

JULY 2022

VBR

Cave Of Wonders

**Brownsville Honors Banker
Caterer Gets Around
SPI Chief Makes Mark**

For the latest in RGV news across the web, find us online!
www.ValleyBusinessReport.com





Construction and Industrial



Commercial Fishing and Marinas



Unbranded Gas Stations

SUNOCO LP®

Partner with the largest fuel supplier in the U.S.

**Now servicing from the Sunoco LP
Brownsville Terminal**

Our Services & Products

- Flexible Pricing Plans and Around-the-Clock Fuel Delivery
- Unbranded Gas & Diesel
- Export-Grade Gas & Diesel
- Gasoline - Ethanol & Non-Ethanol / Rec Fuels
- Lubricants / DEF



Agriculture and Farming



Utility and Transportation



Contact Us Today to Learn More

SunocoLP.com/Brownsville

9351 Old State Hwy 48
Brownsville, TX 78521

Just Cool It

by: Todd Breland

Vacation time, kiddos are out of school and enjoying family time is priceless. We kick back on our beautiful beach with the chairs, umbrellas and ice chest. After a good rinse, an evening swim in the pool caps off a wonderful Rio Grande Valley summer day.

While soaking in the refreshing waters, don't forget about soaking the inside with the same ... cool water. Hydration is absolutely necessary, yet easy to forget when living the life in South Padre Island. Drink plenty of water all day to avoid plenty of problems these extreme temperatures can cause.

Our Valley is paradise and with those perks, there comes a price. Smart, safe precautions including plenty of fluids and sunscreen applied often will help us enjoy our family summer time and not let dehydration spoil our fun.

These scorching hot days has the Gulf temperatures climbing already into the upper 80s to low 90s. As we discussed last month, the

Atlantic hurricane season has begun so be sure to pay close attention to the Valley's wonderful friend Senior Meteorologist Tim Smith and the entire storm watch team at KRGV. As Tim preaches, we should already have a preparation plan in place for what Mother Nature could send our way this summer through early fall.

Our VBR team wishes a fun, safe and

healthy summer to you and your family. We'll keep bringing local, positive business and community news to you in print and online. No matter where you are, you can see the latest profiles of RGV entrepreneurs, businesses and more at www.valleybusinessreport.com. Read. React. Share.

We are one. We are the Rio Grande Valley.



The Valley's Bank Continues to Grow.

Our Fourth Location Coming Soon to Brownsville.

OPENING JULY 2022

**3100 N. INDIANA AVE.
BROWNSVILLE, TX 78521**



Lone Star National Bank
The Valley's Bank.



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



Member FDIC

Table Of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Cave of Collectibles	5
Legacy Of Dedication	8
Have Your Cake	10
Hail To The Chief	12
The Big Screen	14
Run, Hide, Fight	16

VBR Staff

General Manager
Todd Breland
todd@valleybusinessreport.com

Content Editor
Ricardo D. Cavazos
ricardo@valleybusinessreport.com

Online Editor, VBR e-Brief
Angey Murray
angey@valleybusinessreport.com

Writer
Chris Ardis

Design Director
John M. Hazlett
john@valleybusinessreport.com

Production - Daniel's Printing Place

Live Local. Connect Global.®



VTX1 Companies

Supporting local communities
throughout South Texas.



**No Data Caps
or Overage
Fees**



**24/7
Technical
Support**



**Bandwidth
that Exceeds
Your Needs**



www.vtx1.net

1-844-GET-VTX1




**INTERNET
THAT
BLOWS
YOU
AWAY**



Comics Store ‘Pops’ At Brownsville Mall

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

The Incredible Hulk towers over the entrance of The Comic Cave Sunrise Mall.

Walk into the store and it's a visual delight of historic comic books mixed in with newer versions along with an array of collectibles, figurines and playing cards. Stroll through the aisles and discover how superheroes like Batman, Superman and Spider-Man have

changed over the years in the comic books of different eras.

Go to one corner of the store and there's the phenomena of the Pop figures. These are the bobble-head figures from the creative minds of Disney, Ninja Turtles and Star Wars. Every box that encases them says "Pop!" somewhere to underscore how valuable these little col-

lectibles are. The boxes themselves must be in pristine condition for any would-be buyer to consider them worthy of purchase. It's a world of feel-good fantasy where a fan and collector can take a brief reprieve from everyday worries and latch on to a superhero.

Numbers-wise, Comic Cave's owner will tell you comics lead in sales but collectibles



Bill Taliancich is a self-described "nerd," who with a business partner owns and operates The Comic Cave in Brownsville. (VBR)

generate the majority of revenues. The Comic Cave attracts a diversity of customers from young to middle aged, the young kids to the college age, and the professionals who work in law and business offices and cling to the comic world of their youths.

“It’s a thousand Sheldons,” said the store’s owner, Bill Taliancich, referring to the popular physicist character from the hit television comedy, “The Big Bang Theory.” “You can let loose and have fun with your fellow nerds. You realize there’s a lot of people out there like you.”

Staying One Step Ahead

Taliancich knows of what he speaks.

His day job is being an English teacher at Texas State Technical College in Harlingen. His side passion is going to Comic-Cons and helping organize local events of that type. Enthusiasts gather to meet stars and creators, and participate in discussions centered on the world of comics. It was a good fit for Taliancich when the opportunity arose in 2020 to purchase the Sunrise Mall comic store. He and a business partner, Bobby Chidester of Harlingen, took it despite the temporary business shutdowns of the time.

“I figured this place would do great coming out of it,” Taliancich said.

He was right. Sales and revenues rose and continue to crest. Taliancich knows competition is steep and worries about inflation cutting into nonessential purchases. He can also see that national chains like GameStop are changing their business models to sell collectibles and other types of merchandise The Comic Cave carries. In a nod to his youthful employees, Taliancich vowed to take on all comers and tap into their knowledge of pop culture.

“I’m not going to be stagnant,” he said, referring to ever-changing consumer preferences. “I’m not afraid to change. These young kids tell me what I need to get.”

‘Chill’ Place To Hang Out

The youthful edge of The Comic Cave is evident in its social media presence.

