

# Alice

# APRIL 2011



# Business Today

Official Publication of the Alice Chamber of Commerce



business

tradition

service

community

agriculture

oil & gas

growth

## AEP changing out electric meters

By now, you've probably heard that AEP Texas will be installing new, digital Smart Meters at your home in the near future. The meters are part of a larger effort-taking place nationally to modernize the electric grid, which really hasn't changed much since its inception a century ago.

Smart Meters, known as the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system, will be installed at nearly 1 million residences and small business across the AEP Texas service area over a four-year period at a cost of nearly \$300 million. This new technology will enable customers to get timely feedback about their electric consumption so they can find ways to conserve on their electric bills. Research has shown that consumers can reduce their energy consumption between 5 and 15 percent when they have direct feedback on their usage.

Additionally, Smart Meters will improve customer service, as we will no longer have to enter your backyard on a monthly basis to read your meter. We will be able to connect and disconnect meters remotely, which will reduce the amount of time you'll have to wait for a new service connection. Fees associated with these transactions also will be dramatically reduced over time as more meters are deployed throughout our service area that encompasses nearly 100,000 square miles in south and west Texas. Since Smart Meters are two-way communication devices,

See AEP, Page 14

## City breaks ground on project



Alice City Manager Ray De Los Santos addresses crowd during ceremony.

Texas Boulevard will soon be a smoother ride for everyone in Alice as Phase I of the reconstruction of the street begins.

City of Alice officials held a ground breaking ceremony on March 21, 2011 to celebrate the beginning of the project.

"For the last 16 months we have been working to replace all the water and wastewater lines under Texas Blvd before beginning the process of reconstruction of the road," Alice City Manager Ray De Los Santos said. "We knew we couldn't put an \$8+ million road over old water and sewer lines so it was imperative to get that done first!"

The project is being done in phases with Phase I being from Highway 44 north to Commerce Rd. The reconstruction will include curb, gutter sidewalk and ensure every corner of every intersection is ADA compliant. There will be new lights with posts on 3<sup>rd</sup> and TX as opposed to the hanging lights. This phase also includes a rehab of the bridge. The timeline for this project is 18 months and Haas Anderson Construction is the contractor.

"I know this has been an inconvenience for residents and businesses on

See TX BLVD, Page 8

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## From the President

The first quarter of the year has come and gone and the Chamber is going strong. With the banquet under our belts it's time to press on to our next event, our Annual Golf Tournament.

This year's tourney will be earlier than last year as it is set for May 21st at the Alice Municipal Golf Course. The Chamber is soliciting hole and ad sponsors. If you are interested contact Juan or Veronica at the Chamber. The tourney is one of three fundraisers that help with our day-to-day operations of the Chamber.

The Chamber continues to grow. Our membership drive brought in 12 new members. We look forward to helping them as well as our devoted current members. Our next Mixer will be held at Alice Chevrolet on Thursday, April 28th from 5:30 to 7 pm. This is a great way to network with other members.

If you have not paid your 2011 Investments please do so as the Chamber relies on your investments for its annual budget. As always, we thank you for your support and if we can assist you in anyway to enhance your business productivity call the Chamber at 361-664-3454.

**Servando Garza Jr,  
2011 Chamber Board President**

## MOVING ALICE FORWARD TOGETHER!

## From the Chamber

The Texas economic shortfall is set to go to vote this week in the House of Representatives. Some \$8 billion in cuts to our education system will surely put a stress on the future of our children. What is at stake is considerable layoffs, increase class sizes and program cuts throughout our great state of Texas.

How can a state like Texas not for see the economic fall in our education system? The actual shortfall began with the enactment of a statewide cut in school property taxes that began in 2006. At that same time, the governor proposed a business tax to cover the cuts in school property taxes. This has created a trickle affect on us as a whole. The biggest downfall to the state won't be the lack of funds but the lack of education our children will receive. With an increase in classroom size, children will not get the needed attention as they would in small classes. A shortage of text books has all ready occurred throughout the state, will we be expecting a worse scenario? This will create a hindrance on or future workforce. While this may be years down the road, one can only imagine how this great state will be affected in its future.

On the higher education scenario, cuts colleges and universities will have a huge impact for those who rely on financial assistance. The number of students receiving the state's main form of financial aid, the Texas Grant, would be reduced from 86,000 to 27,000. For rural areas such as ours, this will be more of a slap on the hand and more of handcuffs on the hands keeping those who need the assistance for school and our immediate workforce. As a result of the cuts, Texas public universities sent out a letter to financial aid recipients in lieu of a financial disbursement, warning that no funds would be sent out until the budget negotiations are completed. The end result will be that these students will pay at least \$1,000 more this fall in tuition. This added to colleges and universities raising tuition to keep their doors open.

For students in the vocational field locally, we rely on programs like the nursing field, welding programs and automotive to fill our workforce locally. We as Chamber members need to ask ourselves where will our future workforce come from if these cuts keep occurring. Will the state of Texas join other states who are struggling financially. Education is not the place to have such a drastic cut in funding. We can only wait and see how this all will affect us locally and hope for the best in our future.

