



Business Today

Official Publication of the Alice Chamber of Commerce

business

tradition

service

community

agriculture

oil & gas

growth

Chamber, EDC hosting Job Fair on June 14th

Job Fair
Tues, June 14th
VFW Hall
For more info
call 664-3454

The Alice Chamber of Commerce and the Alice Jim Well County Economic Development is teaming up to host a Job Fair on June 14th at the VFW Hall on North

Texas Blvd.

“With our upturn in our economy due in part to the Eagle Ford Shale discovery, we saw a need to help our businesses with a job fair,” Alice Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Juan Navejar said. “We are being contacted more and more from our members and non-members with requests to help them fill some job vacancies.

The Chamber and EDC is looking for businesses interested in participating in the Fair. Space will be limited to the first 50 businesses wishing to participate.

“As the demand for employees increases due to the Eagle Ford Shale activity and improving economy, the existing labor force is increasingly taxed. This demand presents a good opportunity for those looking to “move up” in their industry or for those looking to change jobs,” EDC Executive Director Dean Kruckenburg said. “The most difficult part of this process can be connecting the prospective employee with an employer. Thus, a job fair can provide that connection. By preparing a current resume and distributing it

See JOB FAIR, Page 14

Congressman meets with businesses



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

Congressman Ruben Hinojosa wants to make sure small businesses in South Texas take advantage of the Eagle Ford Shale discovering that is leading the oil resurgence in South Texas.

“This is the biggest find in 40 years and we need for our small town businesses to thrive from this,” Congressman Hinojosa said. “The economic conditions from the Eagle Ford Shale should create offshoots that create indirect jobs to fund new businesses locally.”

This was the Congressman message in two separate meetings where the Congressman met with various citizens and business people in Alice. The first stop

was a luncheon where he conducted a legislative update before educators and members of the community at the Alice Country Club. The second was a meeting with local business owners in a Roundtable Discussion sponsored by the City of Alice. Assisting Alice City Manager Ray De Los Santos and Congressman Hinojosa were Robert Browning with SCORE, Manuel Ugues from SERCO, Sylvia Zamponi District Director SBA and Debbie Fernandez, District Director SBA. The group discussed various topics to assist our local business owners on how to access free

See ROUND TABLE, Page 14

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From the President

Summer is right around the corner and with it the end of school and kids looking for jobs. Both high school and college students will be looking for employment in the month ahead. If you are a business owner who is looking for help, some of these students might be up your alley. Our Job Fair might be a place to start. It's free to the employer but space is limited. Contact Juan Navejar or Dean Kruckenburg for more information or to register your company.

Speaking of summer, the hot weather is here. If you are looking to save on your electric bill contact the Chamber. Our Electric Coalition might be of some assistance to you. There is no obligation to join but it is only available to Chamber Members. The aggregate billing helps you because other Chamber members are pulled together to find the best possible rate each week. Contact Juan for more info.

Our Annual Golf Tournament is set for May 21st at the Alice Municipal Golf Course. A big THANK YOU to all our hole and ad sponsors as well as **Alice Chevrolet** for being our Hole-In-One Sponsor, **CHRISTUS Spohn** Alice for sponsoring the lunch and **Andrews Distributing** for all the hole signs.

Servando Garza Jr,
2011 Chamber Board President

MOVING ALICE FORWARD TOGETHER!

From the Chamber

I was watching the Learning Channel the other day about bullying among children, then they touched about adult bullying. One would not think about adults bullying each other but it does occur. Something that the show touched on was on bullying in the workplace.

Workplace bullying, like childhood bullying is the tendency of individuals or groups to use persistent aggressive or unreasonable behavior against a co-worker or subordinate. Workplace bullying can include such tactics as verbal, nonverbal, psychological, physical abuse and humiliation. This type of aggression is particularly difficult because, unlike the typical forms of school bullying, workplace bullies often operate within the established rules and policies of their organization and their society. Bullying in the workplace is in the majority of cases reported as having been perpetrated by management and takes a wide variety of forms. Bullying can be covert or overt.

