

Alice

AUGUST 2011

Business Today

Official Publication of the Alice Chamber of Commerce



business

tradition

service

community

agriculture

oil & gas

growth

Tax Free Holiday set for Aug 19-21

Texas shoppers get a break from state and local sales taxes on August 19, 20 and 21 - the state's annual tax holiday. Lay-away plans can be used again this year to take advantage of the sales tax holiday.

As in previous years, the law exempts most clothing and footwear priced under \$100 from sales and use taxes, which could save shoppers about \$8 on every \$100 they spend. Backpacks under \$100 and used by elementary and secondary students are also exempt. A backpack is a pack with straps one wears on the back. The exemption during the sales tax holiday includes backpacks with wheels, provided they can also be worn on the back like a traditional backpack, and messenger bags. The exemption does not include items that are reasonably defined as luggage, briefcases, athletic/duffle/gym bags, computer bags, purses or framed backpacks. Ten or fewer backpacks can be purchased tax-free at one time without providing an exemption certificate to the seller.

The 81st Texas Legislature passed HB 1801 (2009) expanding the list of items qualifying for exemption from Texas state and local sales and use taxes during the annual sales tax holiday in August. In addition to clothes, footwear and some backpacks, Texas families also get a sales tax break on most school supplies priced at less than \$100 purchased for use by a student in an elementary or secondary school.

No exemption certificate is required -

See TAX FREE, Page 14

Summer Lunch Series on-going



AEP account reps Omar Lopez and Jessica Burnett talk about Smart Meters.

The Summer Lunch Series program sponsored by the Alice Chamber of Commerce has been quite an informative sessions thus far.

"We have seen some great crowds at our first two sessions," Alice Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Juan Navejar said. "We have had two great topics with AEP Texas and Radiology Associates sponsoring the meals."

AEP Texas opened the series with information on "Smart Meters" at the Alice Country Club.

"There was some great information that I did not know about," attendee

Debbie Micallef said.

Some 28 people attended the first session and another 36 attended the second with Radiology Associates sponsoring the session on radiology imaging.

"Our third session will be unique as this will be a hands on training on computers at Coastal Bend College Alice Campus," Navejar said. "We wanted to take advantage of our new website and show our members about search engine optimization (SEO) that is unique and will allow our members to better im-

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From the President

Where did the summer go as we head back to school this month. With the kids going back to school, it's time to take advantage of the annual tax free holiday. While the savings may not seem as much, it can add up if you are buying uniforms and school supplies for more than one child. Our local merchants have everything you need to get the kids ready for school or college. So make sure you shop locally.

If you did not attend our Chamber Mixer in July, you missed a good one. It was hosted by Nevill Imaging Solutions of Corpus Christi and held at the Chamber. We had nearly 50 people attend. Nevill Imaging Solutions demonstrated a couple of their products available on the market today. Thanks for sponsoring the Mixer. Congratulations to our Chamber Members of the Month – Rosas Funeral Home is the Small Member and Sandpro Trucking is the Large Member. Join us for the next Mixer on Thursday, Aug. 18th at El Capitale located in downtown Alice.

The Summer Lunch Series continues with a few more sessions. If you have not been to one, they are very informative. Contact Juan or Veronica for more details on the topics.

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

MOVING ALICE FORWARD TOGETHER!

From the Chamber

Call it a temporary fix on a longstanding problem, but America is on the verge of defaulting on its own people. What we do not understand is the significance and historic dilemma our elected officials are putting Americans into. While a compromise has been established between President Obama and Congress do not count on a Merry Christmas in five months. The new deal now has a super committee that must come up with trillions of dollars in cuts with a vote slated to take place two days before the holiday break in December.

