Las Cruces in the nation’s capital

Chamber advocates for area economy

Members of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to lobby for local military installations and pursue economic development.

The trip was a joint venture with the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA) and several Chamber member organizations. This marks the seventh year the two organizations have participated in the advocacy trip led by Chamber President/CEO Bill Allen and MVEDA President/CEO Davin Lopez.

The group met each day with leaders at the Pentagon, Army Test and Evaluation, NASA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as well as senators and congressmen from the Las Cruces and El Paso area. During evenings, meetings were held with businesses considering Las Cruces for their expansion and future projects.

“It’s important to have a consistent appearance before these leaders, showing that we have an ever-changing agenda of items and that we are welcome to ideas on how to improve our community,” said Bill Connor, chair of the Chamber’s Military Affairs Committee. “In our meetings, we were able to show that we are a community that feels strongly about our (military) bases and what the Department of Defense is doing in the region enough to come out and ask what we as a community can do to make sure they are successful.”

The major topics of discussion during the trip were based on the future of local military installations – White Sands Missile Range, Holloman Air Force Base and Fort Bliss – along with the NASA facility at White Sands. Future funding and the potential of a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) from the Department of Defense, along with their effects on the economy of the region were key issues addressed throughout the week.

Although it will be some time before the results of the trip can be seen, Connor said he was pleased the Joint Land Use Study for southern New Mexico and El Paso County will begin with a kickoff meeting on Wednesday, April 4. The purpose of the study is to look at areas of growth in the region, and develop recommendations to minimize the potential of encroachment, while at the same time improving the potential for mission growth.

“It was enlightening to see the joint efforts of MVEDA and the Chamber, who complement one another in their passion and dedication to bringing new businesses into the region and creating and retaining jobs in Doña Ana County,” said Savonne Griffin, Chamber board member and chair of the Chamber’s Military Affairs Division.

Other attendees included Kiel Hoffman of Pioneer Bank, Richard Haas of Steve Newby Architects & Associates, Keith Beck of Jacobs Technology, Brett Beckett of Coas Bookstores, Ben Woods of New Mexico State University and John Hummer of Steinborn & Associates Real Estate, who serve as board members and volunteers for the Chamber and MVEDA.

The sponsors for the Washington Lobbying Trip were Steve Newby Architects & Associates, Las Cruces Public Schools, New Mexico State University and Jacobs Technology.

For more information about the Chamber’s lobbying and advocacy efforts, call the Chamber office at 524-1968.
Washington advocacy

Ten of your fellow Chamber members just returned from the annual Washington, D.C., advocacy trip. These members paid their own way to advocate on your behalf and that of White Sands Missile Range, before high-level officials at the Pentagon, NASA and our entire New Mexico Congressional delegation.

Flying into D.C. over the weekend, the group gathered Sunday evening to meet with a business considering Las Cruces as a location to establish a new venture. They were an interesting group, and would bring high-tech jobs to our area.

Up early the next morning, we began our trek to the Pentagon where we were met by our escort, Maureen Ramsey. While showing us from one meeting to the next, she told us about Pentagon history, facts and the especially moving memorials to the 9/11 victims.

During our meetings throughout the week, we advocated on behalf of White Sands Missile Range, its mission and its soldiers and personnel. We discussed the various priorities of its range, its future possibilities and threats and reinforced Las Cruces support for WSMR.

These high-level officials told us how refreshing and important it was to hear that the community supports its installation. After a full day at the Pentagon, we left for dinner with site selection representatives of a large, well-known aerospace company to share with them why Las Cruces was a good place to do business.

It was an exhausting and demanding trip, but your fellow Chamber members represented Las Cruces, WSMR and NASA well in D.C.

A big thanks to Bill Connor, who organized the meetings, and Monte Marlin, with WSMR, who made the appointments. Our group consisted of Bill Allen, Keith Beck, Brett Beckett, Bill Connor, Savonne Griffin, Richard Haas, Kiel Hoffman, John Hummer, Davin Lopez and Ben Woods. If you see any of these members, please tell them “Thank you.” They gave four days of their time to better the business climate of Las Cruces and WSMR.

Richard Haas, Chair of the Board
Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce

Even more Chamber benefits

This month’s cover story highlights our recent lobbying trip to Washington, D.C. I want to provide you with a little more information on the final meeting of the trip – with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The U.S. Chamber certainly is at odds with most of the decisions coming out of the White House these days – which is conveniently located directly across the park from the Chamber’s office. While I don’t personally agree with all of their positions, it is comforting to know we have a group that keeps its eye on any issues that impact business.

One area of focus for me this year was to better leverage our relationship with the U.S. Chamber. It’s kind of funny, because in this instance, I (on behalf of you) am the member, and I want to know, “what’s in it for me” to be part of the Chamber.

Last year, a couple of us met with their Vice President for Small Business for an hour. It was very interesting, but I hoped for something different – something more – this year.

One offer available to us was what they refer to as a Washington Fly-In Briefing Program, where we could schedule a one-hour session with three policy experts who would provide all the background information and legislative updates on areas important to our region.

This time, four of us heard from experts on small business, defense and agriculture. The briefing actually lasted well longer than one hour and, in addition to coming away with information on what is happening in Washington and how it may impact us in New Mexico, we came away with a couple of contacts I believe will help our members this year. There will be more to come on this in the near future.

One of our main focuses is advocacy for the business community in Doña Ana County. I think that is evident when you consider all the effort – both from staff and volunteers – that takes place locally, with our Issues & Government Affairs and Military Affairs committees and events like Thanks Team WSMR; at the state level with our relationship with the Association of Commerce and Industry and Las Cruces Day in Santa Fe; and nationally with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and our annual lobbying trip to Washington, D.C.