While there is no single formal definition of workplace bullying, several researchers have endeavored to define it. Some categorize all harmful boss-behavior and actions of malintent directed at employees as bullying. Bullying behaviors may be couched in humiliation and hazing rites and iterative programs or protocols framed as being in the best interests of employee development and coaching. Others separate behaviors into different patterns, labeling a subset of those behaviors as bullying, explaining that there are different ways to deal effectively with specific patterns of behavior. Some workplace bullying is defined as involving an employee's immediate supervisor, manager or boss in conjunction with other employees as complicit, while other workplace bullying is defined as involving only an employee's immediate supervisor, manager or boss.

Examples of workplace bullying include: Falsely accused someone of "errors" not actually made; Discounted the person's thoughts or feelings in meetings; Used the "silent treatment" to "ice out" and separate from others; Made up own rules on the fly that even she/he did not follow; Disregarded satisfactory or exemplary quality of completed work despite evidence; Harshly and constantly criticized having a different standard for the target; Encouraged people to turn against the person being tormented; Singled out and isolated one person from coworkers, either socially or physically; Publicly displayed gross, undignified, but not illegal, behavior; Stole credit for work done by others; Created unrealistic demands (workload, deadlines, duties) for person singled out. These are only examples that should help you understand that some bullying does exist and should be stopped in workplaces.

Juan A. Navejar Jr.
Executive Vice President

Celebrate National Small Business Week

Did you know that more than half of Americans own or work for a small business? Industry experts estimate that small businesses create 60 to 80 percent of new jobs in this country.

With those statistics, it is undeniable that small businesses drive our country's employment, economic health and ongoing innovation. To thank the small businesses that are such major contributors to the strength of our economy, the President of the United States has established one week every year since 1963 to specifically honor and serve small businesses.

This year, National Small Business Week (NSBW) will be celebrated May 16th through the 20th, 2011 with a schedule of events planned to support and strengthen small businesses across the nation.

As leaders of local trustworthy businesses, BBB invites you to join its efforts to support your business and strengthen your staff. BBB will be participating in a few local events and training opportunities to help businesses like yours continue to grow and advance

marketplace trust.

Here are a few opportunities BBB recommends for you to celebrate and strengthen your business' success this week:

- ◆ **Host an Event and Request a Featured Speaker:** Invite your customers, employees and community members out to celebrate your business' growth! BBB would be happy to provide a speaker for your event, where a BBB professional could present relevant industry tips and/or highlight the way your business is advancing marketplace trust through BBB Accreditation.
- ◆ **Sign Up For Free Training:** BBB will be offering several free online training webinars during NSBW. Training topics will include: Search Engine Optimization Secrets, Marketing Tips, Sales Strategies and more.
- ◆ **Attend Local Networking Events:** BBB is hosting a workshop on Tuesday, May 17th in its Austin conference room led by business

professionals from University Federal Credit Union and The CPA Team. The workshop will focus on strategic ways to help any business grow, and it will offer time for group discussion and networking.

- ◆ **Freshen Up Your Online Presence:** NSBW would be a great time to update your BBB Business Review, add the BBB Dynamic Seal to your website or add your social media links to your BBB Member Pages directory listing. Please contact BBB Accredited Business Services at 512.445.4748 for help with any of the above online updates.

For more information about the training and events listed above, please visit <http://centraltx.bbb.org/events-calendar>.

To request a BBB speaker, inform BBB of additional training topics or to offer an area of expertise that you would like to share with other Accredited Businesses in a training session, please let BBB know by contacting Lydia Hekman at 512.206.2823 or lheman@austin.bbb.org.

Chamber Golf Tourney - Sat. May 21, 2011

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Elizabeth Ramirez

David Silva

Margaret Smith (Life Member)

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Jack Walker

Clare Wonders

Emeritus

Melva Alegria

Joe Ash

Manuel Galindo

Ralph Gomez

Pedro Jasso

Dene Murphy

Johnny Rivera

ALICE AMBASSADORS

First let me begin by congratulating all mothers on this Mother's Day. Mom's are very special whether yours is with us physically or spiritually. We have some great Chamber members who have Mother's Day gifts or florists who can help you not forget your moms.

Attention all golfers, the Chamber Annual Golf tourney is looking for players. It's a three-person scramble with player handicaps in the A, B, and C category. The tourney begins at 8 a.m. with a Shotgun Start. If you are not a golfer, the Chamber could also use your help as a volunteer for the day of the event with the sale of the Mulligans, Tiger Woods Shot, Closest to the Pin and of course the raffle. The tourney is earlier this year to avoid the South Texas Heat of July.

