

Hang Your Hat In History
OZONA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& VISITOR CENTER PARK

P.O. Box 1135, 505 15th Street, Ozona, TX 76943
325/392-3737, 325/392-3485 Fax, www.ozona.com



CHAMBER DIALOGUE

Volume 12

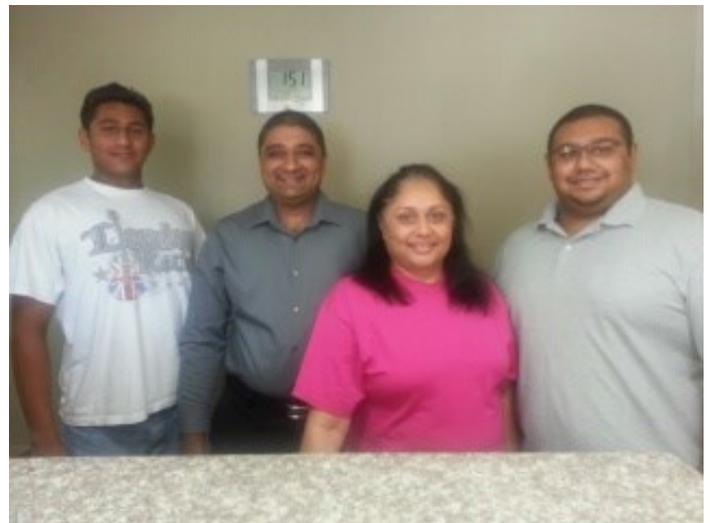
Number 5

May 2014

Chamber of Commerce recognizes the Economy Inn & RV Park as our Business of the Month

The Ozona Chamber of Commerce recognizes the Economy Inn & RV Park as the Business of the Month .

“Our ‘motel family’ at the Economy Inn and RV Park is honored to have been selected as the Business of the Month by the Ozona Chamber of Commerce,” said owner J.R. Bhakta. “We are indebted to everyone in Ozona for their continued support, and thankful for their many local referrals to the Economy Inn. We have been proud to host the members of local families and the many business associates. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all our guests for their patronage. We are excited to be part of the Ozona community, and look forward to many more years of welcoming travelers to Ozona and Crockett County. “



Left to right: Deep Patel, Bhavik Bhakta, Kalpu Patel, Kauntey Patel

The Economy Inn & RV Park is owned by J.R. Bhakta and is currently being managed by Divyesh Patel and his family. “We would like to thank Divyesh, Kalpu, Kauntey and Deep Patel who have been at the Economy Inn for 3 1/2 years and are moving on to Houston to further their education. Bhavik Bhakta will take over management of the property next month.”

The Economy Inn offers ten extra spacious guest rooms featuring a choice of king and double queen rooms with parking right in front of the room, smoking and non-smoking, micro-waves, refrigerators, DISH HD programming and flat-screen TV’s, wired and wireless Internet, iron and ironing board, and coffee makers. Three of the rooms also include kitchenettes. “We are currently finishing a remodel of all rooms,” said Kalpu Patel.

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The RV Park has 24 pads featuring 30 and 50 Amp services with full hook-ups including cable, electricity, water, and sewage. Pets are allowed and the park is conveniently accessible right off Interstate-10.

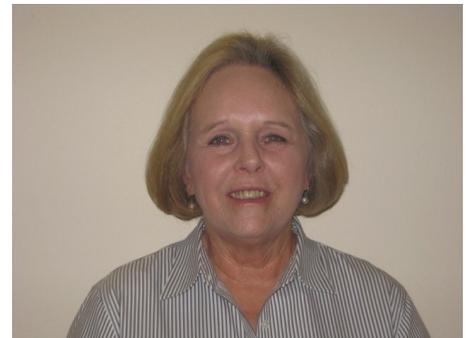
The Economy Inn & RV Park is located at 1103 Avenue A, right off I-10 and Exit 365 behind the Best Western. For more information you may contact the Economy Inn & RV Park at 325/392-3394.

The Chamber of Commerce would like to recognize Economy Inn & RV Park for their efforts to provide quality service in addition to being an added asset to the local business community.



Welcome new Board of Director

Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors recently appointed Deborah to the board to serve a three year term. Welcome and thank you for your service!



Deborah Bourne—Ozona Insurance

Happy Anniversary

The Ozona Chamber of Commerce would like to wish the following members a **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**, and **THANK** them for their support of the Chamber organization, its programs and services, and your community. We would like to recognize and express our **SINCERE** appreciation to the following members who joined during the month of May

MAY

- J. Cleo Thompson - Ozona 1996
- West Texas Rehabilitation Center 1998
- Crockett County Museum 1999
- Crockett County Public Library 1999
- The Permian Basin's Better Business Bureau 2000
- Ball & Strunk Partners, Ltd 2007
- Re-Bath of San Angelo 2008
- Hunnicut Ranch 2009
- Multi-Chem Group, LLC 2010
- Ozona Remodeling & New Construction 2010
- Mi Taco 2010



Your invitation to visit the Crockett County Interpretive Trail

The Chamber of Commerce hosted a soft opening of Ozona's *NEWEST ATTRACTION*, the Crockett County Interpretive Trail on Saturday, May 10th. County officials, locals, Chamber Board of Directors, trail committee members, and out of town visitors who have been watching the development of the project were present.

