



TRI-CITIES ROP NEWS

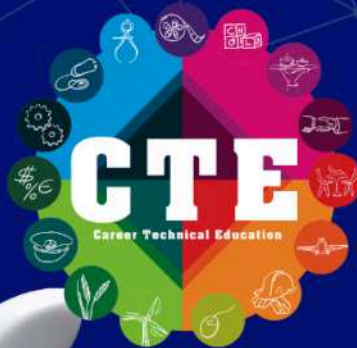
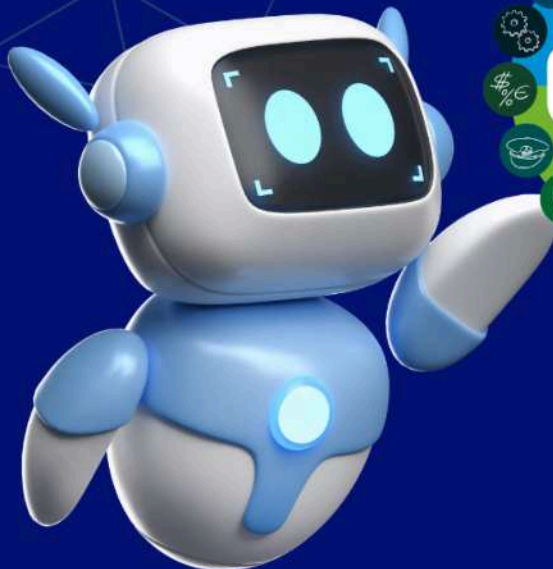
The official publication of Tri-Cities ROP

Issue No. 07-2025/2026

February 2026

celebrating CTE MONTH

FUTURE-PROOF LEARNING



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and so much more!

TRI-CITIES ROP PREPARES STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS

TRI-CITIES ROP NEWS

Issue No. 07-2025/2026 - February 2026

Tri-Cities ROP proudly serves students in the
El Rancho Unified and Whittier Union High School Districts.

We are a WASC-accredited, career technical educational program
located on the Pioneer High School campus in Whittier.

Governing Board

MR. JAIME LOPEZ, PRESIDENT
Whittier Union High School District

MS. IRMA RORIGUEZ MOISA, VICE PRESIDENT
Whittier Union High School District

MR. HECTOR LAFARGA, CLERK
El Rancho Unified School District

MS. ESTHER MEJIA, MEMBER
El Rancho Unified School District

MS. LILIA BOZIGIAN
Whittier Union High School District



CELEBRATE TODAY,
OWN TOMORROW!



Leadership Team

DR. JOHN SMITH
Superintendent

DANIEL BARAJAS
Director of Programs, Technology & Operations

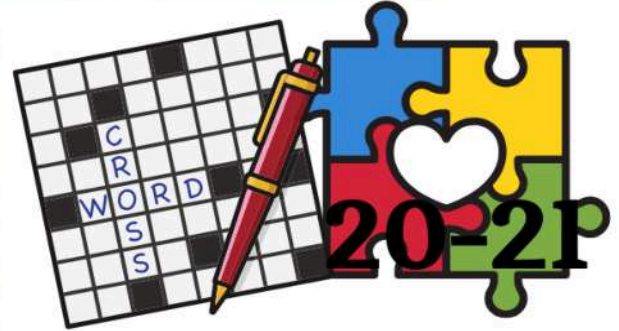
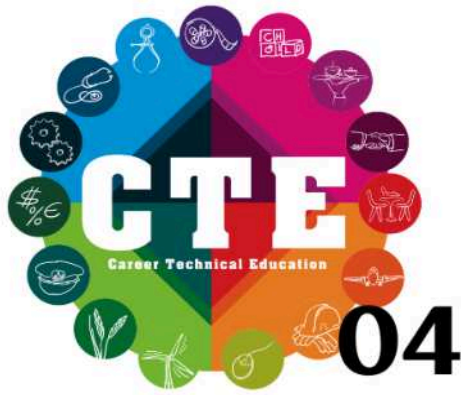
LETICIA COVARRUBIAS
Director of Business Services

KATHI KENT
Director of Educational Services

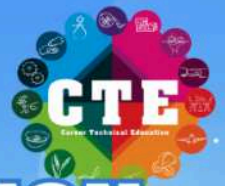
RUTH SUDICK
Human Resource Coordinator

February 2026

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ROCPS AND CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

*California's Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCPS) have been an integral part of California's educational system for over **50** years.