We are looking for ways to better inform and serve you, our members, and ensure this area is on par with the networking, education and marketing opportunities we provide as part of your investment in the Chamber.

Bill Allen, President/CEO
Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce

Visit lascrucescoco.com, call 575-527-7776 or stop by our office at 760 Telshor Boulevard, Suite E, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011.
Chamber provides update on area education

Local leaders speak about regional partnerships and growth

The Las Cruces region strives to improve the educational experience available to students, and local leaders will discuss the recent successes and upcoming opportunities at the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce’s annual Education Update Luncheon, sponsored by Comcast, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, April 19, at the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road.

Speakers for the luncheon include New Mexico State University President Barbara Couture, Doña Ana Community College President Margie Huerta and Las Cruces Public Schools Associate Superintendent Steven Sanchez.

They will speak about the growth of area facilities to address the needs of the growing community, as well as the collaboration between their organizations to improve the quality of the regional workforce.

Earlier this month, Brenda Dann-Messier, assistant secretary for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, visited Las Cruces to take tours and hold discussions at Early College High School and the Doña Ana Community College Workforce Center. The focus of Dann-Messier’s visit was on the region’s successful partnerships among preK-12 schools, postsecondary institutions and businesses and how those programs can be applied to other areas.

The event is the second in the Chamber’s Membership Update Luncheon series, which consists of six luncheons on key sectors of the Las Cruces economy. Other luncheons in the series will highlight the commercial spaceflight industry, area military matters and an address from the governor.

The Education Update Luncheon is sponsored by Comcast, U.S. Bank, New Mexico State University, Gerald Martin, Las Cruces Public Schools, NMSU Athletics and The Las Cruces Bulletin.

Other sponsorship opportunities are still available for the event. For more information on sponsorships, call Shannez Dudeleczk, Chamber revenue development director, at 524-1968 or email shannezd@lascruces.org.

Registration for the Education Update Luncheon is $20 for Chamber members or $40 for nonmembers. For reservations, call the Chamber office at 524-1968, email relo@lascruces.org or register online at www.lascruces.org.

Would like to thank all of our Chairman’s Circle members

New Mexico State University President Barbara Couture, Doña Ana Community College President Margie Huerta and Las Cruces Public Schools Superintendent Stan Rounds share a laugh during the 2011 Education Update Luncheon.

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As part of the growing commitment to governmental affairs and issue advocacy, the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce (GLCCC) publishes a Governmental Affairs Positions page. This feature highlights positions taken by the Chamber as well as the Association of Commerce & Industry (ACI) – which serves as the state chamber of commerce – and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

ACI takes positions of importance to the statewide business community while the U.S. Chamber addresses national business issues, and, often, the GLCCC takes similar positions. However, GLCCC positions must be specifically authorized by the Chamber Board of Directors.

**Federal land management**

Federal natural resource policies that guide the management of public lands have substantial impacts on local and regional economies, particularly in the western United States. Efforts to limit uses of federal lands and forests have adversely restricted the effective maintenance and use of public lands and the economies of communities in these areas.

Moreover, at a time when the nation needs to increase domestic energy production, vast stretches of public lands and offshore holdings with important energy, mineral and timber resources are unavailable. As part of a strong national energy policy, all opportunities to harness the energy potential of the Outer Continental Shelf should be explored and energy resources on public lands should be developed to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign sources of petroleum and natural gas.

These policies have distressed communities in areas with large tracts of public lands. For example, since the early 1900s, receipts from timber harvested on federal lands have funded school districts in forested communities. Consequently, efforts to restrict timber activities have greatly reduced education funding for many rural schools.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce strongly advocates for the multiple use of federal lands, from environmentally compatible economic activities to recreation and conservation. This includes encouragement of strategies designed to achieve appropriate long-term forest and public land management policies. The Chamber supports the full implementation of current forest plans and efforts to continue the timber sales program of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and opposes efforts to eliminate road construction in sections of national forests and restrict cattle grazing on public lands.

**U.S. Chamber Strategy**

Ensure that public lands are managed for multiple uses, including recreation and mineral resources and the maximum public benefit.

Advocate that, as part of a strong national energy policy, energy resources on both public lands and in offshore holdings be developed to reduce the United States’ reliance on foreign sources of petroleum and natural gas.

### Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce Watch List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Item</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces Dust Ordinance</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Awaiting Final Draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces Vision 2040 Plan - Final</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Continue to work on establishing follow-on committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces One-Stop Permit Shop</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Encourage City of Las Cruces to establish focus group input</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces Night Sky Lighting Ordinance</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Reviewing alternatives and revisions to proposed ordinance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Wilderness Designation for Organ and Potrillo Mountains</td>
<td>Taken position</td>
<td>Continue to review current status, still opposed</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces Moongate Water</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Continue to review current status</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces Proposed Gas Rate Increases</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Continue to monitor gas rates proposed by rate payers group</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces Impact Fees</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Support implementation of numeric thresholds for implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of New Mexico Energy Code</td>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Awaiting more information</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of New Mexico Spaceport Indemnification legislation</td>
<td>Defeated</td>
<td>Continue to support implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Las Cruces Security Alarm Ordinance</td>
<td>Taken position</td>
<td>Continue to support security companies’ revised ordinance</td>
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Mesilla Valley Mall
More than just a new outfit

By Rachel Christiansen

Whether it’s shopping for that perfect outfit or window-shopping and daydreaming, Mesilla Valley Mall can be the perfect place to go to fill a host of shopping needs – from clothes and accessories to household items and gifts.

