Minimum wage in Las Cruces

The Chamber takes a stance on this local issue

Many of you may have noticed that the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce has been heavily involved in the minimum wage increase discussion that has been going on.

The direction of the discussion has tended toward the emotional side while neglecting those who would have this wage increase mandated upon them – the local business community. There seems to be a consensus that the local business community has plenty of extra cash and they just need to be willing to share it.

Another ploy used by those in support of a minimum wage increase is to dismiss the concerns of the local business community by citing studies where minimum wage has been raised in other parts of the country, but they are not comparing apples to apples.

Las Cruces is not Seattle, Santa Fe or even Albuquerque. It doesn’t have the same economic factors in play. It also doesn’t have the same labor force. While Las Cruces does have a few major corporations, most of the businesses are small and locally owned.

The increase to the employer is even greater when the employer’s portion of taxes and Social Security are included.

Here is the bottom line, not every job is meant to support a family or even an individual. In some jobs, the work is light and/or the skill level low and would be best suited for an entry-level person or someone who doesn’t necessarily need a lot of income, such as someone who has retired but wants to stay busy. The problem is someone who is trying to raise a family or put themselves through college takes that kind of job. Maybe it is the only job available to them, but it was never meant to be a career to support their situation in life.

Then there are groups who take that situation and twist it to make businesses with those types of jobs available seem evil instead of recognizing those who need a better job really need help with improving themselves to qualify for a job that pays more. There are many jobs unfilled in the community right now that pay well above the current minimum wage.

The Chamber has been active in many discussions recently with all types and sizes of businesses in the community. Many businesses are not going to hire employees because they cannot be sure of their cost of doing business and their ability to sustain themselves with an unreasonable minimum wage along with the known and unknown future costs of the Affordable Care Act.

Many will hire at facilities in other states instead of here and would consider moving the jobs here to those facilities as well. Many have said they will cut back on employees to be able to pay the ones they keep at the proposed wage. Some have said they will probably have to close because the margins will not support more overhead and they will no longer be able to make a profit. Some have said they will pass the increase along to the consumer by increasing prices, while others have said that doing that would keep them from being competitive in their industry and would result in a loss of business.

Some are just plain tired of fighting the seemingly never-ending roadblocks that are continually placed in front of them here in Las Cruces and are ready to just sell out and leave. Chris Erickson, a local New Mexico State University economics professor, has said this drastic increase will hurt local small business.

These are just some issues associated with this unreasonable increase and there are more; they are not, as some have said, scare tactics. They are the realities businesses are facing and, should you forget, businesses are made up of people. People who work and support families, theirs and others through the jobs they provide. See Minimum wage on page 7
FROM THE CHAIR

Keep up with the YPs

My son Brandon runs the e-commerce division at COAS Books. This position involves many hours of setting up and maintaining systems, leading and giving direction to his staff and focusing on staying current with the rapidly changing trends in e-commerce.

Since this type of work makes it difficult to meet with others in similar positions to discuss ideas face to face, he decided to join a Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce sponsored group called Las Cruces Young Professionals.

The Las Cruces Young Professionals is a connection forum run by young professionals mostly aged between 21 and 40 years old. It was formed to develop and advance careers while positively impacting the southern New Mexico community.

A couple of weeks ago, Amaro Winery hosted a First Friday event for the young professionals. My son encouraged me to make an appearance so I could see firsthand how well received this event had become.

My initial expectation was that this was going to be a bunch of young folks drinking and carrying on, using being in a “professional organization” as an excuse.

I was in support of my son, and wow, was I pleasantly surprised! The venue was top notch. People were talking business, exchanging cards and discussing great ideas for the future of our area. Some of the young professionals in attendance already are the movers and shakers of our community, and the others soon will be.

I would have loved for there to have been a group like this when I was younger. If you are between 21 and 40 years old and currently are in or intend to be in a position of leadership in the greater Las Cruces area, the Young Professionals is an important component to your success.

Mike Beckett, Chair of the Board
Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dig a little deeper

We are bombarded by so much information these days, it’s difficult to determine if our decisions are fact based or made as a result of information we get in sound bites.

I really like my smartphone most of the time. I get so distracted by beeps and pings, at times I don’t give a piece of information the time it deserves.

I wonder if we all don’t fall into that pattern. For example, do you favor protecting the Organ Mountains? I trust the majority of responses would be yes.

I recently toured the Potrillo Mountains, bombing range and New Mexico-Mexico border. The majority of the area I saw is a part of the S 1805 Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument being pushed on southern New Mexico. I was also shown some of the county roads that would be abandoned if this bill becomes law.

It’s hard to fathom $7.4 million of incremental tourist revenue created by people coming to see the area. All I can say is they better be extremely fit. I was in a Jeep and it was slow going. If you cannot get close to some of those areas because mechanized vehicles will no longer be permitted, who will have the fortitude to make the trek?

Back to that pattern gain, does anyone want to see people struggle financially? Of course not. So, increasing the minimum wage seems like a logical way to handle that problem, right? Maybe, maybe not.

What if as a result people who are currently working lose their jobs? What if people who have invested greatly in something they are passionate about lose their doors – and more people lose their jobs?

We are all business people. Answer this: If costs are increased at your business, what are your alternatives? What if those cost increases are forced upon you, so chances are that it won’t help drive more business? There are two options: increase revenue to offset those costs or decrease other costs. Neither option is preferable and, in either case, would result in an unintended consequence.

Dig deeper, ask questions, expect logical answers and do research before you come a conclusion. Take the time necessary.