For the last several months, law makers have been pointing fingers and blaming each other with no avail to a comparable solution. The deadline passed and America did not default on its debts for now. The consequences of passing the "Deal" will cost economic stress on the American business owner as it sets to find ways to trim the deficit before the end of the year. Still at stake is the U.S. creditworthiness. How stable has the nation's economy been? While locally, we are sitting ideally because of the Eagle Ford Shale project, America is not as fortunate. The impact of this Congressional debauchery will be a long term effect as to the trustworthiness of the United States paying its debts worldwide. What Congress is doing is like asking your credit card company to raise your credit limit, which is not a smart move to begin with when you cannot afford to make payments. The "Deal" is a short-term fix on an old debt. Congress still has to forecast its spending for the next fiscal year which will not be an easy task based on the figures of these new cuts.

Taking a closer look at the U.S. creditworthiness, at this moment the U.S. owns or guarantees more than 90 percent of all new mortgages. With a decrease in credit, housing agencies will have to pay more to investors which could result in higher interest rates. This would create a ripple effect on bank financing costs and an end result in loan interest rates taking a hard rise. Adversely, this could be detrimental to those who have borrowed to open a business. We could face higher borrowing costs and banks would have to reevaluate their credit practices. The term double dip recession comes to mind, while we are seeing a good economic turn because of the oil and gas industry here in South Texas. Nation-wide the U.S. could enter a recession which could lead to an greater unemployment push, which the nation could not afford to pay.

All this could cause financial instability for our small entrepreneurs with less capital coming in, higher rates on their credit loans and a downgrade in the economy. We just have to wait and see if this is a short term fix by raising the debt ceiling or will we have to go through this again in the next couple of years?

**Juan A. Navejar Jr.
Executive Director**

Don't let AC repairs leave your sweating

BBB offers tips to keep consumers cool this summer

With temperatures hovering in the 100s, going without air conditioning during a Texas summer is not a favorable option. However, rushing to find an AC contractor can burn a hole in your wallet instead of keeping you cool. BBB finds that now is the time consumers are most in need of reputable AC contractors.

Some of the most common mistakes consumers make when looking for an AC contractor is hiring the first contractor they find, not doing the proper research and not getting all the details of their service repair in writing.

If you are need of an AC repair or just following through on a recommended check-up, BBB recommends the following when looking for an AC contractor:

- ◆ Research company background and licensing. Visit www.BBB.org for the Business Review of any AC

service company you plan to hire to learn more about its reputation and history of complaints. Ask if the company and its employees are licensed and insured.

- ◆ Compare prices and service packages. Get at least three estimates for any air conditioning repair or maintenance work. All bids should be in writing and should provide a full description of the services to be provided and the materials to be used.
- ◆ Review warranty coverage. Find out if the company offers any type of warranty or guarantee and make certain you understand the terms and conditions of the coverage. Also, be sure to check the warranty on your current air conditioning unit to determine whether any repairs or replacements may be covered.
- ◆ Ask about energy efficiency. Many new air conditioning units are manufactured to be significantly more energy efficient than others,

which often qualifies them as tax deductions. Make sure you get the necessary paperwork to cash in on those savings.

To check the reliability of a company and find trustworthy businesses, visit BBB.org.

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, Southwest Texas and the Permian Basin at (512) 445-4748.

Shocked by rising commercial electricity bills? We can help. Wish you could get better rates without having to spend a lot of time dealing with a bunch of salespeople and worrying about the contract terms? **Take advantage of the Chamber's Electric Coalition.** There is no fee to have a professional find out how much your business, church or organization can save. And you are not obligated to accept an offer if you don't want to. It's **exclusive** to Chamber members, and it's **quick, easy and safe!** Contact the Chamber at 361-664-3454.

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Johnny Rivera

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



ALICE AMBASSADORS

Summer is just about over and everyone will be back to school soon. Just a reminder to Shop Alice for your back to school needs. We have everything you need for your kids to get ready for school or college.

I invite everyone to the Community Action Health Center for National Health Center Week as they put on a Miracle Runway Fashion Show on Friday, Aug. 12 from 1 to 3 pm. Our very own Community Action Health Center patients will be participating in the show. It's a great pleasure to dedicate this day to our community. National Health Center Week is to recognize the benefits of joining together to showcase the programs offered.

Summer is here and so is the South Texas heat. Are you finding a way to keep your office cool without having to pay excessively on your bill? Contact the Chamber and see how they can help you bring down your bill by joining the Electric Coalition.