More than that, however, the mall is a hub for community activities and events, all while providing the comfort of an air-conditioned, spacious area – not to mention an entire food court – at your disposal.

“We even have mall walkers waiting at the doors when we open to come get their exercise every day,” said Susan Palmer, marketing manager for Mesilla Valley Mall. “Even though that’s more popular when it’s really hot or really cold.”

Taking the kids to get their pictures taken with Santa or the Easter Bunny at the local mall is a seasonal tradition seen nationwide, but Mesilla Valley Mall also hosts a number of other events throughout the year unique to Las Cruces.

“We work with the Salvation Army on several projects as well as the Home Instead Senior Care program, Santa to a Senior,” Palmer said.

In addition to events available to everyone, Mesilla Valley Mall also hosts the Kids club, which holds events for children ages 2-12 to join for free, who are able to come participate and do fun activities such as arts and crafts.

These events and promotions not only give the community a chance to give back to nonprofits in need of support, but also give the organizations the heavy foot traffic and excitement of large crowds.

“That foot traffic gives them something renting a banquet room or venue wouldn’t,” Palmer said.

Palmer, who has worked at Mesilla Valley Mall for the past six years, said she has seen some dramatic changes and improvements at the mall during her tenure.

“Recently the biggest change was the addition of the Cineport 10,” Palmer said. “That was a huge project.”

Managed by the international Jones Lang LaSalle company, Mesilla Valley Mall works closely with its leasing agent to approach retailers with the appeal of making the mall their new home.

“We always continue to focus on bringing unique national retailers in,” Palmer said.

Future plans for the mall include the addition of an Auntie Anne’s, a nationally-recognized food chain providing patrons with pretzels and pretzel-like snacks.

Now “embracing” the social media trend, Palmer said, Mesilla Valley Mall is now available on Facebook, Twitter, and a downloadable smartphone app, in order to better inform followers of special events, promotions and even individual store sales.

“It’s just another way we try to listen to what our customers want, because we have to focus on customer service too,” Palmer said. “It’s about keeping it fun and exciting for them, especially during busy times.”

An important economic driver for the city of Las Cruces, the mall contains many department stores, small boutiques and eateries, and employs more than 1,000 full- and part-time workers.

A shopping, dining and entertainment destination for everyone
The Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce kicked off the 2012 Leadership Las Cruces class, the premier leadership program in southern New Mexico, with a full class of 28 participants on Friday, March 16.

This year marks the fourth straight year of growth for Leadership Las Cruces applicants, which adds to the strength and diversity of the program.

“We are very proud of the Leadership Las Cruces program and its commitment to developing current and future leaders in our community,” said Bill Allen, Chamber president/CEO. “The success of the program is very evident through the increase in applicants each year.”

The program began with an orientation session, which served as an opportunity for class members to meet, an introduction to teamwork and communication and a lesson in the area’s rich history.

As part of the two-day orientation, members of the class were able to get an in-depth look at the early history of the state from local historian and New Mexico State University professor Jon Hunner, who taught about the beginnings of Las Cruces and Mesilla, as well as the key players and issues in the fight for New Mexico’s statehood.

Class members were able to enjoy lunch with many Leadership Las Cruces alumni, a tradition of Leadership Las Cruces, who shared their experiences with the program over the years as well as stories of past class activities and their most memorable moments.

After a lesson in effective communication through True Colors training by Las Cruces Public Schools’ Brenda Figueroa, the class heard from the living history panel of long-time area residents. Members of the panel were William Mattiace, Heather Pollard, Monte Marlin, Erlinda Martinez, and Gary Esslinger. Each panelist shared their stories about what brought them to and kept them in the Mesilla Valley, the growth of the community over the last 40 years, and their organizations’ roles in the success of the region.

The second day of orientation focused on more training and an explanation of the rest of the year to come. Following teamwork and networking activities, the class was split into groups of four, each tasked with developing the curriculum for an entire day on a specific topic of the Las Cruces area’s economic engine, including small businesses, health care, education, military, agriculture, state and local government and other community topics such as the arts, tourism and law enforcement.

Co-chairs and Leadership Las Cruces alumni Audrey Evins, Rob Richardson, Stacie Christiano, Rick Altamirano, Mike Walczak, Terrie Todd, and Chamber Communications and Leadership Director Joel Courtney lead the Leadership Las Cruces program.

This year’s program is sponsored by Memorial Medical Center. Other sponsors for the 2012 Leadership Las Cruces program include Citizens Bank, U.S. Bank and the Rehabilitation Hospital of Southern New Mexico.

“The Chamber continues to improve and expand Leadership Las Cruces every year,” Courtney said, “and we are excited to increase the development of leadership training and techniques as a part of the 2012 program.”

The Chamber will continue to provide more opportunities for Leadership Las Cruces alumni to stay involved and connected with each other. If you or anyone you know is a past graduate of the Leadership Las Cruces program and are not receiving information from the Chamber, please call Joel Courtney at 524-1968 or jcourtney@lascruces.org.

Monte Marlin, Bill Mattiace, Gary Esslinger, Erlinda Martinez and Heather Pollard, the Living History Panel, shared their stories of life in the Mesilla Valley.

Rob Richardson, who has chaired the Leadership Las Cruces program since 2005, was honored at the alumni lunch for his commitment to the program.

The 2012 Leadership Las Cruces class and co-chairs held the orientation session at Lorenzo’s de Mesilla Friday and Saturday, March 16 and 17.

Members of the Leadership Las Cruces class participate in a team-building activity as part of the Saturday session.

