

VBR

ValleyBusinessReport

Connecting You to Local Pro-Business News

www.ValleyBusinessReport.com

LNG in RGV A \$10 Billion Revolution

Investing Angels
Sunshine Power
Freedom Vault

PRSR STD
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MCALLEN, TX
PERMIT NO. 430

 Find us on
Facebook



WANT TO LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE?
SIGN UP AND LEARN TO CODE

NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
MISSION EDC
(956) 585-0040
WWW.CODETHETOWN.COM

TEAMWORK: LESSON THREE

By Arnoldo Mata

The third lesson of team work comes from Google. If you have a problem, you just “Google it” and get the answer. It’s a natural reflex. What if the question is: how do I build a successful team? Well, Google has one answer for you. Don’t do a search. Go straight to Google headquarters.

Last year, Julia Rozovsky, analyst at Google People Operations, revealed the results of years of internal research by Google on what makes for high performing teams. They looked at more than 250 attributes of nearly 200 Google teams. The first inclination was to think it was the type of people in the team that made the difference, a dream team mix. Wrong. They discovered that who is on the team matters less, far less, “than how the team members interact, structure their work, and view their contributions.”

Google research showed that five key dynamics determine what sets successful teams apart from other teams:

1. Psychological safety: Can we take risks on this team without feeling insecure or embarrassed?
2. Dependability: Can we count on each other to do high quality work on time?

3. Structure and clarity: Are goals, roles and execution plans on our team clear?

4. Meaning of work: Are we working on something that is personally important for each of us?

5. Impact of work: Do we fundamentally believe that the work we’re doing matters?

That first dynamic, psychological safety, is the most important one. Essentially, it asks whether people feel that they can voice their opinions and ideas without feeling that they will be criticized personally or ridiculed. You’ve probably worked in a team, or maybe heard of one, where the team leader’s opinion is the only one that is allowed or where personal attacks/ridicule are allowed. This type of environment suppresses ideas and participation. People learn to keep quiet and keep their heads down until they can get out. It is a suppressive and tiresome environment. Things just go bad from there.

Of course, the other four points are important. If you want to build a successful team, that’s the environment or culture you have to create in your organization. The culture you create will determine how successful you are. You control that. Culture is as important as technology, if not more important. You wouldn’t use 15-year-old computers, so why would you keep an obsolete culture simply because that’s what you’ve always had?

Amy Edmondson, an organizational behavioral scientist at Harvard who introduced the construct of “team psychological safety,” offers three simple things individuals can do to foster team psychological safety. First, frame the work as a learning problem, not an execution problem. Second, acknowledge your own fallibility. Last, model curiosity and ask lots of questions.

The challenge is that this takes some thought, extensive work and lots of dialogue. Google’s use of data and analysis has been critical in making it a great company. They have put this knowledge into effect by providing their teams the tools and processes needed to build strong teams based on the five dynamics. This concept has a potential to play a pivotal role in making a significant change in how organizations build their teams. It’s time you looked outside your own organization and looked for those tools.

Arnoldo Mata heads Leadership Resource Group, specializing in leadership and management training, grant writing and strategic planning, with more than 25 years working with non-profit organizations, community organizations, local governments and private businesses. He can be contacted at arnoldo.mata@hotmail.com.



WE OFFER OVER

55,000



SURCHARGE-FREE ATMS, WORLDWIDE.

Never Pay Another ATM Surcharge!

We are part of the Allpoint ATM network - take advantage of these benefits today:

- ▶ Surcharge-free transactions
- ▶ Use your current card
- ▶ 55,000 ATMs worldwide
- ▶ No forms to fill out
- ▶ No sign-up fees
- ▶ Start using Allpoint today

It's easy to find an Allpoint ATM!

Visit www.lonestarnationalbank.com or download the LSNB Mobile™ app today!

Available through the Apple, Google or Windows store.



**Lone Star
National BankSM**

The Valley's Bank.

1-800-580-0322
www.lonestarnationalbank.com



CONTENTS

Teamwork III 3
 LNG 5
 Angel Investors 8
 B2B CFO 9
 Affordable Attic 10
 Mad Guys 12
 Buy Biz II. 14
 Retire Later. 15
 Alba Energy. 18
 Immigrant Business Owner. 20
 Spotlights 22

Cover photo Cover image courtesy of RGV LNG.

Stay updated all month long with news from around the Valley. Sign up for our weekly e-mail e-Brief at www.valleybusinessreport.com.

Follow us at VBR Media on



for Valley business news updates.

Valley Business Report Staff

Editor

Eileen Mattei
eileen@valleybusinessreport.com

General Manager

Todd Breland
todd@valleybusinessreport.com

Director of Operations

Crystal S. Breland
crystal@valleybusinessreport.com

Production Art Director

Beth Martinez
beth@valleybusinessreport.com

Online Editor, VBR e-Brief

Angey Murray
angey@valleybusinessreport.com

Web Design

MPC Studios

Philosophy: We are a pro-business publication providing in-depth perspectives on business trends and creating a forum in which business leaders can exchange ideas and information affecting the local community's economy. Letters to the Editor: 300 words or less. E-mailed: editorial@valleybusinessreport.com Please include your full name and city of residence.

© 2016 Valley Business Report is published by VBR Media
Office: (956) 310-8953 105A East Jackson, Harlingen,

Business is booming!

New businesses are opening in Harlingen all the time. More than a million shoppers within a 45 minute drive means this growing region is perfect for your business.



Your Business Belongs in Harlingen!



Looking for a better place to do business?
Contact us for more information

956.216.5081 • www.harlingenedc.com



CHANGING VALLEY DYNAMICS

By Eileen Mattei

The three liquefied natural gas facilities scheduled to begin construction along the Brownsville Ship Channel in 2017 and 2018 will have an enormous effect on the economy of the Valley and the nation. Given the initial capital investments of \$10 billion in the three plants, South Texas is poised to become an epicenter of the LNG trade and clean energy (including wind and solar). Within five years, the United States is projected to be the world's third largest liquefied natural gas supplier, thanks to five new LNG terminals in Louisiana, Texas and Maryland. Beyond the capital investments, the region can expect thousands of high-paying

construction jobs and new revenue streams for local suppliers of myriad goods and services. Additional benefits include an expanded tax base and hundreds of permanent, well-paid jobs operating the LNG plants and supplying them.

The three plants are well along in the complex application process with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and anticipate approvals in the next four to 15 months. Yet, despite over 50 years of LNG plant operations without any incident that impacted public safety, public misconceptions about LNG have been a hindrance.

Liquefied Natural Gas is not flammable and does not explode. If it is spilled, it evaporates quickly leaving no residue in soil or water. The LNG facili-

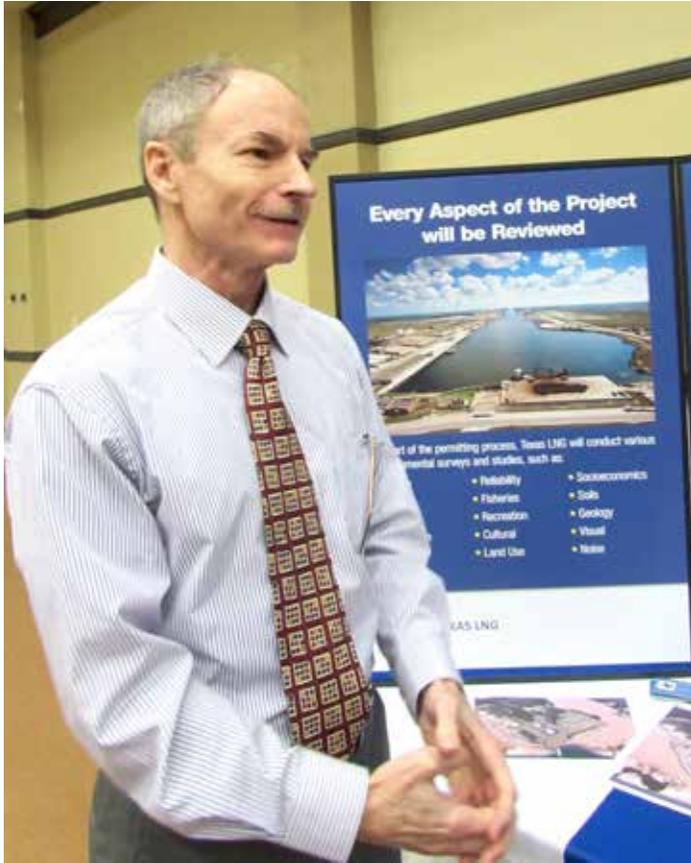
ties are not refineries. Instead each is a liquefaction plant: when natural gas is chilled to minus 260 degrees in long chambers called trains, it becomes a liquid which is stored at low pressure at the export terminal.