ROCPS provide high-quality CTE programs which contribute to students' academic and career educational achievement and the future economic development of the state.

ROCPS provide high school and adult students with valuable career technical education so students can:

- ✔ Enter the workforce with skills and competencies to be successful in life;
- ✔ Pursue advanced training in higher educational institutions; and/or
- ✔ Upgrade existing skills and knowledge

ROCPS collaborate with other public and private agencies and associations to develop and offer important instructional classes and programs for students

Students receive training at a variety of venues from regular classrooms to actual business and industry facilities such as automotive dealerships and shops, restaurants, and hospitals

Students gain a unique "edge" in the workforce by obtaining ROCP training

Services provided by California's ROCPS include:

- ✔ Training, retraining, and advanced training programs
- ✔ Courses that are responsive to current local labor market demands
- ✔ Courses taught by experienced business and industry experts
- ✔ School-to-career transition elements to allow a smooth entry into the workforce
- ✔ Courses that are articulated with other educational institutions
- ✔ Programs specifically tailored to business and industry needs
- ✔ Training which is typically provided in actual business and industry sites
- ✔ Collaboration with industry apprenticeship programs in providing related and supplemental instruction
- ✔ Programs designed to meet high-wage, high-skill employment demands and also that of new and emerging occupational fields developing for the future workforce of California

Approximately 470,000 students are served each year in ROCPS in California. Approximately 80% are high school students and 20% are adults.

ROCPS provide certificates of completion and industry-based certification for successful completers

ROCP courses provide motivation to students to be successful in school, thus reducing the dropout rate and helping to close the achievement gap

ROCPS are a major resource for career development and workforce preparation of California's youth and adults and a necessary part of addressing the shortage of a qualified, skilled, and diverse workforce for the future of the State of California

#proud2bTCROP #weareCTE



*Information provided here can be found on the California Department of Education ("CDE") website



Superintendent's Message



CELEBRATE TODAY.
OWN TOMORROW!

Celebrating CTE Month -- Why Tri-Cities ROP Matters

Dear Tri-Cities ROP Family, Friends, and Supporters,

February is Career Technical Education Month — a time to celebrate opportunity, purpose, and possibility.

For more than five decades, Tri-Cities ROP has been preparing students not only for college and careers, but for life. We offer more than career pathways. We offer students the opportunity to discover who they are and who they can become.

Every day in our classrooms and labs, students experience something powerful — the moment when learning connects to real life. A future nurse confidently practices patient care skills. Construction students see a project come to life with their own hands. An automotive student diagnoses an engine problem independently. A culinary student plates a dish with pride. These are not just assignments. They are milestones.

ROP matters because it gives students direction. It gives them confidence. It shows them that their talents have value and that their futures are filled with possibilities.

For some students, ROP clarifies a college major. For others, it leads directly to industry certification and employment. For many, it provides the first spark — the realization that they are capable of more than they imagined.

Our programs also matter to our community. The skills developed here strengthen our local workforce, support families, and contribute to the economic vitality of our region. But beyond the numbers and certifications, what matters most is the belief we instill in our students: that they are prepared, that they are needed, and that they can succeed.

As we celebrate CTE Month, I am deeply proud of our dedicated teachers and staff, our industry partners, and most especially, our students. Together, we are not simply preparing young people for jobs — we are preparing them for successful lives.

