

# Alice

# MARCH 2011



## BUSINESS TODAY

Official Publication of the Alice Chamber of Commerce

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### Reyna selected Jr. Citizen of the Year



Alice High School senior Justin Reyna is a reflection of what a model student should be. He is involved in school and in his community. These are two reasons why he was named the 2010 Jr. Citizen of the Year.

"I am really honored. I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for this honor. I have to thank my parents and my sister for their support and inspiration," Reyna said. "All of my peers are worthy of the honor. We have had our struggles and accomplishments together."

Reyna is a member of the National Honor Society, Band, Varsity Swimming, National Hispanic Institute, UIL Debate team, Coyote Scholar, NASA High School Aerospace Scholar, Honor Roll, Rotary Speech Contest First Place, TAFE.

The 13 students were selected by teachers and counselors at Alice High School. The candidates were Leandra Barrett, Yecenia Ceja, Calvin Cruzada, Anna Lissa Garcia, Jose Rolando Gonzalez, Bianca Guerra, Christopher Gutierrez, Michelle Henry, Norma Jimenez, Logan Lopez, Andrea Pulido, Franz Puyol and Reyna. All of the candidates met before a panel of judges who narrowed the field down to five. The five finalists were Barrett, Ceja, Gutierrez, Puyol and Reyna. Aside the

**See REYNA, Page 12**

### Little named Citizen of the Yr



Photo courtesy of Jerry Smith, Custom Video & Photography

**Tracy Little addresses the crowd after being named Citizen of the Year.**

A surprised Tracy Little made his way to the stage ushered by a standing ovation at the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet.

Little was named the 2010 Alice Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year, which was one of many awards presented at the event.

"When I was told on Monday I had been nominated I told myself there is no way I will win this. I have as much chance of winning citizen of the year as Charlie Sheen winning the Nobel Peace Prize," Little told the crowd. "I am honored and thank the Chamber and the

selection committee for this honor."

Little has been a part of the Alice Community for more than 30 years. He served in the United States Air Force in the 1960s before working at White Superior/Cooper Energy Services. In 1978, he along with the late Jay Downes began Energy Dynamics (EnDyn) which he continues to be the company president. Little and Downes invested their money and took a gamble on its success. Today EnDyn continues to grow from the hot warehouse to a thriving business.

**See LITTLE, Page 7**

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## From the President

The Chamber banquet was a big success and thanks go out to all our sponsors who help make this happen. Kudos goes out to the Ambassadors for their assistance with the event as well as board member Martin Ornelas who donated a yearling for the auction. Special thanks go out to Juan and Veronica who spearheaded the entire event from table sales, to decorations and everything else.

I would like to say thanks to Dr. Kamat as well for his excellent speech. The Hub City is blessed to have you in our town.

Congrats goes out to Citizen of the Year Tracy Little and Jr. Citizen of the Year Justin Reyna. We also inducted three Chamber members to the Hall of Honor, Tony Bill, Elsa Ornelas and Clare Wonders. We cannot forget our business excellence award recipients – Small Excellence Seidel Whittington and Company and Large Excellence B&J Air & Pump as well as the Employer of the Year City of Alice. Congrats to all.

With the banquet out of the way, our membership drive continues this month. If you are not a member or know of a business who wants to join have them contact Juan or Veronica.

Again thanks to everyone who had a part in the banquet.

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

## MOVING ALICE FORWARD TOGETHER!

## From the Chamber

What a great banquet! I hope everyone had a great time and enjoyed it. Thanks to everyone who attended, our table sponsors, silent auction donors and bidders. Our banquet serves as one of our biggest fundraisers for the year to help with the day-to-day operations of the Chamber. We have been truly blessed to have the support of our members. Thank you again. If you attended I hope you were able to network with other members. Here are some tips about networking that may help you grow your business.

**Keep in mind that networking is about being genuine** and authentic, building trust and relationships, and seeing how you can help others.

**Ask open-ended questions in networking conversations.** This means questions that ask who, what, where, when, and how as opposed to those that can be answered with a simple yes or no. This form of questioning opens up the discussion and shows listeners that you are interested in them.

**Become known as a powerful resource for others.** When you are known as a strong resource, people remember to turn to you for suggestions, ideas, names of other people, etc. This keeps you visible to them.

**Have a clear understanding of what you do and why, for whom, and what makes what you are doing special** or different from others doing the same thing. In order to get referrals, you must first have a clear understanding of what you do that you can easily articulate to others.

**Be able to articulate what you are looking for and how others may help you.** Too often people in conversations ask, "How may I help you?" and no immediate answer comes to mind.

**Follow through quickly and efficiently on referrals you are given.** When people give you referrals, your actions are a reflection on them. Respect and honor that and your referrals will grow.