Next Decade LLC's Rio Grande LNG is the largest proposed private investment in all of Texas and among the largest nationally with an initial \$6 billion slated for the Brownsville Shipping Channel site. Proposed expansions would boost the total investment to \$20 billion. The parent company already runs 10 liquefaction terminals, more than 10 pipelines and multiple related facilities, including one in Boston harbor.



An aerial rendering of the Rio Grande LNG facility shows it is surrounded by a 14-foot-high vegetated berm, which hides the facility from view. (Courtesy)

David Glessner, project director of Texas LNG, discussed the long-term and short term jobs expected at the facility during three years of construction beginning in 2018 and during operations. (VBR)



“This project supports global environmental goals. The reality is this gas is going to replace coal-fired plants. In Europe, customers are seeking independence from Russia, so this furthers U.S. geopolitical goals,” said Next Decade CFO Ben Atkins. “The beauty of this project is that it is founded on long term (LNG) sales contract, and Texas has huge reserves.” The Rio Bravo pipeline will supply Permian Basin and Eagle Ford natural gas to the facility. Giant tankers, fueled by LNG, will carry LNG to foreign ports.

The facility will have a vegetated, 16-foot-high perimeter berm that protects the 750-acre production field and its six super-cooling trains from storm surge and from sight of passersby. Atkins said RG LNG will use construction contractor CB&I to build the Valley facility. When awarding contracts, CB&I gives preference to local companies. When that’s not possible, outside bidders must show their plan to use local subcontractors.

Next Decade CEO Kathleen Eisbrenner signed a MOU with UTRGV President Guy Bailey in September. They established a strategic partnership between academia and industry that fosters STEM education and promotes collaboration.

Atkins expects the FERC decision in the first quarter of 2017. RG LNG expects to have 270 permanent employees, with a \$50,000 minimum salary, once the facility begins operating.

Texas LNG is the smallest of the projects, with a \$1 billion investment in Phase 1 on 625 acres, according to project director Dave Glessner, but the company was the first to file its application

in March 2016, after two years of preparation. “It’s a long process and right now we are in the middle of it.”

Texas LNG’s strategy is to avoid, minimize and mitigate the impact on native species, cultural resources, traffic, tourism, and recreation. He said the project will be almost undetectable visually from South Padre and Port Isabel with its low physical profile and no flaring.

Glessner said employment during the three-year construction phase will peak at 600. He estimated the company would pay \$191 million per year in state and local taxes during construction. During operation, the LNG plant will have 80 full time employees averaging \$80,000 annually.

ANNOVA has proposed a \$3 billion, midscale LNG liquification plant on 650 acres, according to William P. Harris, senior communications manager. FERC approval is anticipated in early 2018 with commercial operations due to start in 2021.

The facility on the south side of the ship channel will include a LNG carrier dock and two storage tanks. During the 48-month construction period, Annova would employ about 700 in jobs averaging \$50,000 annually. When operating, Harris projected the average compensation would be about \$70,000 for about 165 employees.

Harris listed reasons why Annova chose Brownsville for its facility: land availability, location (near natural gas reserves), infrastructure and the shipping channel access to global markets. “Plus the Rio Grande Valley has a pool of skilled worker to hire and help run the plant. All this makes Brownsville the right choice.” The company is committed to STEM education.

the queen city of
mercedes
Home to:
Rio Grande Valley Premium Outlets
Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show
Llano Grande Resort Community
Estero Llano Grande State Park
World Birding Center
Historic Architecture
Live Music
Public Art

big boots. big opportunities.

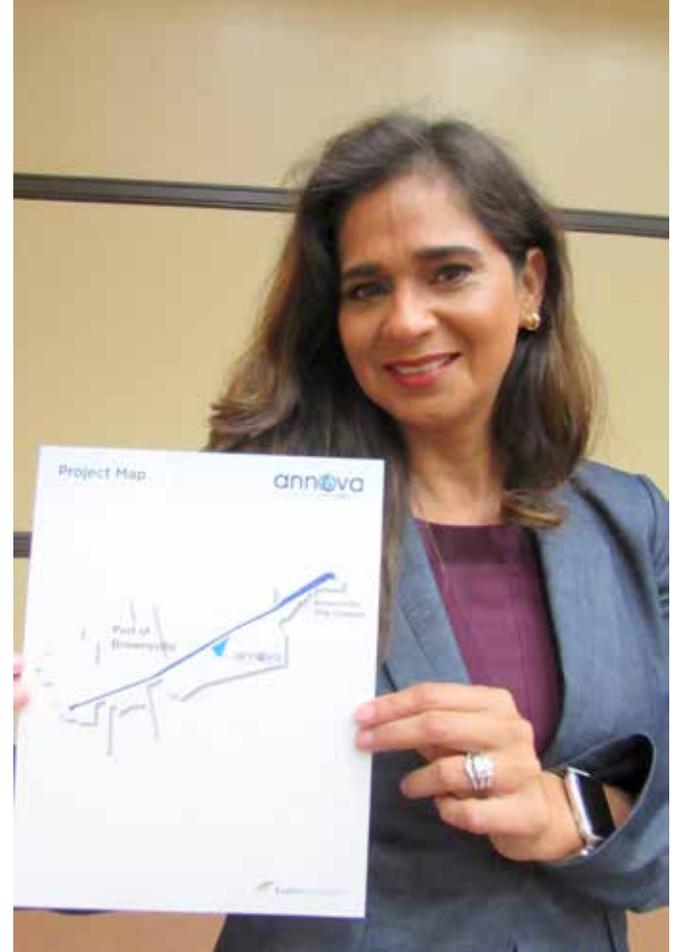


Because of the LNG facilities low profile, they will have little impact on the skyline as shown in this rendered view from the Port Isabel Lighthouse. (Courtesy)

Ben Atkins of Rio Grande LNG stands in front of views of the facility planned along the Brownsville Ship Channel. (VBR)



Maribel Guerrero shows the location of the Annova terminal along the Brownsville Ship Channel. (VBR)



The Impact

Thousands of jobs will be up for grabs during construction of the LNG plants, but so will hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts for a huge range of goods and services. Trucking, food service, medical services, communications, IT, security and engineering services are needed.

“We’re going to need lot of people,” predicted James Markham-Hill of Rio Grande LNG, which expects to begin construction by late 2017. The CB&I workforce would average 2,700 with a peak of 5,000. “Our company’s priority is to maximize the local workforce. CB&I, interestingly, is already the employer of many RGV citizens in Corpus Christi and Louisiana.”

The company hopes those individuals will bring their higher skill levels (and commensurate pay levels) back home. Additionally, many oil field skills are transferable to LNG facility construction. Markham-Hill said the company is working with high schools, technical schools and colleges, as well as UTRGV, to open pathways to employment at RG LNG.

The challenge for Valley businesses, Markham-Hill said, is that many haven’t worked with large industry. To bridge that gap, Rio Grande LNG held five workshops for potential suppliers earlier this year that more than 250 attended. During the events, reps went over the types of goods and services needed and how a business could be pre-qualified. “Our goal with local companies is to get them registered and pre-qualified with CB&I so they’ll be ready for contracts, likely in mid-2017. It’s important that businesses don’t self-eliminate. They need to at least get on our radar.”