Bill Allen, President/CEO
Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
Banking institutions are a very important part of a community. Large corporations, small business and members of the community all use their services.

All banks have a target market, some focusing on a larger demographics while others narrowing in on a smaller group. FirstLight Federal Credit Union is a local institution well known in Las Cruces for serving El Paso and Doña Ana communities.

FirstLight Federal Credit Union’s establishment goes back to 1955. It was formed as cooperative when a group of nine individuals, presumably servicemen, decided to unite and form a credit society. The organization was named Frontier Federal Credit Union and it was located on Biggs Air Force Base. At this time, membership to the union was limited to military and civilians attached to the base, employees of the credit union, and members of their immediate family.

The development of the union took a great turn in 1997, when the credit union was granted a low-income charter, enabling it to expand its membership to anyone living or working in Doña Ana County. In 1998, the credit union added the North Main Street branch in Las Cruces, followed by the Transmountain branch in El Paso in 1999. A third El Paso branch was opened on Lee Trevino in 2003.

Underscoring the initiative to serve the El Paso and Doña Ana counties and heighten awareness of membership opportunities, Fort Bliss Federal Credit Union changed its name to FirstLight Federal Credit Union in July 2005.

With the mission to help members achieve financial success, FirstLight strives to find new ways to help members. Such additions include changes to their infrastructure with the new online banking system and the rollout of the mobile application.

Its vision is, “FirstLight Federal Credit Union will be recognized as an employer of choice, a community leader, and the financial institution first sought by its members for all of their financial needs.”

The credit union keeps its competitive edge by listening to its members, meeting their needs, understanding market needs and finding solutions to continually improve.

FirstLight Federal Credit Union has had different challenges and obstacles. Due to its origins, being built to the military’s needs, this led to an obstacle of having to change El Paso and Doña Ana county residents’ perceptions of FirstLight being only a military credit union to being a community credit union that serves both the military and the community.

Another obstacle was helping communities understand what role a credit union plays compared to a bank. Other than more personalized service, credit unions are local, member-owned institutions.

In the future, technology will play a vital role in their institutions. It will serve to provide members a better, personalized experience and ultimately help them achieve financial success. FirstLight Federal Credit Union will be able to provide even more convenience to business members through multi-channel availability. In addition, increasing the breadth of products will ensure FirstLight is a place and business in the community where members can get all their financial needs met.
Why immigration reform is right for society, economy

Editor's note: This article is based on a speech given by David Chavern, president of the U.S. Chamber's Center for Advanced Technology & Innovation, at an #iCodeImmigration event in San Francisco, hosted by the Partnership for a New American Economy and FWD.us.

Immigration reform is the top public policy priority for the tech community — and it's been a leading issue at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for more than two decades.

The business community has kept up the fight for reform because it's right for our society, for our economy, for our work force and for businesses of every size and sector.

The brightest talent and the hardest workers from around the globe want to come to America because they believe it is still the land of opportunity. We can prove right by welcoming them – and put still the land of opportunity. We can prove come to America because they believe it is

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for talent.

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and award green cards to students who have earned advanced STEM degrees at U.S. colleges and universities.

Immigration reform will help us attract global entrepreneurial talent as well. Studies show immigrants tend to be very enterprising. We should allow them to start their ventures here in the United States – not somewhere else.

Immigration reform will also help us address worker shortages, not only in high-skilled jobs, but also in lesser-skilled industries (those jobs requiring less than a bachelor's degree), such as home health care, landscaping and hospitality.

Allowing foreign workers of every skill level to contribute to our economy will help broaden the tax base and address our demographic realities. Our senior population is exploding, while our birth rate is falling. By 2035 there will be roughly two workers for every retiree — compared with 16 workers per retiree in 1950. The more workers we have paying into the system, the better we'll be able to support our aging population.

Finally, America’s legacy of being a welcoming society will be preserved through immigration reform. That's the very essence of who we are and where we came from.

I think part of the reason we've made so much more progress on immigration reform this time than in past years is the public understands immigrants are an asset — not a threat. That's why the public has largely coalesced around reform — some 70 percent of voters support it.

I must stress that every element of reform must be important to all of us — not only because broad reform is what the system and our economy need, but broad reform is the only way we're ever going to get this done.

In order to get highly skilled and entrepreneurial visa reform, we must all get behind other common-sense fixes to our immigration system, including:

• A pathway for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country

That doesn't mean that the only way Congress can move reform legislation is through a single, sweeping bill. If the House of Representatives wants to take up the pieces individually, we'll get behind the good proposals that will ultimately modernize and improve our system.

The U.S. Chamber has helped to build a powerful coalition including business, law enforcement, faith community leaders, ethnic organizations and, of course, technology.
Allstate-Hester Agency of Las Cruces

Continuing the family insurance business

Insurance is a necessity in everyone’s lives. With a variety of insurance companies to choose from, customers select an agency that can best meet their needs and budget. Allstate-Hester Agency of Las Cruces is making its way to the top as a customer favorite.

Hester Agency of Las Cruces first opened in 2009. Owner Ricky Hester first began working with Allstate at its corporate office in 1969 and retired after 30 years. He then began opening agencies in 1999, starting in Hobbs and Roswell. In 2009, Hester opened the Las Cruces agency along with an agency in Carlsbad.

In 2011, Hester offered his niece, Kayla Jones, the opportunity to manage the Las Cruces branch, and she has been the manager ever since.

Jones began working along with her grandfather when she was 15 years old as a file clerk in Roswell. She started learning about the business by watching how her grandparents and mother assist clients.