Our new by-laws are in place and we are ready to resume our duties in full force to the Chamber. Our committee is looking over our Standing Rules and hopefully we can start implementing them soon as well. With the By-Laws updated, 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.

- 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.



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Reforming national flood insurance



**Congressman
Ruben Hinojosa**
15th Dist

timeframe. H.R. 1309 was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 406 to 22.

The bill co-sponsored by Hinojosa provides for a five-year reauthorization of the NFIP, which is set to expire at the end of September. Reforms included in H.R. 1309 will generate an additional \$4.2 billion of revenues over the next 10 years to help shore up the program, according to the Congressional Budget Office. During the consideration of H.R. 1309, the Committee on Financial Services adopted an amendment by Hinojosa that limited the mapping of flood areas to 100 year floodplains instead of 250 year floodplains. The Federal Emergency Management Administration is already under fire over the inaccuracy of the 100-year flood maps. In fact, a significant portion of H.R. 1309 is designed to address those map inaccuracies by providing more oversight in the form of a technical mapping advi-

sory council of engineers, surveyors, and other independent map experts charged with reviewing and making recommendations to improve the scientific integrity and credibility of the maps.

sory council of engineers, surveyors, and other independent map experts charged with reviewing and making recommendations to improve the scientific integrity and credibility of the maps.

Hinojosa reasoned that if FEMA is not able to accurately draw the 100-year maps, it should focus on finishing the job and making sure the current maps are complete and accurate before redrawing and expanding the map boundaries to include what FEMA might deem additional flood-risk areas. Had Hinojosa's amendment not been adopted, the mandatory purchase requirement would have been inappropriately expanded beyond property owners who were already inaccurately mapped by FEMA into the 100 year floodplain into inherently flawed 250 year floodplain maps. His amendment saved taxpayers \$1 billion. Immediately prior to floor consideration of the legislation, Hinojosa coordinated efforts with a fellow Democrat to reduce the mandatory purchase requirement by 30 percent the first year of a five-year 20 percent a year phase-in for flood insurance coverage. One area in which the Republicans refused to budge was the increase in the annual, chargeable premium rates from 10 percent to 20 percent. Hinojosa has already begun working with the Senate to eliminate this increase from the bill before it goes to the President for his signature.

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Stop unwanted electricity solicitations!

We have all seen the commercials, driven by the billboards, received the phone calls, been visited by salespeople or even approached by friends and family trying to sell us electricity.

Since 2002, the deregulated energy market has continued to grow and become more and more competitive. With competition, comes choices; but many small businesses don't know what/how to choose the right electricity contract. This is why the Alice Chamber of Commerce created the Alice Area Electric Coalition.

Today, over 33 Alice Chamber members have signed electricity contracts through the Chamber Electric Coalition, a purchasing group consisting of 32 other Chambers in Texas. Although each business has different usage and rates fluctuate, it is estimated that Alice members have saved over \$400,000, lowering their bills an average of 25% by getting competitive bids through our licensed aggregator, Fox, Smolen & Associates (FSA).

Most electricity salespeople are representing a single provider and not comparing bids on a true apples-to-apples level. Some may get paid commissions upfront, or accept other "kick-backs" from a provider which can bias a recommendation and prohibit you from getting the most competitive, safest deal on the market. Most importantly, very few solicitors have as much understanding and experience as FSA regarding the different aspects of electricity contracts, products, AEP charges and legislative issues.

Fox, Smolen ensures that a business receives competitive offers from multiple providers, which are based on each customer's actual usage and calculated against all charges that could be included on your bill. The other difference FSA provides is in-house customer services throughout the life of the contract. This eliminates the need to call a customer service center, wait on hold, and talk to someone unfamiliar with your account.

By having a single point of contact, handling all aspects of your account, you can eliminate the stress of managing your energy purchasing or interruptions of electricity salespeople, and focus on running your business.

BUSINESS SEMINAR



Eric Buldosky with the Small Business Development Center presented a free business seminar "Running Your Business Successfully From Your Financials" at the Alice Chamber of Commerce.

