

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

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## *CHAMBER DIALOGUE*

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### **Ozona Mercantile selected as 2013 Business of the Year**

The Ozona Chamber of Commerce held its 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Chamber of Commerce banquet Thursday, March 27, 2014, at the Ozona Civic Center.

Over 130 guests enjoyed a buffet meal catered by Chamber member Sutton County Steakhouse. Invocation was given by Board of Director, Randy Verner.

The program began with Chairman of the Board, Barbie Myers, giving a welcome and introducing the Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee, Board

of Directors and staff. "We thank you all for returning the surveys sent to you, and were very pleased to see that based on your responses, that our Chamber membership is happy with the services and benefits being offered. We thank each of you for your input, ideas and suggestions." Barbie reviewed a number of Chamber member benefits and encouraged members to take advantage of the services available to them.

Chamber Executive Director, Shanon Biggerstaff, informed the members that a new position has been created at the Chamber. She introduced the duties and new staff member Cathy English, who will be the Interactive Media Coordinator. She also recognized and thanked nine local businesses who sponsored the evening events. Chamber Ambassadors were introduced and acknowledged for their volunteer service to the Chamber.

Sally Oglesby, Chamber Committee Chair, updated guests on the status of Crockett County Interpretive Trail located across the parking lot of the Visitor Center. "The purpose of the project is to educate residents, travelers and all visitors to the site, about the importance of water conservation and the daily use of native plants in our lives. The trail includes signage, a wildlife viewing area, and over 231 plants to date. Sally thanked those Chamber members and the community for their purchase of a rock sign or memorial bench, all of which have been set in the trail. "Thanks to you all, we reached last year's goal and have over 50 plants signed in the trail. Be looking for an invitation to a soft-opening that we will host in May. At that time we will have a brochure, highlighting those plants that you have helped us sign, giving visitors a tour around the trail. We will invite all of those that have contributed to this project over the years," said Sally. Guests were informed that there is still an opportunity to purchase a rock sign if you want to participate in the project. "You can purchase a rock in memory of, in honor of, or just in support of the trail."

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3-BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**



**The Chamber of Commerce  
recognizes John “Sandy” Stokes, CPA  
as our  
Business of the Month**



“When people ask me what I do, I just tell them I talk on the phone and write on green paper all day!”

John “Sandy” Stokes graduated from Ozona High School in 1966, and from Texas Tech in 1970. “Then I got an invitation from Uncle Sam, and was drafted in the service for two years,” said Sandy. “The best thing about that experience was getting to see Germany! I came back to Texas, and worked for a CPA Firm in Midland for six years. I went to graduate school at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin and got an MBA in Business Administration.” By 1975 Sandy had completed required education from the American Institute of CPA’s and was board certified with the State Board of Public Accountants.

Sandy then came back to Ozona. “I’m just a small town boy at heart. Midland was even too big for me! So I came back to Ozona where I wanted to make a difference. Finally an opportunity came up that would allow me to make a living here. I opened my business, in this same spot, 35 years ago in 1979. This is the old Ozona Bank Building, one of four buildings (jail, courthouse and Heritage-high school) built by the architect, Oscar Ruffini.”

Sandy served as the Crockett County Auditor from 1988-2010.

“Sandy’s wife, Vicki, was a school teacher in Dallas and her grandmother was a teacher in Big Lake. She wanted to be out in this area and applied for a teacher’s position in Ozona, and replaced 3rd grade teacher Mrs. Madeline Stokes. My brother and a friend arranged for a blind date to a New Year’s dance, but nothing really resulted. It wasn’t until the following fall that we ran into one another again, and six months later we were married!” Sandy and Vicki have two children. John Austin and Wilson, both of San Angelo. “We have one grandchild that is two years old.”

Those that know Sandy are aware of his love of reading, history and music. He plays the mandolin and fiddle, and performs with the Way Off Broadway Players of Eldorado providing background music.