I invite you to turn these pages and discover the heart of our work -- who we are, what we do, and the lives we impact. In every story and every achievement, you will see clear and compelling examples of why Tri-Cities ROP matters.

Until next month,

DR. JOHN SMITH
Superintendent



All are welcome to attend!

TRI-CITIES ROP
GOVERNING
BOARD
MEETING



DATE
12 MARCH 2026



TIME
5:30 PM



LOCATION:
10800 BEN AVON
UNIT E
WHITTIER, 90606





Taking a Peek Inside the Boardroom



February 12, 2026

The second Thursday of the month is "Power Thursday" at Tri-Cities ROP because this is when the five members of our Governing Board join together to consider and take action on items placed on the monthly meeting agenda. The following is a quick peek at some of what took place at the February 12, 2026 Board Meeting:

*The Board approved the attendance of Alexandra Gutierrez, Foundations in Health Science/Emergency Medicine/Sports Medicine Instructor (CHS), and Candice Marsano, WBL and K12 SWP Pathway Coordinator, to the Educating for Careers Conference, February 28-March 3, 2026, at the SAFE Convention Center in Sacramento.

*The Board approved the attendance of Dr. John Smith, Superintendent, to the CAROCP State Board and Committee Meetings, March 5-10, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency in Sacramento.

*The Board approved the withdrawal from the Rio Hondo Region Adult Education Consortium, effective March 17, 2026.

*The Board approved a work-based learning training agreement with PIH Health Whittier for eligible Foods and Hospitality students at California High School.

*The Board approved the declaration of property unusable and authorized its disposal.

*The Board tabled an agenda item regarding the appointment of a member to the Water Education for Latino Leaders ("WELL").

*The Board held a First Reading on proposed revisions to Board Policy 1055 - Bylaws of the Governing Board.

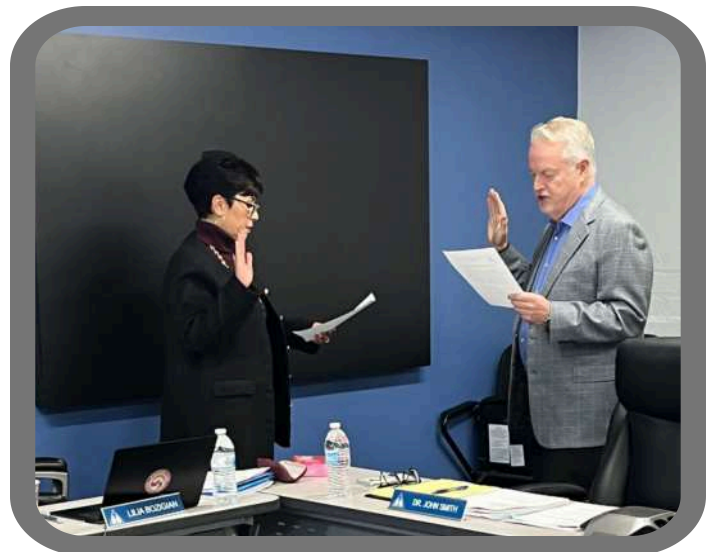
The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

All are welcome to attend!

*The Board held a lengthy follow-up discussion on the status of WUHSD Board Resolution No. 2526:22 - Intent to Withdraw from the Tri-Cities ROP Joint Powers Agreement. Following the discussion, the Board directed Dr. Smith to coordinate a Study Session for Friday, February 20th, to further the discussion and to include the Board Presidents and Superintendents of each District.

*The Board also held a discussion on the status of the parallel fiscal study regarding WUHSD's possible withdrawal from the JPA.

Tri-Cities ROP Warmly Welcomes Its Newest Member of the Board



Pictured above: **Ms. Lilia Bozigian** is sworn in as the newest member of the Tri-Cities ROP Governing Board. Administering the Oath of Office is Dr. John Smith, Tri-Cities ROP Superintendent. Ms. Bozigian also serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Whittier Union High School District.