“I grew up watching my grandparents and my mom run our Roswell office, but I never realized what it was that we actually do,” Jones said. “It’s not about selling to people, it is about making sure that we protect our clients and their most loved possessions.”

Hester Agency of Las Cruces is licensed in New Mexico and Texas. It is a family-owned insurance agency and has four locations in New Mexico with the Las Cruces branch being the newest addition.

Its mission statement is, “To provide extraordinary service to our clients and to develop long-term relationships within the community.”

With the insurance industry being very competitive, the agency stays ahead by focusing on the clients’ needs first. It treats its customers like family, Jones said she stays active in the community by being part of the Las Cruces Young Professionals, the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, the Las Cruces Association of Realtors and the Rio Grande Rotary. Jones said she believes it is important to be physically involved in the community.

“When anyone can write a check, but not everyone is willing to get their hands dirty and help,” she said.

The Hester Agency wants the Las Cruces branch to be as recognized and trusted as the agency’s other locations. By being involved with the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, Jones said she has been able to better understand the needs of the Las Cruces community.

Although managing the business has been difficult, Jones said she has learned from her father to never give up. There were times when Hester wanted to throw in the towel, but with hard work and effort, he has grown the agency to be the largest in New Mexico.

When it comes to insurance needs, Jones said she wants people to know the Hester Agency is here to be a resource for everyone. The staff is committed to helping friends and neighbors, whether they are Allstate clients or not.

“Sometimes people find themselves in situations where they cannot access their insurance agent but need on-the-spot advice,” Jones said. “We are here to provide assistance during those times and help walk people through situations and provide answers to questions, whenever possible. We also pride ourselves on being able to work with our clients to fully understand their needs and provide customized insurance plans at the most affordable price. We treat our clients more like family and less like a policy number.”

In the future, Jones said she would like to see the Las Cruces location grow to be the size of their Roswell office. Although, at the moment, the Hester Agency of Las Cruces is just a small office, Jones said she would like to show her grandfather how much energy and passion she has and how she has been able to grow the business.
Mission:
Provide service to others, promote integrity and advance world understanding, goodwill and peace through our fellowship of business, professional and community leaders.

Rotary Four-Way Test (of the things we think, say or do):
1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
   The LCRGRC has added No. 5: Is it fun?

Purpose:
“Service Above Self” – professionals joining together to use skills and passion to make a difference in communities and the world.

Key goals:
To annually fund and support the projects and events held, find new active members and continue to find new projects that will reduce illiteracy, cure disease, stop hunger and poverty, stop the lack of clean water and other environmental concerns.

History:
Chartered in August 1975, with one charter member who is still active and nine members with 20 years or more of active membership. We have five members less than 35 years of age and are looking for younger members. Our total current active membership is 70.

Key people to know:
Brad Beasley – President
Mike Beckett – President-Elect
Loren Kuehne – Secretary
67 other dedicated members ready for “Service Above Self.”

Events and activities:
- **The annual Dress The Child Project**: The goal is to dress 500-plus children during the Christmas season, which requires help raising more than $50,000 to fund four shopping events.
- **Annual yard sale for the Mesilla Valley Hospice**: We collect sale items all year for a yard sale the first Saturday in May. All of the gross proceeds go to the Mesilla Valley Hospice.
- **Rotary Youth Leadership Awards**: We sponsor $650 scholarships to six to-be high school seniors for a weeklong leadership and team building camp.
- **Dictionary Day**: We’ve passed out 2,100 dictionaries to third-graders in the Las Cruces Public Schools district annually for the past eight years.
- **Don’t Meth with Us**: We support and provide presentations to every sixth-grader in the LCPS district about the dangers of meth.
- **Four-Way Test Essay Contest**: Eighth-graders students write an essay on ethics based on the Rotary Four-Way Test. Prize money awarded to the top three essays.
- **Student Rotarian of the Month**: High school juniors attend a weekly meeting and are asked to write an essay on a chosen topic with three winners awarded scholarships.
- **Rotary Youth Exchange**: We host an incoming foreign exchange student and sponsor an outgoing high school student for a school year.
- **Provide special sleep gear to the homeless at the Gospel Rescue Mission**
- **Support the annual Taste of Las Cruces fundraiser**
- **Support the Rotary International’s worldwide End Polio Now project**: More than 2.5 billion children have been immunized so far and only three countries are still not Polio free. Rotary has partnered with the Gates Foundation to finish this multi-decade project.
- **Annual work with Rotary clubs in Chihuahua, Mexico, and Guatemala**: Support service projects through matching grants from The Rotary Foundation to address today’s worldwide challenges which, include illiteracy, disease, hunger, poverty, lack of clean water and other environmental concerns.
- **Sponsor Rotary Friend Exchange**: Recently hosted 10 Rotarians and spouses from England.

Future plans:
Continue searching for new areas of service to improve our community and world, and to support, encourage and role model for our young people.
ARMIJO HOUSE RESTORATION CONTINUES

Pat Taylor and Richard Haas discuss options for ductwork in the Armijo house, the future home of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. So far, the floorboards have been pulled and work is underway for member contractors representing the HVAC, plumbing, electrical and communications trades to visit the site to review plans prior to submitting bids for the project.

Minimum wage
Continued from page 1

People who pay taxes, donate to the community, are trying to put their kids through college and maybe save a little to retire on.

Many work next to their employees and many work long after their employees have gone home. While some just barely make a living, some have been extremely successful and have become wealthy. All got to where they are not by chance or luck but by working smart and working hard.

