

Alice

June 2010



BUSINESS

Official Publication of the Alice Chamber of Commerce

business

tradition

service

community

agriculture

oil & gas

growth

Board names Navejar Exec. Vice President

The Alice Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors named Juan Navejar Executive Vice President during their monthly meeting in May.

Navejar has been with the Chamber of Commerce since 2002 serving in the role of marketing director. In 2009, the board named him Chamber Manager after reorganizing the Chamber's staff positions.

"The board felt it was time to recognize Juan for all his efforts he has contributed to the Chamber. His continual growth and dedication to the Chamber has been evident," Board president Virginia Menking said.

Navejar assumed the new title on May 20th.

"I am deeply honored that the board has faith in me representing the Chamber in this capacity," Navejar said. "I believe the role of the Chamber has changed in a positive way and moving forward to better serve our members is our priority."

Navejar will attend a leadership course offered by the Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives in Austin in August.

"I am all looking forward to growing more and involving our Chamber members in committees that will enhance opportunities for all to benefit from," Navejar said.

Last year, the Chamber retained a 97 percent membership, improved financial stability and increased membership by 15 percent under the direction of Navejar.

See NAVEJAR, Page 5

State Ag committee meets in Alice



Rep. Yvonne Gonzalez-Tourelles chairs state Agriculture meeting held in Alice.

Texas State Representatives met in Alice for a rare committee meeting at the Alice City Hall Council Chambers.

The House Agriculture and Livestock committee met and was led by chairwoman Rep. Yvonne Gonzalez-Tourelles.

"I am proud to welcome you to my hometown of Alice," Rep. Tourelles told the group of Representatives.

The hearing gave local farmers and ranchers a chance to meet and discuss concerns about cattle fever tick issues.

"I would like to thank the City of Alice and the Chamber of Commerce for their warm welcome and hospitality

given to us while we are here," Rep. Joe Helfin of Crosbyton, Texas said. "I stop by the Chamber yesterday where they were most helpful and giving me assistance."

Representatives traveled from across the Lone Star State either by car or flew into Corpus Christi. Those in attendance included Vice Chair Charles "Doc" Anderson, Joe Crabb, Tim Kleinschmidt, Tara Rios Ybarra, David A. Swinford and Joe Heflin. The Representatives heard from crop stakeholders, livestock stakeholders and public testimonials throughout the day. The hearing was also broadcast on the City Access Channel.

2010 Chamber Leadership

Executive Committee

Virginia G. Menking

President

Community Action

Servando Garza Jr.

President Elect, V.P. - Comm. & Tech.

Coym, Rehmet & Associates

Gap Alaniz

Treasurer, Immediate Past President

First Community Bank

Nena Pitts

V.P. - Membership

CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Alice

Dee Dee Arismendez

V.P. - Civic

Home Interiors and More

Juan A. Navejar Jr.

Executive Vice President, V.P. - CVB

Board of Directors

Dr. Salvador Cavazos

Alice ISD

Michael Day

Individual

Michael Garcia

Atty at Law

Ralph Gomez

Life Member

R. David Guerrero

JWC Dist. Clerk

Hector Hinojosa

City of Alice

Tony Morris

Alice Newspapers, Inc.

Martin Ornelas

Community Action

Mirka Pena

Dixie Iron Works/MSI

Paul Rycroft

Ameriprise Financial

Wayne Shoemake

FESCO

Ex-Officio

Ray De Los Santos

City of Alice

Staff

Veronica Castillo

Administrative Assistant

From the President

We wrapped up our Membership Drive and gained 20 new members. While the drive is over, we still welcome new members to the Chamber all year round. The benefits are endless. One referral from our staff can possibly payback your investment. If you are not a member, we invite you to check us out by either visiting the office or calling us to come visit you. We'd love to share the many changes the staff and board has done in the last year. Remember, the Chamber utilizes its members to fund the day-to-day operations of the Chamber. Without your assistance we could not provide services.

Our Second Annual Golf Tournament which is this month. The posters have been posted around town. Thanks to everyone who has been a part of making these two sponsorships possible. A special thanks to Love Chrysler of Alice who is sponsoring the Hole-In-One for a chance of winning an automobile. We are looking for players in the A, B and C handicap ranges to come out and play. Contact the Chamber if interested in forming a team or as an individual.