As the plants receive their permits, ex-

port licenses, commercial contracts and financing, the Valley dynamic and economy are going to change dramatically.

For more information, see riograndelng.com, annovalung.com and txlng.com.

An advertisement for IBC Bank Visa Debit Cards. The background features a festive holiday scene with a large, ornate red and gold Christmas ornament and blurred lights. The text "Holiday Shopping with" is written in a red cursive font. Below it, "INSTANT ISSUE CHIP CARD" is written in bold black capital letters. An image of a red IBC Bank Visa Debit Card is shown, displaying the number 1234 5678 9010, the name "CARDHOLDER", and the expiration date "11/18". At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "For Increased Security and Fraud Prevention". Below the banner, the text reads "Upgrade to the IBC Bank Visa Debit Card with chip technology instantly." and "When used at a chip activated terminal, the embedded chip produces a one-time use code that helps reduce in-store fraud." The IBC Bank logo and website "ibc.com" are at the bottom right.

INVESTING ANGELS OF THE RGV

By Eileen Mattei

Mark Kroll jokingly calls himself the leader of a band of fools because he is the president of the RGV Angel Network. Kroll, who is dean of UTRGV's Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, explained that that it is one thing to train young entrepreneurs and another to have funding for them to tap into. "What we have not historically had in the Valley is people who have launched scalable enterprises. Family businesses? Yes. Large businesses with relatively sophisticated jobs? No."

"A key element to launching a scalable business is access to seed money," said Kroll. Before a company has grown big enough to attract venture capitalists, angel investors help them in raising their first quarter million dollars to develop the product or scale up the company.

"Angel investors are people willing to walk on thin air and put some money into a company and probably lose it," Kroll explained. "This is not where you put your retirement funds. We like to think it is better than going to Vegas."

Angel investors, known as accredited investors under SEC Rule 501c 3, are individu-



als (or two spouses) with a net worth of \$1 million or else an annual income of \$200,000 (\$300,000 with a spouse). An angel investor must acknowledge that they have enough knowledge and experience in financial and business matters to be capable of evaluating the relative merits and risks of any investment.

"You create a formal network where people can see deals and talk together. Most entrepreneurs don't have access to qualified investors, and most investors don't know young entrepreneurs with good ideas." Besides meeting SEC rules, network members must be willing to make a minimum investment of \$5,000 per year and pay a network membership \$500 per year. To date, the RGV Angel Network has 25 members and is aiming for about 45 members, the typical number of the 14 other groups that be-

long to the Alliance of Texas Angel Networks.

Kroll said with 45 members, an angel network achieves critical mass where they can afford to operate and also have enough diversity among the investors. "Some may have expertise in fields like engineering or agriculture or molecular biology and can inform the discussion of a project." RGV Angel Network members include physicians, engineering firm owners, professional investment managers, family business and agribusiness owners, a school superintendent and of course the business school dean. "Fortunately, we have some retirees from different walks of life who have the time to drill down."

To date, RGV Angels have heard five businesses pitch their plans. Two companies were selected for investments of a total to date of \$267,500. Kroll said a few hundred thousand is typical and allows the investors to see if a business truly has potential.

The network has a proprietary website where the applicants post their information for members to access and read up on the firm before they pitch their company to the group.

"After a pitch, we poll members for follow-up interest and, if it is there, we have an event called the deep dive," Kroll said, where the investors and entrepreneurs spend quality time asking and answering questions. In November, deep dives were held for two recent pitches: a medical device company in the development stage and a young web marketing services firm hoping to scale up.

Equity money is at stake. "That's one of the key points in negotiations. The owner wants to give up as little of a firm as possible. What normally occurs is they have a proposition they've thought through," Kroll said. Don't picture Shark Tank-type on-the-spot decisions. "Usually the entrepreneur says something like, 'I am here to offer 30% of my business for x dollars.' It's more or less a take it or leave it offer."

"This is speculative stuff. More often than not, these firms are cash-flow negative, or they have no cash flow at all because they are in development," Kroll said. "You're not talking about earnings; you are talking about the burn rate: going through the cash on hand."

In order to maintain deal flow for the early RGV Angel Network, the companies funded thus far have come from outside the Valley, although Kroll expects to hear the first Valley-based pitch within six months. When a local network can't come up with the full amount needed for a business, entrepreneurs can tap into the Alliance network, backed by a local group's seal of approval, and make presentations to other Texas investors. "If one network is willing to put several hundred thousand into a project, it adds credibility."

For more information, see rgvan.org.



two cities for the price of one

Fly Sun Country Airlines® nonstop to Minneapolis/St. Paul from November 2016 through April 2017.

Book today at suncountry.com.



THIS GUN FOR HIRE: YOUR OWN CFO

By Eileen Mattei

“Smaller businesses are not aware that a CFO and a controller are different,” said David Girault, a partner in B2B CFO. “The CFO is a strategic role, an executive role, taking the data from the controller and helping the owner

to plan, to evaluate opportunities and to make decisions to improve performance and value.”

Companies with revenue between \$2 million and \$75 million that can't justify the salary of a full-time CFO, but need a CFO's financial expertise to grow have the option of using a fractional or part-time CFO like Girault. Valley-based, he is one of 230 experienced CFOs who are partners in the national B2B CFO.

Girault said the need is there: a business owner needs to raise capital or to understand the efficiency of different units, to increase company value or to reduce cash flow worries. “Finance touches every aspect of a business. The CFO often has as deep an understanding of the business as the CEO. Our goal is to have a long-term relationship as a trusted advisor.”

In the Valley, the bookkeeper, controller and CFO are often mistakenly perceived as a continuum of the same function, Girault said. “My role does not replace your CPA. My role enhances the utility of your CPA.” He explained that the average CPA, focused on taxes and financial reporting, doesn't have the CFO's corporate finance background and the experience to examine the ways forward.

Currently, Girault is a part-time CFO for a Valley manufacturer of fiberglass products and a third-party logistics company. In the past, he has filled that role for a real estate developer and retailers as well as companies involved in cold storage, franchising, trucking and construction. “The challenge is similar wherever we go. I have found that 85% of a business is the same across the board (whatever the industry). That is a strong advantage for a B2B CFO. It's a short learning curve, getting the nuance of new industry.”

Girault, who has a law degree from the University of Texas as well as a degree in accounting, practiced law before becoming a partner in an import-export business and gaining in-depth experience in the logistics industry. He operated independently as a CFO on retainer until two years ago when he was recruited by



B2B CFO, which has been on INC's best 500 list.

“Many clients are businesses that want to grow but can't get past a certain level. We help the business owner look at key performance indicators,” Girault said. With KPI in hand, it is possible to manage and get results that are scalable. “Some business owners run

the business by feel, not by reports. You need systems and processes in place when you add a location,” because the complexity has increased whether it's auto repair shops, restaurants or logistics.

Girault typically works on site with clients, in the interest of data security. He receives a monthly retainer and outcome-based compensation. “We add value for the business owner,” overcoming barriers that have inhibited success and growth. “Our CEO says, ‘they either get it or they don't.’”

Helping owners craft an exit strategy represents a big slice of B2B CFO's projects.

Baby boomers own 60% of the small-to mid-size businesses. “Two-thirds of those do not

have anyone lined up to take over. The best get sold and the rest will fade away because it's a buyers' market,” Girault said. B2B has a large suite of services they employ as coach for the exit team, including doing advance due diligence. As a third party advisor to companies with EBITDA over \$1 million, they develop the proper strategy to get the best future for the business owner.

“What we find happens when working on the exit process, the owner diverts too much attention from the business (to learn how to sell the business), so cash flow dips,” which drops its value, Girault said. The B2B CFO and Exit software help the owner improve the company's value and smooth the transition to the next owners.

Girault is the only B2B CFO partner south of San Antonio and Houston, although approximately 40 other partners operate in Texas. He is active on social media, tweeting and retweeting news of interest to clients and potential clients.

For more info, see davidgiraultcfo.com or b2bcfo.com.



