows all of the major regional transportation projects planned to break ground within 5 years, although some projects are dependent on state funds. Long-term projects include all of the projects in the Measure R Expenditure Plan. In addition to road projects, transit improvements and bike projects are planned for the future. Light rail is a long-term vision of Visalia, Tulare and TCAG.

**Viewpoint:** What are the priorities for county projects for the next five or 10 years?

**Smalley:** SR-99, Road 80, Plaza Drive, Avenue 416, SR-65, SR-65 (Spruce), Road 108, railroad grade separations and SR-99