Finally, the board would like to congratulate Juan on his new title. After conducting his evaluation, we felt the title was well deserving of all his has done over the last year since we reorganized the staff. During his year as Chamber Manager, he maintained a 97 percent membership, increased membership and maintained the day-to-day operations while reducing significant spending. Juan will attend some further training in August and bring us fresh new ideas on how the Chamber can better serve its members. We are confident Juan will lead the Chamber in a great direction.

Virginia G. Menking,
2010 Chamber Board President

MOVING ALICE FORWARD TOGETHER!

From the Chamber

The Alice Chamber of Commerce plays a vital role in my life, not because it's a job but because it's a place to serve others. We all treat our place of employment differently. As we unlock the doors each day, we never know who will walk through the doors or who will be on the other side of the telephone call.

I welcome each day with a blessing from God, who gives me the strength to seek the knowledge I need to better serve our members. I have been truly blessed by a loving and supporting wife and son who each day shine their smiles at me before I head to the office. My blessings do not stop there because I have been entrusted by a great board of directors who have allowed me to better serve our members through their knowledge and guidance each brings to the board. I am proud to have Ralph Gomez serve as my mentor, together along with the board can shape the Chamber to better fit the needs of our business community.

What we do at the Chamber is truly unique. With a staff of one, Veronica Castillo, plus myself, we offer a team effort. When we talk about customer service, Veronica epitomizes how a true servant of the people should be. Her professionalism is well noted by all who enter the Chamber. Together, her and I have changed the concept of customer service. It begins with a warm greeting either face to face or on the phone. As a member of the Chamber, rest assure, when we give out referrals, it you the member who we mention first. If you have concerns or want to improve your business through better customer service give us a call or come by the Chamber. We want to be your voice whether it be in the governmental role, educational role or law enforcement - we want to be here for you. Consider this Chamber your advocate for a better tomorrow as we work to build our future in our business community.

Juan A. Navejar Jr.
Executive Vice President

"Alice Business Today" published by the Alice Chamber of Commerce

City & County raise funds for March of Dimes

The mission of March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. March of Dimes carries out this mission through research, community services, education and advocacy to save babies' lives. March of Dimes researchers, volunteers, educators, outreach workers and advocates work together to give all babies a fighting chance against the threats to their health: prematurity, birth defects, low birth-weight.

The City of Alice and Jim Wells County took this to heart with a challenge from Alice Mayor John Lemon to Jim Wells County Judge L. Arnaldo Saenz in a friendly but competitive game of basketball.

While the final score was not a scoring frenzy of any kind, it was the City of Alice who prevailed at the final buzzer with the biggest winner being the March of Dimes campaign.

This was the first time the two entities have played each other on the basketball court.

"This was a great idea and a lot of fun. I think next year we will call type of game we want to play, because boy, we are feeling it right now," Judge Saenz said smiling while on a break in between quarters. "But it's all in good fun."

The first great polio epidemic in the U.S. was in 1916. The disease infected mostly children, killing thousands and leaving many more paralyzed. On a summer day in 1921, Franklin D. Roosevelt became one of its victims and the March of Dimes was born.

Through life saving research we beat polio, but we continue our efforts to help children today by working to save babies from the silent crisis of premature birth.

Even though polio has been beaten, the fight to save babies goes on. March of Dimes researchers, volunteers, educators, outreach workers and advocates work together to give all babies a fighting chance against the threats to their health.

Each year, more than 525,000 babies (1 in 8) are born too soon, some so small



Alice Mayor John Lemon taunts the Jim Wells County officials during warm ups prior to the charity event.

they can fit in the palm of a hand. Many of these babies must fight just to survive; others must struggle with lifelong health problems. No one knows the causes of nearly half of all premature births, and no one is working harder than the March of Dimes to find out.

Genetic birth defects leave our children unable to walk, to hear, to think, or even to fight off disease. March of Dimes investments in genetic research already are starting to yield results

The March of Dimes helps expectant parents know what to worry about and what not to worry about when it comes to having a healthy baby. Our Pregnancy & Newborn Health Education Center on the web features articles on topics ranging from prenatal testing and nutrition during pregnancy, to questions and answers on various birth defects.