FIRST COMMUNITY BANK

BROWNSVILLE • HARLINGEN • LOS FRESNOS • McALLEN
RAYMONDVILLE • SAN BENITO • SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

SECURE STORAGE OUTSIDE A BANK

By Eileen Mattei

Darrel Johnson has built a mantrap and is proud of it. The founder and CEO of Affordable Attic, after 20 years of growing the climate-controlled, limited-access self-storage business, decided the market was ready for more. The first Freedom Vault, at the original Affordable Attic in Harlingen, provides the equivalent of a bank safe deposit box with advanced security (including the mantrap and biometric scanners) along with round-the-clock, 365-day access.

“Freedom Vault is the first of its kind in the Rio Grande Valley and reportedly only the second in Texas,” Johnson said. “Through the Patriot Act, the government can seize safe deposit boxes without a warrant. Your belongings in a Freedom Vault are like an extension of your home. We are not under banking laws; we’re under storage laws.” That’s why he says the private lockers and storage boxes at Freedom Vault protect a customer’s identity and valuables “Swiss style.”

Converting a conference room into a Freedom Vault required installing one-foot-thick steel and concrete reinforced exterior walls, a heavy gauge engineered roof and mul-

iple layers of security involving security guards, exterior cameras, pin numbers, keys, an iris scanner and the mantrap outside the vault entrance.

“A crashing 18-wheeler wouldn’t dent it. There is maximum security for the protection of goods in the vault and the owner who comes to access the goods, so they can see the whole exterior through cameras and feel comfortable when they leave,” Johnson explained. Access after business hours (8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Sat.) is available for a fee, by appointment, complete with a security guard. A major factor for people accustomed to 24-hour access to information is that access to their valuables is not limited by banking hours.

A niche market already exists with people primed to take advantage of high security storage.

“People have told me, ‘My parents have stuff at their house that they need to have in a secure place.’ They signed up for Freedom Vault before it opened (in early November),” he said.

Johnson opened Affordable Attic in 1995 and now has 10 facilities across the Valley, including a two-story storage unit on 23rd Street in McAl-

Darrel Johnson and Azael Gomez stand inside the first Freedom Vault which contains gun lockers as well as various size storage lockers. (VBR)



len that people mistake for professional offices. “We were the first in the Valley with climate-controlled units, controlled access gates, security cameras on site, and month-to-month contracts. I knew we were going to grow, and I’m not surprised were as big as we are. I feel very blessed and fortunate. It wouldn’t have happened without the great team in central headquarters and wonderful managers at each facility. We run by the team concept, so it’s no longer me making all the decisions. The managers are responsible for the success of the business. They provide the service to customers. My job is to help them do their job, and I get fulfillment from that.”

“We have fun and laugh a lot, but we’re not afraid to argue to get to the best solution,” said Johnson. “We truly believe that the whole business and anything we do is because we have been smiled on by the Lord. Our heart is to be a Christian business, not in name but in deed. That’s not just me; it’s the whole team. Helping people is what it’s all about. If you make service your goal, the dollar will follow.”

It helps that the climate-controlled storage market has boomed. Affordable Attic has doubled the climate-controlled units in its facilities. The next location in Edinburg will have 60% of its



Azael Gomez demonstrates the retinal scanner located in the mantrap outside the Freedom Vault at the Affordable Attic. (VBR)

TEAMING UP IN WESLACO!

UTRGV

STC
South Texas College

TEXAS A&M
KINGSVILLE

The Center Point of Education!

EDC
WESLACO

THE WESLACO ADVANTAGE
ALL THE AMENITIES NONE OF THE CONGESTION

find us on **facebook** 956.969.0838 weslacoedc.com

units climate controlled to meet demand.

Johnson is transitioning the company to Affordable Attic Plus with the introduction of Freedom Vault. The Edinburg facility under construction has a Freedom Vault in its design. From there, Johnson plans to remodel existing Affordable Attics to include the high security vaults as demand grows. He has considered the possibility of having stand-alone vaults as well.

“By design, we are not the largest storage facility in the Valley, but it is our desire to be the highest quality. The business has been evolving and progressing. This a high trust business, building on what we have done. We have customers that don’t want to store anywhere else, because our reputation is so good,” Johnson said. The service offered by a Freedom Vault increases the value to customers.

Azael Gomez., who heads corporate development for Affordable Attic, said the public turns to them when it’s time to declutter or downsize their homes. Affordable Attic simplifies things by providing customers with access to moving trucks, storage boxes and dollies. He pointed out that the website has a short video showing Freedom Vault’s amenities.

For more information, see [affordable attic.com](http://affordableattic.com) and freedomvault.com.

This sign will soon change to Affordable Attic Plus, denoting the location offers Freedom Vault. (VBR)



Greetings from the **24TH ANNUAL** **ENTERTAINMENT LIVE MUSIC** **Winter Texan EXPO 2017**

PRESENTED BY **SOUTH TEXAS HEALTH SYSTEM**

OVER 100 EXHIBITORS

- Healthcare • Travel • Restaurants
- Services • Retail • Automotive
- Entertainment • Recreational Activities and more!

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

Capture the Winter Market at RGV's Largest Winter Texan Event!

JANUARY 17-18, 2017
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
M'ALLEN CONVENTION CENTER

SPOTS FILLING UP FAST!
RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

For more information call or visit us online!
956-687-5115 • www.wintertexanexpo.com

SPONSORS

MAD ABOUT THE DETAILS

By Henry Miller

For Anibal and Alonso Chavez, cars have always been an obsession. Having a great career that made money has also been an obsession. Now they have the best of both obsessions. The brothers are owners of Mad Guys Auto Detailing, located at 1328 E. Hackberry Ave., Suite A, in McAllen. Mad is short for McAllen Auto Detailing. But the moniker has stuck with the two since they found their passion in cars years ago.

“We would always get frustrated when we saw a nice vehicle all dirty and not taken care of,” said Alonso, the elder of the two and CEO of the company. “Friends would make fun of us, asking us why we were getting so mad. ‘It’s not even your car,’ they would tell us. We just

believed that the car wasn’t meant to look like that.”

Growing up in Guadalajara, Mexico, the brothers fell in love with cars early. The car culture is intense there, Anibal said and their dad, likewise, had an appreciation for keeping his car extremely clean. “He is really OCD,” Alonso said. “When we were just 9 or 10, he would have us help wash his car and Mom’s. We were racing fanatics so the fact that we were able to learn how to get the car shiny was great.” It’s also how they first attached making money with detailing cars: the better job they did on their parents’ vehicles, the more cash they’d have in their pockets.

“If we just did a quick job, we wouldn’t get much. And our dad would inspect the cars,” Anibal said. “If we waxed it and gave it a glaze to increase the gloss or reflection, we would get more.”

The family moved to the Valley in 2006 and began a produce company. In 2012, the brothers began their venture into detailing – not just washing – with a mobile business. They worked in parking lots. After getting good responses, they moved into a small warehouse with about 1,000 square feet which could fit only three cars inside.

At their new 6,200-square-foot facility, they can fit six cars

in the back, three in the showroom and can store more. When they realized that the Valley didn’t have an in-depth auto detailer, they decided to take a leap of faith. Now, their services include paint correction, interior coatings, leather protecting, glass coating, paint protection, wraps, tints and whatever will enhance the car’s look and protect it. They also will custom vehicles.

“We had a customer who brought in a plain blue Corvette and out of his pocket he pulled a little Hot Wheels car,” Anibal said. “He asked us to make it look the same, whatever it takes. We had to look for everything, the stripes and the headlights; but we made it happen.”

Alonso said there’s a big misconception that detailing, real in-depth detailing, is for just those with luxury or collector’s cars. That’s not the case. Many of their clients use their cars for everyday driving. “We have customers with 2003 Silverados that look new. We have Sentras and all types of cars that come through here.”