**Call those you meet who may benefit from what you do and vice versa.** Express that you enjoyed meeting them, and ask if you could get together and share ideas.

I hope these will help you when you are out an about networking with others.

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

# Aggressive debt collectors harassing consumers nationwide

## *BBB Warns Consumers to Take Precaution and Guard Personal Information*

In the past three months, **BBB** has received 11 complaints from consumers nationwide regarding aggressive phone calls from United Legal Alliance, a company that claims to be based in San Antonio, Texas. BBB has issued the company an **F rating** due to the number of complaints filed against the business.

Complaints filed with BBB allege that consumers have received phone calls from company representatives and were threatened with legal action or arrest if they did not immediately settle an unpaid debt or set up a payment plan. Several consumers were intimidated into allowing the company to debit as much as \$800 from their bank account. Other consumers refused to pay and requested written substantiation of debts or receipts of payments made but never receive them. Many consumers have stated that the debts this company attempted to collect from them are not valid.

Due to the insufficient company contact information provided, BBB has been unable to track down a company repre-

sentative to address the 11 recent complaints. The San Antonio building address the company provided to consumers appears to be non-existent and the phone number provided with a (210) area code is only answered by a recording device. Messages left on the recording device have not been returned.

Click [here](#) for United Legal Alliance's current BBB Business Review.

BBB advises consumers to follow the tips below to avoid problems with debt collection agencies:

**1) Ask Questions About the Debt.** If the caller does not tell you who they work for, where the actual debt is from or which business hired them to collect the debt, these are signs the caller may be trying to scam you.

**2) Request Written Proof.** Ask the caller for written documentation about the debt and also request they stop contacting you. The Fair Debt Collections Practices Act requires a debt collector to give you a validation notice within 5 days of contacting you about a debt.

**3) Don't Give or Confirm Personal**

**Information.** Quite often the purpose of a phony debt collection scam is to steal your identity or your money. Until the caller can send you written proof, never give them your personal information.

**4) Tell BBB.** You can file a complaint online at [bbb.org](#) if you believe a scammer has contacted you to collect a phony debt.

To [check the reliability of a company and find trustworthy businesses](#), visit BBB.

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

*Businesses that earn BBB Accreditation contractually agree and adhere to the organization's high standards of ethical business behavior. BBB is the preeminent resource to turn to for objective, unbiased information on businesses and charities. Contact BBB serving Central, Coastal and Southwest Texas at (512) 445-4748.*

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Albert Gonzales

Sadie Gonzalez

Melissa Jaramillo

Ernestina Maresch

Debbie Micallef

Bruce Menking

Tem Miller

Rachel Munoz

Maricela Perez

Nena Pitts (Life Member)

Elizabeth Ramirez

David Silva

Margaret Smith (Life Member)

Mellie Smithwick

Jack Walker

Clare Wonders

### **Emeritus**

Melva Alegria

Joe Ash

Manuel Galindo

Ralph Gomez

Pedro Jasso

Dene Murphy

## ALICE AMBASSADORS



**Rachel Munoz presents Debbie Micallef with the Ambassador of the Year award.**

Well hats off to all those who worked so hard on the Chamber banquet. It was a true success.

Dr. Kamat was quite entertaining as always and his passion for this community is evident. Congrats to our award recipients especially our Citizen of Year Tracy Little and our Jr. Citizen of the Year Justin Reyna. They were well deserved. To all the Alice Ambassadors, thank you for your continued hard work. Congrats to our Ambassadors Clare and Debbie on their recognition for their continued support and contributions to the Chamber and the Ambassador program. Dee Dee thank you for your dedication to the growth of our membership by serving as our membership chairperson. Juan and Veronica, we are blessed for the above and beyond dedication to the Chamber events, great job. Last but certainly not least, to our Chamber members and banquet supporters, without you the positive path our Chamber is on could not be possible. Thank you, thank you thank you.

*- Nena Castillo-Pitts*  
Alice Ambassadors President

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## SBDC assisting Coastal Bend residents

The US Small Business Administration SBA has long recognized that businesses come in all forms, shapes, sizes, styles, and methods. Teresa and Darlene are perfect examples of micro-entrepreneurs: very small start-up business' that require relatively modest amounts of money to get started, usually less than \$35,000 and often much, much less.

Last year, the SBA announced funding for their PRIME grant program. The **Program for Investment in Micro-Entrepreneurs** seeks partners to provide the training, one-on-one counseling, mentoring, guidance and support for business owners like Teresa and Darlene. Del Mar College's Business Resource Center submitted an application understanding that competition would be intense and funding was limited. The BRC staff was surprised when their application was accepted. They were shocked when informed that Texas received only one award.