Out and About



Tri-Cities ROP Serves Executive Chef Joe Teodoro a Well-Deserved WASA Community Service Member of the Year Nomination

On Friday, February 13, 2026, the Whittier Area School Administrators held their annual Community Service Awards Breakfast at the Whittier High School Gymnasium. The awards recognize individuals who go above and beyond to support schools, students, and community engagement. One such individual, **Joe Teodoro, Executive Chef at the DoubleTree by Hilton Whittier**, was nominated by Tri-Cities ROP. Chef Joe has been an exceptional partner and advocate for student success. For the past five years, he and the DoubleTree have worked closely with our ROP Culinary program, consistently providing high-quality, meaningful work-based learning opportunities. He treats students not as temporary labor, but as developing professionals, offering hands-on mentorship in real-world culinary and hospitality settings.

Chef Joe has been a reliable and committed partner, hosting up to eight students in a single semester -- the highest number of placements at any internship site. He works alongside students in the kitchen, reinforcing professional standards, teamwork, and culinary fundamentals that align directly with classroom instruction.

Beyond culinary training, Chef Joe and the DoubleTree leadership team expanded opportunities to support diverse career interests. When a student expressed interest in hospitality management, the hotel created an additional placement at the front desk, providing experience in customer service and hotel operations. Over the past five years, several students have transitioned from interns to employees at the DoubleTree, creating meaningful employment pathways. We were proud to nominate Chef Joe for his unwavering commitment to our students.



Pictured (LtoR): Executive Chef Joe Teodoro and Tri-Cities ROP Superintendent Dr. John Smith, proud recipients of 2026 WASA Awards.

Tri-Cities ROP Superintendent Honored with the 2026 WASA Career Tech Ed Award

We are proud to share that our very own **Superintendent, Dr. John Smith**, has once again been honored with the Career Technical Education Award from Whittier Area School Administrators (WASA).

This recognition highlights his unwavering commitment to expanding opportunities for students, strengthening industry partnerships, and championing high-quality CTE programs that prepare learners for both college and career success. Under his leadership, our programs continue to grow, innovate, and make a meaningful impact across our region.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Smith on this well-deserved honor!

10800 E-News

News and information directly from the ROP Center



Celebrating Birthdays and Our Peeps!

At Tri-Cities ROP, it's the people who make the difference -- it's the relationships we build, the support we offer one another, and the shared commitment to our students that truly set us apart. Recently, we were especially proud to celebrate three remarkable members of our office staff whose contributions reflect the best of who we are.

We begin with **Irene Barrasa**, our outstanding Purchasing Technician, who marks an incredible 36 years of service! For more than three decades, Irene has been the steady force behind so much of our daily operations — ordering supplies and equipment, coordinating travel for conferences and workshops, and ensuring that everyone has what they need to succeed. Her work ethic is unmatched, her kindness sincere, and her dedication beyond reproach. Irene represents the heart of our organization, and we are deeply grateful for her loyalty and care. (Birthday - January 29)

We also celebrated **Rachel Hoffman**, our talented Data Specialist, who reached her five-year milestone this year. Rachel manages all things data and safeguards student records with precision and professionalism. She also designs our annual Data Reports and Course Catalogs — essential tools that are relied upon throughout the year. Her expertise, creativity, and thoughtful approach strengthen our programs in countless ways. Rachel is a proud mama of two young children, one who just celebrated a first birthday. They are definitely a great source of pride and joy, and most definitely keep her on her toes. (Birthday - February 5)

And finally, we honored **Richard Alvarez**, our always popular and dependable man on campus, who serves as our Utility Worker. Richard keeps our operations moving — handling shipping, receiving, deliveries, inventory, equipment setup, and assisting with technology. He is always ready to lend a hand wherever needed. Outside of work, Richard roots on his favorite teams, including the Huskies from East Los Angeles College, the mighty Trojans of the University of Southern California, the World Champion Los Angeles Dodgers, and (we don't know why!) but the Las Vegas Raiders. We were also proud to celebrate Richard's recent achievement of earning his AA in Kinesiology -- while working full-time -- a shining example of ROP employees who are committed to being lifelong learners. (Birthday - February 25)

Moments like these remind us that our greatest strength isn't just in the programs we offer — it's in the people who show up every day with commitment, pride, and genuine care for one another. That spirit is what makes ROP so special.



