

EDITORIAL: Thumbs up, thumbs down

By The Bee Editorial Board



Timmy the puppy has a new hero, Fresno firefighter Mark Garcia, who used a knotted rope to pull the puppy to safety from an old well casing in southeast Fresno on Tuesday. Fellow Station 15 firefighters who helped with the rescue are Capt. Aaron Gassett, left, and Craig Short.

FRESNO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Thumbs up to **Mark Garcia and his colleagues at Station 15** who rescued a puppy, Timmy, from a deep metal pipe this week. Timmy, a shepherd mix, fell 50 feet down an uncovered metal pipe about 8 inches in diameter within a garage on the 5000 block of East Grant Ave. Garcia pulled the puppy to safety about an hour after they arrived. He lowered a knotted rope into the hole that he managed to loop around the puppy's legs and torso. The little explorer

was rescued unharmed. The story went national and Timmy and our firefighters are famous. Two paws up!

Thumbs down to **Union Pacific** railroad for routinely blocking traffic between G and Divisadero streets in downtown Fresno. The railroad treats the crossing as if it were part of its rail yard. Traffic is blocked for 10, 15 and 20 minutes at a time for trains stopped dead on the tracks. This situation is a time-wasting inconvenience for commuters, an economic drain and a safety issue. Drivers, knowing they will be blocked for long periods of time, race to beat the train before the gates drop. Delivery drivers fall behind on their schedules. And countless people end up late for where they were heading. Union Pacific touts itself as “North America's premier railroad franchise.” It is past time for the railroad to live up to its own hype.

Thumbs up to **Richard Gunner and George Andros** of Gunner & Andros Investments for giving Community Medical Centers one of the largest gifts it has ever received: a donation of two Fresno office complexes on East Shaw Avenue both east and west of the Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant. The sites — 1510-1560 E. Shaw Ave. and 1630 E. Shaw Ave. — amount to about 16 acres of property with more than 175,000 square feet of office space. According to the Fresno County assessor, the complexes have a total property tax assessment of almost \$11 million, but the actual market value is likely much higher. Katie Zenovich, Community Medical's vice president of corporate development, says Community expects to relocate some of its administrative departments to the East Shaw Avenue offices over the next couple of years.

Thumbs up to the **Fresno Grizzlies** as they begin their new season. They are starting on better financial footing and new food — that Schwab burger, oh, man. Keep innovating and winning, and that will put fans in the seats of our beautiful stadium. Baseball is a great family activity that children remember all their lives.

Thumbs up to **Jim and Michelle Marderosian and Bee Sweet Citrus** for donating \$1 million to Valley Children's Healthcare, a regional pediatrics network that includes Valley Children's Hospital in Madera. The money will be used to support a forthcoming outpatient specialty care center in Fowler. The new pediatric care center will be named in Bee Sweet's honor. It is expected to open in 2016.

Thumbs up to the Tower District's **Rogue Festival** organizers for representing the city's passion for creativity and to Atlantic magazine writer **Jim Fallows** for appreciating the talent he saw here. Rock on, “new Bohemia of California.”

Thumbs up to **Carolyn Hogg**, Fresno City Hall's top digital expert, for getting national attention for her innovative use of technology to improve Fresno. As Fresno's chief information officer, she has been named one of America's top 25 “Doers, Dreamers and Drivers” for 2015 by Government Technology magazine. Hogg was honored for her “transformative use of technology that's improving the way government does business,” according to the magazine. Hogg is working with regional and federal officials to bring broadband to rural communities, then entice high-tech agriculture companies to secure a major presence in the area, perhaps downtown Fresno, and she is encouraging City Hall's “dig once” policy. Where it's smart, city crews doing a maintenance dig now also lay a conduit for future broadband cable. Congratulations! We “dig” Carolyn Hogg.

Thumbs up to **West Hills Community College District Chancellor Frank Gornick** for launching a registration idea that earned West Hills a \$2.5 million state award that will allow the district to overhaul its enrollment process. The new system enables students to register for a full academic year in advance, rather than semester by semester. West Hills is among 14 colleges to earn money for its big idea, in a competition with 52 California colleges and universities. Gov. Jerry Brown set aside funds as part of his Awards for Innovation in Higher Education program. To get the money, schools must undertake creative and cost-effective ways to get more students to earn degrees sooner. Under the new plan, students can register for summer, fall and spring semesters, be guaranteed a seat in a class and know what their schedules are. When students get the right classes, they can transfer to a four-year school faster.

Thumbs up to Bullard High School teacher **Scott Hatfield**, for winning a full-ride scholarship for an eight-day raft trip through the Grand Canyon. He beat out 138 other competitors for the trip with his creative lesson plans and explaining how he has confronted efforts to politicize or undermine science education. Good show!

