

Taft District Chamber of Commerce Honors Community Stand-Outs on Thursday Evening

The Taft District Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau will hold its annual Installation and Awards evening this February 8, 2018, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at the Taft Petroleum Club. The event, *Kudos and Cocktails*, will install Jon Atherly (owner, Westside Furniture) as a new Director to the Chamber Board, will honor those receiving the community awards, and will feature a silent auction.

This year's Community Award recipients include Les Clark, Jr. Businessman of the Year; Yvette Mayfield, Business Woman of the Year; True Value Hardware, Business of the Year; Esther Livingston, Volunteer of the Year; and the Career Technical Education Center of Taft Union High School for Community Service recipient for the Year. "This is an interesting field of award recipients this year," commented Dr. Kathy Orrin, Executive Director of the Chamber. "We are proud to recognize the "usual suspects", well-established business, and the new and innovative programs that are contributing to our community."

Les Clark, Jr. (known to *everyone!*), recently has begun his "retirement" from his nearly twenty-year service to the IOPA (Independent Oil Producers Association) as their Executive Vice President. With lengthy lists of professional affiliations and awards to his credit, Mr. Clark is unlikely to slow down. Because of his service to the "oil patch", to the Board of Trustees of the Taft Union High School District (retired), to the Taft City School District (currently), and to many other groups and associations, Les Clark was happily named by our Board to receive Businessman of the Year.

Yvette Mayfield, this year's Businesswoman of the Year, currently serves the City of Taft as the elected City Clerk and the City's Records and Grants Administrator. She brings to the City of Taft over twenty-five years of experience working in various community capacities, including eighteen years of experience in small city governance, and she specializes in helping people be successful through the availability of grant programs. She is a resident of Taft, is a member of the Taft Kiwanis Club, and serves of the Chamber Board of Directors.

True Value Hardware Store, the Business of the Year, celebrates their 40th year in business in Taft this year! The Cooper Family is no stranger to anyone in Taft, and their generosity and civic-mindedness is well-known. King Cooper is President and CEO, Patti is Secretary/Treasurer, and sons Eric and Jeffrey serve as Vice Presidents of the company. But their contributions do not end there: Patti is an active member of the Soroptimist Club of Taft, Eric is a member of the Taft Kiwanis Club and is President of the Board of the West Side Health Care District, and Jeffrey

serves on the Board of Directors of the Chamber and is a member of the Taft High School Hall of Fame Committee. Congratulations and thank you to the Cooper family!

This year's Volunteer of the Year is Esther Livingston, does not let any grass grow under her feet. A permanent fixture at Wednesday's *Sit n Sips* at the Chamber, she is an active participant in many civic organizations and the Methodist Church. An avid and award-winning photographer, she is a driving force in the Taft Camera Club. She is an active volunteer in the West Kern Oil Museum where she can be found most Thursdays through Saturdays, and she has won the admiration of the Kern County Genealogical Society for her knowledge of the history of Kern County, particularly that of the West Side. And she still maintains her active status as a member of the Soroptimist Club of Taft. Congratulations, Esther!

The recognition for Community Service this year goes to the Career Technical Education Center (CTEC) of Taft Union High School, under the direction of Administrator Sandy Mittelsteadt. CTEC at Taft Union High School includes ten pathways that involve a multiyear sequence of courses. These courses integrate core academic knowledge with technical and occupational skills to prepare students for post-secondary education or lifelong learning and/or a job for today's job demands and careers of the future. CTEC classes are taught by fully credentialed instructors who have trained and worked in the industry that they are teaching. These classes are developed with the cooperation of industry representatives who determine course goals, objectives, and competencies of course content. CTEC, its staff, teachers, and students were chosen for their contributions to various community endeavors and events, including assistance (with the Taft Lions) of staging and security at the Christmas parade, Pictures with Santa at Taft Furniture, assistance with other photography and awards.

Kudos and Cocktails is open to the public. Reservations may be made at the Chamber or by calling 661-756-2165. Tickets are \$30 per person and feature a no-host bar.