Some do more for their employees than can be imagined in the community. There are business owners who have paid for the funeral expenses or the hospital bill of an employee or an employee’s family member. Others have kept an employee on the payroll for decades after they could no longer physically work. Still others have helped finance a home or auto for an employee, paid tuition and many have even bailed employees out of jail more than once.

They are, for the most part, not the heartless group they are sometimes made out to be. The fact is most already pay more than can be imagined in the community. They are, for the most part, not the organization that has for decades supported a Spring Break Scramble! The Chamber, an organization based in some other place that has no investment in Las Cruces, has no investment in Las Cruces, is under way for member contractors representing the HVAC, plumbing, electrical and communications trades to visit the site to review plans prior to submitting bids for the project.

Some accuse the Chamber, an organization that has for decades supported countless nonprofit organizations, of being too political lately. The primary mission, even though it does a lot more, is to support the business community.

If, in this day and age, the business community is undermined in the political arena, then it will be in the political arena that the Chamber will support the business community and build it back. The Chamber will continue to advocate on issues for the business community and will continue to nurture and support the business community of today and create fertile ground for the business community of tomorrow.

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May 2*, 3, 4

Fri: 4pm - 7pm
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Sun: 12pm - 5pm

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- Curry Hard Construction, LLC
- Flair Homes, Inc.
- G.L. Green & Associates
- Hakse Brothers Construction
- Jared Curry Homes
- Luxe Homes & Interiors
- Morning Star Homes of Las Cruces
- NetSolar Homes
- Planet Development
- R. Hines Construction
- Sky Vista Custom Homes
- Soledad Canyon Earth Builders
- Spirit View Homes
- Summit Building & Development
- Tayvis Estates
- Veloz Homes
- Villa Custom Homes, Inc
Cattle Trails: The Butterfield Trail

The Doña Ana link

By Stephen L. Wilmeth

Editor’s note: This article previously ran in the national publication “The Westerner” on April 13.

At sunup, the small caravan departed Fort Mason on what today is the Corralitos Ranch in Doña Ana County.

They pointed their team on the trail that led to the ridge line to the west. In that clear New Mexico Territory morning air, the clarity of the features of the ridge stood out as if it was hundreds of yards ahead rather than miles. The family had not yet become accustomed to an almost surreal atmospheric condition that illustrated this big strange land. It was nothing like they had experienced in their native Switzerland.

Before they reached the ridge, a rider appeared. The dust in his wake preceded before his distinct features could be made out. He stopped only long enough to scream a warning.

“Indians! Indians are killing people over the ridge,” he yelled from astride his lathered horse. “Turn back to Fort Mason!”

Without hesitation, the family turned and followed the rider who quickly outdistanced them.

They were on their own when dust from numerous riders appeared in their wake. Indians!

Before Fort Mason was reached a pitched, running battle commenced between the wagon occupants and the Indians. The family diary describes how a horse was shot and was down in the traces before the patriarch of the family cut the harness loose, and, with the other horse, helped pull the wagon through the open gates of Fort Mason. The doors were slammed shut and the little band stood and sat unbelieving at what had just transpired. Scattered gunfire discouraged more conflict.

The Indians departed, and … the pioneering family was safe.

The Butterfield Trail

The trail the family had been following that day was the Butterfield Trail. They had been on it for weeks coming out of Texas.

The improved trail was the result of actions starting with a Buchanan presidential order to his Postmaster General Aaron Brown. Many things had changed in the West between 1845 and 1850. California had become a state and Texas was the nearest state to the east. A huge swath of wild country lay between the two landmasses. The federal government was committed to establishing a defensible mail route connecting the continent.

John Butterfield competed for and secured the contract for the overland stage route. Although the distance was greater than the more northern routes, the southern route was selected because of the better winter travel conditions.

The route would connect St. Louis to San Francisco with an adjoining leg commencing at Memphis. That routing funneled travelers and mail from the east, joined at Little Rock, and continued west to San Francisco. The leg from St. Louis to San Francisco was a horrendous, 2,785-mile marathon.

It was a huge undertaking.

Securing funding required stockholders, and, among others, Butterfield enlisted Wells Fargo. The Overland Mail Corp. was cobbled together and was ready for business in 1858. It operated until 1860 under Butterfield. At that point, it was passed to Wells Fargo, which was more capable of running the venture.

That era of service was short lived, too, when it was all curtailed at the onset of the Civil War. Wells Fargo survived only because of parallel enterprises and the burgeoning economy of the West following the conflict.

While in operation, the company employed 800 people, built and operated 139 stations, acquired and ran 250 Concord stages and fed and maintained a herd of horses that numbered between 1,800 and 2,500.

Indeed, it was a huge undertaking.

Ormsby

As a passenger, Waterman L. (Lily) Ormsby chronicled the first east-to-west run from St. Louis in 1858.

Notwithstanding the endless thrill of crossing Texas, it was the El Paso to Tucson, Ariz., run that really captured Ormsby’s attention. That was the blood and guts alley that attracted the continuing fascination of novelists and, eventually, screenwriters. Outlaws, renegades, American Indians, cactus, scorpions and frijoles with a rattlesnake or two made good pulp scribbling, and, in that stretch of 382 miles, all of it was found in abundance.

Ormsby was not much taken with Franklin City, which today we know as El Paso. Cavalry was garrisoned at Fort Bliss, but interestingly, it was the agriculture that was arguably more interesting to him. He described the viticulture in some detail. His description of frost control concepts at that time was excellent.