Another benefit of detailing beside enhancing the car’s look and protecting it from elements is that if the owner decides to trade it in, they can get more value. “When dealerships take in a car, they look at the mechanical, of course,” Alonso said. “But they also look at the carpet and the seats for stains, they look for scratches; they will have to invest to fix all that before they put it back for sale. That affects the trade-in value.”



Mad Guys’ Isaac Herrera works on drying the 2015 Ford Mustang 5.0 after spraying an emulsion of carnuba to enhance gloss and reflection. (VBR)

A 2015 Ford Mustang being enhanced in the back shop and bearing the Mad Guys name and logo. (VBR)

The Mad Guys are adamant about customer satisfaction, even if it means the customer spends less. "A lot of times someone will come in with their car and want to do the whole works," Anibal said. "But they won't need it. We tell them that. If they still want it, of course we will do it. But we will tell them things like that only needs paint correction instead of a full paint job, things like that."

While no business is recession-proof, the Chavezes are noticing that theirs is pretty resilient. When the economy is good, people tend to bring their cars in more for detailing. When the economy isn't doing as well, they'll bring them in to preserve their vehicles. "Anybody who wants their car looking their best, that's what we want to do for them," Alonso said. "Detailing really is for everybody."

For more information, visit madguysautodetailing.com.

Mad Guys Auto Detailing owners Alonso Chavez and Anibal Chavez stand next to a 2014 Chevy Camaro z28 in their showroom at 1328 E. Hackberry Ave., Suite A, in McAllen. (VBR)



Revitalizing Historic Old Hidalgo into a destination spot of the RGV!

The Nueva Vida Hidalgo Project is focused on remodeling existing buildings for local entrepreneurs while capturing their ideas, imagination, energy and passion in such a way that it will change the culture and economy of our community.



Call TODAY for more info!



956•843•7400
www.cityofhidalgo.net
www.hidalgoedc.com



Your
EVENT Specialist

RENTAL
WORLD

.com

PARTIES, MEETINGS, RIBBON CUTTINGS, AND MORE

WHETHER PLANNING A MEETING, RIBBON CUTTING OR COMPANY PARTY, RENTAL WORLD HAS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR NEXT FUNCTION A SUCCESS.

956-630-3564 • McAllen
 956-973-5099 • Weslaco
 956-364-2589 • Harlingen
 956-542-1837 • Brownsville
 361-857-2789 • Corpus Christi

WHO BUYS A BUSINESS? PART II

By Randy Wickett

Keep in mind that the vast majority of buyers want to buy cash flow. Sit down with your accountant or bookkeeper and get your financial statements in order, with cash flow in the spotlight.

Cash flow is not the same thing as profit. Most buyers look at the profit and loss statement or tax return and at owner or family compensation. They consider any excess compensation to employees and family. Buyers also look at large, one-time expenses such as a new computer system or remodeling. They consider non-cash items like depreciation and amortization. Interest expenses are reviewed, as are owner perks.

The buyer must be as serious as the seller when it comes time to purchase a business or the sale will never close.

A Buyer Profile

The average individual buyer is usually a male, although more and more women are going into business. Almost 50% have less than



could be a big plus.

Appearances Count

If a potential buyer doesn't like the appearance of your business, the rest of it may never get a chance. Fix the signs, replace the carpet, paint the place – make it look good. Replace worn-out fixtures and equipment before you decide to sell. Don't assume that the price will just be slightly lower because you haven't replaced it.

\$100,000 to invest in the purchase of a business. In many cases, all or part of the funds will come from personal savings followed by financial assistance from family members. The buyer will never have owned a business before, and most likely will buy a business he or she had never considered until being introduced to it.

Their primary reason for going into business is to get out of their present situation, be it unemployment, job dissatisfaction or early retirement. Prospective buyers are ready to take the risk and make the leap of faith necessary to purchase and operate a business. They want to be in charge of their own destiny, working for themselves. Money is important, but it's not at the top of the list. In fact, it probably is in fourth or fifth place.

The traits of a willing buyer include the desire and urgent need to buy a business, financial resources, the ability to make decisions and a reasonable expectations of what business ownership can do for him or her.

It may help your decision-making process to understand not only who the buyer is, but what they want to know before buying your business. Be prepared to answer questions like these.

- How much money is required to buy the business?
- What is the annual increase in sales?
- How much is the inventory?
- What is the debt?
- Will the seller train and stay on for a while?
- What makes the business different/special/unique?
- What further defines the product or service? Bid work? Repeat business?
- What can be done to grow the business?
- What can the buyer do to add value?
- What is the profit picture in bad times as well as good?
- Do you have an active website? A website

Keep in mind that anything that increases sales also increases profits and the all-important cash flow!

Other things add value to your business. Don't discount the value of customer lists, proprietary products and/or techniques, well-maintained equipment, secret recipes, customized software programs and good employees. These are termed "off-balance sheet items." Although not used in most pricing models, they add value. An operations manual may add value too. It doesn't have to be elaborate yet it can impress buyers that you have your act together and might help you sell more quickly. Look at your business carefully so you don't overlook items that make your business more attractive to the buyer.

Eliminate the surprises. Review every facet of the business and remedy any problems that could appear during the sale process. No one likes surprises – most of all potential buyers. Whether legal, accounting, environmental, or anything else, solve it now.

Avoid the temptation to "let down" when you put your business up for sale. Keep normal operating hours and maintain inventory at a constant level so prospective buyers see your business at its best.

Look at your business from the perspective of a buyer. What could you do to make it more attractive or more saleable?

Working with a professional business broker can make the difference between just getting rid of the business and selling it for the very best price and terms.

Rick Wickett is the managing partner at Biz Alliance Advisors which specializes in selling businesses with professionalism, experience and integrity. For more information, see bizallianceadvisors.com.



A family business providing 35+ years of exceptional valleywide customer service! Serving the entire RGV for ALL of your propane needs!

Ask about our Veterans' discount!



Upper Valley Mid Valley
 5201 N. La Homa Road 9093 W Mile 16N Rd
 Mission, TX 78574 Weslaco, TX 78599
 (956) 581-1063 • (956) 581-4574 fax
 www.mrgpropane.com

A QUALITY OF LIFE CHOICE

By *Humphrey G. Thomas*

Did you know that retiring four years later can increase your social security benefits by up to 24%? First of all, let's get a reality check about retirement age.

"Early retirement" has often been presented as a sign of success. But it's interesting that we don't apply that to famous celebrities or celebrated entrepreneurs. In fact, we are surprised to hear if one of them retires. Their careers seem so exciting and fulfilling, so why would they want to retire?

Thinking about it that way, maybe early retirement is actually more of a sign that a person didn't enjoy their career very much, that it was just the necessary evil they were tolerating to pay for the weekends. Can that really be defined as a successful working life?

Here's something else to think about: the longevity revolution. Thanks to advances in healthcare, we are living longer and healthier than ever before. A high percentage of us can expect to live well into our 90s, which will mean 30 or more years of retirement. That's almost as long as an average working life! Why be in such a rush to get started?

Furthermore, studies continually show that older adults who remain active and have things to occupy them intellectually experience less isolation and depression. In other words, retiring later may actually be a health choice.

If you are intrigued (or even excited) about the thought of planning on a later retirement, let me suggest three things to you:

First understand the benefits. Working can have a positive impact on your mental health, but there are clear financial benefits as well. Obviously retiring later means you can hold off on starting to eat into your nest egg, but there's another benefit you may not be aware of: a larger monthly social security check.

For most of us, social security forms the foundation of our retirement income plan. Claiming too soon reduces monthly benefits which means you will have to use more of your savings to supplement it.

Consider the example of a single retired wage earner born between 1943 and 1954. They have the choice of applying for social security between the ages of 62 and 70. For every month they delay, their eventual monthly benefit will be larger. While it's true that an individual who waits until age 70 loses the years they could have already been collecting, when they do start collecting, they'll get a much bigger benefit that will continue for the rest of their life. Given we are living longer, this makes sense.