**Juan A. Navejar Jr.  
Executive Vice President**

# BBB warns donors to give wisely to Japan relief efforts

## *Tips to consider prior to making charity donations for Japan*

Japan's historic earthquake and the ensuing tsunami has left hundreds of thousands of people in need of help. As a result, charities have begun making requests for contributions to support the disaster relief efforts. With many options available for donors to consider, BBB recommends the following tips to help donors decide where and how to make a valuable donation.

- **Consider a relief-based charity.** Some organizations may not specialize in disaster relief, but offer to raise money to pass along to relief organizations. Consider "avoiding the middleman" and giving directly to those organizations that have a relief-based presence in the region.

- **Be wary of claims that 100 percent of donations will go to relief efforts.** Despite what an organization may claim, charities have administrative costs. For example, a credit card donation will in-

volve a processing fee, at a minimum. The truth is most organizations will incur fund raising and administrative expenses.

- **Check the reputation of a charity with BBB.** Donors are advised to visit [www.give.org](http://www.give.org) to research a charity and verify that it is reputable prior to making a payment.

- **Be cautious of online or text message solicitations.** Online giving can be very convenient, but avoid donating in response to unexpected text messages or emails that claim to link to a relief organization. Scam organizations with official looking names can be created overnight. If you want to give to a charity involved in the relief efforts, go directly to that charity's website.

- **Understand the details with text donations.** Consumers donated over \$32 million via text message to the Red Cross to assist with Haiti relief efforts last year. However, it's important to understand that text message donations are limited to only \$10 per person. Donors should be wary if any organization is offering the ability to donate more than

\$10 through texting.

- **Do not give cash.** Using a credit card is recommended, but checks or money orders can be used as long as they are made out to the name of the charity, not to an individual collecting the donation.

For more information on how to find trustworthy charities, visit BBB.

### **About Better Business Bureau:**

*BBB's mission is to be the leader in advancing marketplace trust. BBB accomplishes this mission by creating a community of trustworthy businesses, setting standards for marketplace trust, encouraging and supporting best practices, celebrating marketplace role models and denouncing substandard marketplace behavior.*

*Businesses that earn BBB Accreditation contractually agree and adhere to the organization's high standards of ethical business behavior. BBB is the preeminent resource to turn to for objective, unbiased information on businesses and charities.*

*Contact BBB serving Central, Coastal and Southwest Texas at (512) 445-4748.*

## Chamber Golf Tourney - Sat. May 21, 2011

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## Alice Ambassadors

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Ernestina Maresch

Debbie Micallef

Bruce Menking

Tem Miller

Rachel Munoz

Maricela Perez

Nena Pitts (Life Member)

Elizabeth Ramirez

David Silva

Margaret Smith (Life Member)

Mellie Smithwick

Jack Walker

Clare Wonders

### Emeritus

Melva Alegria

Joe Ash

Manuel Galindo

Ralph Gomez

Pedro Jasso

Dene Murphy

Johnny Rivera

## ALICE AMBASSADORS

Just a reminder the Alice Ambassadors will meet on Monday, April 4, 2011 at noon at the Chamber. All members are encourage to attend as we start helping the Chamber on their next fundraiser - the Annual Golf Tournament.

For the last three years, the tournament continues to grow in entries. The Chamber is soliciting ad sponsors for their tourney poster. Cost is \$40 for the business card size ad. Space is limited to the first 40 sponsors. The Chamber also needs hole sponsors. These sponsorships are \$150 and gets your name on a poster sign at each hole throughout the course. They also need one \$300 sponsor for the Hole-In-One shot. Lunch has all ready been sponsored by CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital. Thanks to Mark Cassanova for swinging this one for the Chamber. We also need volunteers for the day of the event for sale of the Mulligans, Tiger Woods Shot, Closest to the Pin and of course the raffle. The tourney is earlier this year to avoid the South Texas Heat of July.

We are looking for new Alice Ambassadors. We are the official hosts of the Alice Chamber of Commerce. If you are a member of the Chamber and have an employee that would like to serve on our volunteer organization contact any of the Ambassadors listed on this page.

We ask you to keep Chamber Board president Servand "Wolf" Garza and Board member Tony Morris in your prayers for speedy health recoveries.

*- Nena Castillo-Pitts*

*Alice Ambassadors President*



### Our Mission

*The mission of the Alice Chamber of Commerce is to promote the economic and community development in Alice, Jim Wells County and the surrounding trade area.*

**Did you know the Chamber/CVB has...Maps, brochures, phone books, info on attractions and other cities.**



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# Chamber sponsors Circus

Send in the clowns, elephants, tigers, acrobats and the laughter as the circus sponsored by the Alice Chamber of Commerce rolled into Alice on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Kelly Miller Circus made a stop in the Hub City for tow-show appearance that left the crowd wowed.

"This was really a great circus. The whole family was really impressed," Alice Chamber of Commerce President elect Michael Garcia said. "We had a great time and look forward to next year."