To join the other 33 Alice business by finding commercial electricity bids from the Chamber's exclusive broker, contact Jason O'Krent at Fox, Smolen & Associates (888) 822-9090 x104 or okrent@foxsmolen.com.

There is no cost, or obligation, to get a savings comparison to your current rate!



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Self-Esteem and Personal Growth:
Having a positive support system that encourages success.

Contact Laura Gonzalez
361.389.1735
Lauragonzalez_06@yahoo.com

MEMBERS OF THE MONTH



The Small Business Member of the Month is Rosas Funeral Home. The funeral home is locally owned by Oscar and Virginia Rosas and under the direction of funeral directors Goldie Rosas-Garcia and Oscar Rosas Jr. Rosas Funeral Home offers both traditional and non-traditional services. The new modern facility offers monuments and markers and honors pre-arranged funeral plans from other funeral homes. They are located at 1215 W. Front Street.

The Large Business Member of the Month is Sandpro Trucking LLC. Sandpro Trucking LLC is the oil and gas industries best source for professional, value driven low cost trucking service. They are owned by John Villarreal with offices in Alice, Beeville and Odessa. Services include: Pick up and delivery of proppant with either our pneumatic or flatbed trailers. On site sand storage and inventory control, including transloading services; Mobile 24hr On Site Field Supervision; To assist our customer achieve the most efficient and cost effective transport and delivery of their product; and Hot-Shot Services.



Photo courtesy of AdCity Magazine

LUNCH, From Page 1

prove their websites.”

The SEO session will have limited seating as participants will be using computers to learn about SEO.

The fourth session will bring us back to the Chamber of Commerce where the Small Business Development Center and the Business Resource Center will partner to talk about how to improve your business with government programs.

The final session will be sponsored by AdCity Magazine and will talk about how to spend your advertising dollars.

This was the fourth year the Chamber has put on the Summer Lunch Series seminars.



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LEADERSHIP JIM WELLS COUNTY

LJWC applications now available at Chamber for 2011-12

The Leadership Jim Wells County Class of 2011 wrapped up the year in June marking the 16th class to complete the nine-month program. Applications are now available for the next class which begins in October.

The first session will begin in October with the ROPES Course at Camp Zephyr. The ROPES/Challenge Course presented a different challenge with the group figuring out the best and safest way to accomplish their goals. The elements were designed to teach the group to trust, communicate effectively, work together, develop leadership and be responsible for one another.

“Leadership Jim Wells County is a program aimed at further educating potential and existing leaders and enhancing visionary leadership skills through in-depth sessions,” Steering Committee CO-Chairperson Juan Navejar said.

The Leadership curriculum includes sessions in local government that gives the group a prospective of local government and issues about the area. Ethics and communications enhance roles and ideas about the world through ethical



The Class of 2011 wrapped up the year in June and will serve as the 2011-12 facilitators for the next session.

situations.

The communications session allows the student to get a better understanding of communications and the media. Leadership incorporates aspects of being an effective role model, team player and leader.

The state government allows the class to get a better understanding of the state government in Austin. The education

session shows off both private and public school districts and their inner works.

The criminal justice session wraps up the year a better understanding of the judicial system through incarceration of inmates.

Applications for the 2011-12 program are available at the Chamber of Commerce. For more information contact the Chamber at 361-664-3454.

Chamber Members have you optimized your page yet?

Website optimization is the process of specifically designing your web pages 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.

When people connect and share ideas, good things happen

Meet and network with other business people in our community. It's a great way to make personal and professional connections.

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Tourism and transportation

One of the great debates in tourism is how do we differentiate between tourism and travel, and the tourist and the traveler. There are perhaps as many definitions of these two terms as there are tourism and travel professionals.

