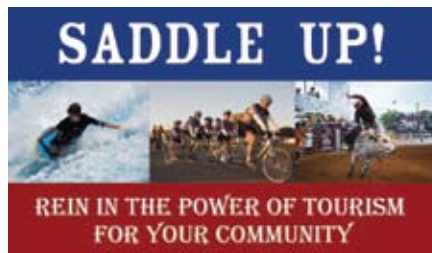


FROM THE FIELD

“Communities can partner with GO TEXAN and the Rural Community Program to remind their citizens to buy local and support local businesses and jobs. In light of difficult economic times, getting that message out is now more important than ever. I am especially excited in helping cities like Bronte achieve the goal of getting the GO TEXAN logo on the door of every business. This will show locals and visitors alike that their rural community is united in its efforts to keep its businesses strong and thriving. It fits in the overall effort of retaining jobs and even creating new ones in Texas,” stated Chandra Eggemeyer, rural economic development regional specialist with the Texas Department of Agriculture.



TOURISM WORKSHOPS

Aug. 5 – Nacogdoches

Aug. 26 – San Angelo

Oct. 15 – Seguin

Nov. 4 – Rockport

For more information, dates and locations, visit www.ttia.org.

RESOURCES

Business Retention and Expansion
www.TexasAgriculture.gov/vgn/tda/files/1848/14921_BRE_Pilot_Program_2007.pdf

TexasEdge
www.window.state.tx.us/texasedge/

READING

Corpus Christi's Strategic Plan
www.thinkbig.ccredc.com/pdf/caseDocument.pdf

GO TEXAN Rural Community Team

Have questions? We're here to help. For general program information including membership, grant opportunities, Hardworking Community Awards and workshops, contact: (877) 99GO-TEX, www.gotexan.org or ruraltexas@TexasAgriculture.gov

Texas Department of Agriculture
GO TEXAN Rural Community Program
P.O. Box 12847
Austin, Texas 78711
Issue 5, July 2009

FIRST CLASS
MAIL PERMIT
1752
ACCT #19646
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTIN, TEXAS



July 2009

SPECIAL FOCUS: Investment Strategies for Business Retention and Expansion

*From Todd Staples, Commissioner
Texas Department of Agriculture*

Six out of every 10 jobs created in the United States in 2008 were in Texas. And the Lone Star State still dominates *Forbes'* 2009 list of best cities for jobs with eight of the top 20 positions, including top-ranked Odessa, along with Austin, Houston, San Antonio and Dallas/Ft. Worth.

Existing businesses account for 70 percent of new job growth, and small businesses typically generate 60 to 80 percent of that number. Taking care of the businesses in your rural community is one of the best long-term investment strategies, especially in challenging economic times. Stable, locally owned businesses have a vested interest in their community's quality of life. For successful economic development efforts, these existing successful business owners are precious resources for jobs both today and tomorrow.

Todd Staples



Want to help your community promote local businesses and invest in retaining employers and jobs? Our rural economic development regional staff is just a toll-free call away at (877) 428-7848, or see contacts below:

Judy Fort, Central Texas and Coastal Bend
(512) 529-4907

Amy Lorance, North Texas
(940) 473-1723

Nancy Cordero, Panhandle and South Plains
(806) 559-7554

Jack Stallings, West Texas
(915) 202-9583

Linda Parker, East Texas
(936) 240-7360

Casandra Garcia, Rio Grande Valley and South Texas
(956) 325-3219

Chandra Eggemeyer, Permian Basin and Concho Valley
(325) 340-6803

WHY INVEST IN EXISTING BUSINESSES?

Because existing businesses can relocate or fail, and your community can lose jobs.

Anticipation is crucial to retaining employers. Talking to business owners and identifying concerns at an early stage can help a business succeed.

A major component for successful business retention is having and updating a business inventory. Because smaller communities have fewer businesses, they can more easily rank priorities and target potential problems.

Developing a community profile that answers the following questions is also of value:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the community?
- What key issues impact businesses: services, regulations, infrastructure, restrictions and competition?
- What are the issues that may need to be addressed before problems are too large to overcome?

This information will help identify business clusters that are most likely to expand or downsize.

Consensus on goals and objectives, effective use of business outreach activities suited for the community, and a commitment from the community are most important to producing results.

