



BUSINESS

Official Publication of the Alice Chamber of Commerce

business

tradition

service

community

agriculture

oil & gas

growth

Chamber/EDC hosting Open House

**Tuesday
December 22nd**

**2 - 4 p.m.
Chamber of
Commerce**

The Alice Chamber of Commerce, Convention & Visitors Bureau and Alice Jim Wells County Economic Development welcome the Alice community to an Open House

on Tuesday, December 22, 2009 from 2 - 4 p.m. at the Chamber.

Last year, more than 30 Alice Chamber of Commerce members and friends attended the Open House.

Guests were welcomed by board members of both the Chamber and EDC.

"We had a great turnout last year and expect a bigger one this year," Chamber director Juan Navejar said. "We have made some changes in the lobby and visitor's center and want to share our new look with the community."

The goal of the Chamber/CVB and EDC is create a positive economic image to our community. All three agencies provide services that can benefit many.

The Chamber provides services to its members which include free use of its conference room, electrical service discounts, advertising opportunities and referrals to name a few.

The CVB's role is to promote Alice and the area to all who are inquiring about the Hub City. The CVB offers both city/county and state maps, brochures of the area, South Texas and the Lone Star State

OPEN HOUSE, From Page 7

Christmas arrives in Hub City



Alice Mayor Dr. Rito Silva Jr. welcomes the crowd prior to officially turning on the lights of downtown and kicking off the parade.

Old man winter brought the North Pole South to the Hub City as the 28th Annual Christmas Parade made its way to downtown Alice.

Cold rain postponed the annual parade one night. Despite the delay the crowds still flocked downtown the following night to await the lighting of downtown and await the arrival of Santa Claus officially kicking off the Holiday Season.

Alice Mayor Dr. Rito Silva Jr. and City Council members led the parade stopping at Heldt Park to turn on the City Christmas lights and getting the

parade underway.

"I am glad we waited one night for this as this is much better weather," Alice Mayor Dr. Rito Silva told the crowd as he welcomed everyone to the parade. "On behalf of the city, we welcome the official start of the holiday season in Alice."

And with that, the lights were lit after a count down, opening the streets of Alice to the parade.

More than 50 units bared the cold

See PARADE, Page 14

2009

Chamber Leadership

Executive Committee

Gap Alaniz

President

First Community Bank

Yvette Johnson

Immediate Past President/VP-CVB

Individual Member

Virginia Garcia

V.P. AJWC-EDC President Elect

WorkForce Solutions of the Coastal Bend

Nena Pitts

V.P. - Membership

CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital Alice

Rito Silva

V.P. - Civic

Coastal Bend College

Hector Hinojosa

Treasurer

City of Alice

Board of Directors

Mark Alaniz

Love Chrysler Jeep of Alice

Dee Dee Arismendez

Home Interior Ind. Contractor

Mark Casanova

CHRISTUS Spohn Alice

Lawrence Cornelius

Century 21

Michael Day

Individual Member

Servando Garza

Coym, Rhemet & Associates

J.R. Gonzalez

Wells Fargo Bank

R. David Guerrero

JWC Dist. Clerk

Robert Molina

State Farm Insurance - Robert Molina

Mirka Pena

Dixie Iron Works/MSI

Ex-Officio

Ray De Los Santos

City of Alice

Staff

Juan A. Navejar Jr.

Chamber Director

Veronica Castillo

Administrative Assistant

From the Chamber



Where has the year gone! Hard to believe my tenure as board president will come to an close at the end of the month. It has been a great and exciting year for the Chamber.

We had our first golf tournament which had not occurred in a while with great success. Our Second Annual Skeet Shoot brought some new faces and groups to Alice. Those two events along with the annual banquet brought some additional revenue to the Chamber for its day-to-day operations.

Our Mixers have been well attended this year with five of them being hosted by various members. Our final one of the year will be on December 17th at the new Alice Heart and Vascular Center. We invite all our members to attend this one. This will also serve as an Open House for the Heart Center's new building. Bring your business cards and network by promoting your business.

Just a reminder to our members, the 2010 Investment statements went out by email and mail last month. We rely on your investment dues for our day-to-day operations. Without your investments, the Chamber cannot function.

If you did not attend the Annual Parade you missed a great one despite the cold weather. Great job to the Chamber staff and the City of Alice for putting on the parade.

Don't forget the Chamber will have an Open House on Tuesday, December 15th from 2-4 p.m. Come out and meet our board members and staff.

Merry Christmas all. Remember to Shop Alice this Holiday Season.

Agapito "Gap" Alaniz Jr., Chamber Board President



DJ's Saloon held a grand opening ceremony on Monday, November 4, 2009. The new establishment is located six miles north of Alice on Hwy 359 and is owned by Balboa family.

FTC: BlueHippo business model is “Built on Deceit”

Last week, the Federal Trade Commission asked a federal court to [issue a contempt order](#) against Maryland-based BlueHippo Funding, LLC for violating a court ordered settlement issued in April 2008. BBB serving Central, Coastal and Southwest Texas first alerted consumers to this computer dealer in a [press release](#) on May 8, 2009. Since then, 12 additional consumers in the local area have filed complaints against BlueHippo.