Don't forget all Veterans this Memorial Day at the end of the month. Memorial Day is a somber occasion where we honor all those veterans who have given their lives for our freedom.

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

- *Nena Castillo-Pitts*

Alice Ambassadors President



Our Mission

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

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



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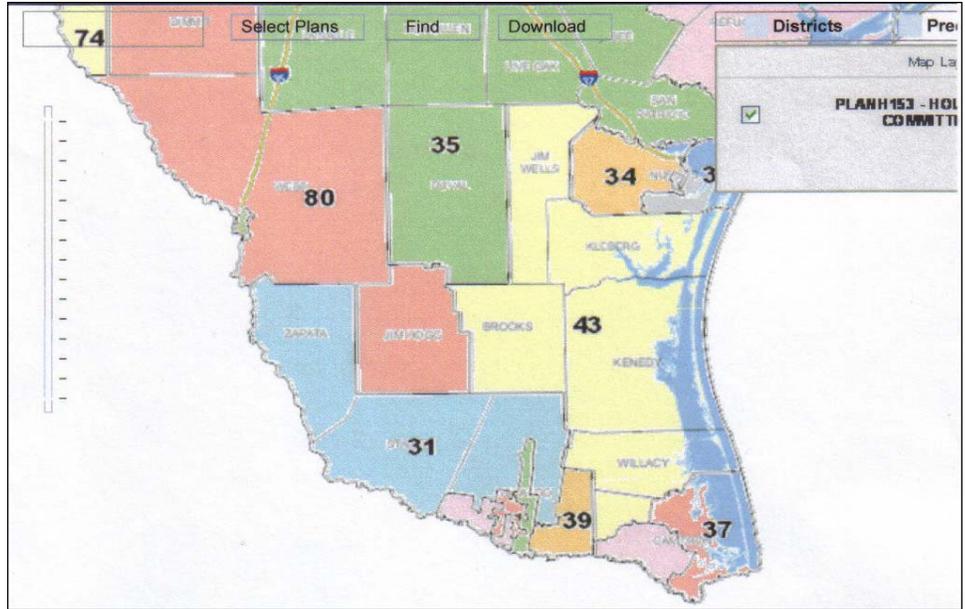
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Jim Wells County headed to new state district

The residents of Jim Wells County will see a new State Representative at the State Election not because of the candidates but because of a redistricting attributed to the 2010 Census Results.

Jim Wells County is currently part of District 35 which is Represented by Jose Aliseda of Beeville. District 35 encompasses Jim Wells, Live Oak, Bee, Atascosa, Karnes, Goliad and McMullen counties. Under the new redistricting, Jim Wells County is headed South to District 43 who is represented by JM Lozano. The new District 43 will have Jim Wells, Kleberg, Brooks, Kenedy and Willacy counties.

“Census numbers showed that HD 35 did not grow as fast as the rest of the state. And, since all legislative districts are required to have about the same number of people, we needed to add nearly 15,000 in population,” Representative Aliseda said. “The district also had to comply with the Voting Rights Act. I worked on this for months and found there were no easy solutions. Surrounding counties either had too few in population or low Hispanic numbers. As a result, we had to create a district that



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

retained Atascosa, McMullen, Live Oak and Bee Counties and added LaSalle and Duval while removing Jim Wells, Karnes and Goliad. I am sad to lose those counties. I've worked hard in the legislature to represent their interests and have developed relationships with the people that

live there.”

The redistrict map still needs to be passed by the Senate before adoption takes place. Following the census, the House Districts had to be divided so that each of the 150 representatives represents a (roughly) equal amount of population.

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Third Annual Chamber Golf Classic

Saturday, May 21, 2011

Alice Municipal Golf Course

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

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

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

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will be available for startup or existing small businesses in Alice, Texas on Tuesday, May 10, 2011 to explain SBA's loan programs, eligibility, and free technical assistance from SCORE & SBDC. Updates resulting from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus Package) will also be discussed. Individual appointments will be seen from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 am at the Alice Chamber of Commerce, 612 East Main Street, 78333. Please call Debbie Fernandez at 361-879-0017, Ext. 302 for an appointment.