"This project has been on-going for sometime. Today we wanted to take an opportunity to thank all of those who have contributed to the project since it began," said Shanon Biggerstaff, Chamber Executive Director. "We wanted to thank the Crockett County Commissioner's Court who partnered with the Ozona Chamber of Commerce to provide property for both the Visitor Center and the Interpretive Trail, Reece Albert of San Angelo for helping to get us going on the initial phase of the trail, the Crockett County Road Department who back in 2010 got us over a major hurdle, all of our past Interpretive Trail Committee members, our current committee Chairman, Sally Oglesby, and all of the donors who purchased a memorial bench or rock sign that helped with the finishing touches of the trail. Last but not least we recognized our Trail Designer, Terry Tate of Mertzson who has worked tirelessly on the trail. We now have a product that both the local community can access as an educational site, and a new attraction that is already drawing visitors off the interstate into our community," said Biggerstaff.

Following a presentation, all guests were then invited to tour the trail. Co-author Willa Finley, of the book *Lone Star Wildflowers*, was on hand for a book signing. She and LaShara Nieland (cousin of our trail designer Terry Tate) wrote the book. Guests enjoyed homemade cookies and punch, and headed to the trail with their brochures in hand.



Guests using their brochure to tour the trail and identify plants!



Trail Designer– Terry Tate talking with guests.

It didn't take long to strike up some interest after the soft opening of the trail.

Smiles and excitement filled the air as local educators, Susan Williams, Briana Clark, and Christi Pena brought two Ozona Elementary School third grade classes (76 students) for a morning field trip to the Crockett County Interpretive Trail, located at the Ozona Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center. The students were wrapping up their last unit on habitats and ecological systems. Part of their assignment was to draw and label at least 24 different kinds of native plants in a small booklet they had prepared beforehand. Using the commemorative stones donated by local businesses and individuals, the small groups of children were excited as they identified various plants throughout the trail. The Chocolate Flower was a huge success, drawing much praise for the chocolate aroma that can be smelled on its leaves and petals. "It smells so good!" said one student, while another exclaimed, "The Indians were so lucky! They had it everywhere!" Many agreed that it made them want to eat some chocolate as soon as possible. Prior to arriving at the trail, the students had studied about the history of the plant life in the area, and understood that many of the plants have become very rare in the wild. One of the goals of the Interpretive Trail is to educate the public about these local plants and provide an example of how the landscape might have looked to the first pioneer families.

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Throughout the trail, several students took advantage of the various memorial benches as they drew the plants in the area. Sketches of the Fairy Duster plant as well as the Texas Redbud “Ozona” tree were common. As the children drew the plant material, they scratched the name off of the alphabetical list of common and scientific names for each labeled plant. Many of the students ran to share with friends a beautiful bloom or unusual cactus they had found. Mrs. Williams explained that when the students return to the classroom, they will continue to find facts about each plant they have identified and will color their illustrations to complete the booklet. Mrs. Clark added that the students will also be writing about what they learned and saw. This is the final project for the group this year, but Mrs. Williams plans to incorporate the trail into units throughout the next school year. She hopes to bring the classes to watch the progress of the trees and plants in the fall, early winter and spring so that the students will be able to see the effects of weather and other environmental influences on the plant materials.

The group finished off the tour with a lecture on the rain harvest exhibit. As they discussed the collection of the water, the students used facts from the informative display to calculate rainfall collected so far this year. The students were thrilled to be able to use their math facts and skills to compute the totals, and will return to the classroom to calculate how long the water would last an average individual or household. They will also spend time looking at ways that their families can conserve this precious west Texas resource at home.

One student explained that her grandmother grew lots of plants and she will bring her to the trail as soon as possible. Another was already making plans to grow some Chocolate Flowers in her garden at home so she could continue to smell the plants every day!

Since the opening of the trail, a retired gentleman and his dog from San Angelo made a special trip to Ozona. Cosmos Tours hosting 37 travelers from Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, and all over the United Kingdom have stopped by the Visitor Center and toured the trail. “When you have limited opportunity for growth, you then have to create reasons to bring people into your community to generate revenue. While Ozona is enjoying the current oil and gas activity, as recently as 2009 we experienced a major crash. Our community is then reliant on the traffic off the Interstate. The trail is just one venue to generate interest in stopping in our town,” said Biggerstaff.

The Crockett County Interpretive Trail is located at the intersection of I-10 and Hwy. 163 S. Inside the Visitor Center, guests can pick up a brochure, go out to the trail, and try and identify the 48 native plants that are signed. In addition, you can pick up a brochure on how to capture rain water. For more information about the trail, you can call 325/392-3737, or visit www.ozona.com.