Posts are frequent with photos, videos and live shots of new merchandise and what’s going on at the store. The store has thousands of items. A fan of the comic culture could spend hours in its aisles of fun, books and figures of all sorts.

There’s one wall lined with what Taliancich refers to as hall of fame comics that are like museum pieces. One comic book says “Action Comics” in big red letters. Its cover features a



The Incredible Hulk strikes a menacing pose at the entrance to The Comic Cave in Brownsville. (VBR)



The Comic Cave features rows of historic and new comics of all types from different eras. (VBR)

Superman of that era picking up a battered car as frightened pedestrians flee after a disaster has hit. It's dated June 1938, but Taliancich says it was printed in the 1960s. Even then, the comic book sells for \$199.99 in its plastic case to protect the valuable product inside.

There are many boxes of comics costing far less toward the back of the store. Here, collectors can thumb through for hours like the nerds often did on "The Big Bang Theory," searching for something worthy to add to their libraries.

Taliancich enjoys the camaraderie and kinship found in his store where collectors of all ages gather to share their love of comics and its related culture. For some youngsters, he said, it's a place where they can find a fit where it may be difficult to find one elsewhere. One reviewer on Comic Cave's Facebook page writes of the store being "one of the major places me and my friends go to hang out," and praises the employees for being "amazing, chill."

"That makes me feel good," Taliancich said. "We're a place where people can get together. I get asked, 'what's your demographic?' I say it starts around 16 and goes up into the 50s."



Collectibles lead the way when it comes to revenues generated at The Comic Cave. (VBR)



Pop bobblehead characters are popular sellers at The Comic Cave. (VBR)

DAVIS EQUITY REALTY

CHURCH BUILDING WITH LOTS OF HISTORY



This 11,322 sf building sits in the heart of Donna, Texas at the corner of Main and Fordyce Ave, Adjacent to the fire/police department and HEB Grocery.

Occupying 10 original townsite lots, the building was formerly the First United Methodist Church. Ornate stained glass windows, 26 church pews, a large kitchen and fellowship hall, playground equipment, separate outdoor storage, a separate parlor used for adult Bible class, 2 offices, a nursery and 6 classrooms.

Sale Price: \$798,000 • Building Size: 11,322 SF
Price Per SF: \$70.98

Location: 228 S. Main St., Donna, TX 78537

2300 W. PIKE BLVD. SUITE 101 • Weslaco, TX 78596

info@davisequity.com • www.DavisEquity.com
(956) 969-8648

Rusteberg Dedicated Life To Helping Brownsville

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Fred W. Rusteberg was known as a gentleman, a soft-spoken and persistent advocate for his banking company and community.

Rusteberg could also bring it, when need be, a steely resolve emerging when he saw an injustice or inequity that required a challenge. One of those times occurred about 20 years ago when the chancellor of the University of Texas System visited Brownsville. It was to be a festive occasion in celebrating the dedication of new education and business buildings on the campus of UT-Brownsville.

“There was a bitterness in the air,” recalled Juliet Garcia, the president of UTB at the time.

Garcia, Rusteberg and other community leaders were furious that the UT System was refusing to allow resources from the Permanent University Fund to reach and fund UTB and the University of Texas-Pan American. This lucrative fund has as its revenue source the royalties of West Texas oil and gas wells. The main UT campus in Austin had long benefited from these revenues, as had other UT campuses. The UT campuses in the Valley had been shut out of the fund.

“Fred chose that day in a very public arena to challenge the chancellor of the UT System,” Garcia said of the longstanding president and chief executive officer of IBC Bank-Brownsville. “He called it what it was, discrimination of the worst kind that had been allowed in perpetuity to hide behind lame excuses and legal technicalities.”

Rusteberg’s comments that day infuriated Mark Yudof, the UT chancellor, but the bank executive and community leader had made his point. It left an indelible mark. Two decades later, PUF funds are flowing into the Valley and its two UT campuses in Brownsville and Edinburg.

It is just one story of the many about Rusteberg and the legacy and imprint he left on Brownsville. He died in July 2020. In January, Garcia and other community leaders, friends and family gathered to remember and honor Rusteberg as the main IBC bank in Brownsville was named in his honor.

Deep Roots

Rusteberg was much more than a banker. He was ingrained in his community as a leader for many worthy causes, with education topping the list.

“Fred would find the time – make the time

– for the community on issues that may not happen today, but set the stage for what may happen in the future,” said Irv Downing, a banking executive colleague of Rusteberg’s era in Brownsville.

Rusteberg’s comments about the PUF fund set the stage, a forerunner to the UT System creating unified RGV campuses under one name with the sort of funding other campuses elsewhere had seen. It’s one example of Rusteberg being “a convener,” Downing said. He was a leader with the capability and credibility to gather people together to pursue noble goals in his community.