No parents should have to choose between feeding their child and buying the medicines he or she needs. Yet, today, more than 9 million children are uninsured. For many of these children, this means they can't get preventive check-ups, immunizations, or treatment for common childhood illnesses. The March

of Dimes is fighting so that all babies, children and women get health insurance.

That dynamic partnership has endured and it's what makes the March of Dimes work. With the help and support of the American people, the March of Dimes has saved the lives of millions of babies over the past 64 years. And we won't stop until we reach the day when every baby is born healthy.

Byron W. Blair, P.C.

Certified Public Accountant

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Alice Ambassadors

Melva Alegria
 Dee Dee Arismendez
 Nettie Cornelius
 Michael De Leon
 Manuel Galindo (Life Member)
 Albert Gonzales
 Mari Gonzalez
 Sadie Gonzalez
 Cynthia Hinojosa
 Melissa Jaramillo
 Ernestina Maresch
 Debbie Micallef
 Bruce Menking
 Tem Miller
 Rachel Munoz
 Dene Murphey
 Delma Palacios
 Nena Pitts (Life Member)
 Elizabeth Ramirez
 David Silva
 Margaret Smith (Life Member)
 Marisela Saenz
 Mellie Smithwick
 Clare Wonders

Emeritus
 Joe Ash



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

ALICE AMBASSADORS

Looking to promote your business? The Alice Chamber of Commerce can help. We are looking for small items to put in our golfing ditty bags for the Second Annual Golf Tournament on June 26th at the Alice Municipal Golf Course. Last year, golfers received ditty bags with items from your businesses. We need around 80 pieces whether it be koozies, towels, pencils, water bottles etc. If you got something call Juan or Veronica at the Chamber. For the golfer, we need you to come out and play with a chance of winning cash prizes as well as a chance at winning a new automobile. Cost to play golf is \$65 per person and includes cart, green fee and lunch.

Our annual Membership Drive is over. While the campaign is over, it does not mean you can't still join the Chamber. We welcome new members year round. We will celebrate our new members at the next Chamber Mixer on June 17th at Humpal Physical Therapy. Mixers are a great way to network and get to know other Chamber members. Bring a friend, co-worker, spouse etc. to come out and meet others. This is a great way to promote your business.

We still have some spots available in the Ambassadors. If you are a Chamber member and would like to be represented contact one of the Ambassadors for more information. We would love to have you be a part of this active group.

Rachel Munoz

2010 Alice Ambassador 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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www.fescoinc.com

Congressman votes to save American jobs



**Congressman
Ruben Hinojosa
15th Dist**

Congressman Rubén Hinojosa voted to help create or save more than a million American jobs, provide working families with tax cuts, and close tax loopholes that reward companies for outsourcing American jobs.

“My number one priority is keeping jobs in this country and putting hard-working Americans back to work”, said Hinojosa. “This bill will help keep American jobs here in America. I have been working hard to lower the unemployment rate in my District by creating new jobs and by helping others keep their jobs”.

The American Jobs and Closing Tax

Loopholes Act will support more than a million American jobs by helping restore credit to small businesses, extending the R&D tax credit, rebuilding American roads and bridges, and providing tax relief for millions of middle class American families. The bill also extends unemployment benefits for Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

“This bill puts middle class families and small businesses first, and helps ensure that Wall Street billionaires pay the same tax rate on their income that you pay on yours,” Hinojosa said.

The tax benefits to middle class Americans – property tax relief, state and local sales tax deductions, and college tuition deductions – are paid for by closing the tax loopholes that big businesses have exploited to ship jobs overseas and that al-

lowed Wall Street billionaires to pay a much lower tax rate on their income. The bill also promotes corporate accountability for the oil industry, boosting the amount oil companies must pay into the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund – so taxpayers are never stuck with the bill for the risky practices of the industry.

“I’m on the side of middle class families – providing tax benefits and building the foundation for a healthy, growing economy”, said Hinojosa.

The American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act includes provisions supported by over 125 key organizations, unions and non-profits, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, AARP, the American Farm Bureau, the National Restaurant Association, and businesses in the R&D Tax Credit Coalition.

OSHA offers grant fund for employer safety education

The Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has announced in the Federal Register the availability of approximately \$8 million for the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program for Capacity Building grants. The complete solicitation will be available at: <http://www.grants.gov>.