The BRC's primary audience for these endeavors is individuals with limited resources. Clients may have a regular job, hopefully with benefits, but have a dream. The BRC provides training, guidance and mentoring on the basic knowledge of starting a small business, book-keeping, sales tax, and a number of other topics that are vital to surviving the start-

**GRAND OPENINGS**

**Journey Trucking held a grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, Feb. 11, 2011. The new trucking company is located at 3365 W. Hwy 44, Suite A.**

up phase and moving to profitability.

Receiving the PRIME grant has enabled the BRC to hire two individuals, one of whom is Eva De La Garza. Eva is traveling around our nine-county region, reaching out in an attempt to contact not only people considering a small business,

but also to existing small business owners seeking help in growing their business. If you are interested in starting a business, want more information or need assistance for your existing business, please call or e-mail Eva at 361 – 698 – 2118, [edela-gar2@delmar.edu](mailto:edela-gar2@delmar.edu) or Bob Beanland, 361 – 698 – 2222, [rbeanlan@delmar.edu](mailto:rbeanlan@delmar.edu).

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# 74th ANNUAL CHAMBER BANQUET



Michael Garcia presents Hall of Honor plaque to Tony Bill.



Elsa Ornelas accepts Hall of Honor plaque from Michael Garcia.



Michael Garcia presents Hall of Honor plaque to Clare Wonders.



Out-going board members Ralph Gomez and Nena Pitts.



Cindy Hinojosa presents Jr. Citizen of the Year Justin Reyna the Wells Fargo Bank Frank Funke Memorial Scholarship.



Dr. Suraj Kamat delivers banquet speech.

Banquet photos courtesy of Jerry Smith, Custom Video & Photography

## LITTLE, From Page 1

"I have known Tracy for almost 20 years and I can say as a local business owner, a past Chamber board member and a member of the community, that I have never known Tracy to say "no" to any request put before him," Dixie President Gerard Danos said. "Tracy is quiet, humble, reserved person, who prefers the background to the limelight, but who, nonetheless, gives incredible support to Alice, TX and her citizens."

Little has been a great supporter of the Alice and its many civic organizations.

"Tracy has supported many of the organizations that have a significant impact on Alice including Habitat for Humanity, the Boys Scouts, the Boys and Girls Club, the United Way, Relay for Life and many others," 2009 Citizen of the Year recipient Dale Wilson said. "Tracy's support of our young people is special. From significant financial scholarships for these organizations to specific projects like the Alice High School all-weather track, the Jim Wells County Fair or individual summer student athletes. Tracy has been very generous with his time and resources."

Little was one of the founding members of Leadership Jim Wells County which is in its 16<sup>th</sup> year.

"Tracy's attitude toward our community and its continued progress is shown in his allowing of his employees to learn more about our community network through the JWC Leadership Program that he helped develop some time ago. He has actively supported the group since its in-

## GRAND OPENINGS

# Radiology Associates<sub>LLP</sub>



**Radiology Associates held a grand opening and open house on Wed., Feb. 16, 2011. The new x-ray and imaging center is located at 2000 Dr. N.W. Atkinson Blvd. Suite 801.**

ception by ensuring that at least one of his employees is enrolled in the class each year," AISD Board President Mike Cochran said.

Because of his support to so many, Little joins the ranks of all our great recipients of the Citizen of the Year award.

"As a friend and neighbor, I have been fortunate enough to be there when he shares his personal beliefs, 'We must all

try do our part and give back to our community.' He truly believes that Alice has been good to him and that in turn he must be good to Alice," Hank Henry said. "Tracy is focused and committed to the betterment of our community and he backs up this belief with his efforts and support of community projects both large and small, public and private and always unconditionally."

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## LJWC Class visits TX capitol, meets with legislators

Texas Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa told the Leadership Jim Wells County class that the state is in for a shakeup financially during their visit to the capitol in February.

The class along with a delegation from the county were part of Jim Wells County Day at the Capitol that made the trek to Austin. The class met with Senator Hinojosa along with Representative Jose Aliseda during their trip.

The trip agenda had to be modified at the last minute as House Speaker Joe Straus recessed the House a day before the scheduled trip as was the Senate. However, this gave the Alice group a more of a one-on-one meeting with our state elected officials.

“It’s always a pleasure to meet with you all here,” the Senator Hinojosa said. “Because of the budget shortfall, we are going to have to make some drastic measures to save our state.”

Senator Hinojosa’s visit was personable as he met with the Jim Wells contingency in the hallway corridor of the Capitol annex in between his finance committee meeting.