This was the first time the Chamber has sponsored a circus in Alice.

"Last year, we were approached by the circus personnel who said they had an open date in March on their way from the Rio Grande Valley and were interested in stopping in Alice," Chamber Executive Vice President Juan Navejar said. "We felt this would be a great opportunity to bring something for the family while making a few bucks for the Chamber as well."

The Kelly Miller Circus provided two shows at the Jim Wells County Fairgrounds where crowds enjoyed tigers, elephants, acrobats and of course clowns. Kelly Miller Circus was founded during the Depression. The tented circus is a family entertainment venue with an international cast.



Circus acts included elephants, tigers, dancing dogs, acrobats and clowns.

"We all ready have plans to bring them back to Alice next year," Navejar said. "For being their first time in Alice, the circus enjoyed their stop and hospitality from the local residents."

Ringmaster John Moss summed it by saying the Circus brings magic into peoples lives.

"We offer something for everyone. It's

not just a show but real life entertainment," Moss said. "Coming to the circus brings families together for a good old-fashion night of fun. We liked the area will definitely be back next year."

Aside the circus acts, elephant and pony rides were available for a nominal fee. The Chamber sold discount presale tickets prior to circus day.

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Cornerstone Member 2004

# Third Annual Chamber Golf Classic

Saturday, May 21, 2011

Alice Municipal Golf Course

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. in the Club House. Shotgun Start is at 8:15 a.m. with a three-person scramble – “A” Player Handicap 0-9; “B” Player 10-19 and “C” Player 20 & Over.

Entry fee is \$195 per team or \$65 per player and includes green fee, cart and lunch.

For more info or to register, contact the Chamber at 361-664-3454.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will be available for startup or existing small businesses in Alice, Texas on Tuesday, April 5, 2011 to explain SBA's loan programs, eligibility, and free technical assistance from SCORE & SBDC. Updates resulting from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus Package) will also be discussed. Individual appointments will be seen from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 am at the Alice Chamber of Commerce, 612 East Main Street, 78333. Please call Debbie Fernandez at 361-879-0017, Ext. 302 for an appointment.

## Celebrating community spirit

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Friends, family, neighbors and local business owners are the backbone of this community. Our vibrant spirit comes alive at events like these.

**Alice Chamber, you continue to help  
build the spirit of our community.**

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Contact Laura Gonzalez  
361.389.1735

[Lauragonzalez\\_06@yahoo.com](mailto:Lauragonzalez_06@yahoo.com)

# MEMBERS OF THE MONTH



AdCity Magazine is the Small Chamber Member of the Month. AdCity Group, LLC is a locally owned and operated advertising agency specializing in a monthly direct mail magazine who's focus is to deliver a successful connection between businesses and consumers. We team up with local, regional and national retailers as well as professional services to offer great deals on products and services. Our growth relies on the partnerships of both businesses and consumers and with our monthly incentives, fun environment, and community involvement we have successfully accomplished that. Be an AdCity Fan. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. "We make shopping fun". The magazine is owned by Javier Ramos.

First Community Bank is the Large Chamber Member of the Month. We are not an impersonal, nationwide bank; we're not an unregulated financial institution. We're a community bank, born and raised right here in South Texas. We've grown steadily and today we're the fastest growing bank. We remain strong, solid and growing...right alongside our customers. We put you – our customers and our community -- FIRST. When you bank with us, your money is reinvested right here in the Coastal Bend... helping people just like you grow their business, build or buy a home, or send their son or daughter to college. The Alice branch is under the direction of Sarita Garcia Bank Manager/ Executive Vice President, Carolyn Vanover Executive Vice President, Billy Best Commercial / Agricultural Loan Officer, Gap Alaniz Vice President, and Yolanda Hernandez Vice President.



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## LJWC Class gets lesson on local governments

City and County governments may be different entities but how they conduct business on a day-to-day shows some similarities is what the class learned in their last session

While the two entities may run operations differently, both see a mission of moving forward and make our community a better place to live.

The class began their session at City Hall where they met with Alice City Manager Ray De Los Santos. The city manager gave an overview of how city government operates along with current projects being done by the city to enhance the city's infrastructure. Highlighting the city was the on-going projects with city to include the Texas Boulevard project.

Following the City of Alice, the class headed to Orange Grove to see how their town operates. It was a different perspective of how smaller towns operate on a day-to-day basis.

After lunch it was off to the Jim Wells County courthouse where Judge L. Arnoldo Saenz gave the class a tour of each office in the courthouse starting with his



Class leaders listen to Alice City Manager Ray De Los Santos during their visit to the Alice City Hall.

office. The class toured all of the county officials located at the courthouse.

Highlighting the tour included stops with County Clerk Ruben Sandoval office where his staff shared their office duties with the class. Pearlle Jo Valadez explained the role of the Voter Registrars office and how it will be the administrator for the county for elections. County auditor Lalo Gonzalez talked about county fi-

nances, District Judge Richard Terrell also met the class as part of the tour.