The Susan Harwood Capacity Building grants are one-year pilot and multi-year developmental grants designed to support and assist organizations in establishing or expanding their capacity to address occupational safety and health problems, and provide training, education and related assistance. Grants will be awarded to training programs that

educate workers and employers in industries with high hazard and fatality rates, workers with limited English proficiency, hard-to-reach workers and supervisors, and small business employers in the prevention of work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths. This program is critical to OSHA’s efforts to provide workers with training about job hazards and their rights. It also

provides employers with information about unsafe working conditions and their responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

OSHA will be publishing a second Susan Harwood Training Grant Program solicitation for “Targeted Topic” training grants in the near future.

NAVEJAR, From Page 1

“We will see some new ideas in the coming year. We have plans to showcase our member services through different expos that will highlight their products and services,” Navejar said. “I look forward to working more closely with our members, board and ambassadors.”

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BBB urges caution when shopping on e-Bay

Three months after a Glen Carbon, Ill., man lost nearly \$10,000 in an Internet scam, he is warning others to be extremely cautious when buying on eBay, a popular auction site.

"I couldn't sleep for a month," said the 57-year-old mechanic, who has been fighting to recoup his money after losing it to an Internet thief in late February. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) says consumers should be especially skeptical of any seller who asks for payment via Western Union, MoneyGram, or other types of non-refundable money transfers.

Consumers also should be wary of eBay sellers who ask that they bypass the auction site and deal directly with them. Michelle L. Corey, president and CEO of the BBB, said the Glen Carbon case is a classic example of what can happen when criminals use legitimate sites like eBay to defraud the public. "These people are looking for any way of separating unsuspecting consumers from their cash. They are sophisticated, and they will do whatever they have to do to keep the money rolling in."

The BBB in San Jose, Calif., which handles inquiries involving eBay, said it is seeing a huge increase of fraud claims from consumers who think they are buying a vehicle from eBay, but are actually dealing with a third party pretending to be eBay. eBay specifically prohibits its sellers from requesting payment through instant cash transfer services, the San Jose BBB said. eBay also says it does not offer purchase protection for payments made by check, money orders, cash on delivery or instant cash transfer services. The Glen Carbon man said he was shopping for a piece of construction equipment when he found one on eBay. He said he should have been suspicious because the \$9,900 price tag was less than

half the value of the machine. When he clicked on the photo of the machine, a notice entitled "Important!!!!" instructed him not to use the "ask seller a question" option on eBay, but rather communicate with the seller directly. The notice gave an e-mail address and, from that point until the sale was completed, he said he used the e-mail address to arrange for the purchase.

He said the seller identified herself as a recent divorcee from Bangor, Maine, who had received the skid steer loader in a divorce settlement and wanted to sell it quickly.

The buyer said he felt reassured when the woman insisted that he use an eBay escrow program to complete the transaction and sent him a link to the supposed eBay site. He learned later that the site was a fake. He said he paid for the machine via a wire transfer from his credit union to a Wells Fargo bank in Los Angeles.

The seller said the bank would hold the money in escrow for seven days to give him time to decide whether he was happy with the purchase. When the man did not receive the machine on the day it was promised, he tried to contact the woman using the same e-mail address he had used earlier. She did not respond. He said eBay told him, "You've been scammed. It happens every day." Several Internet sites have dealt with

similar scams, in which thieves have offered everything from expensive communications equipment to farm tractors to boats. In many cases, sellers have asked to communicate outside the eBay communications system, have used fake sites that appear to be associated with eBay and requested various forms of wire transfer payments.

The BBB offers the following tips for buyers making purchases on eBay or similar sites:

- ◆ Pay by PayPal or use a credit card or debit card. Never pay a stranger with cash or via any type of wire transfer.
- ◆ Be very cautious when purchasing any item through a "Buy It Now" offer when the price is significantly lower than the prices of similar sale items. Beware of sellers who say they are offering items at unusually low prices because they want to sell quickly.
- ◆ If you think you've been directed to a fraudulent web page, ask a representative of the original site directly. Any seller who goes to the trouble of setting up a phony web page is doing it for a reason.
- ◆ It pays to be skeptical. If something doesn't seem right about a transaction, it is usually best to walk away from it.

If you have questions, contact the BBB at www.bbb.org or call 314-645-3300.