Celebrating community spirit

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

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Contact Laura Gonzalez
361.389.1735

Lauragonzalez_06@yahoo.com

Tourism and technology

In these precarious economic times, the hospitality industry composed of tourism and travel is facing a quintessential question. Technology has the great advantage that it allows tourism industries to replace expensive human labor with technological labor, thus not only reducing labor costs but also avoiding issues of customer service. Yet technology may produce a whole new set of unintended consequences.

How does it draw the line between technology and personal service? There is no doubt that technology plays an important role in tourism and travel. Most of us are now used to booking our airline reservations on line, dealing with telephone trees and other cost saving devices. These technological advances have allowed corporations to save on manpower while at the same time empowering customers to make their own decisions. On the other side of the equation, travelers use more technology than ever before and often the tourism industry has taken advantage of this desire (need) to stay in touch with its clientele. Most of us are now used to being almost harassed with on-line surveys or computer driven telephone calls. Now we have entered into the world of e-marketing, a system that may be called an advanced form of "spam."

Although many hotels do provide free internet services, many of the "better" hotels have added additional charges for

local calls, for internet access and a per page fee to receive a fax. These additional charges combined with less personalized service often means that travelers have the idea that technology has become a one-way street. Technology is used to provide less personalized service and at the same time to generate additional revenue at hotels, on airplanes, and at transportation hubs. Despite the misuse of technology, tourism and travel are highly dependent on technology and its use has made life a whole lot easier. There is no doubt that the cell phone has become a major part of our lives. And although technology etiquette may lag behind technology machinery the inconvenience of someone speaking too loud on a cell phone is more than outweighed by the safety, security and convenience that cell phones bring to most of us. On the other hand, technology's growth has allowed worldwide terrorism to attack the tourism industry. Cell phones can save lives or detonate bombs; air conditioning units serve to make life bearable in hot climates, but also pollute the atmosphere and can be carriers of disease. The dawn of the computer age permits us to know weather forecasts around the world, allows business travelers to stay in touch with their offices and to supersede the problem of cross time zones negotiation, but can be used to destroy air travel.

Technology then has become a mixed

bag for the tourism industry. It creates a great deal of conveniences while at the same time has been used as a way to increase revenues and to lessen customer service. The world of technology has made air travel safe and abundant but has also brought about the need to go through long security lines and daily hassles. Certainly, some parts of the industry have begun to use technology prudently. When used ethically, technology can be a great help in increasing our communication and security. If on the other hand technology is used for selfish or destructive purposes than it can become a nemesis within the travel and tourism industry. Hamlet's question "to be or not to be" has never seemed more poignant in its relationship to travel and tourism. To help you decide how much or how little technology is right for your tourism business, Tourism Tidbits offers the following suggestions:

-Remember that tourism is about people "interfacing" with other people. No matter how good your technology may be, technology does not provide human warmth of take-home experiences. Be mindful that tourism is about the selling of memories and then ask yourself at what point are you willing to sacrifice memories for efficiency.

-Make sure that your employees are well trained in the use of technology. Often tourism centers hire people who simply

See TIDBITS, Page 8



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LJWC Class gets lesson on local governments

The Leadership Jim Wells County Class went back to school during its last session as they studied the education system.

Meeting with Alice Independent School District Superintendent Dr. Salvador Cavazos, the class was given a tour of the administrative building before a question and answer session with the superintendent. The one-on-one session gave the class a better inside how the AISD operates as well as ask questions regarding the state budget cuts, curriculum as well as questions about policy. Dr. Cavazos also gave a briefing on the upcoming school bond election.

After their meeting with the superintendent it was a short walk across the street to tour Alice High School. For some members of the class, it was the first time to see the inside of the school that was expanded recently. The class toured the gyms, cafeteria, band hall as well as



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

some of the classrooms that included the health and technology areas.

Following lunch, it was off to Coastal Bend College where fellow class members Dr. Patricia Candia and David Sullivan

provided a tour of the campus.

The class will reconvene in May to study communications and ethics.

TIDBITS, Page 7

are not up to the task, misuse the technology and create more problems than they solve. Train, train and then train your people some more. Do not update so often that your employees' knowledge base lags behind the technology's capabilities.