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January Newsletter Puzzle Winner Announcement!

We are happy to report that **Kathy Shipka**, our second-to-none Office Specialist/Receptionist, was the first person to correctly solve BOTH January newsletter puzzles! For her efforts, Kathy received a box of See's candy to enjoy just in time for Valentine's Day! Congratulations, Kathy!

Save the Date!

TRI-CITIES ROP'S

33rd Annual

*An Evening
of Excellence*

**April 28, 2026
5:00 pm**

**Whittier Community
Theatre**

Hosted by

**Educational
Foundation**



33rd Annual
An Evening of Excellence
Advertising Opportunities



Tri-Cities ROP and Tri-Cities ROP Educational Foundation are pleased to announce the 33rd Annual Evening of Excellence, a student awards ceremony honoring outstanding students in the El Rancho Unified and Whittier Union High School Districts who have achieved academic excellence in their ROP course of study. These students represent the future of our workforce – skilled, motivated, and ready to succeed.

By placing an advertisement in our event program, you are directly supporting student achievement while showcasing your business or organization to families, educators, community leaders, and industry partners. Your contribution helps us recognize student success, strengthen career technical education programs, and inspire the next generation of professionals.

We thank you in advance for investing in students and celebrating excellence in education.


DR. JOHN SMITH, Tri-Cities ROP Superintendent



Advertising Rates

Advertising Deadline: April 3, 2026



Business Card Size	1/4-Page (Horizontal)	1/2-Page (Horizontal)	Full Page
4" x 2.58"	4" x 5.25"	8" x 5.25"	8" x 10.5"
\$75	\$125	\$250	\$500

Don't have an ad and/or would like help designing an ad?

Contact Ruth Sudick
at (562) 698-9571 ext. 105 or
rsudick@tricityrop.org
She can help design one for you at
NO ADDITIONAL COST!

Mail your camera-ready artwork (jpg or png format)
with payment to:

Tri-Cities ROP Educational Foundation
Attention: Ruth Sudick
10800 Ben Avon Street, Unit E
Whittier, California 90606

Tri-Cities ROP Educational Foundation is an IRS-recognized charity
Tax ID No. 91-2007626

CAL HIGH



February 2026



EL RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL



February 2026



**CELEBRATING
CAREER
TECHNICAL
EDUCATION!**



LA SERNA HIGH SCHOOL

February 2026



PIONEER HIGH SCHOOL



February 2026



Celebrating CTE



SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL



February 2026



WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL



February 2026



CELEBRATING CTE MONTH!



RUBEN SALAZAR HIGH SCHOOL



February 2026



IN CELEBRATION OF CTE MONTH, STUDENTS AT RUBEN SALAZAR HIGH SCHOOL EXPLORED HANDS-ON CAREER PATHWAYS OFFERED THROUGH TRI-CITIES ROP AND LOCAL COLLEGES. THE EVENT SPARKED EXCITEMENT AS STUDENTS LEARNED HOW THEIR INTERESTS CAN TURN INTO REAL-WORLD CAREERS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES.





Getting Social

A snapshot of a few FB, IG posts, and Tweets from TCROP. Let us help promote your class! Share your pictures and stories at mburrola@tricityrop.org.

Mr. Jennrich's Construction Technology II students at El Rancho High School put their skills to work in the best way possible – by building *Little Libraries* for grade schools across the ERUSD district.