“It was great he took the time out to meet with us,” class member David Sullivan said. “He made some very interesting points that are going to affect us all.” Prior to meeting with the senator, the class got an in-depth look at the capitol with their tour as part of Texas history.

“I had never been in the capitol and was real amazed by it,” class member Sandra Bowen said. “Everyone should make a trip here. They will be amazed at the history that is in here.”

Representative Aliseda took time to take pictures with the Alice group on the House floor. The Representative was joined with constituents from South Texas for the picture.

Following a pictures with the Representative and Hinojosa, the class headed



The leadership class was among county residents participating in JWC Day at capitol.

to a luncheon where Representative Aliseda spoke to the group and entertained questions.



As part of the Texas history and government lesson, the class visited the historical Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

While at the library, some class members viewed a video on President Johnson while others did a self-paced tour of the exhibits

that included a mock of the Oval Office.

The following day headed to the classed to the Bob Bullock Museum to continue their Texas history and government lesson.


The class reconvenes on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> when they study local government.



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# 74th ANNUAL CHAMBER BANQUET

The Alice Chamber of Commerce annual banquet keeps growing and it was not surprising when the KC Hall was filled with guests at the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual banquet.

“For the last three years now, we have continued to grow in the number of sponsored tables and additional tickets. A great deal has to do with the great guest speakers,” Executive Vice President Juan Navejar said. “We are truly blessed to have had great support from our Chamber members.”

Guest speaker, Dr. Suraj G. Kamat gave an eye-opening speech about the health care industry, America and education.

“We have the best country in the world and we need to be treated as such. There needs to be adequate health care for everyone. We are the riches country in the world and yet we cannot take care of our own people,” Dr. Kamat said. “In education we lack in the math and science departments. We cannot afford to short change our children, they are our future.”

Dr. Kamat was received with a standing ovation from the crowd after his speech.

The night also belong to three individuals who have gone above and beyond in our community.

“Each year the Alice Chamber of Commerce recognizes individuals who been an asset to our local community,” Board member Martin Ornelas said. “The Hall of Honor Award was created to honor those citizens who have participated in civic and social activities over many years. These citizens must be at least 50 years or older and may be awarded the Hall of Honor Award posthumously.”

The three individuals inducted into the Hall of Honor were Antonio “Tony” Bill, Elsa Ornelas and Clare Wonders.

Chamber board members Michael Garcia and Ornelas presented the awards.

Other awards included the Alice Ambassador of the Year – Debbie Micallef, Ambassador Emeritus Awards – Melva Alegria, Manuel Galindo and Dene Murphy.

Alice Chamber of Commerce retiring board members, Mirka Pena, Nena Castillo-Pitts, Ralph Gomez and Michael Day were also recognized. The Small Employer of the Year was given to Seidel Whittington and Company, Large Employer Excellence was B&J Air & Pump. The Employer of the Year was awarded the City of Alice. Also recognized was Immediate Past Chamber president Virginia G. Menking.



Photos courtesy of Jerry Smith, Custom Video & Photography

**TOP: Large Employer Excellence Award recipient B&J Air & Pump. MIDDLE: Small Employer Excellence Award recipient Seidel Whittington & Company. BOT-TOM: Employer of the Year City of Alice.**



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>

## How to get discounts for your small business today

As recently as a couple of years ago, a business owner would never have considered searching for an online coupon for a B2B service. That's because you wouldn't have expected to find one.

Today, however, it's just standard practice for many businesses to search online for coupons before they make any major purchase. This simple step can save you literally thousands of dollars in the next few years.

Yet, even though you should think more frequently about searching for online coupons, you also know you have overlooked savings opportunities simply by not being mindful enough of where and how to look for discounts.

And discounts take the form of more than online coupons. Here are five steps to take today to find discounts for your business – both offline and online:

**1. Check all recurring invoices and billing statements for discounts** – You've heard of trade terms, right? Trade terms allow you a discount for early payment of an invoice. Check each and every vendor contract to see if discount terms are indicated in the invoice or other documentation. Don't forget insurance premiums and other types of recurring payments. If discounts are available, do what it takes today to take advantage of those discounts. Schedule automatic electronic payments so that you don't miss early-payment deadlines. If you pay by paper checks, schedule reminders to make sure the checks go out in plenty of time. Instruct your staff or your outside bookkeeper to put through payments promptly to take advantage of discounts. Likewise, be aware of late payment charges and when those kick in – you want to avoid those, too.

**2. Ask for discounts** – If your ongoing vendor arrangements do not contain discounts, evaluate each to determine whether you have enough bargaining power to get better terms. Typically you will have to offer some kind of concession in exchange for a discount – such as committing to minimum purchase volumes or agreeing to pay 6 months or more in advance. *To keep a valued customer, some vendors will gladly offer a discount.* As long as you keep your requests businesslike, you have little to lose – so ask.