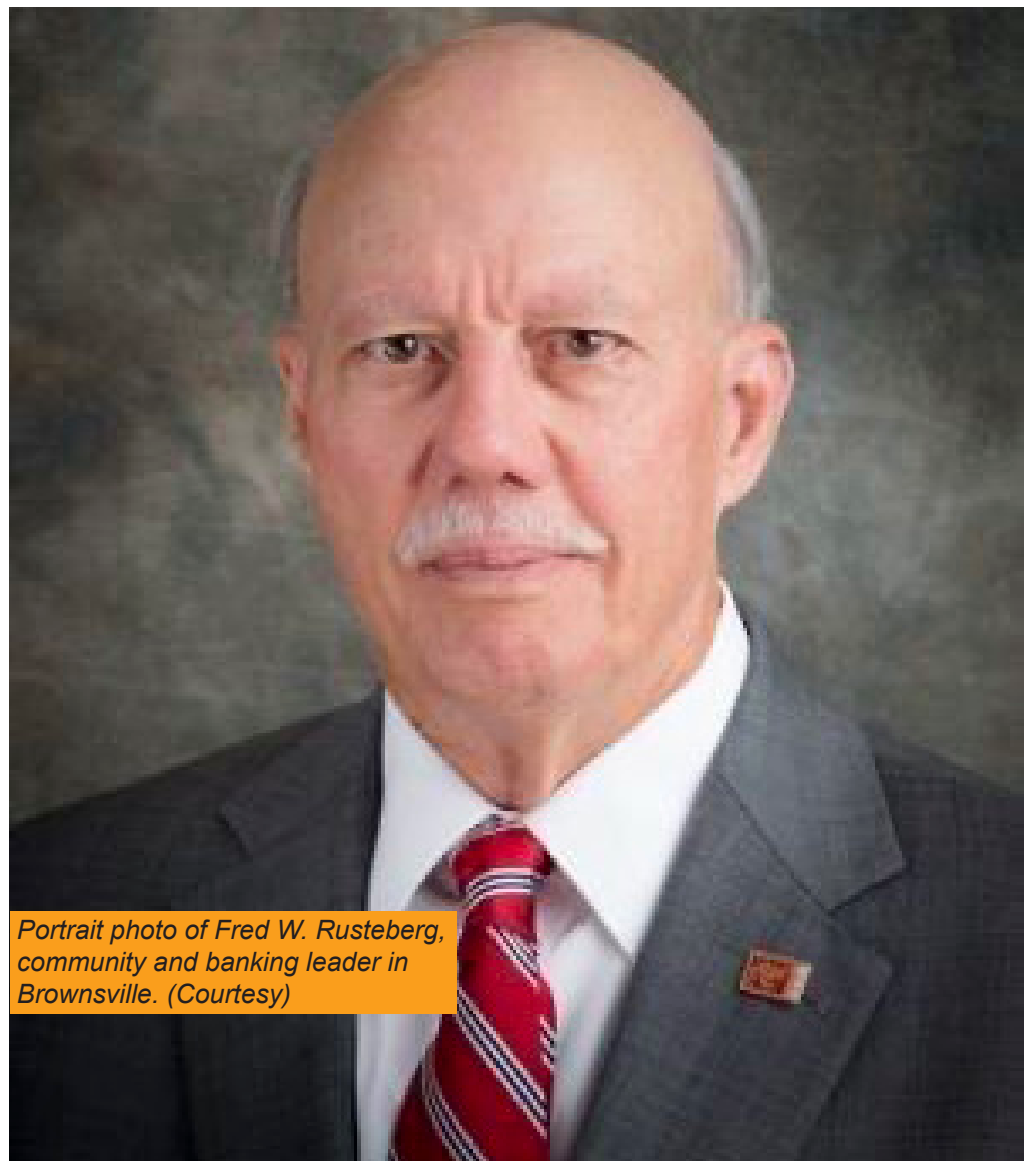
Rusteberg’s Brownsville roots ran deep. Born in 1946, he was the younger brother to four older sisters, growing up on a family

tomato farm in Villa Nueva on the Military Highway. His father, Fred Jr., was a founding trustee of Texas Southmost College. Rusteberg’s mother, Jessie, drove the first school bus in Cameron County when she was only 16.

Building A Bank

He went on to attend Texas A&M University and serve as an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War years. Making his way back to Brownsville, Rusteberg would eventually serve as IBC’s first president in its infancy as a new banking company in the Valley market.

“He built IBC Bank in Cameron County from the ground up, starting with a single downtown location in 1983 with more em-



Portrait photo of Fred W. Rusteberg, community and banking leader in Brownsville. (Courtesy)

employees than customers,” said Al Villarreal, who succeeded Rusteberg as the bank’s president and CEO.

In those early years of IBC in the Valley, there were no fancy meeting rooms, with Rusteberg convening his board around the young bank president’s desk. IBC today has \$1.7 billion in assets and 12 locations in Cameron County.

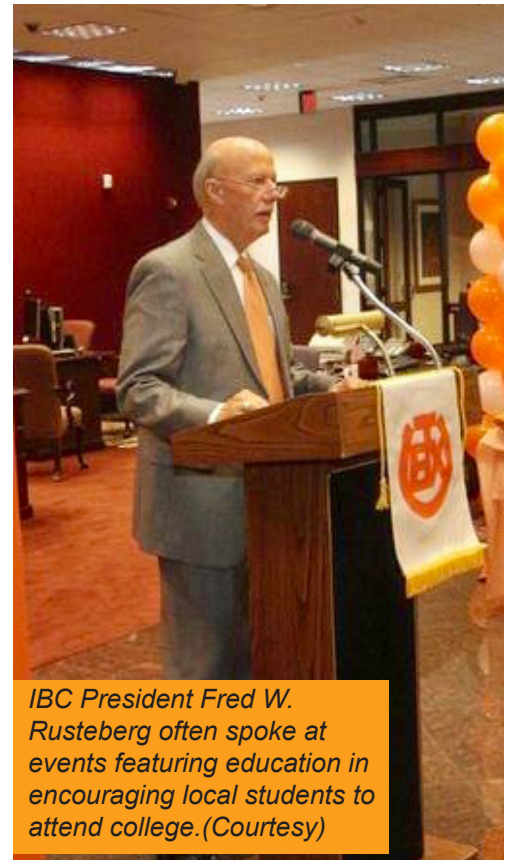
“He led by example from the frontline,” said Villarreal, who grew up in the banking industry under Rusteberg’s watch. “He had the innate ability to connect with people and win

them over.”

Rusteberg reflected on his career and community efforts around the time of his retirement from IBC in 2016. It encapsulated how he approached his work and helped the community.

“You can sit by and watch things happen, or you can make them happen,” he said in a video.

Fred Rusteberg did the latter – many times over – and the Rusteberg Bank Building on FM 802/Ruben Torres Blvd. is but one example of his legacy in Brownsville.