Excerpt from "Business and Retention Program" available online at www.TexasAgriculture.gov, click on Publications, By Title.



GARDENING GUIDES FOR JOB GROWTH

1. Focus first on existing businesses. Tend to what you have in your own garden rather than recruiting new industries.
2. Be proactive. Local businesses may not be aware you can help them grow by providing access to expertise, training and other resources.
3. Work regionally. A business retention partnership program can produce more yield for remote communities with limited resources.

BLANCO IN BLOOM

An example of how one community has taken advantage of GO TEXAN.

Don't let the beautiful lavender blooms or the meandering river fool you. Blanco is all about business, and business is blooming.

In addition to one-on-one business counseling sessions offered the second Thursday of each month, the Blanco Chamber of Commerce mails out GO TEXAN applications with each chamber renewal.

Julie Demaree Dill, executive director of the chamber explains, "GO TEXAN has helped the Blanco community tremendously. With GO TEXAN marketing dollars for our Blanco Lavender Festival and Blanco Lavender Days, including Hometown STARS and Bootstrap Bucks funds, we have been able to draw thousands of people to our area who would not have considered us before. They then fall in love with Blanco and come back over and over again throughout the year."

"Because of the success of the Blanco Lavender Festival, one hotelier decided to build a 50-room hotel here, which is currently under construction."

Dill stated, "In addition, all of our restaurants continue to have annual increases in sales, as do the merchants. We've had several real estate agents report that when home buyers are asked 'why Blanco?,' they say because of the attraction and fun that the Lavender Festival creates. The increase in new residents is good news for all businesses and definitely adds to the creation and retention of jobs."

"Because of some capital fund grant monies, our local brewery, Real Ale, was able to expand – including new jobs – and now distributes beer all over the state. Their tasting room brings many people to Blanco each month. Again, this creates even more attraction to the area."

Dill concludes, "GO TEXAN provides great marketing exposure for its rural communities and their businesses. They offer free listings on their Web site, spread the word about us to other communities through their newsletter and offer grant monies for marketing products through the GO TEXAN Partnership Program (GOTEPP). We want all of our members to know of the many free and inexpensive ways GO TEXAN can assist their businesses. In today's economy, the GO TEXAN program can give any existing or new business the leg up that it needs to go and grow."



GO TEXAN TOOLBOX

In addition to the marketing and promotion benefits and potential grant funding of the GO TEXAN Rural Community Program, rural communities and GO TEXAN companies can take advantage of a few more tools.

- The GO TEXAN mark – a glowing brand in the shape of Texas – taps into Lone Star loyalty, working to persuade the 22 million Texans who shop, dine and travel to choose the state's bounty for food, fiber, horticulture, livestock, shrimp and wine.
- The GO TEXAN Restaurant Program links participating Texas restaurant establishments to local producers and other Texas-grown or processed food products to bring the quality of Texas to the table.
- The GO TEXAN Partnership Program (GOTEPP) is the Texas Department of Agriculture's matching fund program



designed to double the money available for GO TEXAN members to market and promote their Texas agricultural products.

- The GO TEXAN Certified Retirement Community Program stamp of approval ensures each certified community has demonstrated it can meet the living, employment/volunteer, health, entertainment, education and safety needs of its citizens and visitors – all the things that make Texas a great place to retire.
- The GO TEXAN Rural Community Program stamp of approval ensures each certified community has demonstrated it can meet the living, employment/volunteer, health, entertainment, education and safety needs of its citizens and visitors – all the things that make Texas a great place to retire.
- USDA Export Assistance organizes the inspections and holding of livestock before

leaving the country. After inspections are completed and import requirements are met, livestock is loaded and shipped to international markets.

For more information on all the GO TEXAN programs, see www.gotexan.org.



GO TEXAN.



TIP OF THE HAT: City of Bronte

"It is the goal of the City of Bronte and the Bronte Chamber of Commerce for each business to become a member of the GO TEXAN program and proudly display the membership emblem in their windows. What better way to stimulate the state's economy than to buy products manufactured in Texas. Each business that displays a GO TEXAN emblem shows that it sells products that are Texas made with Texas pride."

Submitted by Pat Martindale and Tammy Thorn, City of Bronte