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Stella Shelley  
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Communications & Policy Development Director  
Las Cruces Public Schools

Patty Thomas  
Branch Manager  
MEI Tecnologías

T.J. Hicks  
Administrator  
Sagremor Rehabilitation & Nursing Center

Blanca Ceniceros  
Mechanical Engineer  
White Sands Missile Range

Julie Hughes  
Director Internal Communications & Public Affairs  
New Mexico State University

Renaye Charlet  
Branch Manager, Assistant Vice President  
Pioneer Bank

Veronica Gallegos  
Retail Store Manager  
AT&T Mobility Services

Bret Moody  
Vice President  
First American Bank

Leslie Martinez  
Business Member Service Representative  
FirstLight Federal Credit Union

Rico Gonzales  
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Janet Acosta-Clifton  
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TODAY’S LINE  • April 2012  • 7
The thought of homemade artisan bread and wood-fired pizza may be worth drooling over, but Gary and Anne Marie Ebert have brought that tasty dream to reality in Las Cruces.

After opening Zeffiro Pizzeria Napoletana in the Downtown area in 2009, by popular request, the two opened Zeffiro New York Pizzeria at 901 E. University Ave. in early 2010.

Popular among the university crowd, Zeffiro pizzeria offers by-the-slice or whole-pie deals, among other sandwiches and calzones that can be enjoyed either in the urban-atmosphere restaurant or ordered to go – an option unavailable at the original Napoletana.

Gary Ebert said after graduating from law school, traveling through European countries, such as France and Italy, formulated in him a love and appreciation for the art of bread-making.

“During that time, it didn’t seem like there were very many artisan bread bakeries here in the states,” Ebert said. “Pizza-making seemed like a natural progression.”

A look behind the counter at the pizzeria will reveal pizza chefs mastering their craft of hand tossing made-to-perfection dough with fresh ingredients.

“Virtually everything is made from scratch. We don’t just open cans and use the microwave,” Ebert said. “You have to have a passion for what you do.”

Providing top-notch cuisine at an affordable price is exactly what Zeffiro intends to do, according to the owners, who want nothing but the best for their customers.

Mixing and shaping the dough is an art form in itself, according to Ebert, who said all the dough is prepared 24 hours in advance to give the perfect amount of time for the yeast to be at its prime.

“It’s kind of like a brewery,” Ebert said. “You could technically brew a beer in an hour, but it wouldn’t be any good.”

Employing approximately 30 people between the two locations, Ebert said he knows the value of supporting and maintaining local businesses for Las Cruces’ economy.

“We’re bringing diversity to the culinary scene, and with local businesses like this, money stays in the community,” Ebert said. 

Hailing from Boise, Idaho, where the Eberts started their first bakery and restaurant, Gary Ebert said Las Cruces seemed like it had the potential he was looking for.

After expressing to a business friend in Idaho his desire to relocate to the southwest, the friend suggested Las Cruces. Hopping on a plane to see what it was all about, one visit to the City of the Crosses was all it took to seal the deal.

“I was also hoping for some surrounding development,” Ebert said of the pizzeria. “Already, the new convention center and center for the arts have been good for business.”

Earning his customers’ respect is also a top priority and, according to Ebert, the key to success.

“You have to earn respect and the respect of your customers by offering a high-quality product at competitive prices,” Ebert said. “After all, you’re only as good as the last pizza you made.”
Grace, elegance and Moonlight
A story of love, courage and rising above

By Stephen L. Wilmer

Athletes are not necessarily human. In fact, if all local athletes were arrayed, there is valid reason to argue that recent equine athletes from our community have surpassed the accomplishments of their human counterparts.

In two national outlets this month, a story of a local horse appeared. The horse was Moonlight.

Her journey from the world of high-level jumping competition in Mexico, through a gauntlet of cartel violence along the border, to the confines of a new, safe home on this side of the border was traced. This is a remarkable horse and an even more remarkable story.

The story of Moonlight parallels the coverage of the Mexican cartel war. The prevailing story is still being told through a running recapitulation of political correctness.

This version fits a story line of the political maneuvering that elevates any argument of environmental priorities over national defense, private property rights, or American sovereignty.

In fact, the local press coverage featured three stories that, standing against a backdrop of zero rebuttals, would make a casual reader think that picking roses has become the favored pastime of border residents, since federal agencies have defused the cartel violence.

First, there was the story of the single Luna County rancher who was represented to profess that all border smuggling intrusions have reached an all-time low. Then there was the story of the rise in the middle

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT
Doña Ana Arts Council

Mission:
The Doña Ana Arts Council (DAAC) is a nonprofit organization working to improve the quality of life in Las Cruces, Doña Ana County and Southern New Mexico by ensuring the performing, visual and literary arts are an integral part of education, economic growth and community development.

Purpose:
DAAC promotes arts and culture through arts education: visual and performing arts workshop for young residents of La Casa through our Youth at Risk program; Kennedy Center Partners in Education to provide professional development for teachers and integrate arts into the public school curriculum; Magic Carpet Story Time reading program featuring published authors and children's book illustrators; Career Art Path two-week immersion program in the visual arts for middle school students; and Missoula Children's Theatre summer theater camp for all children with performance at the Rio Grande Theatre.

Artist Support:
Fiscal agent services for emerging arts organizations; mini-grant program for use of the Rio Grande Theatre; arts networking luncheons featuring artist speakers; ArtsWrap monthly newsletter on area arts activities.

Performances and exhibitions at the Rio Grande Theatre:
Host events presented by DAAC, as well as those of community, school and professional performers. Events offered free of charge to the community are Every Other Tuesday featuring local artists, monthly Howling Coyote open mic nights and artist receptions in our galleries on the first Friday of the month as part of the Downtown Art Ramble.