Some tourism entities define tourists as someone who has traveled at least 100 miles from home and spends at least one night in a taxable place of lodging. Industry professionals often define visitors as people from another political jurisdiction who spend money in a place not their own, travelers are people who go from point A to point B for any purpose and for any length of time. In all cases, however and no matter which words we use travel and tourism involve leaving place "A" and going to place "B". Despite the fact that the industry would prefer to think of itself as emphasizing interpersonal relationships, fun, relaxation or education, tourism and travel always involve getting to someplace new. It is for this reason that travel and tourism are very oil/price-sensitive products with high spoilage rates. That is to say, once an airplane has left the gate, the profit from unsold seats can never be regained. The same is true of unsold hotel rooms or attraction tickets. To make tourism even more sensitive, most people are not obliged to travel except in cases of business and family.

For the most part, leisure travel is something that people elect to do, rather than are obliged to do. This right to not travel, simply to spend one's vacation at home, means that the tourism industry dare not allow itself to become arrogant or too self-assured. It is in this light that travel and tourism experts need to watch the rising cost of oil carefully. No one knows at what point travel can become so expensive that people simply decide to forgo it. While no one can predict the future, it is also a mistake not to plan for the future. Then as realities develop, those plans can be adjusted as needed. To help you plan, Tourism and More offers you the following ideas and scenarios.

For the foreseeable future, assume that gas and oil prices will continue to rise. Gas pump shock is now something that travel officials will need to consider. In those countries, such as the USA, where

gas prices have traditionally been low, the public is less likely to ignore rising fuel prices. In fact, every day as citizens pass a gas station they are reminded that the world's major industrial powers are in a state of wage stagflation coupled with energy inflation. There is already a move to greater carpooling, and seeking of alternative forms of transportation.

Do not panic; do plan. The continual rise in fuel prices will impact every aspect of tourism. This is not the time to panic, but rather to be creative. Hold a local summit meeting between hotels, restaurants, attractions, and even such secondary tourism components as police and city governments. Develop several scenarios and then develop creative methodologies to meet these potential challenges. Remember, in a crisis, it is easier to modify a pre-set plan than it is to develop a new one from scratch.

Take an active role in developing gas price incentives. Until now, tourism entities have mainly taken a reactive role in gas price issues. With gas pump price-shocks becoming more common, tourism and travel may need to become creative. For example, create promotions that include a free tank of gasoline for new visitors, or people spending an extra night in hotels or at attractions. The bottom line is that gas pricing often creates emotional reactions, and tourism is a business of emotions.

Make sure you know how people arrive in your community. If you are a destination to which most people drive, then you

are going to be directly impacted by the high cost of motor fuel. If your tourism industry is airline dependent, airline service cutbacks and flight frequency (often caused by high airplane fuel prices) will impact every aspect of your tourism industry. One solution for many will be to expand markets by finding more visitors closer to home. While this temporary solution may help the local hotel industry, it is not adding to the community's economy as tourism revenues from outside of the local region begin to fall. Instead, develop compensatory marketing schemes that will continue to make travel to your destination a worthwhile place to visit. In some areas, such as many island destinations, there are no closer markets. In that case, develop creative pricing, along with creative airport hospitality. Get travelers to forget the woes of travel as soon as they deplane.

Higher fuel prices mean that the tourism industry needs to be thinking of its product as an integrated whole rather than as a series of independent components. The additional cost of transportation means that visitors will be seeking other ways to economize. Visitors do not see their tourism experience separately as hotels, restaurants, transportation, and attractions, but rather as a unified experience. The tourism industry now needs to do the same. Each component needs to be working with the other sectors of the industry to find ways to compensate for higher fuel



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LOCAL HOUSING LENDER

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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>

Bonuses: Rewarding Your Employees

Bonuses can be a great motivation tool, even for employees of the smallest business. They can also be a waste of money. How they are planned and administered makes the difference.

Properly administered bonuses can reinforce behavior that will lead your company to success by rewarding people for making a specific contribution to the organization. Bonuses dolled out improperly will lead to disgruntled employees who expect a bonus, but who may not be happy with what they receive.

Set goals - To reap the most out of bonuses, tie them to clearly-set goals. A good time to set these goals is at the beginning of the year.