The class followed with a look at the JWC jail administration and the Adult Probation annexes and the Juvenile Probation Department where LJWC alum Jimmy Schmidt gave the class an inside feel of the department.

The next session has the class studying the education system on April 14th.

## TX BLVD, From Page 1

Texas Blvd with all the construction," Councilwoman Yvette Johnson said. "We ask you to bear with us a little bit longer as the light is at the end of the tunnel."

Phase II will commence from Highway 44 south to FM 665 but will not begin until the completion of the waterlines is finished which will be later this year.

The reconstruction will include curb, gutter sidewalk and ensure every corner of every intersection is ADA compliant. The timeline for this project is 15 months.



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# SBDC sponsoring Export Event

The Small Business Development Center plans to sponsor an Export event in support of the Small Business Jobs Act 2010 and needs your help. Your participation, along with other local community leaders and partners (chambers, EDC, associations, Port of Corpus Christi, City Council & Staff, Small Businesses, etc) is critical for success. We would first like to find out if you're aware of an export event already in the planning stages and if so, we would like to assist as a co-sponsor and every way possible. If not, are you interested in collaborating with us to get this topic out to our small business community?

I'm attempting to distribute this information to everyone mentioned above and would appreciate your help in forwarding this email to them and responding with further information or suggestions.

Provisions in this law aim to put more capital in the hands of entrepreneurs and

small businesses, promote small business exporting in support of the president's National Export Initiative, and expands training and advising to support small business success. For detailed information on the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, visit the website at <http://www.sba.gov/content/small-business-jobs-act-2010>.

## **New Law Promotes Small Business Exporting, Building on the President's National Export Initiative**

- ◆ Higher Loan Limits – increased maximum size of top export loan program
- ◆ The law permanently increased the maximum size of 7(a) International Trade Loans and Export Working Capital Loans to \$5 million.
- ◆ Export Express Pilot Becomes Permanent
- ◆ The law turned the Export Express

pilot loan program into a permanent program with 90% guarantees for loans up to \$350,000 and 75% for loans between \$350,000 and \$500,000.

- ◆ [State Trade and Export Promotion Grants Pilot](#)
- ◆ The law will provide \$90 million in competitive grants over next three years for states to help small business owners with exporting (target rollout summer 2011).
- ◆ Increased Staff and Additional Export Counseling Resources.

Lisa V. Farr, Training Coordinator

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In order to accommodate entrepreneurs busy schedules the Del Mar College SBDC operates a satellite office at Coastal Bend College - Alice. The Alice office services Jim Wells, Duval, Brooks, Kleberg, Live Oak, McMullen and Kenedy counties. This office run by senior counselor Larry Ellis offers business counseling, training and procurement technical assistance to the residents and businesses of South Texas. For more information on the Small Business Development Centers and Procurement Assistance, contact Larry Ellis at 661-1119 or check out our website <http://www.delmar.edu/sbdc>

## Business success: Five ingredients needed for success

### 1. An idea for a product or service that customers are willing to buy at a sufficiently high price to allow for a big margin above cost.

Whether the idea is original, borrowed, or bought, the idea is the heart of any business through all stages of its life. If there is no idea, there is no business.

The idea is what will keep you fired up, and give you pride. Plus, the idea is the most fun part of business. So go with an idea you can get excited about.

### 2. The ability to provide the product or service.

Is it possible for you perform the service or provide the product to a high enough standard so that you can get return business and referrals to new clients?

Make sure you get the relevant education and experience in the same industry as your intended enterprise.

Research your product or service and benchmark the competition to see how they do it and how you can do it better.

### 3. Personal contacts for acquiring information and other resources.

Networking is an essential skill for most business people, but especially for entrepreneurs. The strong association between the entrepreneur as a person and his or her business, demands entrepreneurs get out into the world and create and maintain [business relationships](#).

Active networking and participation in network partnerships can help you meet people and build mutually beneficial business relationships.

For a start-up or [small business](#), networking can provide a lifeline of support and help generate business for [your com-](#)

[pany](#) through benefits such as:

- ◆ **benchmarking** opportunities against competitors and similar-sized businesses
- ◆ **comparing and discussing** issues of common interest, for example supply networks, customer service and legal and regulatory developments.
- ◆ **developing ideas**, innovation and knowledge of best practice.
- ◆ **raising your business profile** by becoming an established networking member.
- ◆ **expanding markets** by generating business contacts such as customers, suppliers and partners.
- ◆ **overseas partnerships**, through international exhibitions and conferences.

### 4. Money to keep the business going during the start-up phase.

Don't think you'll start making money right away. What do you do till the cash starts flowing? And where can you get the upfront money your startup will

need?

A possible source of money is "angels". They are successful entrepreneurs who are willing to risk money in a new venture if it promises a good return. Find rich people in your area and have an excellent [business plan](#) ready. This will take time and networking. Another possible source is a SBA loan at a local bank.

If all sources decline to participate, you have the option of "bootstrapping", which means starting small and growing carefully on the cash flow your business generates.