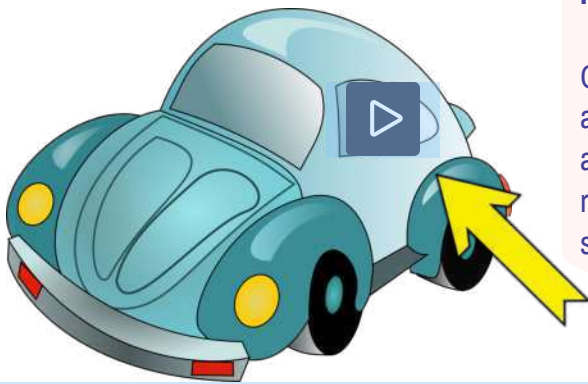
These student-built libraries are more than just projects; they're gifts to younger learners and a true example of how CTE connects classroom learning to real-world impact.

What a perfect way to launch our celebration of CTE Month – showcasing craftsmanship creativity, and community all in one project. We're so proud to these students and the difference they're making! To view, click on the TV screen to the right:



It's CTE Month and we're shifting into high gear!

Our Auto Technology students at Whittier High School aren't just learning about cars – they're building real-world skills, earning industry knowledge, and preparing for high-demand careers. From diagnostics to hands-on repairs, this is learning that drives forward. To take a "test drive" and view a short video, click on the link on the car's window at the left.



We're keeping the momentum going as we continue celebrating CTE Month and shining a spotlight on the incredible programs that prepare our students for college, career, and beyond!

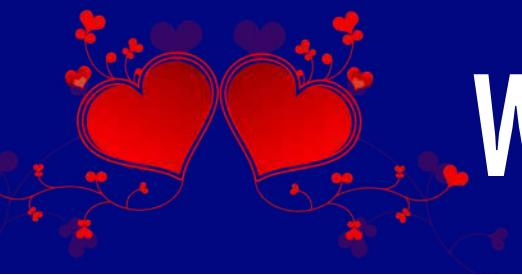
This week, we're proud to feature our **Construction Technology program at El Rancho High School**. In this special video from El Rancho Schools' website and e-magazine, you'll meet **ROP teacher Duane Jennrich** and his talented students as they design and build "Little Libraries" that will be placed at local elementary schools throughout the community.

These projects are more than just hands-on learning – they represent craftsmanship, collaboration, and a commitment to giving back. Our students are gaining real-world skills while making a lasting impact on younger learners.