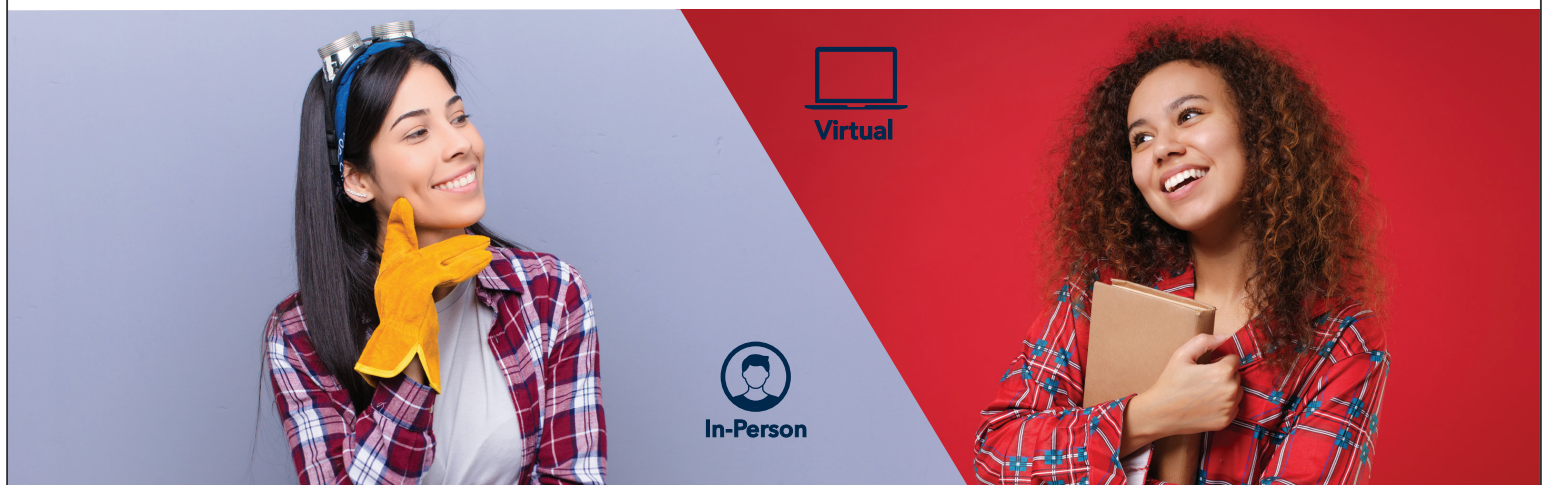
IBC President Fred W. Rusteberg often spoke at events featuring education in encouraging local students to attend college. (Courtesy)



A wall of honor at IBC-Brownsville lauds the legacy of Fred W. Rusteberg. (Courtesy)

LearnYourWay

Come back to campus for face-to-face classes or study from home.
At South Texas College, you get to choose.



Register Now
for Summer and Fall at
southtexascollege.edu



Caterer Takes Baking To Higher Level

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Peggy Harris offers a full-catering menu from her rural Cameron County on a farm-to-market road that still looks like the Rio Grande Valley of citrus groves and sorghum fields.

A mother cow with its young calf munch in a pasture near the garage space-turned-commercial kitchen where Harris has set up her Peggy's Cakes & More. She said her business has outgrown the compact and efficient kitchen from which she caters weddings, corporate events, special events and sit-down dinners. Harris rarely sits on busy weekends, going from farmers' markets to celebration events to weddings and baby showers.

During the week, there are meetings and luncheons at area school districts, hospitals

and businesses with Harris taking sandwich trays, charcuterie boards, desserts and comfort food to conference rooms and auditoriums. It started out far simpler over a decade ago. Harris' son is autistic and has many food allergies. She noticed he was often left out of birthday parties and realized there was a need to provide food and treats for those like her son who suffer from food allergies.

It was then she took several cake decorating classes and became a master cake decorator. Harris also began to specialize in gluten-free, sugar free and dye-free desserts to serve families and customers with the sort of food allergies her son has. She made old fashioned cakes as well, the ones with real sugar, but

found a niche in the gluten-free selections. From there, Harris was off to a new enterprise – the second business of her entrepreneurial life – and it has grown steadily since then, with catering and market stops all over Cameron County.

"I never meant for it to be a business," she said. "Now, some days, I'm on my feet over 12 hours a day, but I love it."

Love Of Baking

Harris grew up in a fishing and shrimping family in Brownsville.

It makes sense in noting her first business was a fish and seafood market in her hometown. It went well for a number of years



before Harris and her husband decided to move to a rural life with farming and ranching interests, including the mother and calf living near her kitchen, which are like family pets.

Farming and ranching are still something the Harris family appreciates, but Peggy's passion is her cakes, sandwiches, desserts and cookies in taking "my love for baking to the next level," she says on her company's website.

The catering menu on the site is extensive. There are casseroles and family style meals that include pepper bacon mango lime shrimp, baked chicken with raspberry chipotle sauce, and beef or chicken lasagna. Sandwich trays feature her signature chicken salad made with chicken breast, grapes, apples and pecans. There are also vegetarian and vegan choices. For dessert, there are cupcakes and cookies of any flavor, chewy soft pretzel balls and her signature scones.

All of those choices, and many others, keep her busy and her cell phone ringing. Harris is a one woman-baking business, so much so that some weeks her husband pleads with her to turn away orders, which she is reluctant to do. "It's everyday crazy," she said.

New Challenges

Harris' business is prospering even as challenges related to supply chain issues concern her.

The price of the high-quality flour she uses has more than doubled this year. The same goes for butter. Searching for certain supplies takes time when she doesn't have much of it to begin with as requests come in.

"I really need to plan ahead to make sure I have all the ingredients I need," Harris said.

The ingredients are there in her state-inspected and certified commercial kitchen. They're neatly stacked and ready to go, with the next order surely on its way.



Above: Peggy's Cakes are popular choices at events throughout Cameron County. (Courtesy)

Below: Sandwiches and fruit trays are among the delicious choices on the menu of Peggy's Cakes & More. (Courtesy)



U.S. Customs Broker Ocean Freight Forwarders

We know the rules to move your goods to Mexico and the World. Automatic electronic communication gives you up-to-date status of shipments.

A full service company providing solutions to your logistics needs. ISO 9001 Certified 2008 Standards.



PARKER & COMPANY
WORLDWIDE

U.S. Customs Brokers • In-House Mexican Brokers • International Forwarders Warehouse & Distribution • Truckers • Custom Consulting • Agent Network Worldwide

Brownsville (956) 831-2000 • McAllen/Hidalgo/Pharr (956) 843-8989 • Laredo (956) 728-9000 • Corpus Christi 1-888-831-4130 • Monterrey, Mexico (52) 81-8320-6163
www.parkerandcompany.com

Police Chief Makes Career Climb In SPI

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

South Padre Island Police Chief Claudine O'Carroll didn't know what to fully expect heading into March's spring break 2022 and the following Easter holiday week in April.