### 5. Sufficient customer orders to cover all costs and expenses and to provide a profit.

Ensure there is a demand for your product or service. Try and pick a growing industry, as opposed to one that is crowded with suppliers. Take advantage of major trends.

Many entrepreneurs have tried to [start businesses](#) without giving enough attention to each of these requirements, their businesses have failed.

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# Check up: What are we looking at?



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“Well, what are we looking at?” That’s what is overheard at the doctor’s office, at the mechanic’s shop, at the art museum, and it can mean several different things. What’s the cost, how long will it take, what needs to be done, what does it mean, or what the heck is it?

Part of everyone’s life is spent visiting the doctor, the mechanic’s shop, and your accountant. These are necessities ... death and taxes, right?

First, your health needs to be checked out, especially as many of us pass the 50 mile marker. I recently had my first colonoscopy. It was prep first, then the procedure, then trying to fully comprehend what the pathology report said. I do my homework, regardless of the situation. Point is I feel the need to be informed, so I Googled every medical term on my pathology report so I’d know what the heck it all meant.

Everything takes so much time these days. Maybe we have more tasks at hand than ever before. In every facet of life, it’s imperative that we’re knowledgeable and regularly informed of changes.

Secondly, your car needs to be inspected and your oil changed, then other things start to go wrong if you’ve got some wear and tear. Then you begin to wonder if you should hang on to a vehicle that’s paid for or buy new. It’s time to look at options ... weighing out repair bills verses new car payments and the entire time you know you’d rather be driving a new ride.

Okay here’s a good one... you’d better be on the same page with your significant other. If she says one carat, does that mean one carat for each earring or one carat total weight. I once heard a story of a very upset wife, she was expecting a surprise gift and carat size was mentioned; much to her dismay the gift ended up being a half carat diamond for each ear.

Our business needs an annual physi-

cal, too! We need to do our homework thoroughly, to understand every area of our business including human resources.

I know what goes on in small to medium size company, because I used to own one. The daily operations and who has your attention at the moment is where your time is spent. Unfortunately, most business leaders don’t have enough hours in the day to update business plans and ensure all the bases are covered with respect to internal operations.

We know we have reports that must be completed and submitted. The federal and state governments want our employment taxes and income taxes. As business owners we are always gathering information, such as: reports for governing bodies, for accounting purposes, and for our own business marketing plans. However, many fail to keep their business and marketing plans updated, unless they’re requesting funds from their banker.

If you’re not continuously updating your business plan it’s like jumping on a horse without buckling the saddle - you’re in for one hell of a ride. You might have a nice smooth gait and never notice you’re undone.

The area of human resources is one of the most underutilized and overlooked areas in small businesses today!

There are a multitude of employment laws. If you or your employee breaks one you could have legal troubles. Unem-

ployment and workers’ compensation claims can be unexpected and very costly with an overall negative impact on operating capital. You need to know how to properly address employee situations and have quality risk management and safety processes in place.

Outsourcing human resources has become very cost effective and popular. If you’re working with a highly accredited Professional Employer Organization (PEO) they take the guess work out of all the employee stuff. They offer a set price for your employees (including employer taxes, workers compensation insurance, safety program, risk management, human resources - all the administrative duties), which really helps keep you on budget.

You’ll rest assured, knowing you have the much needed expertise with respect to employees and risk management, along with fully staffed departments doing the various human resource duties, all working for you.

It’s a complex world we live in and there is never enough time in the day. I’m so tired of hearing that phrase. But, what’s worse than hearing clichés is losing your hard-earned money or your health so get with it. Get your check up and make sure your bases are covered.

For more information on the only ESAC accredited locally headquartered PEO call or email consultant Connie Laughlin at (361) 852-6392 or at [conniel@uniquehr.com](mailto:conniel@uniquehr.com).



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Cornerstone Member 2004

# CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

*Alice*  
T e x a s

## Convention & Visitors Bureau

We begin the second quarter of the year in April and look forward to the Easter Holiday.

The Chamber/CVB hosted the Annual Winter Texas

Fish Fry at the Third Coast Squadron Museum. Some 40 Winter Texans attended this year's appreciation dinner. The meal was cooked by the Coyote Cooks and drinks provided by H-E-B and Andrews Distributing. The group performed a skit along with a sing-along about "Alice being the place to be."

This month, the Texas Tropical Trails will meet in Alice with the Chamber/CVB playing host to the group at the Third Coast Squadron Museum.

Chamber Executive Vice President Juan Navejar attended a conference at Texas A&M on how to enhance tourism and improve attendance at local festivals. The focus was on changes to IRS reporting for festivals, ADA concerns on safety issues when a town hosts a festival as well as carnivals or fund-raising events.



Winter Texans who worked on Habit For Humanity sing a song about Why Alice.

The website continues to see many visitors 578,200 hits since October 1st. Among the targeted web pages was general information about Alice, accommodations and sites. Applications for 2011 project funding are now available at the Chamber of Commerce. We have made some changes in the administering of funding for event promotions.