Stokes CPA is located on the town square in the old Ozona Bank Building. It is open for business Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm, and Fridays from 8am to noon. Stokes CPA provides payroll tax, sales tax, and income tax services. In addition, they can assist you in setting up your books, or keep your books for you.

Employees of Stokes CPA are Wendy Tambunga, Office Manager and Jill Crawford, Bookkeeper.

You can reach Stokes CPA at 325/392-2711, by fax at 325/392-3714 or by e-mail at [stokesjohn@aol.com](mailto:stokesjohn@aol.com).

The Chamber of Commerce would like to recognize Stokes CPA for their efforts to provide quality service in addition to being an added asset to the local business community.

## 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 March:

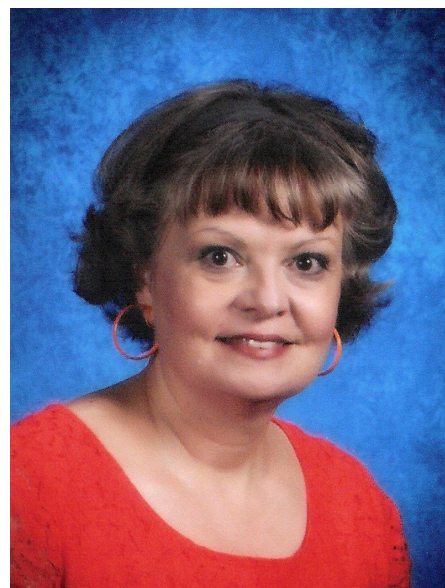
KYXX Ozona 94.3-True Radio-1996  
Circle Bar Truck Corral, Inc.-1997  
Ozona Country Club-2000  
Upham Insurance Company-2004  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Moran-2003  
Will M. Black Real Estate-2010  
Natgas, Inc.-2010  
CC Wrecker Service-2012  
Shootzies-2013

Travelodge-1996  
John Stokes, CPA-1997  
Triple C Hardware & Lumber, Inc.-2002  
Texas Farm Bureau Insurance-2009  
Escondido Draw Recreation Area-2008  
Dollar General—2010  
Guy & Patsy Hester-2012  
Baker Acre Enterprises-2012

## Welcome aboard



Robert Crain— Manager of Sonic  
Appointed as Board of Director to serve out term of former director. Robert began and attended his first board meeting in March.



Cathy English-Newly hired staff for the Chamber to fill the position of Interactive Media Coordinator. Cathy is currently working part-time and will begin full-time in June following the school year.



## BUSINESS OF THE YEAR-CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“As you all know, each month the Chamber recognizes a Business of the Month,” said Board of Director, Randy Verner. “At the end of the year, you, the membership, select of those twelve recipients, the Business of the Year.” Randy introduced all twelve recipients. “Each and every recipient provides a valuable service to our community; there is not one candidate that is not deserving. In fact, this was such a tough choice for you, the membership, that as we were receiving the ballots, at one point we had a tie between four of these candidates. That speaks volumes about each of you. However, as the ballots continued to roll in, one business in the end captured the majority vote of the membership. It is my privilege to announce that the membership of the Chamber of Commerce has selected Ozona Mercantile as the 2013 Business of the Year.”

“This concludes the business portion of our program, and again we would like to thank all of you for coming out this evening, and for your support,” said Board of Director, Paige Tambunga. Paige thanked again the businesses that sponsored the event, Chamber member Sutton County Steakhouse, for catering the meal, and Allen Willams and staff at the Civic Center for hosting the event.

The evening wrapped up as guests laughed and enjoyed the performance of four actors from Eldorado’s Way Off Broadway Players, who graciously agreed to perform Act One of



the play Cedar Gap Home-coming. Four actors played multiple characters planning a reunion to their small West Texas town.