Holding off on collecting social security is a little like buying "longevity insurance," but at rates far more favorable than any insurance company could offer. Benefits increase by 8% per an-

you to defer drawing on social security. Love fishing? Work in a tackle shop. Is cooking your passion? How about a kitchen store? Do you like kids? Drive a school bus or retrain to be a teacher's aide. Really enjoy meeting people? What about a job at the front desk in a hotel?

Reset your expectations sooner.

Imagine getting to the age you always thought you'd retire and then finding out it's going to be tighter than you thought, so you need to put it off a few years. That could be very disappointing. But if you've already faced the prospect of a longer working life ahead of time, it's going to enable you to enjoy it as part of the plan, instead of with a feeling of failure.

You owe it to yourself to keep an open mind and take another look at when you'll retire. The future belongs to those who plan!

Humphrey G. Thomas is an accredited asset management specialist and certified divorce financial analyst at HG Thomas Wealth Management, LLC in Brownsville. Contact him at hghtomas.com. Estate planning is done in conjunction with your estate planning attorney, tax attorney or CPA.

62? 66? 68? 70?

num for every year you postpone retiring. (A person starts claiming at age 66, and their monthly check is \$3,120. But if that same person waited four more years until age 70 before claiming, their monthly check would be \$4,693.)

To take a look at your own situation, use the "early or late retirement" calculator at the Social Security Administration website (ssa.gov).

Consider "ReHIREment." Perhaps your current job is quite stressful or physically taxing, so that continuing with it beyond age 60 is not desirable. A new line of work might be an interesting and exciting alternative.

If your home is paid off and the kids are on their own, your commitments will be lower, so you don't need to make as much to live comfortably. Consider a less demanding job that still allows

It's Better at
**BOGGUS
LINCOLN
McALLEN**

THE VALLEY'S
ONLY SOURCE FOR
**LINCOLN
LUXURY.**



**THE LINCOLN
MOTOR COMPANY**



877-686-7411
1400 EAST HIGHWAY 83 • 
www.BoggusLincoln.com
 SUNDAY IN CHURCH



YOUR LOCAL G



Schlitterbahn
SOUTH PADRE ISLAND *Beach Resort*

BEACHFRONT HOTEL & INDOOR WATERPARK

956.761.1160
www.schlitterbahn.com

MASSAGE & Healing Arts Center

"Awaken the Potential for Self Healing"

DOLORES FERRENTINO
& Associates



Licensed Massage Therapists

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
2100 Padre Blvd.
(956) 761-1814
spimassage.com



See Your Business Featured Here!

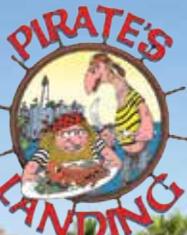
Call Todd
(956) 310-8953
Todd@ValleyBusinessReport.com

The Only Hotel Facing The Marina



5701 Padre Blvd.
956.761.4913
windwaterspi@gmail.com
www.windwaterspi.com

A Casual Waterfront Restaurant Famous for the FUN, Known for the FOOD!



956.943.FOOD (3663)
www.PiratesLandingRestaurant.com
Located at the foot of the Causeway in Port Isabel's Famous Historic Lighthouse Square

Join our VIP Club" text "Seafood" to 72727



Like us on Facebook



Pirates Landing Pier

PORT ISABEL, TEXAS



Longest Fishing Pier in Texas!
Bait Tackle Sales & Pole Rentals!
Family, Friendly Fun!

Pirate's Landing Fishing Pier is located perfectly at the entrance to the Queen Isabella Causeway that leads to SPI.

Join our VIP Club text "Pier" to 63975 • (956) 943-PIER

GETAWAY IS SPI!

See
Your Business
Featured Here!

Call Todd
(956) 310-8953
Todd@ValleyBusinessReport.com



1985 W. Bus. Hwy 77, San Benito, TX • (956) 399-5123



6200 Padre Blvd
(956) 761-4744
www.travelodgespi.com



Experience a warm welcome the moment you enter our lobby.
Free super start breakfast.
Spacious rooms with kitchenettes.
Clean and friendly.



956-761-6300
www.super8padre.com

*A Real Dining
Over the Water Experience*

PIER 19
RESTAURANT & BAR
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Palapa Bar

Serving Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner Daily
Plus Full Service Bar

956.761.PIER (7437)
www.Pier19.us

Join our VIP Club
text "Pier19" to 63975

1 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island
From Causeway, Turn right on Padre Blvd.
You'll see our sign one block on the right
Across the street from Schlitterbahn

*Best of the best Italian restaurants
as seen in Spirit Magazine*

Marcello's
Italian Restaurant
& BAR ON THE PIAZZA
Since 1984
Classic Italian & Coastal Cuisine

1/2 OFF BOTTLES OF WINE
Tuesday & Wednesday

LIVE MUSIC FEATURING:
COLIN MINKLER - Monday 6-9
ANDREW MINKLER
Thursday & Saturday 6-9
KEITH DISANTIS - Friday 6-9

www.marcellosspi.com
Located across from the Lighthouse
956-943-7611
Open 11am daily
Rotary meets here Friday at Noon

Join us in our bar for our
Big and Boory Cocktails
and \$5 Appetizers

ALBA ENERGY PUTS THE SUN TO WORK

By Eileen Mattei

The lack of regulations and guidelines for solar panel systems in the Valley does not make Graeme Walker happy. The CEO of Alba Energy, an Austin-based solar firm which installs and monitors solar power systems, said solar installation guidelines like the ones he has worked with in Austin “technically make our life easier.” With regulations, all companies in the market have to follow the same regulations, the same playbook, from project assessment and sizing the system to design and installation requirements.

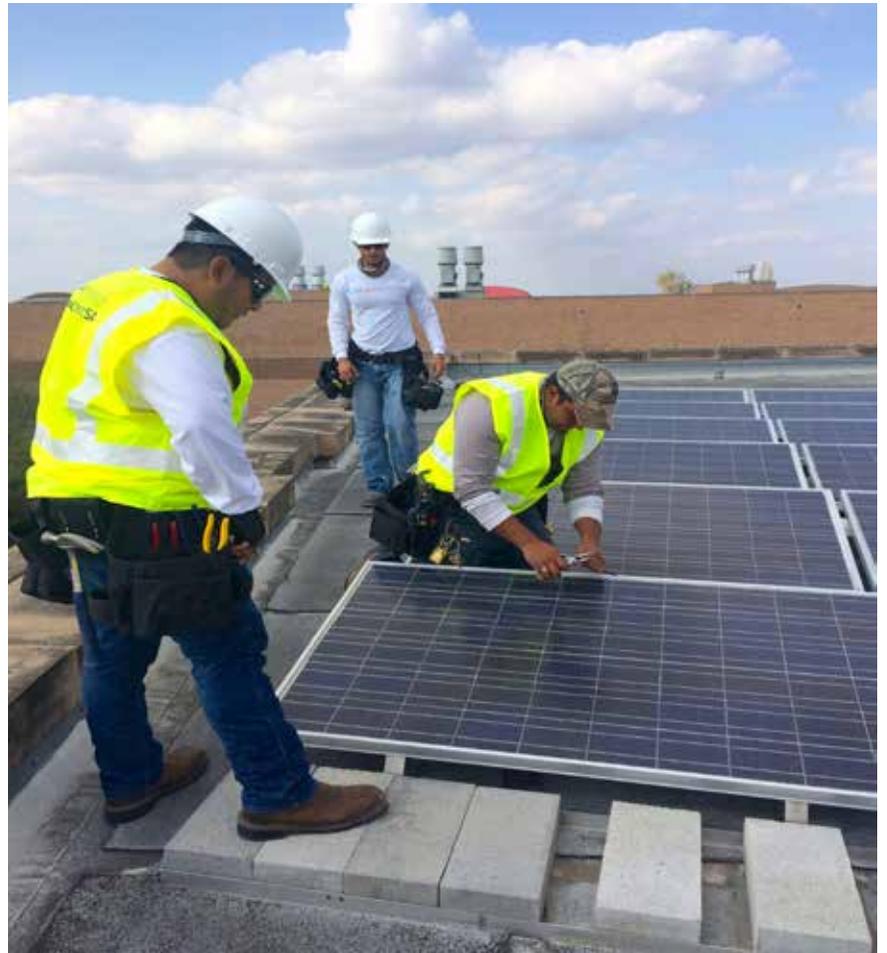
While being one of the first solar energy firms along the border lets Alba steal a jump on the competition, it also means that Alba has to spend considerable effort on the education of both commercial customers and municipal staffs dealing with permitting and inspections. Regulations, he noted, also deflect fly-by-night installers who can give the industry a bad reputation.