Chamber Visitor Center Facts –APRIL 2014

Visitor Center

- Walk-in traffic into the Visitor Center - 446
- Texas visitors 197, Out of State 178, Local 24 and Foreign 47
- Top five states visiting Ozona - CA, AZ, NM, FL, CO
- Top five cities visiting Ozona; San Antonio, Houston, Austin, El Paso, San Angelo
- Chamber related inquiries 22%, Tourism related 78%
- Week days in order of the busiest – Wednesday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Friday

Advertising

-Year-to-date the Chamber has filled in response to our advertising, 4,498 requests for information on Ozona.

www.OZONA.com APRIL Google Analytics

3,545 visits to www.ozona.com, 2,873 new, 672 returning

Of 3,545 visits, there were 7,608 page views, of these 6,063 were unique (1st time)

3,545 visits from 44 countries, 3,391 visits were from the US

Top 5 States

| | |
|------------|------|
| Texas | 2268 |
| California | 59 |
| Louisiana | 75 |
| Arizona | 62 |
| Oklahoma | 56 |

Top 5 Cities

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| San Antonio | 362 |
| San Angelo | 253 |
| Houston | 169 |
| Comanche | 157 |
| Austin | 148 |

Top 20 Content Searches

| | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|------|----|-------------------|-----|
| 1 | Ozona | 1611 | 11 | History | 135 |
| 2 | Hunting Leases | 518 | 12 | Event Calendar | 126 |
| 3 | Mobil Homepage | 419 | 13 | Shopping | 112 |
| 4 | Homepage | 335 | 14 | RV Parks | 111 |
| 5 | Lodging | 278 | 15 | Location | 104 |
| 6 | Restaurants | 231 | 16 | Local Attractions | 93 |
| 7 | Mobil Hunting | 217 | 17 | Spring E-Brochure | 90 |
| 8 | County Officials | 204 | 18 | Hot Deals | 89 |
| 9 | Public Services | 189 | 19 | Churches | 86 |
| 10 | Oil & Gas Services | 138 | 20 | Area Attractions | 69 |



Chamber Master

- 516 Chamber Member Business Directory Searches
- 172 Hot Deal Searches
- 2259 Member Page Hits

Chamber Facebook Page

- 179 Monthly active users
- 6 New wall postings
- 89 Visits
- 248 Average number of fans

Reasons to stay

In a recent blog post, I came across some startling statistics: 40% of U. S. workers are planning to look for a new job in the next six months, and 69% say they are already passively looking.

To a small business employer, those figures are staggering. We are careful to hire only the best employees, and once we have them, we want to keep them. There are huge benefits for employees to stay with the same company for ten years. Employers need to know steps in which to make workers want to stick around for years.

For employees to make a long term commitment to a business, the employer will need to give them good reasons to stay. Proactive efforts by employers to establish a culture that builds strong relationships with their employees – the kind that leads to a lengthy commitment, and perhaps even a commitment for life is what we are seeking.

What can employer do? Let's look at five ways to build employee relationships:

Responsibility. Show your employees you trust them by giving them responsibilities that allow them to grow. Encourage them to gain new skills. Provide them with continuing education opportunities. Hire from within whenever possible, and give generous promotions at appropriate times.

Respect. Employees need to know they are respected and appreciated. People may forget the things you said, but they will always remember the way you made them feel. Many a workplace is built around the horrific things weary and stressed out managers said or did. If managers make it a priority to show outward respect for employees on a regular basis, it should lead to a strong and enduring culture as well as positive experiences and memories they will never forget.

Revenue sharing. Tie a part of employee wages to company performance. This will align their interests with the company's revenue and profit goals and will serve as an incentive to stay with the company as it grows. By making the fixed cost of payroll more viable under differing business conditions, this can make the business more resilient, while also treating your employees exceptionally well.

Reward. The rewards given to your employees should speak to their emotional needs and should go beyond their monetary compensation. Recognition in front of the entire staff, company parties, community service projects, lunches with the boss and handwritten notes can all contribute to the positive culture of the company and can be good morale builders as well.

Relaxation time. Be generous with time off. Provide sufficient time for sick days, family vacations and new babies. Pacing workflow can be highly beneficial to enduring employee relationships. Expect and even demand a high level of performance, but it is unreasonable to expect continuous quality pressure at 100 percent. Allow employees to catch their breath from one assignment to the next with the help of team building activities or mini break periods throughout the course of the day.

Remember that long term commitment requires effort in both directions. If you expect and hope that employees will make and keep long term commitment to your business, it will be equally vital that you give them good reasons to stay.

This article was written by Paul Howard, Business Development Specialist and Certified Business Advisor IV of Angelo State University's Small Business Development Center. For more information on the topic of this article or the services of the ASU · SBDC, contact him at Paul.Howard@angelo.edu.