**3. Save by consolidating** – Look at all your existing service providers to see if you can consolidate services under a single provider. *By bundling services you may get significant savings.* Telecommunications and Internet services are examples of where it is possible to save through bundled offerings or buying from the same provider. Insurance premiums are another area – you may be able to save by having multiple types of insurance through a single insurance carrier.

**4. Seek out vendor partner program savings** – Visit the website of each of your existing vendors to look for vendor partner programs. Somewhere in the site – perhaps on a page labeled “partners” – you will find information about discounts provided by your vendors' partners. Providers that frequently offer partner savings are: credit card and charge card issuers; telecommunications providers; financial institutions; online communities including forums and discussion boards.

**5. Sign up for vendor newsletters** – I know, I know... we all have email inboxes bursting at the seams. But vendors often send out email communications with special offers and discounts for their own products – and those of their partners. Those emails can save you money.

If you are like many of us, you will be surprised at how many discounts are available for your business if you just start looking for them. Being conscious and mindful of discounts is the first step to saving thousands of dollars.

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# Hunting trophy bucks



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When you're sitting in a deer blind all you do is observe. You are glassing the senders while you wait for that once in a lifetime buck to wander into your hunting grounds. That's the dream. But, there's a lot of work involved to make it happen. Otherwise, it's just sheer luck, like winning the lotto.

Before opening day you're planning and preparing. You're in the field clearing land, planting food crops or setting up feeders, getting camp ready, stationing your game camera's, and a multitude of laborious duties. When rut is on you jump in your ATV armed to the teeth with every possible new gadget and all the necessities such as a rifle with sighted in high-dollar scope, knife, flashlight, side-arm, the best binoculars you can afford, warm camouflaged scent-proof clothing, and possibly other things like blind heaters, deer rattlers for calling in bucks, estrus scent, and too many other things to even mention.

What would be considered the spot-on RIFLE SCOPE in your business? To me it's your business plan, and it needs to be sighted-in continually, meaning your business plan needs to be reevaluated all the time so you can count on accuracy and hitting the mark in all departments.

We need to be this observant in our business rather than on auto-pilot. We must maximize efforts in each area. If employees or you (the proprietor) are wasting time on things that aren't driving revenue – stop it now. That's like using a .22 to kill an 800 pound coastal brown bear ~ are you kidding me? Really? How efficient do you think that would be and what about the risk? Time is being wasted on ineffective ways of doing business and it is risky. Although many leaders don't quite know how to address it, stop it, or willing to take the time to professionally handle it.

It could be a matter of employees not showing-up for work on time and not having the professional procedures in place such as a handbook and formal disciplinary measures to utilize. Along with that goes the human resource training (the professional knowledge) to know how to change disruptive or disengaged behavior in the workplace. Whatever it is that's going on there's an answer or solution for it. Productivity must be maximized and costly problems (such as; expensive lawsuits or injuries) avoided.

Smaller companies without the advantage of a highly trained human resource department are operating at a disadvantage. Ultimately you must find ways to increase profit, control labor cost, and protect your small business or that disadvantage could eat you alive. If you're hunting without spending time in the field beforehand, your odds of getting on a good buck are as good as buying that winning lotto ticket.

Ground shrinkage is what they call a buck that doesn't score well. It's hard to compare a nice buck to a trophy buck if you haven't ever seen one. If you haven't ever had major and/or costly problems in your small business you might not know what measures to put in place.

We've got rules on our deer lease and you could be fined for harvesting a trophy buck that doesn't score appropriately. When big bucks are 200+ yards out with

their magnificent antlers up in the air they look enormous. If you shoot that deer without really knowing the business of hunting whitetail you'll have one of those "uh-oh" moments. That's when you really learn about ground shrinkage. In business you can find yourself in a much worse "uh-oh" moment if you are faced with a lawsuit, OSHA fines, or complex workers' compensation claims.

There are checks and balances you must go through before you pull the trigger. Bucks have a way of slipping in and out of your hunting grounds. You may have seen a really nice buck go into the brush and out slips a similar buck ~ but NOT the same buck upon close examination with your binoculars. Running a business can be pretty tricky, too.

When you're sitting in the blind there are always deer in the herd on the lookout for predators. They will drive you nuts; when you're spotted you must remain motionless until they turn away. In a way each herd is protected because if danger comes from any direction all others are alerted and off they go. Don't you wish your employees were constantly vigilant for anything that could cause your company harm?

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



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Cornerstone Member 2004

# CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

*Alice*  
T e x a s

## Convention & Visitors Bureau

March is here and with that our Winter Texans have begun their trek back home. We thank them for their stay in the area and look forward to having

them back in November.