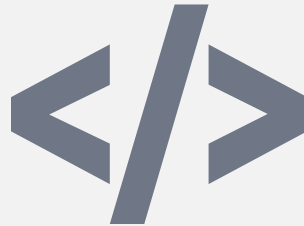
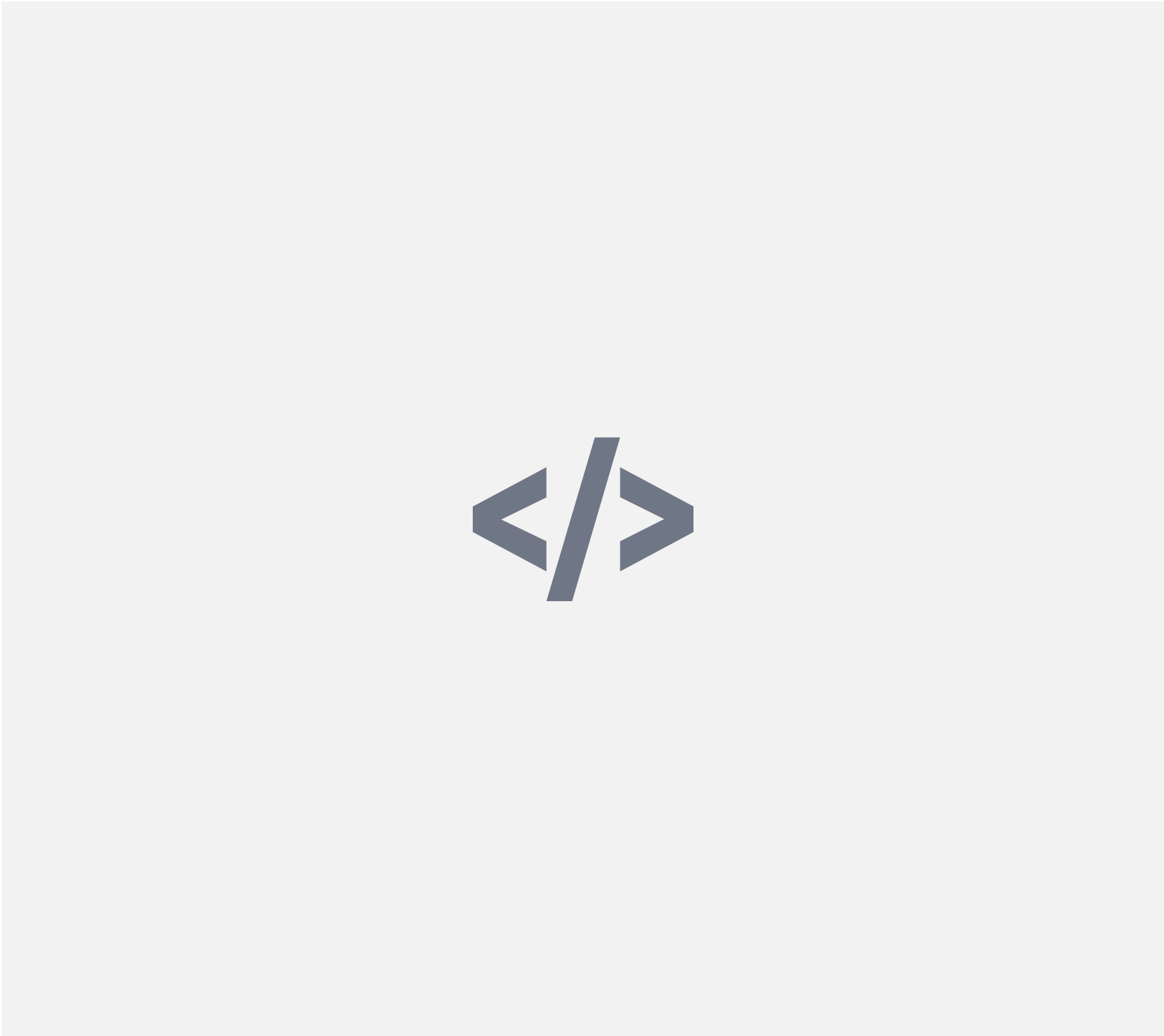
Be sure to watch the video and see CTE in action!



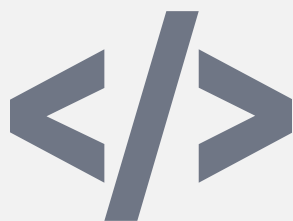
Click on screen to view video



Will You Be Mine?



Preparing Students for College AND Careers



RÍO HONDO COLLEGE

DIVISION OF MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING



FESTIVAL

FREE Family Event • FREE Entry • FREE Parking
Gifts and Prizes (while items last)

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026
11 A.M. - 2 P.M.

**AT RÍO HONDO
COLLEGE**

AGE: KIDS 5+ YEARS

Interactive science activities and games for elementary, middle and high school students.
Fun hands-on experiments in chemistry, engineering, physics and biology,
arts demonstrations and more!

REGISTER: gorio.page/steam-2026



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS IN WHITTIER

READY TO APPLY?

HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED:



You must live within Whittier city limits to apply



Submit your application and a short essay that answers the prompt (MLA formatting)



Include a photo of yourself

Multiple winners will be selected!