**2nd Annual Chamber
Golf Tourney**
Saturday, June 26, 2010
Alice Municipal Golf Course



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OPTIMIST CLUB RESPECT FOR LAW



Dale Wilson presents Alice Police Dept Sgt. Rex Ramon with the Respect for Law Award.



Jim Wells County Deputy Brandon Torres is presented Respect for Law Award from Dale Wilson.



Dale Wilson presents Freer Border Patrol Agent Ramon E. Salinas with the Respect for Law Award.



Falfurrias Border Patrol Senior Agent Elizabeth Gold is presented the Respect For Law Award.

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***2nd Annual Summer Golf Classic
Player Registration Form
Saturday, June 26, 2010
Alice Municipal Golf Course***

Individual Golfer

Handicap

Team Players (list three-man scramble players with handicap)

Name _____ Handicap A Player _____

Name _____ Handicap B Player _____

Name _____ Handicap C Player _____

Company Name

City

State

Zip

Phone Number

Email address

Check enclosed for the following: ___ Individual - \$65 ___ Team - \$195

Media topic of April Leadership lesson

The Leadership Jim Wells County Class of 2010 wrapped up the year with a memorable session of the Judicial System and eye-opening experience at one of Texas' well-known prison.

Going behind the bars enclosed controlled areas and touring the John Connally Unit in Kenedy, the class spent the entire day getting a behind the scene to look at how tax dollars are spent in hopes of rehabilitating convicted offenders.

The day began with a visit to the Alice Police Department where they shared a one-on-one session with Police Chief Danny Bueno. The class asked several questions from city ordinances to juvenile crimes before getting a tour of the police department.

The Jim Wells County jail gave the class a local look inside the county incarceration center and its day-to-day operations.

A tour of the Garcia Juvenile Detention facility in San Diego followed. While touring the facility, the class got an inside view of how juveniles are processed, housed, schooled and fed. Georgia Parr provided the in-depth tour of the facility.

After visiting the detention facility it was off to Kenedy to the Connally Unit. The class was met by several assistant wardens before going on a tour of the highly acclaimed Texas prison.

The class ate lunch in the guard dining area before seeing the inner workings of the prison as well as a safety briefing while walking through the levels of prison.

The guided tour led by Sgt J. Leyva who gave the class a personal look inside the lookup facility. Beginning with the education center, the class went into the law library followed by the local library and education section. The medical facilities followed where the class learned of how inmates are treated medically. A look inside the dining hall and how meals are prepared followed. Whisked



The class tours inside the Jim Wells County jail.

out the back door, the class saw the tower in the distance where the famous Connally Seven escaped in 2001 while taking over the motor pool to the outside tower en route on their escape plan. The dorms followed where the class followed the yellow lines through the commissary to the craft shops from the lowest level, G-1, prisoners to the highest level, G-5, in-

mates, which was on lock-down due to an incident involving gang members earlier in the day. While at the highest-level chamber, was off limits because of the incident, the class was safely guarded at all times.

The class wrapped up the year with their class graduation on Monday, May 18th.

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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>

Keys to creating a small business website

In some cases, small business owners decide to create their own sites. This must be done with care and intelligence. Here are a few questions all business owners with a Web presence should ask themselves in order to help set their site on its way into the World Wide Web.

Does your site have enough content? One of the most common mistakes a small business website can make is to provide insufficient content. Not only do visitors need to understand what your business is about, so do the search engines. Search engines depend on your content to determine whether or not you are an authority on the subject that is represented within your site. Say it loud and say it proud, include as many details as possible about that subject to gain a keyword-rich copy that the search engines will gobble up and serve up in their rankings. But be aware that your content must have a theme, if your site talks at length about "Web Hosting," "Web Hosting Services," or "Web Hosting Plans" the search engines will understand that your site is about those terms. But if someone searches for "Web Design," your site won't show up unless you use that phrase on your site, too. Be conscious of the keyword terms you want to use and maintain the presence for those terms within your website copy by providing valuable information on the subject.