The Chamber/CVB hosted the Texas Regional Tourism Council meeting in February in Alice at the Maxine Flournoy Third Coast Squadron. Some 18 members attended the meeting and were impressed with the museum. We will host the Texas Tropical Trails meeting in April.

The website continues to see many visitors 512,900 hits since October 1st. Among the targeted web pages was general information about Alice, accommodations and sites. Applications for 2011 project funding are now available at the Chamber of Commerce. We have made some changes in the administering of funding for event promotions.

**The CVB will no longer make checks payable to the applying entity but to the advertising agencies con-**

## REYNA, From Page 1

panel of judges, the five finalists met before the Chamber board for the final selection was made.

Each student had to write an essay as part of the selection process. The students are judged on their essays and extra-curricular activities.

The 13 candidates also competed for the Lowell Hunt Memorial Scholarship presented by the Alice Echo-News Journal for their essay competition. This year's Lowell Hunt Scholarship was awarded to Anna Lissa Garcia.

Reyna was also presented the Franke Funke Scholarship by Wells Fargo Bank during the banquet.

# GRAND OPENINGS



**Dr. Jason Bradford, held a grand opening and Open House on Thurs. Feb. 21, 2011. The new Alice Obstetrics and Gynecological Associates office is located at 2510 E. Main, Suite 106.**

**tracted to promote events.** They will be due 60 days prior to an event in order to receive board approval for events to be held in Alice. All requests must be presented to the Chamber board for approval before granting assistance from the CVB. Funding will be done a bit different this year.

Aside from the application, the CVB will require a business plan and proof of

insurance before awarding funding to assure we are using proper documentation of the hotel tax. People walking through our doors are asking for information on Alice, the area or asked for phone books and maps of Alice and Texas. Some 150 Relocation/information packets were sent out in February. The promotion of Alice through the CVB is administered by the Alice Chamber of Commerce.



**PACS  
is here!**

## e-imaging e-mazing

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

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

 **CHRISTUS SPOHN**  
Hospital Alice  
christusspohn.org

# New tax rates could create new opportunities



**PAUL RYCROFT**  
on Finance

Americans now know that income tax rates are not going up (at the federal level) this year. In fact, most people will temporarily pay less federal tax than was the case previously. The tax savings may create an opportunity for you to

consider putting more money to work toward your key financial goals.

Here is a rundown of what's been put in place effective in 2011 (or in some cases, in 2010):

**Extension of 2010 tax rates** - Federal income tax rates established in 2001 and scheduled to expire at the end of last year are now in place through 2012. Tax brackets start at 10 percent and peak at 35 percent.

**Temporary Employee Payroll Tax Holiday** - For 2011 only, the 6.2 percent Social Security tax deducted from your paycheck (up to the first \$106,800 of Social Security wages in 2011) will be reduced to 4.2 percent. That means an extra \$200 for every \$10,000 of Social Security wages you earn (up to the Social Security wage limit). Note that the reduction does not apply to the employer's contribution to Social Security and the payroll tax related to Medicare for both employers and employees remains unchanged. A similar reduction also applies for self-employment tax.

**Extension of capital gain and dividend tax rates** - Like income tax rates, existing rates on long-term capital gains and qualifying dividends were scheduled to increase at the end of 2010. However, the rates that existed in 2010 have been extended through 2012. The highest applicable tax rate on most long-term capital gains and qualifying dividends is 15 percent and for lower-income taxpayers can be as low as 0 percent.

**Renewal of Education Tax Credit and Other Education-Related Provisions** - The enhancements made to the Hope Scholarship Credit (American Opportunity Tax Credit), which provided for a \$2,500 maximum tax credit per student for the cost of tuition and related expenses paid during a taxable year in 2009 and

2010, is extended to 2011 and 2012. Qualification for the credit is subject to income limits. The credit is phased out for single taxpayers with income over \$80,000 and married couples filing a joint return with income over \$160,000.

Also extended for 2011 and 2012 is the ability of certain individuals to deduct up to \$2,500 in interest on qualified higher education loans from their income taxes. The deduction phases out for individuals earning more than \$60,000 and married couples filing a joint return with income above \$120,000.

Families can continue to invest up to \$2,000 per year in Coverdell Education Savings Accounts in 2011 and 2012. Dollars can grow on a tax-advantaged basis and be used to pay elementary, secondary and higher education expenses.