Walker first saw the Valley six years ago as an executive with a renewable energy company researching the offshore wind market. A CPA with renewable energy experience in

the UK and the U.S., Walker said, “I could see the growth coming here,” and decided the Valley would be the next place to go. Alba was founded in 2013, assembling a portfolio of commercial solar projects in Austin before opening its Valley office in 2015. Surprisingly, despite its reputation for sunshine, the Valley does not receive that much more solar energy than Austin.

Alba, which has a professional engineer on staff and is licensed as an electrical contractor, approaches every project as the start of a long-term relationship with a customer, reinforced by quality and service. “We do our assessments the way they should be done. We’re

Technicians install solar panels on a Valley roof. (Courtesy)



very focused on not outsourcing installation. It’s

more expensive for us to hire, train and maintain people. But we keep control. That’s what sets us apart,” Walker said. The local crew, which includes UTRGV engineering graduates, installs panels warranted for 25 years.

Initially, Alba remains in control by including a five-year “headache free” period of full maintenance and Wi-Fi monitoring in the commercial installation package. “Every system (commercial and residential) we do is linked to a data base. We monitor to make sure we are delivering. It lets us catch any problems.” If a panel’s production dips, the tech gets an alert.

“Residential installations help seed the local market,” Walker said. “But the goal here is to do a lot of larger commercial projects. We look for manageable sustainable growth.”

Large power consumers include cold storage facilities, manufacturers, automotive dealers and fast food chains. “They are getting pressure from their supply chain, which want to see them go more green,” as an indicator of corporate responsibility, Walker said. “One of main reasons we are in the Valley is the opportunity for PACE financing, which is private money administered through county tax assessments.” The PACE mechanism is now in place in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties.



Graeme Walker (Courtesy)



Revolving Loan Fund Program

Need Access to Capital?
Check out the Alamo Loan Program!

The city of Alamo is ready for business, and the Alamo EDC wants to help businesses looking to expand or make Alamo their new home.



The Alamo EDC is prepared to provide qualifying businesses 5% interest loans, covering up to 75% of the project cost.



Call Today for More Info!

"We Are Your Alamo"

(956) 787-6622 Alamo EDC • www.alamoedc.org

715 E. Business 83, Alamo, TX 78516

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

“We have a lot of larger projects that will be using PACE,” he said. Alba has already closed contracts with some, and the companies are arranging financing with their banks. PACE requires third-party validations of the engineering, which Walker said is a good thing.

Two main forms of federal tax credits (accelerated depreciation and 30% investment credits the first year) apply to solar installations, Walker said. “These two combined add up to 60% of the system costs in the first few years.” An additional incentive to install solar is the ROI of five to eight years. “You save money from year one on your energy bill, plus you get tax credits.”

Walker doesn’t recommend oversizing a solar system, because any overproduction does not get significantly reimbursed by power companies currently. “Typically we size a solar system to offset 75% of annual use.”

“Some electric providers will only give you the fuel rate. A provider like Green Mountain has a very generous buy back,” said Walker. As a business’ electric contract ends, he recommends switching to one like Green Mountain that is structured for solar. Unlike Austin, no local utility is giving rebates here for solar installation, which should change with customer demand.

Alba has provided informational best practice training for McAllen city inspectors, “showing them the standards we were held to in Austin, telling them about national solar codes,” which covers things such as distance to roof lines. Alba Energy has installed solar panels at the McAllen EDC office as well as on homes in the region.

“We’ve grown fairly quickly and acquired divisions of other complementary companies,” Walker said. “We are here as a Valley-based company,” noting that Alba gave a verbal commitment to the EDC to grow and sustain growth here

Alba Energy installed solar panels on this Edinburg residence. (Courtesy)



For more information, see albaenergy.com.

BMC
Burton McCumber & Cortez, L.L.P.
Certified Public Accountants & Management Consultants

Tax Consulting

- ◆ Compliance, Planning & Preparation
- ◆ Business & Individual Tax Issues
- ◆ Expatriate & Mexico Tax Matters
- ◆ M&A & Liquidation Planning
- ◆ Representation before the IRS
- ◆ International Tax & Transactions
- ◆ Estate & Gift Tax Planning



Brownsville, Texas **McAllen, Texas**
956-542-2553 956-618-2300

www.bmctexas.com

BMC
Burton McCumber & Cortez, L.L.P.
Certified Public Accountants & Management Consultants

Fraud & Forensic Accounting Services

- ◆ Accounting Fraud Investigations
- ◆ Internal Controls Consulting
- ◆ Loss Risk Mitigation
- ◆ Certified Public Accountants
- ◆ Certified Fraud Examiners
- ◆ Certified Internal Controls Auditors



Ricky Longoria, CPA, CFE
205 Pecan Blvd
McAllen, Texas
956-618-2300
rlongoria@bmctexas.com

Ben Pena, CPA, CFE
1950 Paredes Line Rd
Brownsville, Texas
956-542-2553
bpena@bmctexas.com

www.bmctexas.com

THE IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR

By Eileen Mattei

In 2010, Registered Nurse Christopher Wycoco left his home in the Philippines with a work visa for a job at Valley Baptist Medical Center Harlingen. The next year, he discovered he had to file an income tax form, something unheard of in the Philippines. He turned to a friend in Brownsville who had a tax preparation business.

“That was the turning point. I’ve always liked numbers,” said Wycoco, now the president of Wyco Tax and a legal resident of the United States since 2012. After partnering with the Brownsville business owner for two years, he decided in 2014 to open his own business in a recession-proof field. He credits his grandmother, who operated a small café and store, with exposing him to business. Although she didn’t read or write, she was good with math and kept accounts in her head. “She taught me how to deal with numbers and the value of money. She taught me about investing: save half, spend half.”

In order to do tax preparation work for working class families and small businesses, Wycoco had to overcome his limited knowledge of

Christopher Wycoco visited his client Elsa Sapigao Garza (right) at her Pacific Island Kitchen. (VBR)



Spanish, Texas and federal tax regulations. Then he set a company policy of taking time to learn about the clients. “We don’t rush them. They feel like they are accommodated. Our competitive advantage is we are open year-round and provide assistance if they are audited or need documents.”

Wyco Tax offers free tax refund estimates, which attracts many new clients. A detailed, incentive referral system has brought numerous families and friends of clients into the business.

This tax season, the company launched

a cell phone app that allows clients to submit documents, access their tax returns and make appointments through their cell phones. “That’s the convenience. Our goal is to have a hassle-free tax refund, (About 90% of clients receive a refund.) We follow up if a refund is not approved.” The company also gives advances up to \$750 on refunds.

Year round, Wyco supplies supporting documents to clients applying for mortgages or college financial aid. “We have the paperwork in



Being remembered is important to Wyco Tax, so Christopher Wycoco makes an impression with teddy bears attached to cards listing the incentives for those who refer multiple clients. (VBR)

MPC Studios
SINCE 1998

**THE WEB TEAM
YOU’VE BEEN
LOOKING FOR**

MPC HAS WON OVER
100 ADDY AWARDS
FOR OUTSTANDING
WEBSITE DESIGN

www.mpcstudios.com

our data base and help them through the process.”

Outside of tax season, Wyco focuses on doing payroll, bookkeeping and special services for small businesses. “Bookkeeping is a service that feeds into tax preparation” he said. The company even helps clients launch new businesses. “We walk them through the process for fees: get a tax ID number and get registered with the state and provide them notary service. They don’t know about payroll and sales taxes. That’s complex, and that’s where we come in, so they don’t get in trouble.”