The grapes, of course, led to the products of trade that were included in his account. Brandy and wine were front and center, and it was apparent he imbibed. Wine was a particular interest.

Leaving dusty Franklin City, its vineyards, saloons and 400 mixed residents, he described, in succession, stage stops northward at Fronteras, La Tuna, Cottonwoods, Fort Fillmore and then La Mesilla. The modern counterparts became Canutillo, La Tuna (the area of the prison), Anthony and, of course, Mesilla. Alcohol was still on his mind when he noted New Mexicans knew the Franklin City brandy as “Pass Whiskey.” That referenced the sourcing of Franklin City brandy and the El Paso del Norte name that was the area traversing the narrows of the Rio Grande north from Franklin City (which also applied to what we now know as Juárez).

Ormsby’s description of the village of Mesilla was not becoming. He described its agriculture with interest, but he wasn’t taken by the town. He found the residents “squalid, dirty, and indolent.”

“I never saw such a miserable set of people in my life,” he wrote.

Beyond Mesilla, they watered and changed teams at Picacho. It was from there to Tucson his western adventure escalated.

His description of the trip beyond Tucson was surprisingly subdued. The roads were better, the stops were consistent and the rate of progress was excellent.

He liked California.

In 23 days and 23-and-a-half hours, he reached his destination of San Francisco. Asked if he would board the stage for the trip back east, he suggested he might, but, on second thought, he wasn’t so sure.

“I know what hell is like,” he admitted.

The continuing cow trail

Congress decommissioned its involvement in the trail in 1861, but that didn’t halt traffic. The trail became the primary access route into southwestern New Mexico and on to Arizona for generations of pioneers.

I, for one, believe the trail should be elevated as one of the most important cattle trails in the nation’s network due to the abundance of mixed herds trailed by settlers into the area. The difference in those herds and the better-known counterparts in Texas was the nature of the enterprise.

The cow trails of Texas were commercial farm to market corridors whereas, on the Butterfield Trail, privately owned foundation herds were trailed. Their ownership was seeking homes that existed in their hopes, imaginations and hearts. At the time, they simply fought for existence. They knew nothing of the immensity that must now be assigned to their endeavors. Their efforts and sacrifices were gigantic.

The reference to mixed herds was the fact cows and calves were trailed whereas most of the commercial trailing of cattle consisted largely of adult steer cattle. Trailing mixed herds was much more difficult, and that segment of the harshness of the lives of those pioneers has never been adequately described. That story and others like it are components of the immeasurably important historical value that is not taught

Continued on following page
Fewer direct lines of descendants know the immensity of their own family history.

In the leg west from Picacho, the stage was pulled by mules. The need for mules was the result of distance between water sources and the grades. Ormsby described the stops following Picacho as “Rough and Ready, Goodsight, Fort Cummins and Cooke Springs.”

The name Fort Mason did not yet exist in 1858, but it was the referenced “Rough and Ready.” Through a series of transactions, Kit Mason secured title in 1877. He ran a mercantile and forage business catering to trail traffic.

It was Mason who was proprietor of the establishment on the day of the massacre in 1879. It was probably Mason who slammed the gate shut behind the wagon being pulled by the unlikely team of Christian Flury and his horse escaping from Indians intent on killing him and his family.

A question must now be asked. After he unharnessed himself and his horse and caught his breath was it in Swiss, English or … in tongues that Flury finally spoke?

Stephen L. Wilmeth is a rancher from southern New Mexico. “Flury became the patriarch who gave rise to ranching families whose names still exist in Grant and Luna counties. Members of the Benedict, Burris, Delk, Franks, Gunter, Harrington and Johnson families have direct lineage to Flury. They are part of the living history value of the area tied to ranching heritage and the Butterfield Trail.”

The White Sands Missile Range Fire Department was recently awarded the Fire and Emergency Services Annual Central Region Award as the department of the year in the medium size category.

This is the first year the department has been recognized at a regional level.

“We were able to articulate our accomplishments better this year than in previous years,” WSMR Fire Chief Carlos Soto said.

The department was recognized for excellence in areas such as customer service, awards received within the installation, quality of life initiatives and health and safety initiatives. Last year, the department responded to 31 major vehicle accidents along U.S. highways 70 and 380.

The department was also awarded the Volunteer Protection Program Star award last year. The star award is the highest rating and is given to organizations with an effective safety and health management system. The department is the only fire department within the U.S. Army Installation Management Community (IMCOM) to receive the star award.

“It validates the hard work that firefighters accomplish on a day to day basis,” Soto said. “It validates that the installation has professional firefighters on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.”

The winner of the regional level gets to move forward to the IMCOM level, where they will compete against 17 installations. If the department wins at the IMCOM level they move forward to the Army level, and if they qualify from there, they will move forward to the final Department of Defense category.

By Adriana Salas
Missle Ranger Staff Writer

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The winner of the regional level gets to move forward to the IMCOM level, where they will compete against 17 installations. If the department wins at the IMCOM level they move forward to the Army level, and if they qualify from there, they will move forward to the final Department of Defense category.

WSMR Fire Department awarded
Services recognized on regional level

By Adriana Salas
Missle Ranger Staff Writer

The White Sands Missile Range Fire Department was recently awarded the Fire and Emergency Services Annual Central Region Award as the department of the year in the medium size category.

This is the first year the department has been recognized at a regional level.

“We were able to articulate our accomplishments better this year than in previous years,” WSMR Fire Chief Carlos Soto said.

The department was recognized for excellence in areas such as customer service, awards received within the installation, quality of life initiatives and health and safety initiatives. Last year, the department responded to 31 major vehicle accidents along U.S. highways 70 and 380.