-Use technology wisely: While even the best computer can never substitute the care and love that comes from another human being, technology if used properly can solve many a problem in tourism. Among these are:

* Issues of time. Nothing upsets the tourism industry's clientele as much as the misuse of time. The proper use of computers to facilitate both check-ins and check-outs of places such as hotels, allows the person-on-duty to attend to other problems.

* Clarity and consistency. In an interrelated multi-lingual world a great

deal of information can be provided to guests in their own language without linguistic, pronunciation or grammatical errors.

* Ease of place - use technology and

social networks to allow visitors to research from home and to gather basic information. However, many hotels and transportation companies seem to hide telephone numbers on their web.

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BUSINESS TIP

Business tips that make or break a business. We'll use a restaurant as an example, but the principles we describe below are applicable to any business. **It's Not Enough Just To Know** So you think that just because you know what you're doing in your respective field you're going to be a successful business owner? When you hang out that open sign on day one, it is unlikely that customers will flock to you right away just because you know what you're doing. Promotion, publicity and a good management team have to be implemented in order to get things stated. How many chefs or self-professed foodies have you met or known to open a restaurant because they love food and cooking, only to have it close down months or years later because people weren't beating a path to their door when they opened? Just creating dishes isn't enough, you also have to make people aware of your creations. You also need to know how to run the financial side of your business, which may require an accountant, bookkeeper or manager.

FROM OUR MEMBERS



Holiday Inn Express is holding a Biggest Loser Contest among its employees. Pictured is Keith Kapoor, Judy Kapoor, Olga Padilla, Rosa Haney, Nicki Carrizales, Yvonne Diaz and Belinda Benavides.

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

Business success: Five ingredients needed for success

Monitoring Your Business Competitors

No matter what type of business you have, whether you are at home, in a store front, or online, you are going to want to keep your eye on the competition.

This is important for several reasons. You need to be sure that you are getting the most customers that you can and that you are meeting the needs of these customers so that you can keep them and get others.

In order to do this successfully, you have to be sure that you are keeping up with what your competitors are doing. This has always been the case, from the time that business itself was new. Competition is just that. However, it has lately changed in several ways.

First of all, in the past you keep up with what the top of the field was doing. The business at the top was getting all of the

customers, all of the best deals and was just in generally at the place that you wanted to be.

This meant that everyone had their eye on who was above them and was sure to keep up with them as much as they could. However, this has changed lately due to several factors.

Because of the internet and of the fact that someone can sell just as many units of something from their basement as they can from a warehouse, you have to be aware of what all of the people in your field are doing, even the little guys.

In the past the small companies that were just starting out would not have caused you any problems.

However, now that these little guys are able to swoop up out of nowhere and own the market very easily, within just a few years, you have to keep your eye on each of them as well.

Another thing that has changed is distance. In the past, you only had to worry about what your competitors in your same area were doing because they were the ones who could get your cus-

tomers away from you. Now, however, when just about everything is available online, you are going to find that it does not matter where the other businesses are, they can still be competition for you, even in your own home town.

This means that you have to find something that only you can do, or a hook that only you are going to be able to use and you have to strive to set yourself apart from all of the others that are doing the same thing you are.

This might seem tough at first but once you have gotten the hang of it, you will see that the competition that is all around the world is actually going to make your business stronger and make you more able to compete in a world wide market...

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Mother's Day

May 8, 2011

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If it wasn't happening in your business it might actually be funny . . . things your employees say to clients, the demand for payment for services never received, forgotten meetings with important clients, all of these things can get you so wound up you forget where you

parked your car or your wife's name!

I see many leaders caught up in act of balancing meetings with management duties and it takes up 100 percent of their time? Don't you wonder where time goes and how you will ever get it all done? There's not enough time for addressing all the items on your list, let alone resolving them. In addition to professionally handling your duties, are you sure that every department of your company is being run efficiently and appropriately?

Company execs have it tough managing core and non-core duties. Business leaders feel like they're continuously chasing two pigs and the reality of it is you cannot catch one pig if you are too busy chasing two.

Seriously, the answer is at hand, as non-core activities can be handled by professionals that will assure you up-to-date compliant services and low cost solutions.

Professional Employer Organizations (PEO's) are standing ready to partner with you and take that monkey off your back. It's cheap compared to what the monkey might cost you.