These goals should be concrete, attainable, and critical to the growth of your business. The steps below will help you set good bonus goals:

Set goals with employee - Employees are often the best source for information about what job-specific goals will contribute to overall increased productivity, responsiveness, or other business goal. Involving employees in goal-setting will also do away with resentment that can come from the imposition of goals from senior management.

Reevaluate goals frequently - Do this, at a minimum, halfway through the year to insure that goals still make sense and that employees are on track. Big companies tend to have concrete goals but smaller companies let this information slide.

Make goals specific and measurable - Don't set goals such as "Do a better job," because a general goal does not instruct an employee in what steps to take. An example of a constructive goal is "Increase response time to customer calls by one-third" or "Cut customer complaints by 50 percent."

Set goals that tie employees into the success of your company - Don't automatically assume that bonuses should be tied to increased sales or even profitability. For example, it may be most important in a given year for your business to cut costs or raise visibility. Tie bonuses into that critical goal rather than one that is traditional.

Make sure employee goals are attainable - Most people tend to set goals that are too high and this leads to employee frustration and demotivation over time, which kills off the value of setting goals.

Other reasons to give bonuses - If you didn't set goals with your employees last January, that doesn't mean that you can't pay bonuses this year. There are a number of reasons that you might want to consider paying year-end bonuses to your workers. According to Ted A. Hagg of Ableman Management Services, a New York City-based financial and management consulting service for individuals and small businesses, you can still make an educated decision at year-end by asking yourself the following questions:

Can I afford to give bonuses? - It is legitimate not to be able to give bonuses every year. If you did not make a profit, for example, bonuses are inappropriate.

Do I want to retain the workers I have? - Bonuses are a tool for attracting and keeping good employees. If you are concerned about losing someone to the competition you should factor that into your decision.

How much to pay - There are no hard and fast rules except that you should make bonuses equitable among peer groups and always have performance justification for bonuses.

Employees will discuss bonuses, and paying inequitably will generate strife or potentially lawsuits.

When you deliver bonuses, be sure you explain the reasons for them. These reasons should be non-subjective, measurable, and performance-oriented. When you deliver bonuses, make it clear that a bonus is an extra that may not always be available.

As nicely as possible, drive home the fact that you are rewarding them for this year's accomplishments and that bonuses are available based on the company's performance this year only.

Bonus nuances - The end of year is not the only time bonuses can be given out. Some business owners believe that whether you give bonuses or not, you should also provide periodic rewards for jobs well done.

Accountants often give them at the end of tax season, other entrepreneurs give them at the end of a large job or busy season to demonstrate appreciation for employees' devotion and hard work.

Even a bonus as small as \$50 can mean a lot to someone because it demonstrates that you acknowledge their hard work. If you don't have a lot of extra money to spare, a small bonus or a bonus in the form of time-off can work.

Some people believe that giving all bonuses at the end of the year is not a good idea. According to David H. Bangs, Jr. author of *Smart Steps to Smart Choices* (Upstart Publishing Company), end-of-year bonuses can create a mine-is-bigger-than yours syndrome in your company. Bangs recommends providing bonuses for goals attained at the time of the achievement.

When you are doling out bonuses during the year or at the end of the year, don't forget the behind-the-scenes people who have made the big orders, the successful client presentations, and the travel, possible. Clerical staff is instrumental in making all other functions of the company operate smoothly. Reward them for it.

Young guns vs. Age-gifted



Connie Jackson-Laughlin
Unique HR
Business

Who has the advantage, the young entrepreneurs or the older generation?

What's it like to be young, intelligent, worldly, and in business? What's it like to be older, more mature, experienced, and in business? What are the differences between the two? On

which side do the benefits lie?

I believe young entrepreneurs must have a lot of personal growth under their belt, be intelligent, motivated, not afraid of hard work and able to learn from any failures to be a success. Older individuals at times have to unlearn certain things and relearn newer, better ways of handling the multiple tasks associated with running a business.