The annual and popular Zombie Walk is promoted by DAAC and held in front of the theatre in October. We also host a networking gathering of filmmakers during Las Cruces Film on the third Wednesday of every month.

Arts Festivals and Events:
The Renaissance ArtsFaire is the largest cultural festival in the region and is our largest fundraiser; Color Las Cruces began as a plein air competition and is evolving into a "Chalk Walk" event with proceeds going towards our CAP program; The Las Cruces Arts Fair at the Las Cruces Convention Center present the work of more than 80 fine artists in the spring and benefit the Rio Grande Theatre; The annual Community Arts Awards are presented each year to individuals and organizations who have made extraordinary contributions to the cultural life of southern New Mexico.

Key goals:
Key goals for DAAC this year include focusing on the Rio Grande Theatre as a destination location. Labeled as the jewel in the crown of Downtown, this historic landmark is already symbolic of Downtown Las Cruces, which is on the verge of exploding once the south end is open. The theatre could be a real economic driver, and we are excited about scheduling programming that will draw large crowds all year long.

As part of this, we are launching a new in-house theatre troupe, Driftwood Productions, in early June with their production of “Nunset Boulevard,” the third in a trilogy of “Nunsense” productions. Our theatre nights will work well with the schedules of the other theatre houses on Main Street, and we are thrilled to present this popular comedy. If all goes well, Driftwood Productions will become a permanent member of our roster of live performers, concerts, film screenings and children's events that are already scheduled at the theatre.

On a broader level, Las Cruces has a strong, unique creative community and a large concentration of talented artists in this area. We want the rest of the world to discover what we have to offer, and define Las Cruces as a relevant arts destination. We plan to do this through increased usage of statewide networks and through effective advocacy.

History:
DAAC was established in 1971 by a group of community leaders who were passionate about supporting the arts in Doña Ana County. Patricia Tombaugh, Hivana Leyendecker, John and Barbara Glowacki, Ruben Smith and Bill and Jane Trego were all pioneers. 1998 marked a major milestone in DAAC’s vital role in the community when it acquired, renovated and transformed the historic Rio Grande Theatre, raising more than $1 million in a three-year period.

The City of Las Cruces now owns the theatre, DAAC manages the facility and fundraising efforts are directed to maintaining equipment and underwriting community programs. DAAC acts as an arts liaison with the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, maintaining communication and encouraging cooperation concerning art and art-related events and programs.

Key people to know:
Ceci Vasoncellos, executive director
David Salcido, Rio Grande Theatre manager
Lanova Sheets, board president
Scott Brecken, vice president, Rio Grande Theatre
Summer Irvin, events/programs coordinator
Heather Pollard, donor development

Future plans:
We invite everyone to stimulate their senses and sustain their spirits by joining the creative community at DAAC. Join us in performing the work of arts.
Continued from previous page

class in Mexico.

In order for such progress to take place, readers were reminded that Mexico has to maintain an environment of stability and opportunity. Finally, there was the article about the disappearance of the radical right-wing nuts that organized themselves to protect the Arizona border. Each article substantively supported a political theme that remains the dominating feature of our local and prevailing press.

What remains absent is the reality of ongoing violence that impacts humans and animals alike. A call to the quoted Columbus area rancher would have revealed intrusions are down – down significantly in the Cedar Mountains.

A similar call to the ranchers in the Pelloncillos, however, would have prompted a different response. Traffic is unchanged and, in fact, drug traffic is up. So are illegal immigrant deaths. So are break-ins and theft.

A similar call to the ranchers in the Potrillo Mountains would also paint a different picture of the tranquility. Those operations have become part of the expanding flight pattern for drug trafficking via ultra light aircraft.

If you have the nerve to venture south far enough to talk to the cowboys on the south side of the international fence, they would also tell you the Sinaloan Cartel crew has put the word out that human trafficking in the Potrillos is not welcome. The Potrillos are reserved for other, more lucrative smuggling activities.

The continuing saga is the real human side of this story is being scripted and understold. The animal side is silent.

Moonlight’s story reveals a dark, sinister and horrific side of the war. The few lucky horses are the horses whose owners are trying to get them out of the war zone.

Those horses are being brought north to escape violence, but they face immense dangers. Half of those horses do not make the trip.

They are seized and parleyed for favors, they are ransomed, they are diverted to ferry drugs or they are killed.

The group of horses that came north the night Moonlight crossed didn’t beat the odds. Eight of nine trailers that started were stopped and diverted. Only the trailer Moonlight was in crossed the border safely.

Judy Glore of Tucson, Azir., Heart of Tucson, a horse facility that cares for the unlucky “drug horses,” is a brave woman. Glore talks about the horses that are found with their heads hanging after the horrendous marathons packing 300 to 400 pounds of drugs north across those great expanses of federally protected lands.

“They are not just physically wrecked, they are detached from any stimulus,” she says. “They just stand there with no lights on inside, no soul, no feelings.”

There is a side of the border debate that continues to be minimized and dismissed. The story of Moonlight, the big Hanoverian mare that can jump with the world’s best, is a new and different chapter in its tragic continuation.

She represents the other side of a political war that has not blunted the drug trade, has polarized Americans and has revealed leaders who are incapable of bridging the divide.