One unprecedented suit, claim, or judgment can put your assets in harms way. Surprisingly, the little things you may not have even thought about can be financial landmines.

Let highly trained PEO employees ensure government compliance, payroll accuracy, timely tax payments, safety training, HR solutions, etc. You will no longer have to worry about being up to speed with the ever-changing landscape of regulations imposed on your business.

Don't be afraid of the unknown – PEO's can be G O O D for business. Look into what a professional employer organization can do for your company. Multitudes of business leaders are jumping at the chance to get rid of the headache of internally handling non-core duties. Their feet are already held to the fire for maximizing their investments. Non-core duties take up precious time. In addition, precious time is used managing employees doing non-core duties. Be smart - let it go, outsource to a PEO!

Let the PEO assume responsibility for human-resource functions, including payroll. Another immeasurable service provided is the one every company decision maker needs to be looking at - asset protection. A good PEO will bring a solution-based program to the table, not just a handful of services.

Outsourcing HR also includes workers' compensation insurance, claims management, and the expertise to address unemployment claims. Minimizing risk can help with budgeting, long-term asset protection, and growth strategies.

Meeting with a PEO business consultant will provide you with a synopsis of services that will be provided, but it's only after the evaluation is completed and their business model is presented that you will know how they can help and what the cost will be. It is difficult to provide business leaders with solutions for their busi-

ness without knowing a few pertinent details. Without company statistics business consultants can't offer any tangible advice . . . they might as well just advise you to never walk down the hall without a document in your hands, as people with documents in their hands look like hardworking executives or employees heading for important meetings. And please don't forget, people with newspapers in hand look like they're heading for the bathroom. Kidding aside, it's always a good idea to know your options and a PEO is definitely a viable. They can provide immeasurable services for a very modest cost.

Many Professional Employer Organizations have thousands and thousands of employees under their umbrella. This brings their aggregate buying power to you, the small to medium sized business owner. Now you too can offer reasonably priced benefits, such as health insurance or 401k plans, to retain cream of the crop employees. Ensure the future success of your company by bringing in a win-win business solution. No more monkey business driving down profits and company morale. Look to outsourcing professionals to eliminate risk and give you the time it takes to take your business to the next level.

For more information on PEO service, contact Connie Laughlin at (800) 824-8367 or by email at conniel@uniquehr.com.



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Cornerstone Member 2004

CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Alice
T e x a s

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Summer is right around the corner and the CVB Information Center has literature to help plan a trip somewhere in Texas. If you are headed out

of state, we can assist you in obtaining info from other Information Centers across the US.

The Texas Tropical Trails met in Alice with the Chamber/CVB playing host to the group at the Third Coast Squadron Museum and La Copita Ranch. Some 22 members attended the meeting in Alice.

The Noon Lions will host their Annual Road Kill Festival on May 6-7 at the Jim Wells County Fairgrounds. There will be plenty for the entire family.

The Annual Fiesta Bandana fest has been postponed. The new date has not been set but organizers said possible date would be early fall.

The website continues to see many visitors 685,080 hits since October 1st. Among the targeted web pages was general information about Alice, accommo-



Members of the Texas Tropical Trails tour the Third Coast Squadron Museum.

dations and sites. Applications for 2011 project funding are now available at the Chamber of Commerce. We have made some changes in the administering of funding for event promotions.

The CVB will no longer make checks payable to the applying entity but to the advertising agencies contracted to promote events. They will be due 60 days prior to an event in order to receive board approval for events to be held in Alice. All requests must be presented to the Chamber board for approval before granting assistance from

the CVB. Funding will be done a bit different this year.

Aside from the application, the CVB will require a business plan and proof of insurance before awarding funding to assure we are using proper documentation of the hotel tax. People walking through our doors are asking for information on Alice, the area or asked for phone books and maps of Alice and Texas. Some 55 Relocation/information packets were sent out in April. The promotion of Alice through the CVB is administered by the Alice Chamber of Commerce.



Alice Optimist Club
26th Annual BBQ Fundraiser
Combination Sausage
& Brisket Plate
Sunday, May 8, 2011
VFW Patio - N. Texas Blvd
11 am - 2 pm
Donation \$7
Proceeds benefit the Youth of Alice



e-imaging e-mazing

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

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



Spring means time for financial house cleaning



PAUL RYCROFT
on Finance

It's spring at last. The birds are singing and the smell of barbeque fills the air. As you perform such springtime rituals as garage and basement cleaning, why not take some time to spruce up your finances? Review these important items now so you can relax and enjoy the budding season knowing that your financial house is in order.