**Estate Tax Is Back But Affects Fewer People** - The estate tax has been in flux for several years. In 2009, a per-person exclusion of \$3.5 million was in place. Taxable estates valued beyond that amount were subject to a tax of 45 percent. In 2010, the estate tax was scheduled to be repealed, but only for that year. Under the new law, the estate tax is retroactively reinstated for 2010 (but with an elect-out provision) with an exclusion amount set at \$5 million per person, so potentially \$10 million per couple - with a tax rate of 35 percent applying to estates larger than that. The higher exclusion amount and lower rate apply for 2011 and 2012.

What to Consider Now That Rates Are Set

Strategies that may be suitable will depend on your circumstances, but here are some specific ideas to consider in light of the recent tax legislation:

- ◆ Make sure that the amount being withheld from your paycheck is appropriate. Now that you know income tax rates aren't going up this year or next, you are better off avoiding having too much withheld and ending up with a large tax refund every year. This is money that could be put to better use each month, specifically toward your key financial goals.
- ◆ Consider taking the two percent savings from the temporary payroll tax holiday and putting it to work toward your retirement by increasing the amount directed to your workplace savings plan, or making a regular contribution to an IRA.
- ◆ Determine if you should adjust your investment strategies to take advantage of the ongoing favorable rates for long-term capital gains and qualifying dividends.
- ◆ Review your estate plan to determine if any changes are needed in light of the new estate tax laws. Make sure any trusts and wills are up to date and consistent with the

See RYCROFT, Page 14



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# 74th ANNUAL CHAMBER BANQUET



Melva Alegria is presented the Ambassador Emeritus plaque.



Nicole Perez presents Anna Lissa Garcia the Lowell Hunt Award.



Out-going Ambassador president Rachel Munoz says thanks.



Immediate Past President Virginia Menking heralds success.

## RYCROFT, From Page 13

law, especially since the most recent change is only effective through 2012.

- ◆ Stay prepared for future changes. By the end of 2012 at the latest, Congress is likely to have to address many of these same tax issues again. A regular review of your financial and tax situation should be part of your routine.
- ◆ Consult with your financial and tax advisors for more information before making any critical decisions that could have a tax impact.

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# Thank You 2011 Alice Chamber of Commerce Members