**The CVB will no longer make checks payable to the applying entity but to the advertising agencies contracted to promote events.** They will be due 60 days prior to an event in order

to receive board approval for events to be held in Alice. All requests must be presented to the Chamber board for approval before granting assistance from the CVB. Funding will be done a bit different this year.

Aside from the application, the CVB will require a business plan and proof of insurance before awarding funding to assure we are using proper documentation of the hotel tax. People walking through our doors are asking for information on Alice, the area or asked for phone books and maps of Alice and Texas.



### Alice Optimist Club 26th Annual BBQ Fundraiser

Combination Sausage  
& Brisket Plate

Sunday, May 8, 2011

VFW Patio - N. Texas Blvd

11 am - 2 pm

Donation \$7

Proceeds benefit the Youth of Alice



## e-imaging e-mazing

The new Picture Archive Communication System (PACS) is now available at CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Alice. This cutting edge technology allows physicians to view patients' x-ray images from the hospital, office or home computer — providing quicker results and easier physician consultations.

This leap forward in advanced imaging technology is just one of CHRISTUS Spohn's investments in the health care needs of South Texans.



# Retirement: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow



**PAUL RYCROFT**  
on Finance

It's safe to say that your retirement will bear little resemblance to that of your grandparents – and even your parents. The world has changed so much in the past 20 years that even the savviest prognosticators

couldn't have predicted all changes in society and technology that have transformed our daily lives. We now know there is no turning back from the life we've become accustomed to, but it begs the question: What's next?

## Planning for the unknown

Think about those planning retirement in 1991 – the year the World Wide Web was introduced. There was no internet service in homes, few people had cell phones and many considered cable TV and health club memberships luxuries. Now, 20 years later, as those people prepare to retire, these items alone can take a considerable bite out of their budgets. Add escalating health care, gas and oil prices to the mix and the nest egg that seemed adequate may now fall short.

We've also seen medical advancements over the past two decades that have allowed Americans to live longer, more active lives. While this is good news, it will also put additional strain on retirement budgets. Those planning retirement 20 years ago were also unaware of the

realities facing Social Security today. It was an expectation that the program would fund a portion of most retirements. However, with the Congressional Budget Office reporting in January of 2011 that the program will run a \$547 billion deficit over the next 10 years, Social Security's future is uncertain.

## Preparing for the future

If we only could look into a crystal ball and see the future, planning for retirement in 20 or 30 years would be much easier. Unfortunately, we don't have that luxury. Here's what we can do:

- ◆ Plan for new technologies. Odds are, progress will come with a price. Plan dollars in your retirement budget for items that will make the world operate faster and more efficiently.
- ◆ Plan to live a long time. There is a good chance that you and your partner will live longer lives than the generation before you. That's why most financial advisors now recommend that clients plan for a 30 year retirement. With life expectancies on the rise, it's probably safe to assume that number will increase down the road.
- ◆ Plan for inflation. While increases in the cost of living have been modest for the past several years, that trend will likely end soon. Experts predict that an inflationary period may follow in an economic cycle like we are currently experiencing.

- ◆ Plan to live without Social Security. With the government funded program spending more on benefits than it receives in revenue, its demise is almost certain unless the program is revamped. Planning retirement without Social Security will take the uncertainty out of your future.

## Taking matters into your own hands

Having realistic expectations about future retirement income needs is the first step in securing your future. The next step is to take matters into your own hands and start saving for the day when work becomes optional. If the idea seems daunting, you don't have to do it alone. Your financial advisor can help you develop a plan to reach your goals in retirement, and feel more confident along the way.

Try to close your eyes and imagine what realities we'll face 20 or 30 years from now. It's fun to dream, but it's also possible to turn those dreams into a realistic plan for the future if you start now.

*Paul Rycroft is licensed/registered to do business with U.S. residents only in the states of Texas. Brokerage, investment and financial advisory services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA and SIPC. Some products and services may not be available in all jurisdictions or to all clients. © 2011 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.*

## Chamber Members have you optimized your page yet?

Website optimization is the process of specifically designing your webpages to rank high on search engines.

If you are serious about your business, contact the Chamber, 361-664-3454, to optimize your site. It's free to Chamber Members.

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## AEP, From Page 1

they will be able to tell AEP Texas when there is a power outage. When electricity stops flowing to the home, the meter will give a “last gasp” signal that will inform us that the lights are off.

This will also help us locate the outage as our Dispatch Center collects data on who is out of power and where the problem likely exists. In the near future, Smart Meters will allow Retail Electric Providers to give customers different pricing options as an incentive to reduce electric consumption during peak usage times. In-home monitoring devices and an online website will be available to help monitor consumption. It also will have the ability to communicate with “smart appliances” as manufacturers begin to produce major appliances such as washers and dryers with built-in smart chips.