Stephen L. Wilmeth is a rancher from Dona Ana County. “The story of Moonlight is in the current issue of Range Magazine and can be found in the archives of Frank DuBois’ blog, ‘The Westerner.’”
Company: Memorial Medical Center

Education: Master’s in Business Administration – Focus on health care management

Family: wife Gale Rivera, daughter Nicole Rivera-Brasted, son Adam Rivera

What you do: Chief operating officer

Reason for getting into the business: I have always had an interest in the health care industry, especially as a way to help people and give back to the community

What has being in business taught you?: That being attentive to your customer’s needs is what will ultimately make you successful. It does not matter what industry you are in or whether you compete in a marketplace or not, at the end of the day, if you thoroughly know your customers and strive to meet their needs with genuine concern, quality services and great customer service, you will always be successful.

Best business practice: Remember the reason you are here is your customer. Quality patient care and customer service are our top priorities. You should always strive to provide these for the community, and if you fall short of that goal, do everything in your power to make it right.

Community involvement: Involved in many MMC activities that support organizations and causes in our community, including serving as a board member for the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce and Southwest Health Executives Association.

I am also active in Zia Velo Cycling and in the community through my church.

What brought you to Las Cruces?: When I first visited Las Cruces, it reminded me a lot of Santa Fe, where I grew up. Las Cruces has a small-town feel and was a great place to raise our kids. It is a fabulous rural community that is big enough to provide everything you would possibly need, but not so large that you do not always have the small-town feel.

Professional and life goals: My professional goal is to run a hospital as a CEO one day. We’ve raised two wonderful kids, so now my wife and I are looking forward to the next step in our lives – grandkids.

Hobbies: Many outdoor activities such as cycling, golf, hiking, fishing and camping

Inspiration: I was always interested in health care as a way to give back to the community. I started my career on the financial side of health care, then moved into the operations side of the business. I believe my experiences and understanding of the financing of health care really prepared me to be successful in my current role as chief operating officer.

I have worked for many great organizations – and MMC is definitely one of those. Paul Herzog has been a great mentor, and I have learned a lot from him related to hospital operations and always putting our patients first.

Favorite leisure activity: Spending time with my wife and kids.

Best business advice received: The people who work for you always have the ability to make you or break you. You’ve got to be sure you have the best people and that you are always looking out for them. An organization is only as good as the people within it, so you have to create an environment that attracts the best and brightest and that is valuable to them so they want to stay.

Proud Bataan memories

“What a beautiful morning to take a walk,” is what I thought before hundreds of runners and walkers passed through our water station at mile No. 7 at the 23rd annual Bataan Memorial Death March.

The Conquistadores have manned water station No. 2 for many years. We arrived at 5:30 a.m., set up the generators and lights – long gone are the days of using flashlight to light the tables to cut the fruit – set up tables, covered the tables with plastic, organized our fruit cutters and erected shades. We perfected the assembly line of cutting and stacking fruit, filling 5-gallon jugs with water and mixing Gatorade.

The weather was perfect. In the past, we have endured freezing cold and biting, sandy winds. We have thawed frozen faucets on the Water Buffalos. The volunteers have always forged ahead, no matter the weather, to prepare the fruit and make gallons of Gatorade.

We poured thousands of cups of water and Gatorade and strived to stay ahead of the onslaught of walkers. We ran out of oranges, we ran out of bananas and then we ran out of cups. The walkers were still coming. We did the best we could using insulated coffee cups, refilling water bottles with Gatorade and water. Our supplies were replenished just in time for the last of the walkers.

Our volunteers consisted of a mix of Conquistadores and FirstLight Federal Credit Union employees. Early in the morning, I thought 39 volunteers was too many, but as we strived to keep up with the thousands of walkers to hand them fruit, water and Gatorade, I noted we were understaffed. Periodically, I would take a moment from pouring cup after cup of Gatorade to look at the crowds of people moving through our water station. It was just amazing.

Looking at the walkers individually, there were all ages – young and old, soldiers and civilians, hot, fatigued, polite and appreciative. I felt proud of some young soldiers I saw walking as a team, but sadness as I noticed two of the men had each lost their right leg. Most inspirational, was that people with of restrictions or disabilities were participating in this most important memorial walk.

An event like this does not happen without volunteers. Thank you to our hard-working, participating Conquistadores: Doug Boberg, Rick Altamirano, Terry and Mike Gaume, Savonne Griffin, Mary and Jerry Iadicicco, Kiel Hoffman, Leslie Martinez and son Clay, Sasha Ogas, Ron Szak, Audrey Valdez, Mike Zamora and his three sons Matthew, Maurice and Marcus. Thank you also to Bill Allen, president of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. Savonne Griffin invited her employees to participate again this year. What a great, hard-working team they made. Thank you.

Sarah Stegall
Chair of the Council of the Conquistadores 2012 Greater Las Cruces Chamber
Renewing Members

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Chris Najjar

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Freddie Serna

Covenant Clinics, LLC
Robert Patterson

Dave's Repair & Delivery
John Powers

Do It Best Sun Valley Hardware
Brad Achen

Douglas Inspections
Douglas Ramsey

Family Eye Care
Rodger V. Lewis

General Surgery Associates
Robin Morris

High Desert Event Rental
Brent McCann

HoyFox Toyota/Lexus/Scion
Steve Fox

Las Cruces Abstract & Title Co
Elvia Romero

LegalShield
Eldelisa Nava

Motel 6 - La Posada Lane
Joseph Mance

Mr. Electric
Brett Off

New Mexico Department of Agriculture NMSU
Jeff Witte

RE/Max Classic Realty- Nora Stone
Nora Stone

RTD Hardware
Theresa Trujillo

Red Brick Pizza
Paresh Bhakta

Spectrum Imaging Systems
James Hurst

Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts
Charles Centilli

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate- Cecelia Levatino
Cecelia Levatino