Would you agree with me, that the odds are more favorable for a start-up entrepreneur 40 or over, than the younger age group? Albeit, the younger generation's footprint in business is typically not as large, so should failure occur it doesn't effect the economy as much as with the older generation. More than likely you'll find it's the older generation that takes on the larger scale operation losing many more employees if the business tanks.

At any age it's all about the numbers ~ if you don't stay on top of your numbers daily you're bound to either become a slave to your financial problems or go bankrupt. The second biggest hurdle for business leaders young or old is the amount of time one must put into starting a business.

You must be a number cruncher that's always looking for ways to make the most net income. Successful entrepreneurs I've known had their calculator in hand at all times. Once, I was following a friend coming back into town and

watched him drive off onto the shoulder of the highway. I knew what Jack was doing; he was crunching numbers on his calculator.

Some business people are drawn to work with the younger set. They like to see today's youth thriving or maybe they want to be a mentor. Or, quite possibly they just like their fresh new ideas. There are different mindsets. Another opinion might be that younger business people don't have the experience and the risk isn't worth it. A business-savvy young entrepreneur knows how to handle these situations and can stand tall amongst any of the old-timers.

Regardless of your age everyone must ensure the backbone of the business is solid. There is more to it than having clear-cut legalese in employee handbooks and knowing worksite employee laws. Business owners must not only handle themselves professionally, but see that their employees follow the same ethics or they might want to keep an attorney on retainer.

Risk management in all areas of business (when you have employees) takes a big chunk of time for any business owner, whether you own a dress shop or you have an oilfield operation. Slips, trips, falls, or other personnel situations not only pose legal issues and/or complex workers' compensation claims, but you're short an employee. It's imperative to have this area fully covered. What you don't know can hurt you and it's way too expensive for a start up company to staff professionals in areas of human resources, safety, risk management, and so forth. In addition, you'll have all the associated software costs, training, and other expenses.

There are new solutions for every business process at hand now. A business owner is dealing with things we never thought of 20 years ago. So how do you keep all these balls in the air today with so much to see about?

Join forces with a PEO (Professional Employer Organization) to handle the personnel burden; working with a PEO is a growing trend. Or, at least seek mentors if you're a start-up, an existing company looking at a growth strategy, or trying to dig out of a hole. Do not get weighed down working on non-revenue generating duties. Maturity comes in many shapes young or old as the decisions you make today can impact your company many years down the road.

For more information on facts regarding entrepreneurs refer to "*The Anatomy of an Entrepreneur*," published in 2009, through Kauffman, The Foundation of Entrepreneurship. Website: <http://www.kauffman.org/>.

Large companies with HR expertise in house implement a full scope of HR initiatives to maximize employee productivity, avoid costly problems, and ultimately increase and protect profits. Smaller companies, without that expertise, are at a competitive disadvantage. A PEO firm brings that human resource expertise and value to smaller companies at a small fraction of the investment of them doing it on their own.

To contact Connie Laughlin, call (361) 852-6392 or email her at [UniqueHR conniel@uniquehr.com](mailto:conniel@uniquehr.com), the only ESAC accredited locally headquartered PEO.



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CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Alice
T e x a s

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Summer is just about over as we begin our back to school programs this month. With that brings the busy months for events in our area.

This month, the Evening Lions bring a two-day event to the Jim Wells County Fairgrounds in their annual BBQ Turkey Throwdown. Aside the cook-offs, the group is bringing an array of musical talents. The Throwdown is set for Aug 19-20.

The Annual Hispanic Heritage Festival follows in September with the downtown event. The two-day event offers vendors, food, music and new this year an Elvis impersonator. The event begins on Friday, Sept. 9th.

Not far along in October is the Annual Alice Street Rods Rod Run at the Jim Wells County Fairgrounds on Oct. 1 – 2. The annual event brings many classic cars that are on display.

The Chamber of Commerce's Annual Skeet Shoot follows on Oct. 8th at the

CITY OF ALICE



City leaders along with past City of Alice elected officials dedicate the new Training Building on Stadium Road. Pictured is Councilman Michael Esparza, Councilwoman Yvette Johnson, Mayor John Lemon, former Alice Mayors Grace Saenz-Lopez, Juan Rodriguez and former Councilman Rey Garcia.