Wycoco has tapped into his own experience navigating the visa system. “Because I’m an immigrant myself, I know the common forms.” When one of his small business clients, who also runs a professional soccer team, needed sports visas for 15 Mexican players, he turned to Wyco. The company helped the players obtain one-year, renewable visas and then prepared their U.S. tax returns. He refers visas involving professional certifications to attorneys.

Wyco also makes sure clients with different visas and visa applications are filing the right tax forms. “Former coworkers who are immigrants tend to be my clients. These are healthcare professionals who itemize deductions,” Wycoco said. “It’s a large market in a high income bracket because nurses get more credentials. They tend to invest in rental properties and businesses in their home countries. Yearly filing is new to people from the Philippines and Mexico, and it’s very hard for them to find someone to provide the service,” he said with a smile.

Wycoco enrolled in the SBA’s ScaleUp program earlier this year. “We’re in the early stage of going from start up to growth. They want us to determine our target market and promote our competitive advantage. I’m learning that our competitors have different goals and that we have tapped only a tiny percentage of our market.” Wycoco has worked on a three-to-five-year business plan with a related budget.

Despite his company’s rapid growth, ScaleUp is making Wycoco look at delegating work and what the owner should focus on at different stages. He has learned that the owner planning to grow needs to find new business rather than mind the minute details of the startup. His marketing strategy involves emphasizing what Wyco is good at and providing more services to his target markets.

Wycoco networks seriously and promotes his business wherever he goes. At restaurants, along with a tip, he leaves a goody bag that might include a coffee mug for the server. “The thought counts, and we are going to be remembered.” After tax season, Wyco connects with its tax clients on Facebook, sending birthday wishes and comments.

For more information, see wycotax.com.

Innovative Skin Care for Men

Up your grooming game with the *MKMen*[®] Skin Care Collection! These powerful products deliver clean face solutions for every man from cleansing and shaving to moisturizing and age-fighting. Sometimes the best defense is a good offense.

Contact me to love
your skin today!

discover what you **LOVE**



Crystal Santos Breland
Independent Beauty Consultant
www.MaryKay.com/CrystalBre
(956) 283-4243
Se Habla Espanol.

MARY KAY

Open Thursday - Sunday 11 am to 4pm
(or until sold out)

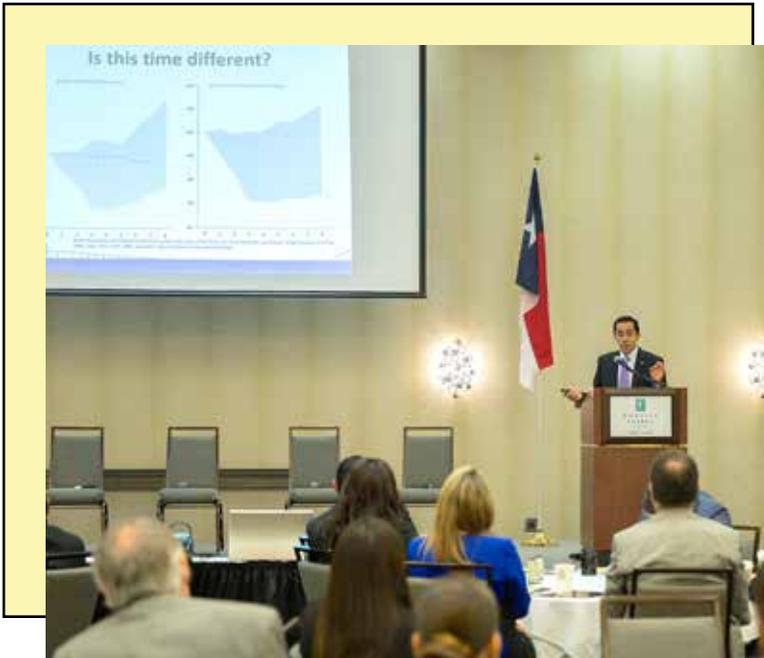


(956) 565-2246

546 Hidalgo St, Mercedes, TX 78570

find us on **facebook**

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Robert Coronado, senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas - El Paso Branch, discussed changes in the border economy at the annual BEDES symposium. (Courtesy)

At the BEDES symposium, six Valley bankers presented their opinions on what will happen in the next months in the spheres of banking, international trade and border commerce. (Courtesy)

For consideration in one of our featured sections, email your photos to info@valleybusinessreport.com.

Happy
Holidays
and best
wishes from
all of us at

VBR
ValleyBusinessReport
Connecting You to Local Pro-Business News
www.ValleyBusinessReport.com

New York Deli
Now serving
Beer & Wine
at our Weslaco Location!

New York Deli 829 W Dove Ave McAllen (956) 631-8787	New York Deli II 122 North A Street Harlingen (956) 425-3500
New York Deli III 1631 East Price Road Brownsville (956) 550-0025	New York Deli III 1400 Westgate Drive Weslaco (956) 647-5703



RUBY RED VENTURES

A MISSION EDC INITIATIVE

\$100,000 SMALL BUSINESS FUND

BRING YOUR IDEAS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

MISSION EDC

(956) 585-0040

WWW.RUBYREDVENTURES.COM

YOU DESERVE A BREAK THIS TAX SEASON

FIND **NEW** ROADS™

YOU COULD QUALIFY FOR A 2016
TAX BREAK OF UP TO \$500,000!



We take pride in giving you the best value on the new Chevrolet vehicles your business depends on. With the 2016 tax incentives, you could be eligible for up to a total of \$500,000 in tax deductions when you purchase qualifying Chevrolet vehicles for your business before 12/31/16. And you can stack up select BUSINESS CHOICE OFFERS and other small-business incentives to get an even bigger haul. To learn more about current offers, contact your dealer or visit gmbusinesschoice.com for details and vehicle eligibility.

NEW-VEHICLE DEDUCTION ELIGIBILITY

There are some limitations to the expense deduction, including vehicle eligibility.¹

Up to \$11,160 <i>total deduction per vehicle:²</i>		Up to \$11,560 <i>total deduction per vehicle:²</i>	Up to \$25,000 <i>total deduction per vehicle:³</i>	Up to \$500,000 <i>total deduction (Aggregate, no per-vehicle purchase price limit):⁴</i>
Camaro	SS Sedan	City Express	Silverado (short box)	Silverado (standard and long box)
Corvette	Volt	Colorado	Suburban	Silverado Chassis Cab
Cruze		Equinox	Tahoe	Express Passenger Van
Impala		Trax	Traverse	Express Cargo Van
Malibu				Express Cutaway
Sonic				
Spark				

¹Each individual's tax situation is unique; therefore, please consult your tax professional to confirm vehicle depreciation deduction and tax benefits. For more details, visit irs.gov. ²For vehicles that qualify as passenger automobiles under the Internal Revenue Code, there is a \$11,160 per-vehicle depreciation deduction cap or \$11,560 for certain SUVs, trucks, and vans placed in service during 2016. ³For vehicles that qualify as sport utility vehicles, including certain trucks and vans, under the Internal Revenue Code, the maximum amount that may be expensed is \$25,000 of the total purchase price. The \$25,000 expense cap contributes to the \$500,000 dollar limit and \$2,010,000 investment limit under Section 179. ⁴The tax incentives are available for depreciable tangible property that is acquired by purchase for use in the active conduct of a trade or business. Additional limitation based on purchases. For the 2016 tax year, the aggregate deduction of \$500,000 under Internal Revenue Code Section 179 is most beneficial to small businesses that place in service no more than \$2,010,000 of "Section 179 property" during the year. For every dollar spent on Section 179 property in excess of the overall limit of \$2,010,000, the \$500,000 expense-tax deduction decreases by a dollar. Certain vehicles, models, and restrictions apply. Consult your tax professional for details. ©2016 General Motors LLC. All rights reserved. The marks appearing in this ad are the trademarks or service marks of GM, its subsidiaries, affiliates, or licensors.