Is your site easy to navigate? A visitor who arrives at your site and cannot navigate it for the specific information they seek will surely get lost and could very well leave in complete frustration. A good site design means a good navigation structure for your web site. What does this mean? It means that the visitor can find the information with ease. Usability is not the same thing as design. Just because you might have a design that is ingenious does not make that site easy to use. It is crucial

that visitors be able to follow your navigation scheme or they won't be able to find your products or services. And if they can't find them, how can they buy them? Do not expect visitors to send you an email to ask for more information because it is a lot easier for that visitor to find what they are looking for with a competitor of yours. Bottom line, if they cannot find it on your site easily they WILL go elsewhere. Take more notice of websites as you surf the Web over the next few weeks, keep an eye out for usability issues you come across on other sites and learn from them. Usability issues are basically anything that makes you back up, stop to figure out the next step, or stare blankly at your screen. Make a note of that site and bookmark it for future reference.

Why is my site not converting? Now let's discuss creating pages within the site that boost conversion (sales/leads). By this I mean making sure that your visitor is set up to make the desired action whether it is a purchase or inquiry. You might ask yourself:

- ◆ "What is the page's primary objective?"

- ◆ "Does the page have a clear objective to persuade a visitor to make the desired action?"
- ◆ Does it have a clear headline?
- ◆ Do I use images that could potentially distract visitors?

You should be using each page to direct a visitor to do what you want them to do. Ensure that your visitors' questions are answered prior to them asking them. Consider addressing your visitor directly with "you" and "your" instead of "us" and "our" personalizing their experience. Keep visitors options limited, too many options can deter a visitor instead of leading them to a desired action. Also, consider that top upper corners are "prime real estate" for key pieces of information such as special promotions or phone numbers. Avoid using these areas for images that will not entice a visitor to proceed to a desired action. Images can automatically draw attention and therefore do not need to be placed in dominant positions in the natural eye-path. Ensure that your visitor understands the desired action that needs to take place and keep your call-to-action simple yet compelling.



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What's your oath of office?



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"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully try to not execute any employees this year and to the best of my ability will try to keep this business from tanking." Was that your oath?

Put together a plan of action to grow your service or product sales and improve your customer service. Look at the viable outsourcing options that will eliminate your everyday administrative duties that eat away at your time.

Customers don't buy off on your vision; they buy your service or product. Look ahead at what the future holds for you, your company, your clientele, your market, and your employees. Ensure you're positioning yourself for success.

If you hang around with company leaders doing the same old thing they've been doing for the last 30 years you're sure to become stagnant. Hang out with boring people and you'll become boring. Look outside the box, meet new people, and know what your options are.

Get out of the rut!

With business rivals everywhere, it's amazing how the market gets stronger. The leaders that are thriving are on a mission - a mission to drive their busi-

ness with new ways of thinking and well-defined goals. Many company owners deserve "atta boy's" from us, as they've figured it out. They've formulated a process to beat the odds and make their business successful.

Are you the one holding your company back?

Management and business owners stay awake at night worrying that some day they'll be discovered . . . that indeed they don't know all the answers. Albeit, not one of them will admit it. You won't hear the CEO standing at the water cooler expressing these thoughts. At times every one of us feel the need for direction - we need to be the leader our employees are counting on to keep the business flourishing, to provide job security, and maintain their benefits.

Professionals should be called in!

You wouldn't call a plumber's helper for a major plumbing problem, so should you dare let your staff handle tricky workers' compensation or employment claims and safety training putting your company in a high risk category.

Professionals to advise or totally manage the administrative side of your business are a practical option, actually an excellent option that is a lot less costly than you think. And, in many cases, there's no long-term contract. Therefore, you have the safety net without any confining contracts. You can't put a price tag

on preventing a huge loss to your business that human resource and claims administrative professionals might have prevented.

Put your employees on the fast track?

Determine how they can make the most money for the company. Are they weighed down with too many reports or administrative duties? Are they motivated? If not, they need direction.

Are you frugal in the right areas?

Cut back on unnecessary expenses, such as; travel, meetings, training, and other miscellaneous expenses. But don't get caught off guard . . . be sure you're legally protected, insured, and conducting your business professionally with the least amount of time spent by your staff on administrative duties and with the least amount of associated business risk.

Make your company attractive to not only your clientele, but to quality employees. Benefits are a real hot button right now. Offer all the benefits you can afford to offer. Assure your employees you run a tight ship and that you are not only protecting their interest, but the company's as well.

For more information on outsourcing human resources services, payroll, workers' compensation insurance, health benefits, and safety training contact Connie Jackson-Laughlin at (361) 852-6392, conniel@uniquehr.com, or visit www.uniquehr.com

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Alice
T e x a s

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Summer is here and its time to prepare yourself for the open roads and vacation time.