APPLICATION DEADLINE

MARCH

17

2026

BY 5 PM TO
TMARRUFO@CITYOFWHITTIER.ORG

ESSAY PROMPT

Recycling conserves natural resources, improves air and water quality, and reduces the need for landfill expansion. Describe a strong and successful residential recycling program that helps minimize landfill use, and include strategies that could reduce, reuse, and recycle household waste.



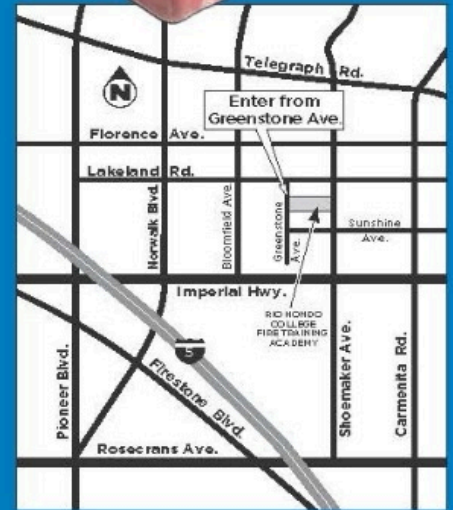
For full submission guidelines and award details, visit WhittierPRCS.com or contact (562) 567-9400.

TOO TOXIC TO TRASH



FREE Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste Drive-Thru Collection Event

Saturday, March 21 • 9 A.M. - 3 P.M.
 Rio Hondo College Fire Training Academy
 11400 Greenstone Avenue
 Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670



CHEMICALS



- ◆ Carefully secure items in your trunk/pick-up bed. Hazardous waste must be in your trunk/pick-up bed with no other items.

PAINTS & SOLVENTS



- ◆ Waste should be in a sturdy box, preferably in their original containers. Be prepared to leave containers.
- ◆ No explosives, ammunition, radioactive materials, controlled substances, trash, tires, or large appliances (like refrigerators, stoves and washing machines).

SHARPS



- ◆ Sharps disposal will require exiting your vehicle in a designated location to deposit them in a bin.

E-WASTE



- ◆ Open to Los Angeles County residents. No business waste accepted.
- ◆ Limit of 15 gallons or 125 pounds of hazardous waste per trip.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS
 Converting Waste Into Resources

Brought to you by Los Angeles County and presented by Los Angeles County Public Works and Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, in cooperation with the cities of Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, Norwalk, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, and Whittier.

800-238-0173 • LACSD.org/HHW • CleanLA.com



Mark Your Calendars! ROP Activities – March

coming soon









March 2026

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 	3	4	5 PAY DAY	6 Evening of Excellence Nominations Due And Cover Contest Deadline ^A	7
8 Daylight Savings Time Starts  Set clocks forward	9 ERUSD Staff Development {optional} -No Students	10 WUHS Board Meeting 7pm	11 Advisory Meeting Transportation 3:30-4:30pm Virtual	12 Board Meeting 4:00pm 2nd Interim Budget	13	14
15	16 CAROCP State Board Meeting 9-2:30pm Hyatt, Sacramento 	17 CAROCP State Legislative Visit Sacramento	18 Safety Committee Meeting 	19 Evening of Excellence Winners Selected and Ad Deadline	20 TIME CARDS DUE For additional time ERUSD/WUHS Quarter 3 End 	21
22 	23 Spring Break ERUSD / WUHS Mar 23–27	24 ERUSD Board Mtg 6:30pm	25 Technology Committee Mtg	26	27 Teachers: Last Day to Submit Purchase Requisitions for 25/26 School Year ^B	28
29 Tri-Cities ROP Office hours 3/30 thru 4/2 7:30am-4:00pm	30	31	EDUCATING FOR CAREERS DATES TBD Sacramento, CA			

Birthdays	
2	Matthew Rojas
8	Esther Mejia
16	Ryan Todd
18	Jaime Lopez
18	Cristina Vasquez
20	Hector LaFarga
22	Leticia Covarrubias





Tri-Cities ROP prepares students for college AND careers