Both 2020 and 2021 were peculiar ones. Spring break traffic in 2020 was light to at times non-existent. A bit of a rebound occurred in 2021, with more families on the Island over the usual college-aged spring breakers who had their routines thrown off by college shutdowns.

Going into 2022, bigger crowds were predicted with the return of visiting Mexican nationals via international bridges and normal college calendars. O'Carroll worked as she always does when surges in visitors are expected. She and her force collaborated with state and federal law enforcement partners in working to beef up a police presence and boost surveillance capabilities. The chief also added seasonal officers and personnel to help with traffic control. More dispatchers were hired to help with increases in calls.

The 2022 spring holiday and seasonal peaks have passed and O'Carroll's assessment is that it wasn't "a full-on spring break," but busy enough.

"It generally went well," the chief said. "We didn't have any severe critical incidents. The (tourist) numbers were better, but not what they were in previous years. There's still some hesitancy about traveling."

For O'Carroll, it was the latest SPI spring break and Semana Santa among the many she has experienced in her years of law enforcement on the Island. She started as a part-time police officer on the Island in 1999. From there, over a two-decade span, O'Carroll became a full-time SPI officer, a detective and patrol sergeant, a captain and on to administrative leadership. She was an interim police chief and then permanently named chief in 2019.

"I was raised up in the ranks," O'Carroll said.

Knowing Every Job

O'Carroll touched every level of operations in the department in taking every step up to being chief.

There's not a job she hasn't done or

knows about in the police department she now oversees. O'Carroll describes herself as a chief who is "very involved in all operations."

"I like my staff to know that I'm responsive to their issues," she said.

It's a department that is 25 percent female, which is a stark contrast to the fact she was only the woman in her police academy class over two decades ago. Having a diverse police force is important to the chief, but does not override hiring the best candidates for jobs regardless of gender.

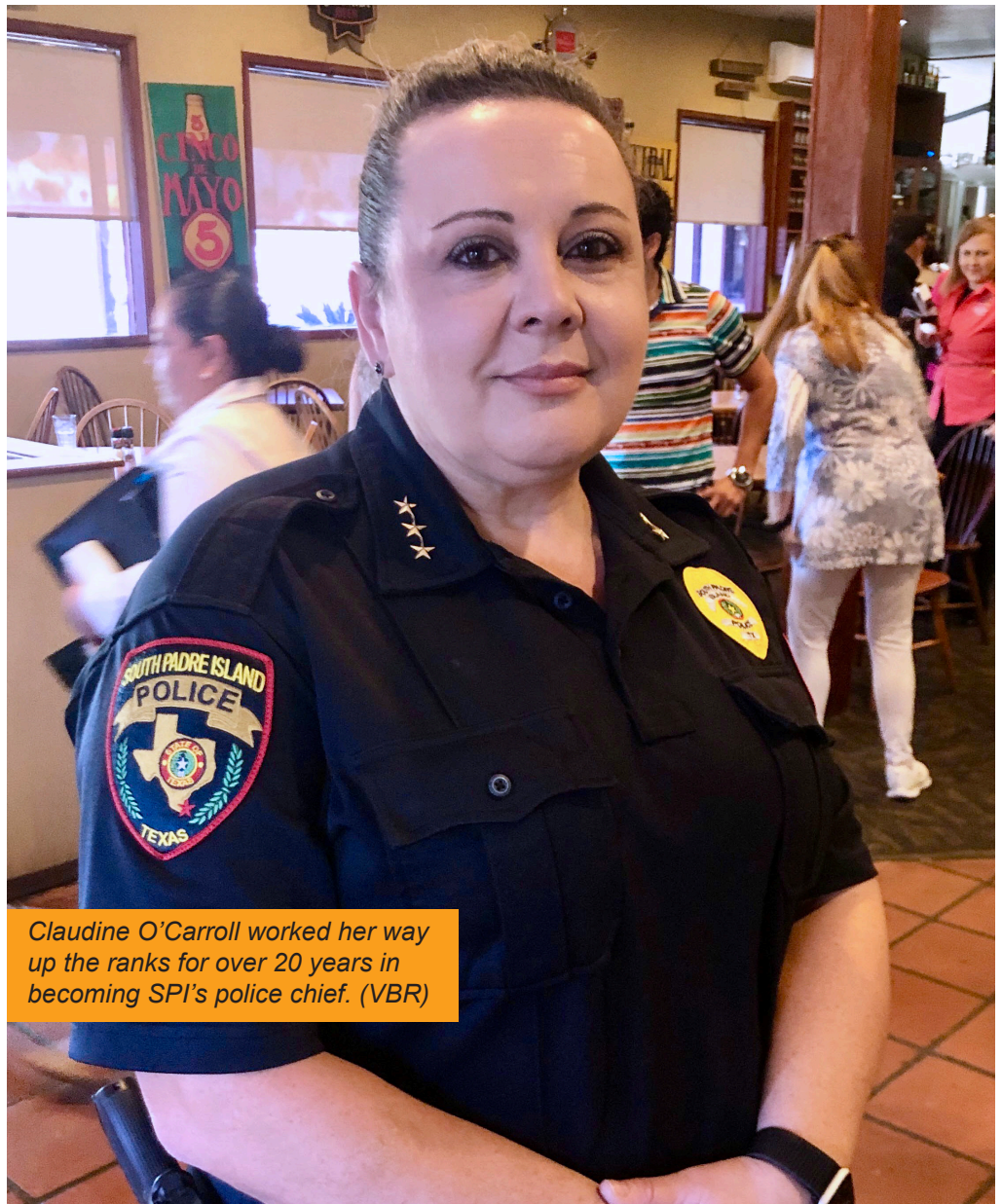
"These have been challenging times for policing in recent years," O'Carroll said.

"We've been fortunate in that we've had more apply than in many places. At the end of the day, you have to ensure you're putting the right person on the job. You owe that to the community for its safety."