In a [statement released by the FTC](#), Chairman Joe Leibowitz stated, “We’re putting companies like this on notice: If you mistreat consumers and thumb your nose at the courts, we will hold you accountable.”

BlueHippo claims to provide an alternative for people with limited financing options, such as poor or no credit, to own expensive items like computers. Consumers across the country complain the company does not deliver merchandise on time, does not provide a contract, denies refunds and makes unauthorized withdrawals to their bank accounts.

“According to BBB records, Blue

Hippo has targeted a vulnerable group of consumers with poor credit and taken advantage of them,” said Carrie A. Hurt, President and CEO of BBB serving Central, Coastal and Southwest Texas. “BBB supports the Federal Trade Commission’s efforts to stop BlueHippo and hold them accountable.”

In the past 36 months, BBB has received 4,145 complaints about BlueHippo, and the company has failed to respond to any complaint filed since February 2009. Click [here](#) to view BlueHippo’s current BBB Reliability Report™.

The company has a BBB rating of F due to failure to comply with an arbitration decision or mediation settlement, failure to respond to 2,516 complaints, the company’s overall complaint history and past government action taken by The Attorneys General in Maryland, West Virginia and Illinois.

Consumers like Kim Becerra of San Antonio continue to be out substantial amounts of money.

“I still don’t have a computer,” said Becerra. “I filed a complaint with my bank to get my money back, but BlueHippo denied the refund.”

BBB offers the following tips when ordering items by phone or online:

- ◆ **Protect your private information.** When shopping online, look for the retailer’s Web site privacy policy and never provide your Social Security number, birth date, or mother’s maiden name.
- ◆ **Don’t wait for paper statements.** Check your credit card and bank statements for suspicious activity by calling your bank or visiting your financial institution’s Web site.
- ◆ **Check the company’s refund policies.** Some merchants set a deadline for returns or charge a fee to accept returned merchandise.
- ◆ **Pay with a credit or debit card.** For extra protection enroll your card in anti-fraud programs.

To check the reliability of a company, visit www.bbb.org.

USDA gets \$35 million for distance learning

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that 111 projects in 35 states have been selected to receive more than \$34.9 million in grants that will increase educational opportunities and access to health care services in rural areas. The funding will be provided through USDA Rural Development’s Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program. Five projects in Texas have been selected to receive \$1,443,395.

“The Obama Administration is working to ensure that rural citizens have access to a full range of educational opportunities and access to quality medical care,” Vilsack said. “The funding we are announcing today will deliver these opportunities by expanding telecommunications, educational resources and computer networks throughout rural communities.”

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program provides access to education, training and health care resources in rural areas. Funding is

contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. These funds are part of USDA’s annual budget and are not part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“Schools and health care providers in rural Texas have increasingly tighter budgets. Grants such as these are powerful tools for providing expanded edu-

cational and health care opportunities which otherwise may be unavailable,” Paco Valentin, USDA Rural Development State Director of Texas said

Coastal Bend College will receive \$193,786 to enable their Distance Learning and Allied Health Training Project to high schools located in Benavides, Karnes City, Pettus, Skidmore and Woodsboro.

Your First Step to Success

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Coastal Bend College Alice Center

704 Coyote Trail - Alice, Texas 78332
(361) 664-2981 - Toll Free 1-866-891-2981 - www.coastalbend.edu

Alice Ambassadors

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

Emeritus
Joe Ash
Ralph Gomez
Pedro Jasso
Johnny Rivera



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

ALICE AMBASSADORS

It's December - wasn't that a nice Christmas Parade. Once again the Chamber staff and the City of Alice did a great job with the decorating of Downtown and the annual parade. The Chamber did a great job in organizing the parade and the city with the decorating. Great job all.

December means shopping, shopping and shopping. Alice stores have some great bargains. Contact the Chamber for a list of its members who can provide you with great savings. Shop Alice First this Holiday Season.

Congratulations to the new Alice Ambassador officers. I will remain as president for one more year and will be joined by Bruce Menking as vice president, Margaret Smith remains as treasurer and Debbie Micallef joins as secretary. Officers will serve a one-year term beginning in January.

We invite everyone the Open House at the Chamber on Tuesday, Dec. 15th from 2 - 4 p.m. and the Chamber Mixer on Thursday, Dec. 17th from 5:30 - 7 p.m. at the Alice Heart and Vascular Center.

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

Rachel Munoz

2009 Alice Ambassador President



Our Mission

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



- Production Testing
- Offshore Services
- Braided and Slickline Services
- Frac Flowbacks
- Hydraulic Choke Manifolds
- Frac Valves
- Pipeline "Pigging" Separators
- Capillary Tubing Services
- P-V-T Laboratory
- P-V-T Simulations
- Hydrocarbon Laboratory
- Reservoir Fluid Sampling
- Pressure Transient Analyses



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