The department was also awarded the Volunteer Protection Program Star award last year. The star award is the highest rating and is given to organizations with an effective safety and health management system. The department is the only fire department within the U.S. Army Installation Management Community (IMCOM) to receive the star award.

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Soto said he received notification of the award from Garrison Commander Col. Brian Michelson. Michelson was notified of the accomplishment through a letter written by the IMCOM Central Region Director Thomas Schoenbeck. In the letter, Schoenbeck congratulated the department and expressed his appreciation on the department’s efforts. WSMR Interim Garrison Deputy Director Kathryn McNeely said the award serves as a great representation for a medium installation such as WSMR.

“We’re very proud of our fire department. They just have an excellent reputation and we think they’re very innovative,” McNeely said. “They manage resources, people and equipment as efficiently and effectively as possible.

“It just starts from the top and it’s well managed.”
Leadership Las Cruces kicks off
Class focuses on economic development and small business

On Good Friday, April 18, the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce kicked off its Leadership Las Cruces Class by focusing on economic development and small business.

The classmates in charge of organizing the event were Brant Adams of Jacobs Technology, Yosef Abraham of the Carrillo Law Firm, Reza Mansouri-Rad of El Paso Electric Co., Russell Blundell of White Sands Missile Range and facilitator from the Leadership Committee Savonne Griffin of FirstLight Federal Credit Union.

The class made a trip to Santa Teresa, where they met with Southwest Steel Coil and were given a tour by its president, Ed Camden. Although most manufactures were closed due to Good Friday, Camden was too busy to close shop for the day and his staff was hard at work filling orders.

It was enlightening to see all of the steel that is made in Doña Ana County, which is placed into several everyday products currently in households.

Jerry Pacheco joined the tour to talk about the many businesses currently in Santa Teresa and showcased Union Pacific and the massive array of product being moved throughout the state on a daily basis. The class also got an up-close view of the border and work being done in Mexico, which ships its products via truck across to the United States, through the port of entry in Santa Teresa.

After a stop at historic Chope’s for lunch, the group found its way to MFIVE, where Marci Dickerson – owner of MFIVE, Dickerson’s Catering, Sports Skill Institute, Hurricane Alley, The Game Sports Bar & Grill and the future Game 2 – spoke about how she started her business, a barbecue restaurant, out of the family barn and how her businesses have grown throughout the years to encompass more than 150 employees throughout the organizations and the economic impact she has on our county daily.

Throughout the road trip, the bus was divided into teams and participants played games that emphasized economic development, winners of the challenges received gifts from local Chamber members, even pieces of the space shuttle were given away to contestants on the bus.

The day raised the bar for future leadership classmates to plan a day filled with unknown facts about the county and how exciting it is to be in Las Cruces during this time, in a fun and interactive way.

Once the day concluded, the class spoke about Santa Teresa and how so much is happening in that county that most of the class was unaware of.

On behalf of the leadership committee, the students who planned the leadership day and the board of directors, we would like to thank our guest speakers – Kiel Hoffman, president of Pioneer Bank and chair of MVEDA; Camden; Pacheco; and Dickerson – for taking time out of their busy schedules to inform the class about what is happening in the area. It was extremely enlightening and we appreciate their time and insight.

Next month’s class will focus on health care.

Junior Leadership stops by the missile range
Class takes a look at the local military

April was Military Month for Junior Leadership. It also marked the final trip the class will take prior to graduation Thursday, May 8, at the Double Eagle.

The group was greeted at the gates of White Sands Missile Range by Cammy Montoya, public affairs specialist. Montoya, herself a graduate of Leadership Las Cruces, escorted the class to the Cox Range Control Center. The class got the opportunity to meet Major General Gwen Bingham, commanding general of WSMR, who spent almost 30 minutes talking about her career and answering questions. What a treat that Bingham was available and took the time out of her busy schedule to talk with the group.

The group then heard a command briefing describing the mission at WSMR. The class also got a chance to tour the control center itself. It saw the air traffic control area as well as a video of a successful missile test illustrating the lengths the base must go through to conduct such a test – including coordinating with the FAA for this particular test, which originated in Gallup and culminated over the range itself.

The class then moved on to the Frontier Club for lunch and heard from Major Rob Fairel of the 2nd Engineering Battalion as he discussed his career – leaving ample time for more Q&A.

After the lunch the students took a trip to the White Sands Missile Range Museum and a tour and discussion of the V2 rocket – one of the things that put the range on the map – as well as a trip to the launch site used for the rockets.

In April, the Junior Leadership class visited White Sands Missile Range.

THE KEY TO YOUR HEALTH BEGINS WITH OUR QUALITY CARE.

2013 Top Performer on Joint Commission Key Quality Measures

Memorial Medical Center has been named one of the Nation’s Top Performers on Key Quality Measures® by the Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America. We are proud to be recognized for achievements in heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia care.

MMC
mmcic.org
Mary Joe and Laura Wood from Eccoci Las Cruces, a new store at Mesilla Valley Mall, mingle with guests during the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Feb. 27, at the Armijo House.

During the event, guests got to network and tour the Armijo house, currently being restored by the Chamber.

Conquistadore Corner

Why you should become a Conquistadore

I have been asked on numerous occasions, “Why are you a Conquistadore?” That is one of the easiest questions to answer, but it requires a very long answer.

The textbook answer would be that, as a Conquistadore, we create goodwill for the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, city of Las Cruces and surrounding areas through public relations events and activities.