Drive To Succeed

The National Law Enforcement Executives reports that about 300 women are chiefs of police.

That's only about eight percent of those who serve nationally in those roles. South Padre Island has one of those female chief executives. It's an admirable distinction for the city. South Padre also has a chief who



Claudine O'Carroll worked her way up the ranks for over 20 years in becoming SPI's police chief. (VBR)

is an immigrant. O'Carroll immigrated to the United States from Ireland in the early 1990s.

Serving in the military or in law enforcement was an aspiration from an early age. The former wasn't really possible for a woman in her native country at the time. Getting to the United States, she joined the U.S. Coast Guard with Corpus Christi as her first station assignment. It was where she learned how to drive and got her first driver's license after growing up in a country where public transportation abounds.

In 1997, she made her first drive across the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge in what she called "my newly minted driver's license in my newly minted car." Arriving to serve at Coast Guard South Padre Island, she would never leave what would become her adopted home. First it was the dedicated guardsman and then a determined law enforcement officer.

"I had no choice," she said. "I had to be up to do it in my adopted country, I wasn't going to fail. This city has been very good to me and supportive of my career throughout."

The South Padre Island Police Department gears up and adds supplementary staff during spring break and the Easter holiday. (Courtesy)



Ready for tomorrow.

Keep moving toward your goals with HUB.

When you partner with us, you're at the center of a vast network of experts dedicated to advising you on how to prepare for the unexpected with:

- Business insurance and risk services
- Employee benefits
- Personal insurance
- Retirement and private wealth management

Let's protect what matters most to you.

hubinternational.com



SHEPARD WALTON KING
INSURANCE GROUP

Risk & Insurance | Employee Benefits | Retirement & Private Wealth

Cinemark Brings Moviegoers Back In RGV

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

For Steven Rodriguez, there's streaming television viewing at home - and then there's the movies.

"The experience of the big screen is something you can't get at home," Rodriguez said recently at the Cinemark 16 in Harlingen. "Any big movie, a Marvel or DC, we make a date and we're here. Let's get our popcorn and watch it on a big screen."

It's the movie-returning demographic that the Plano-based Cinemark is aiming for. The big studios are revving up to crank out big films the company hopes will go to movie theaters first. In 2020, the studios were forced to rethink the traditional methods of releasing films as moviegoers stayed home and watched more television.

Movies starring the likes of Tom Hanks went first to Apple TV in 2020 and 2021 be-

fore getting to theaters. It's the exclusivity of new movie releases that Cinemark and others in its industry are working to bring back to theaters. Cinemark executives contend going with new movies first at theaters will lead to more total revenues for the studios when they subsequently send the films to streaming services.

"Content is the biggest factor," said Caitlin Piper, a senior manager for public relations and corporate communications for Cinemark. "They, (moviegoers), will see it wherever you show it. What we tell our studio partners is that seeing big box office revenues will lead to better opportunities for them in streaming."

To make that dynamic work means enticing film fans like Rodriguez and his wife, Priscilla, back to the movies. On a recent weekday

evening, it appeared Cinemark was having success doing just that as lines to enter the Harlingen theater began forming just before 7 p.m. Cinemark was running a promotion that night as it chose Harlingen as one of its over 300 U.S. theaters to celebrate the company's movie club reaching over 1.2 million ticket purchases since 2017.

Movie Club members like the Rodriguez couple were treated to a private, free screening of "Top Gun: Maverick," starring Tom Cruise.

"Harlingen is a really strong market for us," Piper said. "The Valley consistently ranks as one of our strongest markets."

Blockbusters Return

Priscilla Rodriguez recalled those lonesome days of 2020 when she and her husband



Cinemark 16 in Harlingen, along with other RGV theaters, represent some of the top markets for Plano-based Cinemark. (VBR)

would drive by the Harlingen Cinemark and see it closed during the shutdown months of that long year.

“It was sad, thinking of all of the movies we saw here,” said Rodriguez, who lives in Harlingen. “Being back, it feels really good, like things are getting back to normal.”

Harlingen’s Cinemark was closed for four months in 2020. When the theater reopened, it was a long climb back to the better numbers it is now seeing. Piper said Cinemark got creative during those slow months when theater attendance was down and the studios weren’t putting out new films. Cinemark brought back old films and classic movies back to its theaters. In some markets, Bollywood films from India were shown while others featured anime movies from Japan.

Those lean times appear to be largely over. Piper said “the cadence of new releases” is nearing what it was before 2020. Blockbuster movies look to be making a comeback. Cruise’s new “Top Gun” has exceeded \$1 billion globally in box office revenues. Piper said it is Cruise’s first \$1-billion movie in his long career, showing again, she said, the power of studios returning to releasing new

movies first at theaters.

“Cinemark has always believed that the return of moviegoers would happen,” Piper said. “It’s still an affordable way to get out of the house and have an enjoyable time with friends and family.”

Making Adjustments

There are a few noticeable changes at the Harlingen theater.

A sign posted says, “Wipe On Wipe Off,” stating seats receive a cleaning before every movie and encouraging patrons to take a sani-

tizing tissue if they wish to add to those efforts. Through the Cinemark app, moviegoers can purchase tickets, reserve seats and order items from the concession stand that they can pick up before heading to their movie. It’s all meant to minimize human interactions, Piper said. There’s also more spacing between seats and longer rows. Those sorts of improvements make Priscilla Rodriguez feel better about returning to the movies.

“We waited a bit at the end of 2020,” she said. “We’re back now, pretty much like we were before.”

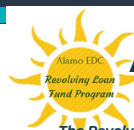


Cinemark theaters in the Rio Grande Valley are gradually seeing a return of moviegoers. (VBR)

Movie goers begin arriving at Cinemark 16 in Harlingen as blockbuster movies return to the big screens. (VBR)



Long lines form to see movies on a recent evening at Cinemark 16 in Harlingen. (VBR)



ALAMO EDC REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

The Revolving Loan Program is just one of the incentives the Alamo Economic Development Corporation has established as part of our efforts to encourage business growth and job creation in the city. This program is designed to assist small businesses and start-ups by providing a low-cost alternative financing option.