AEP Texas is not alone in this effort. Larger electric utilities in Houston and Dallas were the first to begin installation of these meters due to legislation that encouraged the use of digital technology to help reduce electric consumption. The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT), which still regulates wires companies like AEP Texas in our deregulated marketplace, is overseeing the process to ensure the public’s interests are protected.

Electric customers will pay for the meters over time with a monthly surcharge on their electric bill. Customers will pay an average of \$2.53 a month over an 11-year period. It is expected that the savings experienced on electric bills will help defray this cost.

Smart Meters are just one component of a modernization effort that AEP Texas is calling gridSMART. Digital technologies have changed every aspect of our daily lives and now will help us manage our energy consumption and reduce our impact to the environment. That makes the future brighter for everyone.

**- Wade Smith**

*Wade Smith oversees electric distribution operations for AEP Texas in south and west Texas as well as the safety, customer services, marketing, communications, community affairs, governmental affairs and regulatory functions.*

## GRAND OPENINGS



**Design UR Basket held a grand opening on Friday, March 11, 2011. The new business is located at 614 S. Reynolds and is owned by Rita Gonzalez-Vera.**



Corpus Christi Hooks

### Alice Night at the CC Hooks

Sun. May 1, 2011

2 pm Whataburger Field

**\$7 Reserve seats on sale at the Chamber**



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# Thank You 2011 Alice Chamber of Commerce Members

AT&T - Texas	C.A.W. Company Inc.	H&S Constructors, Inc.	R&B Answering Service
A&W Investments Sunset Terrace Apts.	Carlisle Insurance Agency	Halliburton Services	RC Electric
A-1 Quality Fence	Century 21 Hallmark	Hampton Inn	Realitos Vending
Acetylene Oxygen Company	Chentes Restaurant	H-E-B	Rialto Jewelry
*Adcity Group, LLC	CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Alice	Hispanic Heritage Committee	Richardson's Water Well Drilling
Adcock Pipe & Supply	Church's Fried Chicken	H.D. Machine & Welding	Right of Way Service Inc.
Adventure Moonwalk & Party Rentals	Circle T Tanning	Holiday Inn Express	Rios, Margot
Alamo Credit Recovery, LLC	Clark, J. Karl	HomeCare Medical Equip.	Robert Molina - State Farm Insurance
Alamosa Animal Hospital	Claro Communications	Humpal Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine	Rollies BBQ & Country Store
Alice Autoplex, Inc.	Coastal Bend Blood Center	Hunter Petroleum	Rosas Funeral Home, Inc.
Alice Board of Realtors	Coastal Bend College	International Bank of Commerce	Rush Truck Center, Alice
Alice Boys & Girls Club	Coastal Bend Defensive Driving	*J&J Transportation	Rushing & Gonzalez
Alicecalendar.com	Coastal Community & Teachers Credit Union	Jasso Insurance	RSVP Events
Alice Cash & Carry	Community Action Corporation	Jim Dean Homes	Saldivar Coastal Services, Inc.
Alice Chevrolet Buick GMC	Community Coalition for Children & Families	Joe's Plumbing	*Sandpro Trucking, LLC
Alice Chiropractic & Wellness Center	Copper Cantina	Johnny's Blooming Shop	Schuenemann, Josie
Alice Counseling Center	Cornelius, Nettie	Jolene's Merle Norman	*SGC Janitorial Services, L.L.C.
Alice Echo-News Journal	Cornerstone Baptist Church	*Journey Trucking, LLC	Scott Bearing Company
Alice Family Eye Center	Corpus Christi Hooks	K.C. Hall	Scottish Inn
Alice Feeder Supply, Inc.	Counseling Resources of South Texas	Keetch & Associates	Sears Authorized Dealer Store
Alice Heart Center	Covance Research Products	L&F Distributors	Seidel, Whittington & Company
Alice Housing Authority	Cowley Supply Company	La Copita Ranch	SERCO of Texas, Inc.
Alice ISD	Coym, Rehmert & Gutierrez Engs.	La Hacienda Pharmacy	Sherwin-Williams
Alice Jim Wells EDC	Cruz Drywall & Painting	Landmarc Field Services	Small Business Dev. Center
*Alice Little Miss Kickball	CVS	La Quinta Inn & Suites	Smithwick, Mellie & David
Alice Mini Storage	Dairy Burger	Lopez Finance	SNBL USA, Ltd.
Alice Optimist Club	Dan's Processing Center, Inc.	Love Chrysler Dodge Jeep	South TX Blood & Tissue Center
Alice Paint & Decorating	Day, Michael & Melanae	Luchazie's General Store & Restaurant	South Texas Museum
Alice Pest Control, Inc.	Days Inn	Malfunxion Junction Automotive	South Texas Screening - Driving School
Alice Police Officers Assoc.	Del Cielo Home Health	Maurices	South Texas Tamales
Alice Radiator & Muffler	Dee Dee C. Arismendez, Ind. Contractor	Manpower	South Texas Shredding Inc.
*Alice Screen Printing	Home Interiors	March of Dimes	Stewart Title Company
Alice Skin Care	Deerwood Stevens	Maresch, Ernestina	St. Elizabeth Catholic School
Alice Shoe Shop	DeLaune Drilling Service	McCoys	St. Joseph Catholic School
*All Temps Personnel Services	Devon Energy	McDonalds	Star Light Limo Service
Ameriprise Financial	Dixie Iron Works MSI, Ltd.	McNinch, Leon CPA	State Rep Yvonne Gonzalez-Tourelles
American Cancer Society	Dr. Alejandro Lopez	Meridian Care of Alice	State Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
Andrews Distributors	Dr. Andres Elizondo	Mi Familia Adult Day Care	Steamatic of Alice
Angela Saenz-Ngo	Dr. Bandeira Teixeira	Model Key Shop	Steve Costley Advertising
ARAMARK	Dr. Gary T. Cloud, O.D.	Murdoch Welding	Subway #3
Apollo Towing	Dr. Roel Garza & Assoc. Family Dentistry	Murphy, Dene	*Sylvia Rivera
Armando Marroquin	Dr. Roel Valadez, DDS	NSCL	Tejano ROOTS Hall of Fame
Astromatic Car/Truck Wash	Dr. William Nisimblat, M.D.	N&S Air Conditioning	Texas Champion Bank
Atkinson - Wonders	Edward Jones	Neff's Plumbing Service	Texas Star
B&J Air & Pump	Edwards Furniture	New York Life Insurance	The Copy Center
Baker Auto Sales	*El Capitale Steakhouse	New Sound Hearing Aid	The Jigger
Ball-Montez Electric Co.	Elsa's Pill Box	Nortex Bakery & Fast Foods	The Menu Gazette
Barker, Paulette	EnDyn OMS, Inc.	Page Water Well Drilling	*The Pottery Company
Bayarea Fellowship Church	FESCO, Inc.	*Paisano Mobile Home & RV Park	Third Coast Squadron
Bedgood, R.E. & Sons	First Choice Diagnostics	Paladium Bowl	*Time Warner
Best Western Executive Inn	First Community Bank	Panda Chinese Restaurant	Tractor Supply Company
Betty Allison Realtors. Inc.	First Continental Mortgage Company	Perez, Marisela	Truckers Equipment
Betina Vargas - Avon Rep	First State Bank of San Diego	Phoinix Global LLC	True Elite Fitness & Well
Big House Burgers	First United Methodist Church	Picture Perfect Sanitizing	Tutti Frutti Delight
Bordeaux Apartments	Flowers Machine & Welding Co.	Platinum Events	Tyrone City Barber Shop
Bowden Ford	Fox Smolen & Associates	Plaza Four	Unique Staffing
Boys & Girls Club of Alice	*Fuller Tractor Supply	Popeye's	United Medical Services
BriteStar	Richard J. Garza, P.C.	Port of Corpus Christi	V.F.W. Post 8621
Brush Country Bank	*Get Wired Internet Café	Prodigy Child Academy	VillageProfile.com
Brush Country Casa	Gil's Catering	Prosperity Bank	VTX Communications
Brush Country Claims	Gilbert's Fine Jewelry	*Radiology Associates	Walker, Jack
Buckhorn Mini Storage	Goodwill of South Texas	Ramirez, Elida S.	Wal-Mart, Inc.
Byron W. Blair, P.C.	Guaranty Title & Abstract	Raul Ramirez - State Farm	Weiben Chiropractic Clinic
C.A. Jackson, Inc.	Gulf Coast Federal Credit Union	Ray Vess Jewelers	Wells Fargo Bank
Cameron Village Apartments	*Gulf Coast Livestock Market		Workforce Solutions