Your Information Center can get you started on your

family planning.

If you are heading out, come by the Chamber's Information Center and pick up a Texas map or Texas Travel guide and schedules of all the festivals being held in the Lone Star State.

Summer time also means Hurricane Season. We should have hurricane maps very soon. Forecasters are predicting an active season. Don't forget to stock up on items you will need in case we are threatened by severe weather.

Congratulations to Fiesta Bandana for a nice celebration on May 6-9. The Fiesta marked its 35th Anniversary this year.

Tejano ROOTS Hall of Fame also had its share of bringing in tourism with their King of the Bar-be-cue event on May 22nd. We saw many out-of-towners par-

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Richard Allen DeLeon and Matthew DeLeon were presented \$1,000 scholarships during the 19th Annual Law Enforcement Dinner sponsored by the Coyote Cooks, Alice Chamber of Commerce and Law Enforcement Committee.

ticipate in the cook-off as well as attend the day-long festivities.

Each month we tabulate the number of sessions received on the pages and you would be amazed on how many hits we get and where they are coming from. In May the number of page views to our webpage were 16,311 sessions to the site indicating increase before the summer.

Among the targeted web pages was general information about Alice, accommodations and sites. Applications for 2010 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.

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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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Identity Theft – a 21st century crime



PAUL RYCROFT
on Finance

One of the most insidious crimes of today's information age is identity theft. More and more Americans have fallen victim to the illicit use of their personal information for fraudulent purposes.

The crime often centers on the theft of credit card, Social Security, or passport numbers to gain access to money using the victim's identity.

A common case involves the theft of an individual's Social Security number to obtain credit in that person's name. Some perpetrators have even gone so far as to file for bankruptcy in the name of the unassuming victim.

Others are able to abscond with money through illicit means by obtaining an individual's driver's license or bank account number. The losses can add up quickly and the impact on the victim's financial history can be damaging.

You may know of somebody who has fallen victim to identity theft. If it can happen to them, it can happen to you--with little or no warning. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, your best line of defense is to follow the acronym SCAM:

- ◆ Be stingy about giving out personal information
- ◆ Check all of your accounts regularly to make sure no unexpected transactions occurred
- ◆ Ask for periodic credit reports
- ◆ Maintain careful records of all bank and financial transactions.

Information on a "need-to-know" basis

The risk of suffering a loss due to identity theft can be reduced if you limit the number of people and institutions that have access to your personal information. Be particularly skeptical of a phone call or email from anybody claiming to represent, for instance, a financial institution, who asks for account numbers or password information.

If the call were truly from the institution you do business with, they would already know that information. Don't provide your Social Security number on any form

or for any reason unless you are convinced it is absolutely necessary. Also be careful about passing on personal financial information over the phone in a public setting where passersby could listen in, or on an unsecured computer in a public location.

Stay on top of your accounts

The best way to get a jump on any illicit activity involving your bank, investment or credit card accounts is to regularly check that nothing suspicious is taking place.

Always review monthly statements you receive by mail. You can stay on top of your accounts more frequently if you have online access to account information. The sooner you catch signs of unauthorized activity and are able to report it, the less damaging it may be.

Part of this process involves tracking the activity in your account. For example, keep receipts of your credit card purchases and maintain a record of your transactions so you can check them against each of your statements. Make sure you keep a ledger of all checks written or withdrawals you make from ATMs so you can compare it against your bank statements to determine if all reported transactions are legitimate.

Check your credit report

Another way to determine if everything involving your personal information is intact is to ask for a credit report from a recognized credit reporting agency. All of

the accounts listed in the report should look familiar to you. If somebody has opened an account using your name, it will be apparent on that report.

What to do if you are victimized

Even the best efforts to prevent identity theft cannot eliminate the possibility that it might happen to you. If you believe it has, here are steps recommended by the Federal Trade Commission:

- ◆ Place a fraud alert on your credit reports – contact one of the three credit reporting agencies (Transunion, Equifax or Experian) to inform them of the fraudulent action.
- ◆ Close any account that was tampered with or opened fraudulently – for example, if the theft involves a credit card account, talk to the card company immediately to report the action.
- ◆ File a complaint with the FTC – the information you provide can be used to help track down identity thieves.
- ◆ File a report with local authorities – police or sheriff's deputies can conduct a legal investigation.