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate- Joe Martin-Howell
Joe Martin-Howell

Steinborn TCN Commercial
Real Estate- Tom Whatley
Tom Whatley

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate- Sherrell Grimes
Sherrell Grimes

Steinmann Prosthetics and Orthotics
Robert Steinmann

Stubbs Engineering, Inc.
Michael Stubbs

Sunspot Solar Energy Systems, LLC
Janet Honek

The Children's Garden Child Development Center
Lupe Nevarez

Torres Welding, Inc.
Cindy Torres

Wet ‘N’ Wild Waterworld
Jenny Ayer

Zia Natural Gas Company
Leslie Graham

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Toni Hendricks

New Mexico Earth Works
Sean Kaltenbach
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Renaye Charlet
532-7550

Progressive Residential Services
Kay Lilley
523-8431

Rejuvenate Massage
Carol Hickok
405-4986

Pioneer Bank - Roadrunner Branch
Anna Marie Robles
532-0639

Restaurants de Las Cruces
Carlos Parra
571-3347

White Sands Federal Credit Union
Sharon Sumner
647-4500

LABOR MARKETS

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<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Jan.-12</th>
<th>Jan.-11</th>
<th>% change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Las Cruces</td>
<td>83,529</td>
<td>83,177</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>853,833</td>
<td>847,771</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. (in thousands)</td>
<td>141,637</td>
<td>139,330</td>
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<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>Jan.-11</th>
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<tr>
<td>Las Cruces</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. data</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
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Source: New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

HOUSING PRICE INDEX

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<th>(In thousands)</th>
<th>4th Quarter 2011</th>
<th>4th Quarter 2010</th>
<th>% change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Las Cruces</td>
<td>165.8</td>
<td>175.32</td>
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<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>291.61</td>
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<td>United States</td>
<td>320.11</td>
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Source: Federal Housing Finance Agency

BUILDING PERMITS

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<th>Jan.-Feb. 11</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>490</td>
<td>340</td>
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Prepared by Christopher A. Erickson and James Libbin
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MONTHLY SCHEDULE

APRIL 2012

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<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<td>Good Friday</td>
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Easter

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Education Update Luncheon, New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum

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Earth Day

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OPEN TO PUBLIC | PRIVATE EVENT | OPEN TO MEMBERS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

April 2 4 p.m. Las Cruces Day in Santa Fe Committee
April 4 4 p.m. Conquistadore Executive Committee
April 5 4 p.m. Issues & Governmental Affairs Committee
April 6 7:30 a.m. Military Affairs Committee, Mesilla Valley Hospice
April 9 Noon Member Retention Committee
April 10 4 p.m. Finance & Executive Committee
April 11 Noon Member Retention Committee
April 12 9 a.m. Commercial Space Committee
April 18 7:30 a.m. Education Committee, Housing Authority
April 23 4:00 p.m. Candidates & Elections Committee
April 24 4 p.m. Board of Directors

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Fulfilling the community need
The following statistics from the past 30 days indicate the number of individuals interested in learning more about the Chamber by visiting the website. Those who have visited the site inquired about relocation advice as well as the approximate number of member business referrals by the Chamber staff members.

10,089 people have visited the Chamber’s website.
86 people have inquired about individual relocation.
82 referrals have been issued for members.

Fulfilling the community need

CHAMBER BY THE NUMBERS

The Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce is the primary advocate for the Greater Las Cruces business community, dedicated to fostering growth and opportunity by focusing on communication, education and participation.

10,089 people have visited the Chamber’s website.
86 people have inquired about individual relocation.
82 referrals have been issued for members.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Account executive
Apply for an account executive position with the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. The position offers flexible hours (part time or full time).
Will train. Must have an outgoing personality and have access to a vehicle. Pay is based on commission sales. Send a résumé or contact Shannez Dudelczyk at 524-1968 or shannezd@lascruces.org for further details.

Looking ahead

Thursday, May 10
WSMR Golf Tournament
Red Hawk Golf Club

Wednesday, May 16
Economic Update Forum
KRWG-TV Studio

Wednesday, June 13
Good Evening Las Cruces
Las Cruces Home Builders Association

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

April 2 4 p.m. Las Cruces Day in Santa Fe Committee
April 4 4 p.m. Conquistadore Executive Committee
April 5 4 p.m. Issues & Governmental Affairs Committee
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April 18 7:30 a.m. Education Committee, Housing Authority
April 18 11 a.m. Events & Benefits Committee
April 23 4:00 p.m. Candidates & Elections Committee
April 24 4 p.m. Board of Directors

*All above meetings are held in the Chamber boardroom unless specified otherwise.

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County seeking applicants

Doña Ana County is seeking applications from residents interested in serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission, a seven-member board of volunteers whose members review land-use and development matters at twice-monthly public hearings. Four open seats on the commission will be filled by the Doña Ana County Board of Commissioners at the April 24 regular meeting.

Planning and Zoning Commission meetings generally last about three hours – from 9 a.m. to noon – and are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month in the Commission Chambers of the Doña Ana County Government Center, 845 N. Motel Blvd.

Matters that historically have come before the commission include: requests for zoning variances, planned-unit development (PUD) designations, zoning changes, community district creations, subdivision reviews and approvals, appeals of staff decisions, reports to the Board of County Commissioners, and recommendations related to amendments or changes to the county’s land-use ordinance and subdivision regulations.

The Planning and Zoning Commission members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for staggered two-year terms.

Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m., Friday, April 6. Applications will consist of a letter of interest, current résumé and three references. Mail or deliver applications to the Doña Ana County Planning and Community Development Department, 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, NM, 88007, Attention: Janine Divyak. Application packets also can be faxed to 525-6131. For more information, call 525-6130. Residents calling from outside the Las Cruces area may call toll-free at 877-827-7200 and request ext. 6130.

**AUSTIN**

Austin named New Mexico sales manager

Las Cruces Lisa Austin has been named Wells Fargo area sales manager for New Mexico. She will oversee Wells Fargo Home Mortgage in New Mexico.

Timothy Disbrow, Wells Fargo regional sales manager, announced the appointment.

“During her career, Austin has excelled at providing outstanding service to our customers,” Disbrow said. “With her commitment to community involvement and her focus on helping customers reach their goals, she will continue to be a tremendous asset for our team.”

Austin joined Wells Fargo in 1993. She most recently held the position of regional processing manager. She holds a bachelor’s degree from New Mexico State University.

Silver Bell Road to close for bridge repairs

Silver Bell Road north of Hatch near Salem will close beginning Monday, March 26, so county crews can repair planks on a bridge. Weather permitting and barring unforeseen complications, construction will be completed on April 4.

Warning signs and detours will be posted. Motorists are advised to slow down and expect delays in the construction areas. Motorists also are reminded to exercise caution in all areas where workers are deployed.

SBA announces partnership with corporate supply chains

A new private-public collaboration will help small businesses strengthen their revenue streams by gaining access to more than $300 billion in combined supply chain spending by a consortium of 15 of America’s largest corporations, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Supplier Connection, created by the IBM Foundation, is part of the Obama Administration’s American Supplier Initiative, and is designed to help bridge the gap between small, nimble businesses looking for new opportunities and large corporations looking for innovative new ideas and diversity in their supply chains.

“The American Supplier Initiative is part of a comprehensive solution to grow small businesses, create jobs and to ensure that America has a strong, deep and diverse supply chain,” said SBA Administrator Karen Mills. “While it is clear that becoming a corporate supplier can lead to business growth, breaking in can be a challenge for small businesses. The Supplier Connection will be one tool to help small businesses connect with corporate buyers. Tools like this help to ensure that more small businesses are part of commercial supply chains, which add additional revenue streams. This is a proven formula for job creation.”

Mills sent letters about Supplier Connection to more than 50,000 small businesses that currently participate in small business federal procurement programs.

**2012 home sales up for New Mexico**

Higher home sales have been reported to the Realtors Association of New Mexico for the first months of the year. During January and February, 1,758 sales were reported. This number is 8.1 percent higher than the number reported for the first two months of 2011, and 10.9 percent higher than the sales reported for same period in 2010.

February’s median price was $159,500. This compares to the January median of $163,250 and a February 2011 median of $165,000. The 2012 year-to-date median is $160,000. Median price means half the houses sold for more and half for less.

“Lower prices (which are influenced by foreclosures and short sales) mean great news for buyers and the increase in number of sales reflects the decision to ‘buy now,’ of many of those folks who were on the fence about buying,” said Debbie Rogers of Silver City, 2012 RANM president. “Many of our members are reporting increased activity in their market.”

“Real estate markets vary widely across the state,” according to RANM Executive Vice President Steve Anaya. “As always, there are reporting markets with increases in sale numbers and markets with decreases in sales.”

The spring market is nearly here, and there is evidence that it will be stronger than recent history. Fannie Mae’s February National Housing survey found, with low mortgage rates and falling home prices, 70 percent of those surveyed say now is a good time to purchase a home.

Also, more Americans surveyed say now is a good time to sell, rising to 13 percent in February, which is the highest level in more than a year but still low by historic standards.

The trends and numbers reported are only a snapshot of market activity. If you are interested in buying or selling, consult a Realtor familiar with your market area, as he or she can provide information on specific trends in your neighborhood.

**Business in the Borderplex Forum**

The April meeting of the MVEDA Business in the Borderplex Forum will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 3, at Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces, 705 S. Telshor Blvd. The meeting will begin with a hot entrée buffet.

The April Forum will feature local commercial real estate brokers and developers discussing the local commercial real estate market and opportunities in a changing market. Panel members are Kary Bulsterbaum with Steinborn/TCN Commercial Real Estate and Jake Redfearn with NAI 1st Valley Commercial Real Estate.

Bulsterbaum is an Associate Broker at Steinborn/TCN Commercial Real Estate who joined the firm in 2006. He has more than 12 years of brokerage and industry-related experience and is part of the Grady Oxford Team at Steinborn/TCN Commercial Real Estate.

Redfearn specializes in retail and investment properties. He has worked with and represents national companies such as Church’s Chicken, US Bank, CVS and others. Redfearn handles leasing responsibility for three of the largest retail centers in Las Cruces.

Luncheon cost is $20 per person, payable by cash, check or major credit card. The meeting is open to the public. A large turnout is expected so reservations are required, call the office 525-2852.

Send us your business briefs

Chamber members interested in publishing their business briefs should email a short description and photo, if available, to business@lacrucesbulletin.com. Briefs should be sent no later than the 15th of each month.
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**Las Cruces: A Photographic Journey**

100 Years of Statehood

Take a trip back in time with “Las Cruces: A Photographic Journey.” This beautiful, 288-page book full of photographs and history of the Mesilla Valley offers a tour of the first 100 years of New Mexico statehood through the eyes of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. New Mexico’s Centennial is Jan. 6, 2012, and this publication is a perfect commemorative edition for anyone who loves Las Cruces.

The book can be a wonderful addition to any home, and could make an ideal gift as well. Now available at the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce (524-1968) and at the Las Cruces Bulletin (524-8061). Only $60 plus tax.

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