Now for the real answer: Being a Conquistadore for the past 12 years has provided me the opportunity to meet numerous business owners; assist in projects that recognize success; participate in public relation events and activities; and much more.

When a new business joins the Chamber and requests a ribbon cutting or a ground breaking event, we see an opportunity to meet someone new, welcome a new or existing business into the Chamber, network with fellow business associates and, once again, get the name of our business out.

Being a Conquistadore also allows us to sit on worthwhile committees and participate in events that directly impact the community and people who live here. Las Cruces Day in Santa Fe, Thank you Team WSMR, The Whole Enchilada Fiesta, Electric Light Parade and involvement with the Las Cruces Public Schools, New Mexico State University and networking during our monthly Business After Hours events are just a few of many opportunities Conquistadores can participate in and offer input in what directly affects our growing community.

Last month, we inducted nine new Conquistadores. I am very proud of the group that can now wear the blue jackets and start collecting pins. Some have already volunteered for different committees, to read proclamations at ribbon cuttings and be involved with the Chamber.

New Conquistadores mean new ideas on how we can become a better group of goodwill ambassadors for the Chamber. The new Conquistadores are motivated and eager to represent the company they work for and to send a positive message about what we do and why we are all so committed to growing our community.

I have just scratched the surface on why I became a Conquistadore. If you are a business owner or member of the Chamber and want your business represented by a professional group of people, contact the Chamber for details. I promise, you will be the winner.

Rick Jackson, Conquistadores Chair
Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
RIBBON CUTTINGS

HTM INC., DBA SECURITY SPECIALTY TRAINING – March 25, 1705 N. Valley Drive, Suite 6 – Director Charles Matley and Jackie O’Byrne, corporate secretary, hold the proclamation while President Pete Hampton and Vice President Genno Tafoya cut the ribbon.

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE AUTISM EXTRAVAGANZA – April 16, 1950 Sonoma Ranch Blvd. – Las Cruces Public Schools Director of Special Education Glenda Rodriguez holds the proclamation while LCPS Board of Education President Connie Phillips cuts the ribbon.

CAVILL & CO. – MARCH 26, 1155 B. COMMERCE COURT – President Ronald Cavill holds the proclamation while Executive Assistant Hannah Mayberry and Elena Mayberry cut the ribbon.

ESTRADA LAW, P.C. – April 16, 4611 Research Park Circle, Suite A-112 – Client Coordinator Aurelia Maxey and Donna Ungvarsky hold the proclamation while Michele Ungvarsky cuts the ribbon.

LAS CRUCES HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION 55TH ANNIVERSARY HOUSE GROUNDBREAKING – April 16, 3677 Santa Sabina Court – Members of the Las Cruces Home Builders Association break ground on a home being constructed in honor of the organization’s 55th anniversary.

ST. CLAIR WINERY & BISTRO – April 1, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla – General Manager Thomas Perez and Manager Jeremiah Cabres hold the proclamations while Florent Lescombes, proprietor, cuts the ribbon.

STATE FARM – BEN TRUJILLO – April 4, 1151 Heather Ave. – Agent/owner Ben Trujillo holds the proclamation while Libby Amundson, office manager, cuts the ribbon. Also pictured are Karen Trujillo, Office Representative Briana Lopez and Office Representative Tara Trujillo.

ST. CLAIR WINERY & BISTRO – April 1, 1720 Avenida de Mesilla – General Manager Thomas Perez and Manager Jeremiah Cabres hold the proclamations while Florent Lescombes, proprietor, cuts the ribbon.
New Members

Environmental Systems of Las Cruces Inc.
Santiago Baltierrez
523-1858

RE/MAX Infinity - Tim Henderson
Teresa Ramos Henderson
524-8202

Michael Mravetz Edward Jones Investments
Michael Mravetz
522-5583

Enchanted Occasions Event Rentals
Deanna Green
523-7368

Renewing Members

10 Pin Alley
Merideth Hildreth

Connor, Dolores
Dolores Connor

Las Cruces Tower LLP
Sonia Skowronski

Sierra Title Co.
Jon Hathaway

The Salvation Army
Scott Schneider

A Perfect Fit
George Pintar

Cordova, Kathleen D.D.S.
Kathleen Cordova

Las Cruces Winnelson
Steve Christianson

Sisbarro Buick/GMC Trucks
Louis Sisbarro

Toastmasters Club No. 2984
Christine Logan

Allstate Insurance Co. - Mary Iadicicco Insurance Agency LLC
Mary Iadicicco

Days Inn
Krys Blankenship

Main Street Bistro & Ale House
Nick Ray

Small Business Development Center
Pavlita Paiz

Toucan Market
Richard Cole

ASA Architects
Ted Shelton Jr.

Document Solutions Inc.
Keith Houser

El Paraiso Management Services LLC
Gabriel Calderon

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate - Bill Carpenter
Bill R. Carpenter

TownePlace Suites By Marriott - Las Cruces
Ana Berrun

Bank of the Rio Grande, N.A.
Maris Reynolds

Hester Agency of Las Cruces
Kayla Jones

Mesilla Valley Dental Care
Marianne Day, DDS, PA

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate - Eastside
John Hummer

Western Heritage Alliance
Jerry Schickedanz

Bravo Mic Communications - KMVR, KOBE, KXPZ, KVLC
Michael Smith

El Paraiso Management Services LLC
Gabriel Calderon

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate - Grady Oxford
Grady Oxford

