

Rural County Representatives Hosts Corning Meeting, Takes Tehama County Tour

Red Bluff Daily News

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April 28, 2017

Corning >> Members of Rural County Representatives of California took a tour of southern Tehama County on Wednesday to explore the area prior to the organization's meeting Thursday at Carlino's Event Center in Rolling Hills Casino.

The group is a service organization made up of 35 county members that champions policies on behalf of California's rural counties, said Vice President of External Affairs Justin Caporusso.

"RCRC is dedicated to representing the collective unique interests of its membership, providing legislative and regulatory representation at the State and Federal levels and providing responsible services for its members to enhance and protect the quality of life in rural California counties," Caporusso said.

For the first day of the two-day event, hosted by Tehama County Supervisor Bob Williams, who is also the chairman, the group took a three-stop tour that included Sierra Pacific's Richfield mill, Lucero Olive Oil and Abbey of New Clairvaux. The tour ended with dinner at the Lassen Steak House in Vina.

"Every year, the chair hosts a meeting in his county," Caporusso said. "It gives the rest of the board a chance to see a different part of the state. The first day there's a tour and the second there is a meeting where we talk about state legislation, give updates on bills we sponsor and an update on resource issues we're working on such as the water and forestry issues. We exist to give a voice to rural communities in Sacramento."

Holding the meetings in another location gives the chance for members to learn more about the county they are visiting and to get ideas to take back to their areas, Caporusso said.

"I am honored to welcome rural elected officials and other county representatives from across the state to Tehama County," Williams said. "While serving as chair of RCRC frequently takes me to Sacramento, it also provides a number of benefits to Tehama County communities. This two-day event is just one example."

Imperial County Board of Supervisors Chairman Michael Kelley, who worked in probation before becoming an elected official, had never been to Tehama County before and said it was very different than the way he pictured it, which was more like a forest.

“It’s a beautiful place and I’m impressed,” Kelley said. “Lots of rolling hills and grass. This meeting is a dynamic opportunity to visit other counties and see the economic growth, topography and the people. It’s been very interesting and educational.”

Stacy Corless comes from the Mammoth Lakes area of Mono County and said she was impressed with what she found.

“It’s wonderful to see this production,” Corless said of Lucero. “It’s great to see such artisan craftsmanship and attention to detail. It’s world class quality and I’m glad for the opportunity to learn more about it.”

During the tour at Lucero, General Manager Liz Tagami and Ivan Rodriguez, one of seven tasters, talked about olive oil, their production and the challenges that come with it in northern California as well as answered questions the group had. For the most recent season, the challenge was the weather.

“We were trying to beat the rain this year,” Tagami said. “We were at almost 24 hours a day for the milling. To be in this community with others dedicated to growing and producing quality products is a privilege.”

The company’s efforts paid off though as they secured their 325th medal at an olive oil competition in Tokyo the weekend prior, Tagami said.

“We have a team of 20 who from tree to mill take care of every step,” Tagami said. “It’s about making a quality product.”

To learn more about RCRC, visit rcrcnet.org.

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