

**Taft MIDWAY DRILLER**

This could be your spot for only \$20.00 a week.  
Call 661-763-3171 for more information!  
**Happy Holiday!!**

**G&A Mini Mart**  
530 Kern St.  
8 am - 9 pm

Serving the Community for over 28 years.  
**SACME Jewelry**  
661.763.5451 • 426 Center St.  
Quality Knives - Spyderco, Kershaw, SOG  
Tactical Flash lights, Tactical Bags, Emergency Lights

# MIDWAY DRILLER

SERVING TAFT AND THE WESTSIDE COMMUNITIES SINCE 1910

Thursday, November 18, 2021 Vol. 111 - Edition 46

## TCSO raises substitute pay

By Doug Keeler  
Midway Driller Editor  
dkeeler@taftmidwaydriller.com  
@midwaydriller



PHOTO BY DOUG KEELER/MIDWAY DRILLER  
**Renee Hill at her first meeting on the Taft City School District Board.**

The Taft City School District is giving substitute teachers a hefty raise.  
It has no choice. TCSO Chief Business Official Steven Gragg told the school board substitute teachers are in high demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the TCSO has to compete with other districts to get substitutes to fill in.  
The board agreed and unanimously approved a raise from \$150 per day to \$250 per day for short term substitutes. For longer term subs, the rate goes to \$300 per day starting on the 21st day.  
The new pay schedule was approved at the Nov. 10 meeting.  
The meeting was the first for new board member Renee Hill, who was appointed to fill a vacancy left by the death of long-time board member Michael McCormick.  
Hill is a former member of the Taft Planning Commission and Taft City Council. Her term will expire in 2022.



PHOTO BY DOUG KEELER/MIDWAY DRILLER  
**Local scouts unfurl American flag before hoisting it on pole to open Veterans Day observance last week. See more photos on page B2.**



PHOTO BY DOUG KEELER/MIDWAY DRILLER  
**City public works employee Bobby Withey began placing holiday decorations in the downtown this week.**

## Former TUHS superintendent Dr. Mark Richardson passes

Former Taft Union High School District Superintendent Dr. Mark Richardson has died.  
Richardson, who headed the TUHSD for four years before leaving to become superintendent of the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District, passed away on Monday, the SMJUHSO said in a news release.  
Richardson is survived by his wife, Kelly, and two sons, Vaughn and Val, and a daughter, Sherah. Funeral/memorial services are pending.  
Richardson came to Taft as principal in 2008 and remained here until just before the start of school in 2012 when he accepted the Santa Maria position.

He retired in 2019, and left his mark on that district.  
SMJUHSO Public Information Officer Kenny Klein said Richardson "was the driving force behind creating the Career Technical Education Center & Agricultural Farm, passage Measure H 2016 and countless other programs and infrastructure that benefited youth and the community."  
"As a friend and colleague of Mark for over 30 years, his unexpected passing hits very hard," said John Davis, SMJUHSO Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. "Mark brought passion, humor

and professionalism to everything he did and he shared those gifts generously with all that worked with him. His impact on this district and community were profound and we were indeed fortunate to have benefited from his leadership during the seven years he served the SMJUHSO."  
Before that, he spent nearly two decades in a variety of positions in the Kern High School District.  
Richardson had strong connections to Taft.  
He was the grandson of Monty Reedy, a star football player at Taft Union High School who quarterbacked the



**Mark Richardson**  
1930 Taft High Wildcats to the Valley football championship  
Reedy later taught and coached baseball and football for 35 years until his retirement in the early 1970's.  
Richardson was the nephew of Monty Reedy Jr., a TUHS star athlete in the late 1960s.  
Richardson grew up in Shafter and was a standout football player in high school, junior college and college.

## Three Westside schools honored for progress

Three Westside schools have been recognized through the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Innovative and Impactful Schools project.  
Midway School, McKittrick School and Buena Vista High School were among more than two dozen in-

dividual campuses for their strategies that have proven successful in helping close the achievement gap and improving school climate. Specifically, the 2020 and 2021 recognitions honored schools for student performance in English Language Arts and Math and for

reducing suspensions and chronic absence rates.  
Midway and McKittrick were singled out for their growth in English language arts and math over the past three years.  
Buena Vista was honored for its three-year declining percent-

ages of chronic absenteeism and suspensions  
"In the spirit of continuous improvement and collaboration, schools honored with the I2S designation agree to share their knowledge, experiences, and expertise with others to help enhance the education

CONTINUED ON PAGE A5

**STARTING THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021**  
**West Side Family Health Care will open at**  
**7:00 am Monday - Friday**  
Holiday and weekend hours will remain 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

**NEW HOURS**

**100 E. North St. Taft, CA 92368**  
**661-765-1935 • WSHCD.org**