TO QUALIFY:

Business must be located in Alamo.

Applicant must contribute 25% of the total project cost.

51% of the businesses must be owned by US Citizens or Resident Aliens.

Loans need dollar-to-dollar collateralization.

LOAN USES:

Working Capital.

Start-up cost.

Construction.

Repair and Renovations.

Purchase of equipment.

Business Expansion.

LOAN TERMS

Loan terms and conditions vary depending on the project, financial need, and type of asset used as collateral. The interest rate varies between 4-10%. The typical loan is between 5-6%. The minimum loan amount is \$10,000. The maximum loan amount is \$150,000. The maximum term is 10 years.



Seconds matter. Preparation Matters.

By Chris Ardis

The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office, in partnership with DHR Health, invited the public to a free, two-hour Active Shooter/Critical Incident Training on June 8 at the Edinburg Conference Center at Renaissance. Senior deputy Rick Garcia stressed the importance of awareness and preparation in his presentations.

Hidalgo County Sheriff Eddie Guerra said over 45,000 civilians across the state have been trained with sessions done at schools, churches, government offices and private businesses. Trainings can be further customized for each

audience.

Dr. Noel Oliveira of DHR Health welcomed everyone before turning the presentation over to Garcia. After a brief introduction, Garcia played "Prepare to Survive," a short video emphasizing that most active-shooter events end within five minutes and 35 percent end in two minutes.

"Pre-planning," the voice on the video says, "will shorten your reaction time. Seconds matter."

Garcia provided a timeline of school shootings, emphasizing the importance of learning

from each one.

"Just as the predator evolves every single time," so must we, he said.

"For years, all we've been doing is training police officers," Garcia said. "But we have to train you because you're there when it happens."

He discussed how cell phones and social media have led to situations where parents and others know what is happening before a call to 9-1-1 makes it through the dispatch chain.

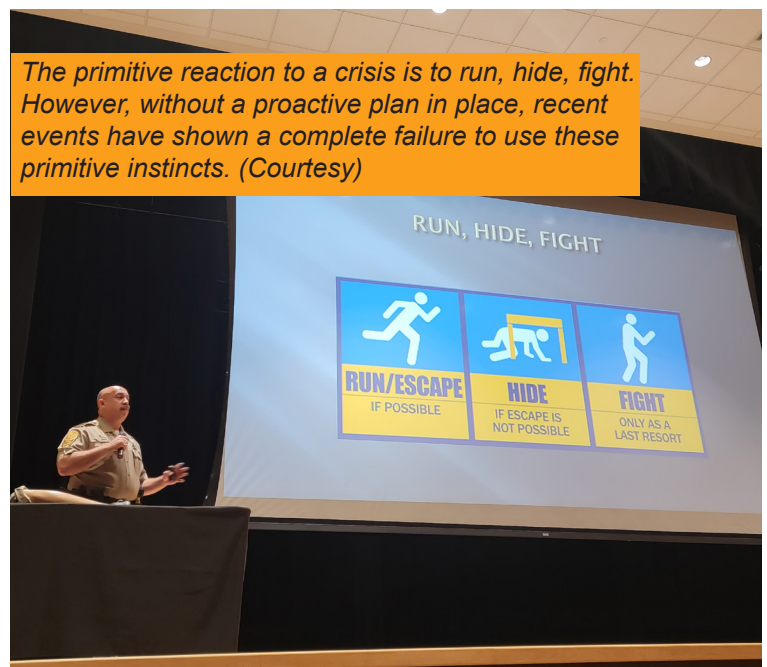
"That's problematic," he said. "We need to



Senior Deputy Rick Garcia of the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department, developer of the Active Shooter/Critical Incident Training. (Courtesy)



Planning ahead prepares citizens in the event of an actual active shooter/critical incident. (Courtesy)



The primitive reaction to a crisis is to run, hide, fight. However, without a proactive plan in place, recent events have shown a complete failure to use these primitive instincts. (Courtesy)

have a better plan to work together.”

Have A Plan

A proactive plan, Garcia said, begins with a natural reaction to a crisis, which is to run, hide or fight.

“What we see time and time again is a complete failure of these primitive instincts,” Garcia said.

Waiting for a crisis to occur leads to disastrous results. Instead, always have an exit plan, be aware and be prepared, he said.

“Remember what’s important, you, not your stuff,” he said.

People who have not had training will run toward the police, but this prevents the police from doing their job. It’s better to run from danger, calling 9-1-1 once safe, he said. Garcia stressed the need for businesses, schools, churches and families to establish a reunification plan. In the event of a crisis, everyone knows to meet at a designated, off-site location. This avoids the unnecessary distress caused by searching for one another. If you can’t run, hide.

“Be hard to reach,” Garcia said. “Create layers to barricade. We have to buy time.”

Attendance at the June 8 Active Shooter/Critical Incident Training maxed out at the Edinburg Conference Center at Renaissance. (Courtesy)



DHR Health employees on hand after the training on June 8 to sign up audience members for a free, one-hour Stop the Bleed course at DHR Health. (Courtesy)



Silence your cell phone and remain silent to avoid drawing attention to yourself.

If you can't run and you can't hide, fight.

"Commit to your actions," Garcia said.

Trauma Care

What law enforcement has learned is that lack of pre-planning and training results in unrealistic plans, he said. Women in Hidalgo County can prepare by taking the free, 12-hour women's self-defense course offered by the sheriff's office, Garcia said.

The presentation then shifted to the importance of training in schools for all stakeholders: employees, students and parents. Garcia underscored the importance of parental involvement in their children's schools, knowing what the safety plan is and their role in that plan. If your child's school has not received training by the sheriff's office, "you are going to invite us," Garcia said.

The final portion of the presentation focused on a brief but critical introduction to trauma medicine. Garcia again focused on how preparation changes outcomes.

A Combat Application Tourniquet, a one-handed tourniquet, can mean life or death not only during an active-shooter event, but also in home/industrial/hunting/car accidents.

"I can't believe we live in a community where this is not common knowledge," Garcia said. He demonstrated how easy the CAT is to use, stressing to "go high or die," placing the tourniquet in the highest possible position on the arm or leg affected and to leave the tourniquet on and tightened, once applied.