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USDA offering loans for home energy efficiency

Paco Valentin, Texas State Director of USDA Rural Development, announced today that Section 504 loan funds are available to qualified applicants to make their homes more energy efficient.

Loan funds may also be used to make general repairs to improve or modernize the property, as long as the dwelling remains modest.

“The Section 504 Loan Program not only helps homeowners repair their homes and make their homes more energy efficient, but is an important component of USDA’s economic development efforts,” said Paco Valentin.

Having an energy efficient home can be accomplished very easily. Examples of making a home more energy efficient

include installing double pane windows, more insulation in the attic, weather stripping the doors, caulking existing windows, and the installation or upgrade of a heating or cooling unit with higher seasonal energy efficiency rating for the purpose of removing health hazards. Doing such would reduce the costs of heating and cooling a home.

Section 504 loans have an interest rate of 1 percent and a maximum term of 20 years. Maximum loan amount is \$20,000. To qualify for a Section 504 loan, the applicant must have a reliable income source sufficient to allow repayment of the loan.

Applicants must also have a credit history that indicates a reasonable ability and willingness to meet debt obligations.

The adjusted household income at the time of loan approval and at loan closing must not exceed the USDA Rural Development applicable very low income limit.

In order to be eligible for a Section 504 loan, the applicant must own and occupy the property. The property must be considered modest for the area, must not have an in-ground pool, and must not have a value in excess of the area loan limit.

For the purpose of USDA Rural Development housing assistance the property must be located in an eligible rural area. To determine if your property is located in an eligible rural area, please contact the USDA Rural Development area office that serves your area, which can be located at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> or call (254) 742-9770 for assistance.

New college students can register early for fall classes

Coastal Bend College hosts Cougar Days for first time college students and those entering CBC with less than 12 semester hours completed. Cougar Days will take place on each campus and students may attend either event, regardless of where they plan to take classes in the fall.

Cougar Days gives new students the opportunity to find out what to expect on the first day of college. Participants can register early for Fall 2010 classes.

Attend Cougar Days at any one of four Coastal Bend College campuses in Alice, Beeville, Kingsville and Pleasanton. Sign up for Cougar Days 2010 at any campus or online at www.coastalbend.edu (go to “Cougar Days”). Sign up for Cougar Days 2010 by sign-up deadline to receive a free T-shirt.

Campus	Date	Sign-up Deadline
Kingsville	July 20	(July 14, 2010)
Alice	July 22	(July 15, 2010)
Pleasanton	July 27	(July 20, 2010)
Beeville	July 29	(July 22, 2010)

To be eligible to register early the student must bring the following to Cougar Days:

- ◆ Social Security Number;
- ◆ THEA, Compass or Accuplacer scores or evidence of exemptions (ACT, SAT, TAKS, etc.);
- ◆ Official transcripts from all educational institutions attended before entering CBC (high school or college);
- ◆ License plate number for obtaining parking permit; and

Online Orientation: As an incoming

freshman, you are required to complete Coastal Bend College orientation. If you cannot attend one of our Cougar Days, you must complete online orientation and register during regular registration dates. You may complete orientation at www.coastalbend.edu.

Please call (361) 354-2304 for additional information about Cougar Days 2010 and Coastal Bend College’s orientation requirements.



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Adcock Pipe & Supply	Chiles Sales & Service	HomeCare Medical Equip.	Right of Way Service Inc.
Adventure Moonwalk & Party Rentals	CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Alice	Humpal Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine	Rios, Margot
* Aguilar Farm & Ranch	Church's Fried Chicken	Hunter Petroleum	Robert Molina - State Farm Insurance
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Alamosa Animal Hospital	Coastal Bend Blood Center	Jasso Insurance	Rosas Funeral Home, Inc.
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Alice Echo-News Journal	Corpus Christi Hammerheads	Keetch & Associates	Scottish Inn
Alice Family Eye Center	Corpus Christi Hooks	LHR Services & Equipment	Sears Authorized Dealer Store
Alice Fire Fighters Assoc.	Corpus Christi IceRays	L&F Distributors	Seidel, Whittington & Company
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C.A.W. Company Inc.	H-E-B		*Indicates new 2010 new member



Alice Chamber of Commerce
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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.