## Membership Benefits

- Two FREE classified listings in the Chamber website: [www.alicetx.org](http://www.alicetx.org)
- FREE Subscription to *Alice Business Today*, the official Chamber monthly newsletter
- Annual **Membership Directory/Buyer's Guide** listing all members, including a classified directory for member businesses
- **Advertising opportunities** in Chamber publications to promote your business
- **Membership Services** which include FREE Business Announcement/Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies, Conference Room Rentals and Mailing Lists
- **Networking Opportunities** through Chamber activities to make valuable contacts and promote your business
- **Opportunities to get involved** in the Chamber's volunteer working committees to help build a stronger economy and bright future for our community
- **Access to economic and statistical information** through the Chamber office
- **Support of a professional staff** that works fulltime for you and your fellow members

## Objectives

The following objectives have been established by the Alice Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors:

To encourage and advance the growth of existing industries and businesses.

To provide all proper assistance to any new firms, professional or individuals seeking to locate in the Alice area.

To serve as liaison with all government, civic and educational entities, and law enforcement agencies in Alice and Jim Wells County.

To increase our membership and provide quality service for our members.

To identify and assist in obtaining funding to accomplish the objectives of the Chamber of Commerce.

For more information on how to get involved and benefit as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, call (361) 664-3454, or stop by the office located at 612 E. Main, Alice, Texas.



**Alice Chamber of Commerce**  
**612 East Main**  
**P.O. Box 1609**