AT&T - Texas	Century 21 Hallmark	Heavin & Associates Insurance Agency	Rialto Jewelry
A&W Investments Sunset Terrace Apts.	Chentes Restaurant	Hispanic Heritage Committee	Richardson's Water Well Drilling
A-1 Quality Fence	CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Alice	H.D. Machine & Welding	Right of Way Service Inc.
Acetylene Oxygen Company	Church's Fried Chicken	Holiday Inn Express	Rios, Margot
*Adcity Group, LLC	Circle T Tanning	HomeCare Medical Equip.	Robert Molina - State Farm Insurance
Adcock Pipe & Supply	Clark, J. Karl	Humpal Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine	Rollies BBQ & Country Store
Adventure Moonwalk & Party Rentals	Claro Communications	Hunter Petroleum	Rosas Funeral Home, Inc.
Alamo Credit Recovery, LLC	Coastal Bend Blood Center	International Bank of Commerce	Rush Truck Center, Alice
Alamosa Animal Hospital	Coastal Bend College	*J&J Transportation	Rushing & Gonzalez
Alice Autoplex, Inc.	Coastal Bend Defensive Driving	Jasso Insurance	RSVP Events
Alice Board of Realtors	Coastal Community & Teachers Credit Union	Jim Dean Homes	Saldivar Coastal Services, Inc.
Alicecalendar.com	Community Action Corporation	Joe's Plumbing	*Sandpro Trucking, LLC
Alice Cash & Carry	Community Coalition for Children & Families	Johnny's Blooming Shop	Schuenemann, Josie
Alice Chevrolet Buick GMC	Copper Cantina	Jolene's Merle Norman	*SGC Janitorial Services, L.L.C.
Alice Chiropractic & Wellness Center	Cornelius, Nettie	*Journey Trucking, LLC	Scott Bearing Company
Alice Counseling Center	Cornerstone Baptist Church	K.C. Hall	Scottish Inn
Alice Echo-News Journal	Corpus Christi Hooks	Keetch & Associates	Sears Authorized Dealer Store
Alice Family Eye Center	Counseling Resources of South Texas	L&F Distributors	Seidel, Whittington & Company
Alice Feeder Supply, Inc.	Covance Research Products	La Copita Ranch	SERCO of Texas, Inc.
Alice Heart Center	Cowley Supply Company	La Hacienda Pharmacy	Sherwin-Williams
Alice Housing Authority	Coy, Rehmert & Gutierrez Engs.	Landmarc Field Services	Small Business Dev. Center
Alice ISD	Cruz Drywall & Painting	La Quinta Inn & Suites	Smithwick, Mellie & David
*Alice Little Miss Kickball	CVS	Lopez Finance	SNBL USA, Ltd.
Alice Mini Storage	Dairy Burger	Love Chrysler Dodge Jeep	South TX Blood & Tissue Center
Alice Optimist Club	Dan's Processing Center, Inc.	Luchazie's General Store & Restaurant	South Texas Museum
Alice Paint & Decorating	Day, Michael & Melanae	Malfunction Junction Automotive	South Texas Screening - Driving School
Alice Pest Control, Inc.	Days Inn	Maurices	South Texas Tamales
Alice Police Officers Assoc.	Del Cielo Home Health	Manpower	South Texas Shredding Inc.
Alice Radiator & Muffler	Dee Dee C. Arismendez, Ind. Contractor	March of Dimes	Stewart Title Company
*Alice Screen Printing	Home Interiors	Maresch, Ernestina	St. Elizabeth Catholic School
Alice Skin Care	Deerwood Stevens	McCoys	St. Joseph Catholic School
Alice Shoe Shop	DeLaune Drilling Service	McDonalds	Star Light Limo Service
*All Temps Personnel Services	Devon Energy	McNinch, Leon CPA	State Rep Yvonne Gonzalez-Tourelles
Ameriprise Financial	Dixie Iron Works MSI, Ltd.	Meridian Care of Alice	State Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
Andrews Distributors	Dr. Alejandro Lopez	Mi Familia Adult Day Care	Steamatic of Alice
Angel Care Ambulance	Dr. Andres Elizondo	Model Key Shop	Steve Costley Advertising
Angela Saenz-Ngo	Dr. Bandeira Teixeira	Murdoch Welding	Subway #3
ARAMARK	Dr. Gary T. Cloud, O.D.	Murphy, Dene	*Sylvia Rivera
Apollo Towing	Dr. Roel Garza & Assoc. Family Dentistry	NSCL	Tejano ROOTS Hall of Fame
Armando Marroquin	Dr. Roel Valadez, DDS	N&S Air Conditioning	Texas Champion Bank
Astromatic Car/Truck Wash	Dr. William Nisimblat, M.D.	Neff's Plumbing Service	Texas Star
Atkinson - Wonders	Edwards Furniture	New York Life Insurance	The Copy Center
B&J Air & Pump	*El Capitale Steakhouse	New Sound Hearing Aid	The Jigger
Baker Auto Sales	Elsa's Pill Box	Nortex Bakery & Fast Foods	The Menu Gazette
Ball-Montez Electric Co.	EnDyn OMS, Inc.	Page Water Well Drilling	*The Pottery Company
Barker, Paulette	FESCO, Inc.	*Paisano Mobile Home & RV Park	Third Coast Squadron
Bayarea Fellowship Church	First Choice Diagnostics	Paladium Bowl	*Time Warner
Bedgood, R.E. & Sons	First Community Bank	Panda Chinese Restaurant	Tractor Supply Company
Best Western Executive Inn	First Continental Mortgage Company	Perez, Marisela	Truckers Equipment
Betty Allison Realtors. Inc.	First State Bank of San Diego	Phoenix Global LLC	True Elite Fitness & Well
Betina Vargas - Avon Rep	First United Methodist Church	Picture Perfect Sanitizing	Tutti Frutti Delight
Big House Burgers	Flowers Machine & Welding Co.	Platinum Events	Tyrone City Barber Shop
Bordeaux Apartments	*Fuller Tractor Supply	Plaza Four	Unique Staffing
Bowden Ford	Richard J. Garza, P.C.	Popeye's	United Medical Services
Boys & Girls Club of Alice	*Get Wired Internet Café	Port of Corpus Christi	V.F.W. Post 8621
BriteStar	Gil's Catering	Prodigy Child Academy	VillageProfile.com
Brush Country Bank	Gilbert's Fine Jewelry	Prosperity Bank	VTX Communications
Brush Country Casa	Goodwill of South Texas	*Radiology Associates	Walker, Jack
Brush Country Claims	Guaranty Title & Abstract	Ramirez, Elida S.	Wal-Mart, Inc.
Buckhorn Mini Storage	Gulf Coast Federal Credit Union	Raul Ramirez - State Farm	Weiben Chiropractic Clinic
Byron W. Blair, P.C.	*Gulf Coast Livestock Market	Ray Vess Jewelers	Wells Fargo Bank
C.A. Jackson, Inc.	H&S Constructors, Inc.	R&B Answering Service	Workforce Solutions
Cameron Village Apartments	Halliburton Services	RC Electric	
C.A.W. Company Inc.	Hampton Inn	Realitos Vending	
Carlisle Insurance Agency	H-E-B		<b>*Indicates new 2011 new member</b>



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

## Membership Benefits

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

## Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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