## Chamber Visitor Center Facts –FEBRUARY 2014

### Visitor Center

- Walk-in traffic into the Visitor Center –381
- Texas visitors 148, Out of State 184, Local 23 and Foreign 26
- Top five states visiting Ozona – AZ, CA, NY, CO, NM
- Top five cities visiting Ozona; Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Alpine, Odessa
- Chamber related inquiries 16%, Tourism related 84%
- Week days in order of the busiest– Thursday, Friday, Tuesday, Saturday, Wednesday, Monday

### Advertising

-In response to our advertising, the Chamber has fulfilled 127 requests for information on Ozona for the month of February.

### www.OZONA.com FEBRUARY Google Analytics

**4368 visits to www.ozona.com, 3503 new, 865 returning**

Of 4368 visits, there were 8095 page views, of these 6625 were unique (1st time)

4368 visits from 42 countries, 4204 visits were from the US

#### Top 5 States

Texas	3123
Louisiana	126
California	99
Washington	84
Florida	71

#### Top 5 Cities

Houston	295
Austin	286
Brownwood	247
Waco	182
San Angelo	162

#### Top 20 Content Searches

1	Ozona	1936	11	Home Page	133
2	Hunting Leases	1816	12	Area Attractions	133
3	History	371	13	Location	117
4	Restaurants	250	14	Oil & Gas Services	113
5	Lodging	231	15	City County Map	113
6	County Officials	205	16	Contact Us	112
7	Job Postings	152	17	Local Attractions	110
8	Municipal Airport	138	18	Hunting & Ranching	110
9	Public Services	138	19	RV Parks	100
10	Events Calendar	135	20	Hot Deals	82



### Chamber Master

620	Chamber Member Business Directory Searches
160	Hot Deal Searches
2467	Member Page Hits

### Chamber Facebook Page

8	Monthly active users
6	New wall postings
67	Visits
237	Average number of fans

## What to look for when hiring

When hiring employees sometimes we find ourselves in a bind on what to put more emphasis on, soft or hard skills. The perfect combination is ideal but often difficult. For many job positions hard skills will be the area to focus on. For many other businesses related to customer services or sales, soft skills might become paramount to make a decision when hiring.

Hard and soft skills are often discussed when hiring. For most jobs, while the hard skills are essential to getting the interview, it's the soft skills that will land the job because as an employer you want someone who won't just perform their job function, but will be a good personality fit for the company and make a good impression on clients.

Hard skills are referred to as specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured. Examples of these are: software program, specific job related task, typing, writing, math, reading, etc. Soft skills are those linked to the personality of each person. These are personality-driven skills like etiquette, getting along with others, listening and engaging in small talk.

Therefore, when hiring employees for your business, you might consider some of the following soft skills in your candidates: responsibility, work ethic, effective decision making skill, goal setting, time management skill, perseverance. You want someone who works well as a team player, communicates effectively, is empathetic, and knows how to learn and exhibit self-control. When it comes right down to it, soft skills are characteristics that make people more likeable.

As we know, we can train someone to do a job or a specific task, but it's almost virtually impossible to teach someone a new set of soft skills. Therefore, it's not surprising that soft skills continue to play a big role in hiring decisions. A recent study from Millennial Branding showed soft skills topped the list of "must have" skills that employers want, with 98 percent of employers saying communication skills are essential.

Also, Mark Miller, author of *Hiring for Attitude*, notes that 92 percent of employers believe attitude is key because candidates need to be "motivated to learn new skills, think innovatively, cope with failure, assimilate feedback and ... collaborate with teammates."

No matter the extent of technical or how-to, "hard skill" requirements of a job, most "soft skills" are valued at all workplaces. Sometimes what separates a good employee from an exceptional one is taking just one or two extra steps or considering a situation from the employer's point of view.

Ultimately, as employers, you want employees who are self-motivated, have ideas, take initiative, and deliver more than is promised or expected.

***This article was written by Adriana Balcorta Havins, Business Development Specialist and Certified Business Advisor II, 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 her at [Adriana.Balcorta@angelo.edu](mailto:Adriana.Balcorta@angelo.edu).***