Your budget. There's a good chance that your cash flow needs will vary during the summer months. Not only does summer travel come into play, but you may also need additional funds for child care while the kids are away from school. This review may also reveal opportunities to trim expenses and increase savings goals.

Your credit standing. Did you know that you are entitled to one free credit report annually from each of the three major credit bureaus? Spring is a good time to request yours from Equifax (equifax.com), Experian (experian.com) and TransUnion (transunion.com). You can also get copies at no cost from annualcreditreport.com. By reviewing the reports carefully you can find anything from old accounts that should be closed to outright identity theft.

Your financial records. Spring is an excellent time to sort through old statements, pay stubs, bills and other records

that you no longer need. Be sure to keep up to six years of records to support your tax deductions, since that's how long the IRS has to audit you.

Your protection needs. While decluttering and filing paperwork, take time to review life, homeowner, auto and disability policies to make sure you are still satisfied with your level of coverage. If you've experienced any life changing events like divorce or the birth of a child, your needs have changed and it's time for an insurance and beneficiary review.

Your estate plan. Estate planning is not just for the wealthy. While tax reduction and gifting strategies come into play for those with considerable assets, everyone needs the most basic estate plan. If you haven't already done so, make sure you have an up-to-date will, health care directive and basic powers-of-attorney.

Your benefits. Even though fall is traditionally open enrollment time, spring is a good time to make sure the benefits you've elected are being maximized. If you are covered by a health savings plan, make sure you are using the investment component to your advantage.

Your investment and savings plans. There's no better time for an annual review to help make sure you are on track to reach your financial goals. The process can help keep tabs on your net worth, cash flow and portfolio value. It's also a good way to determine if your portfolio has strayed from your intended asset allocation and rebalance if necessary.

Most importantly, don't let your financial house cleaning overwhelm you. Tackle items one at a time and consult your financial advisor for help along the way.

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

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

Chamber Members have you optimized your page yet?

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

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

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ROUND TABLE, From Page 1

information to enhance their current businesses.

“Stakeholders and entrepreneurs in small businesses like yours and others can get an idea on how to access business friendly information and grow into much larger businesses by accessing these agencies,” the Congressman said. “More than ever our small businesses have the resources it takes to start up or expand their business.”

The Congressman credits the 2010 Small Business Job Act that increased much needed lending to millions of small businesses while offering eight new tax incentives to companies for expansion, hiring and fuel the economy.

“The Job Act helped small businesses with 500,000 new jobs and established \$30 billion in lending funds like those here in Alice,” Hinojosa said. “It helped leverage our economy with \$12 billion in tax relief with incentives and changes to the SBA loans.”

Zamponi said the Job Act helped with critical resources especially in a tough economy.

“Starting a new business is risky. We have better resources in place to help you. You have to have a good business plan and we have the people who can help you do that,” Zamponi said.

While there are no grants available for starting a business, the Job Act assured

JOB FAIR, From Page 1

to employers at the job fair, the prospective employee can start the process to a brighter future.”

Business should contact the Chamber to obtain a registration form. There is no cost to the business. Each business will be provided a table and chairs. Space for interviewing will also be provided.

“While we are still in the planning stages of this event, we are welcome companies who would love to assist us,” Navejar said. “We understand the needs of the employers and wish to connect them with those who are looking for job vacancies.”

For more information or to participate contact the Chamber or EDC at 361-664-3454.

RIBBON CUTTING



The City of Alice held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the King Street Bridge on April 18, 2011.

funding to keep the Small Business Administration with programs like SCORE and the Small Business Development Center open to assist you with your business.

“I see people in Alice once a month or by appointment,” Fernandez said. “I

have a good working relation with the Juan (Navejar) and the Chamber of Commerce to service customers there when ever I need to.”

The panel also discussed various other topics from tax changes to health care for small businesses.



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Cornerstone Member 2004

Thank You 2011 Alice Chamber of Commerce Members

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



Alice Chamber of Commerce
612 East Main
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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.