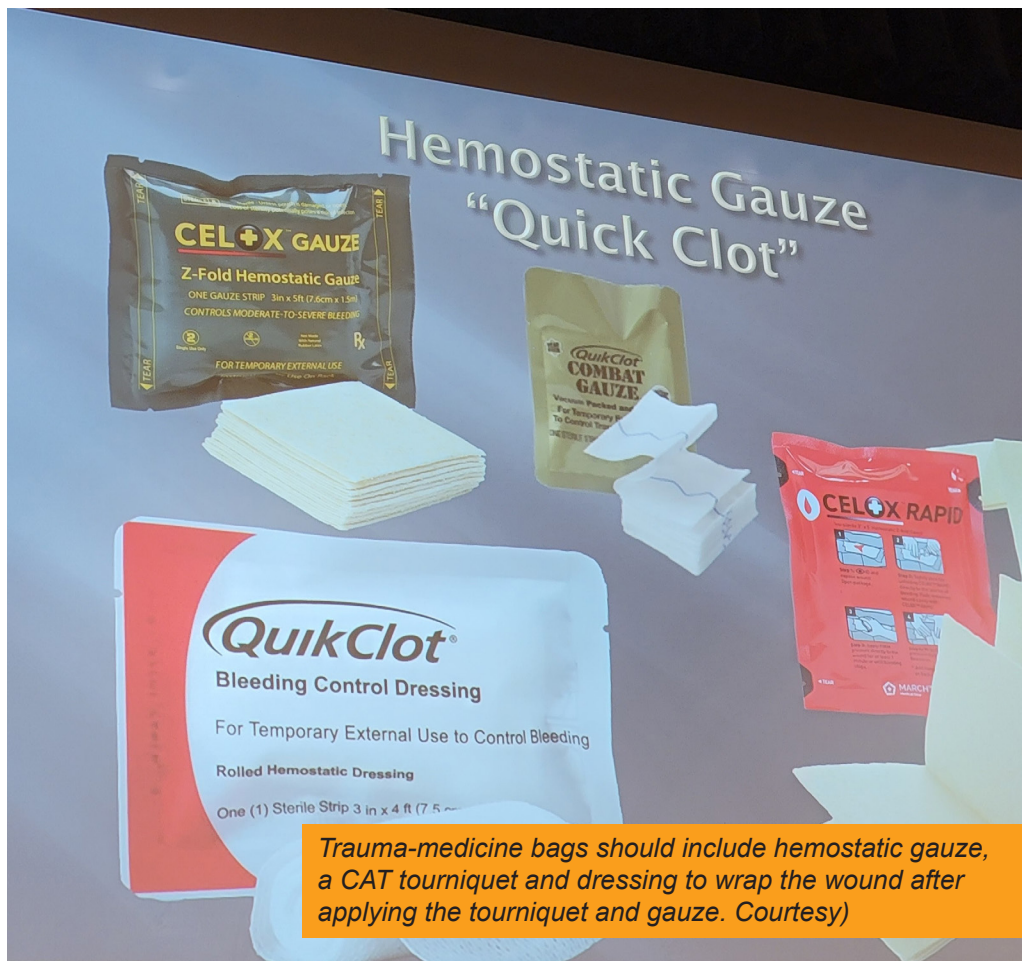
Garcia showed the audience how to use hemostatic gauze to "quick clot" the bleed after applying the tourniquet and to wrap heavy dressing around the wound to prepare for transport. This led to Garcia's two final pleas for preparation. First, he urged everyone to "build a kit," including a CAT tourniquet, hemostatic gauze and heavy dressing. A complete kit, he explained, should cost just under \$50.

Public Training

Garcia urged everyone in the audience to sign up for a free, one-hour Stop the Bleed course, offered monthly at DHR Health. Learning the three techniques taught in this course can save lives. Follow the HCSO on Facebook and Twitter for information on additional trainings, and give them a call to schedule a training. More information on the tourniquet process is available on the last Thursday of every month at DHR Health. Call 956-362-5119 for more information, or email d.west@dhr-rgv.com. For active shooter resources, visit fbi.gov/survive.



Dr. Noel Oliveira of DHR Health welcomes the audience at the June 8 Active Shooter/Critical Incident Training. (Courtesy)



Trauma-medicine bags should include hemostatic gauze, a CAT tourniquet and dressing to wrap the wound after applying the tourniquet and gauze. (Courtesy)

Your SPI Area Businesses Appreciate Your Support!

FEATURE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

Call Todd
956.310.5953
todd@valleybusinessreport.com



Fish. Eat. Stay.

Book Your Summer Vacation Stay Now!

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





MODERN COASTAL CUISINE



Open Daily 5-10pm / Sunday Brunch 11am-3pm / Happy Hour 5-7pm
3109 padre blvd., south padre island, texas 78597
956.772.8114 / www.fandbspi.com



Casual Waterfront Dining Overlooking South Padre Island

Now Serving Breakfast!

WELCOME TO PORT ISABEL

Open 7am Serving Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
956-943-FOOD (3663)
PiratesLandingRestaurant.com
Located at the Foot of the Causeway
in Port Isabel's Lighthouse District



PIRATE'S LANDING FISHING PIER
at the base of the Causeway, Port Isabel
FB: Pirate's Landing Fishing Pier

OPEN 24 HOURS
All Year Long
(weather permitting)

THE LONGEST FISHING PIER IN TEXAS!!

SNACKS • SANDWICHES
COLD DRINKS • BEER • ICE
TACKLE • BAIT, LIVE & FROZEN

956-943-PIER (7437)
Waterfront at the Historic Lighthouse
501 E Maxan St., Port Isabel



ValleyBusinessReport
The Valley's Pro-Business News
www.ValleyBusinessReport.com



Our greatest strength is you.

Because in times of uncertainty, you show up. When faced with a challenge, you see the path forward. The unique experiences you bring with you every time you walk through the hospital doors make a difference in the lives of your patients and profession.

At Valley Regional Medical Center, when you discover best practices for nursing care, it changes how nursing is practiced across the state and across the country.



Join our team at
valleyregionalmedicalcenter.com