Fairgrounds as well.

The Jim Wells County Fair kicks off Oct. 19-22 and brings in many people from through the county for the four-day event that includes food, vendors and more.

We are seeing more traffic through our doors with people either relocating

because of the economic boom or people getting ready to travel this summer.

The website continues to see many visitors 997, 974 hits since October 1st. Among the targeted web pages was general information about Alice, accommodations, hotel stays and recreational sites.

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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.

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Managing the financial side of a relocation



PAUL RYCROFT
on Finance

You've just been offered your dream job in a city far from your current home. Now the panic sets in. How are you going to manage the move without it costing an arm and a leg? To be sure, you'll have a long list of to-do's associated with managing your transition to a new community. Tap into whatever network of support your employer can offer. With careful thought and advance planning, you can make your move less stressful and more affordable.

Housing hurdles

The biggest challenge to relocation is often selling a home (if you own a property) and finding a new one. Large employers may offer assistance with the sale of your home, to help facilitate your move. If you're left to your own devices, talk to a realtor as soon as possible to find out how quickly houses have been selling in your area, fair market value and what you need to do to get your property ready for sale.

You might consider renting your property if you are concerned about selling in a down market or if you think your relocation will be temporary. Talk to property management companies to explore services that oversee rental properties for absentee owners.

If you need to start your new job right away, you may need to find a place to rent near your new employer. Look for rental agencies that specialize in temporary housing for executives to find quality properties with more flexible lease arrangements. When you're ready to purchase a home, a good realtor can help you identify desirable neighborhoods and narrow your search to properties in your budget. There are realtors who specialize

in relocation who are especially skilled in helping families manage the array of issues that arise with a move.

Moving day

Coordinating the physical move can be tricky. Ask your family, friends or your employer to recommend reputable moving companies. Get a quote in writing and compare terms. Make sure you agree on timing as well as cost, as some trucks wait for a full load before leaving town, which could add weeks to the transit time of your sofa and chairs. If you need temporary storage on either end of your move, factor in that cost as well.

Money management

You might be surprised that most banking systems are regional, which means if you move from Minnesota to New York or vice versa, you'll need to open a new bank account if you want local banking. Scout a bank on your first visit and apply for a new account at your first opportunity.

Travel

Don't underestimate travel costs. You may need to make several trips back and forth before you permanently relocate. If you're traveling by air, try to book at least two weeks out. Generally speaking, you can nab the best prices on tickets when you buy and travel midweek.

Managing costs

If your move brings you to a larger city, expect to experience a higher cost of living. There can be significant regional

differences, which hopefully your employer considered when determining your new salary. In any event, as you manage your monthly budget, make adjustments that reflect your new reality and modify your discretionary spending to fit your new lifestyle.

Talk to your financial advisor

Because there are many aspects of a job change and physical move that impact your finances, you'll want to consult with your financial advisor. Discuss whether you will maintain your relationship or, if you prefer to work with someone in your new location, how you will transition your accounts to a new advisor.

Paul F Rycroft, CRPC®, CPA Advisor is a financial advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services in Alice, 604 E. Second St. 668-1212 or email at paul.f.rycroft@ampf.com and is licensed/registered to do business with U.S. residents only in the states of Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

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TAX FREE, From Page 1

with one exception. If the purchaser is buying the supplies under a business account, the retailer must obtain an exemption certificate from the purchaser certifying that the items are purchased for use by an elementary or secondary school student. "Under a business account" means the purchaser is using a business credit card or business check rather than a personal credit card or personal check; being billed under a business account maintained at the retailer; or is using a business membership at a retailer that is membership based.

If you sell items that do not qualify for the exemption, you may not advertise or promise that you will pay your customers' sales tax.



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Alice Jim Wells EDC	Coastal Bend Defensive Driving	H.D. Machine & Welding	Paladium Bowl	Steve Costley Advertising
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*Indicates new 2011 member



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

Membership Benefits

- Two FREE classified listings in the Chamber website: 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.