Western Heritage Bank
Cindy Bennett

Bridget Burris, DDS, PC
Lana Griffith

Home Instead Senior Care
Jan Wimsatt

Payment 1 Financial
Matthew Gaddy

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate - John Hummer
John Hummer

Varay Systems
Patrick Holland

Builders Source Inc.
Caryn Elmore

Hub International of Texas
Marco Bencomo

Steinmann Prosthetics and Orthotics
Robert Steinmann

Citizens Bank of Las Cruces - S. Main St. Branch
Justin Harper

Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino

Stubbs Engineering Inc.
Kenna Stubbs

Zia Engineering & Environmental - Civil Division
Marilu Pittman

Clifford, Ross, & Cooper LLC
Denise Cooper

Inspection Masters
Roger Holt

Roadrunner Food Bank
Rachel Anaya

SUCCESS...incorporated!
Steven Chavira

Las Cruces Public Schools Foundation
Nyeta Haines

ServiGas/Ikard & Newsom
Propane
Lance Ross

The Bridge of Southern New Mexico
Stacie Allen

Las Cruces Winnelson
Steve Christianson

Main Street Bistro & Ale House
Nick Ray

Small Business Development Center
Pavlita Paiz

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate - Grady Oxford
Grady Oxford

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate - Eastside
John Hummer

Steinborn & Associates Real Estate - John Hummer
John Hummer

Steinmann Prosthetics and Orthotics
Robert Steinmann

Stubbs Engineering Inc.
Kenna Stubbs

SUCCESS...incorporated!
Steven Chavira

The Bridge of Southern New Mexico
Stacie Allen
### CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SCHEDULE

#### MAY 2014

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<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<td></td>
<td>4 p.m. Military Affairs Committee, MV Hospice</td>
<td>Noon Trade Mission - Hotel Encanto</td>
<td>Noon LCYP First Fridays - Red Hawk</td>
<td>Noon Member Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Noon Conquistador Executive Committee</td>
<td>11 a.m. Events &amp; Benefits Committee</td>
<td>3 p.m. Healthcare Committee</td>
<td>11 a.m. Small Business Council Committee</td>
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### LAS CRUCES QUICK FACTS

**BUILDING PERMITS**

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<th>Total YTD 2013</th>
<th>Total YTD 2014</th>
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Source: City of Las Cruces – Tuesday, March 25

### CHAMBER BY THE NUMBERS

The Greater 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.

**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 Chamber staff members.

- **11,313** people visited the Chamber’s website
- **35** people inquired about relocation
Finalists for NMSU College of Business dean selected

Two finalists have been chosen to interview on campus in the search for a new dean to New Mexico State University’s College of Business.

The first interview, with Stuart Michelson, professor and former dean at Stetson University, took place April 23.

The second, with James Hoffman, professor and former dean at Texas Tech University, will take place Tuesday, April 29.

Both interviews are being conducted on the NMSU campus, where the finalists are meeting with university Executive Vice President and Provost Dan Howard, the search committee and College of Business staff, faculty and students.

The 15-member search committee, chaired by Lowell Catlett, dean in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, went through approximately 24 applications for the positions before inviting the two candidates to visit the campus.

Six companies go to Santa Teresa

On March 6, Gov. Susana Martinez announced six new companies in Santa Teresa that will create nearly 138 new jobs. The new companies are ERO Resources (50 jobs), Transmaritime (15 jobs), Stagecoach Cartage and Distribution (9 jobs), Kalisch Chatarra (20 jobs), Santa Fe Aero and Oak Tree Inn and Penny’s Diner (34 jobs).

State housing prices rise in March

The latest reports from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) indicate nationally sales numbers are decreasing slightly and prices are rising. New Mexico seems to be an exception to this trend.

March 2014 found more property sales reported to the Realtors Association of New Mexico (RANM) than March 2013, but the statewide median price for 2014 was slightly lower than the median reported for March 2013. Median price indicates half the properties sold for more and half for less.

Even though the statewide median price for 2014 was 1.5 percent lower than the median reported in 2013, the nearly 9 percent increase in the number of reported sales resulted in a 25 percent increase in total volume of dollars generated comparing this March to last year,” said Sandylee Pasquale, 2014 RANM president.

Positive Energy Solar honored

On Tuesday, April 22, Positive Energy Solar was recognized for creating the most positive environmental impact among Midsize Businesses (50-plus employees) by the non-profit B Lab with the release of the third annual “B Corp Best for the Environment” list.

The list honors 84 businesses that earned an environmental impact score in the top 10 percent of all Certified B Corporations on the B Impact Assessment, a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of a company's impact on its workers, community and the environment. Honorees were recognized among micro, small and mid-sized businesses.

Positive Energy Solar is the only solar company in New Mexico that is a certified B Corp. The employee-owned company earned the distinction by providing good wages, benefits and growth opportunities for team members; contributing to schools and nonprofits; delivering 100 percent satisfaction to its customers; and selecting products for long-term performance and low environmental impact. Positive Energy Solar has more than 1,000 solar installations across New Mexico.

Labor Department announces veterans’ training grants

U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez has announced a grant competition that will award 24 or more Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program grants totaling approximately $6 million to provide an estimated 2,000 veterans with occupational, classroom and on-the-job training, as well as job search and placement assistance, to help them succeed in the civilian labor market.

Funds are being awarded on a competitive basis to state and local work force investment boards, local public agencies, tribal governments and nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and community organizations.

Successful applicants will design a program that addresses the challenges associated with homeless veterans.

The solicitation for grant applications (SGA 14-02) will be available at www.grants.gov. For more information, call Cassandra Mitchell at 202-693-4589.