

**Don't Mess
With Texas®
"CANpaign",
page 8**



Bosque County Seat Est. 1854



**Meridian
Chamber of
Commerce**

Spring, 2013

News

2013 Chamber Board

Officers:

President: Madelyn Rieke,
RARE Motorsports

Vice President: James Webb,
First United Pentecostal Church

Treasurer: Sharla Rowland,
First Community Bank

Secretary: Miriam Wallace,
Wallace Sight & Sound

Directors:

Linda Calhoun,
Main Street Antiques

Jim Cole,
Associate Member

Jason Hurley,
Mustang Dental

Juanita Miller,
Miller Septic & Port-a-Pots

Melissa Zuehlke

Kay Duke – Ex-Officio,
Meridian Chamber of
Commerce

CHAMBER on the MOVE:

NEW MEMBERS: 9
RENEWED MEMBERS: 100
MEMBERSHIP TOTAL: 109

CHAMBER INQUIRIES:

OFFICE VISITORS: 86
MEMBER REFERRALS: 24
RELOCATION PACKET: 2
TOURISM PACKET: 1

ChiggerFest and Bosque Go Texan Barbecue Cookoffs—June 8 at Bosque Bottoms

The Meridian Chamber of Commerce and the Bosque County Go Texan are looking for cooking teams to compete in their Barbecue Cookoffs that will kick off on Friday, June 7 at Bosque Bottoms. The ChiggerFest Barbecue Cookoff, sponsored by the Meridian Chamber of Commerce, is open to cooking teams residing in Bosque County and all the surrounding counties. The Bosque County Go Texan Cookoff is open only to residents of Bosque County.

Local teams may enter one or both of the contest; same rules and regulations will apply to both. There must be at least 10 entries to be a sanctioned cookoff. Cooking

teams must be in place and fires started by 10pm, Friday, June 7. Judging will begin for chicken at 12:00 spareribs at 1:00 and brisket at 2:00. Winners will be announced at 3pm on Saturday, June 8 under the pavilion.

Camping and vendor spaces are available. Local churches, non-profits and school organizations are encouraged to reserve a spot for free to advertise or sell products for fundraisers.

For more details, entry forms or to reserve camping or vendor space, call the Meridian Chamber of Commerce at (254)435-2966 or e-mail meridian-chamber@sbcglobal.net.

Featuring the
**DW Blues
Band**

\$20

Red, White & Blues
Meridian Chamber 2013 Banquet
Red Caboose Winery 6:00PM April 20, 2013

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Meridian Chamber of Commerce is to promote expansion and growth of our businesses through commerce and tourism and to partner with other local organizations to promote civic programs designed to increase civic pride in our community to make Meridian a great place to live, work and play.





Double B Foods Honored as Bosque County Employer of Excellence

Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas awarded Double B Foods with the Bosque County Employer of Excellence Award at its Annual Award of Excellence Banquet held in January. This is the second time that Double B Foods has won this award.

The *Annual Awards of Excellence* event honors members of the Heart of Texas region who add value to our communities and have both contributed to and benefited from the services provided by the Workforce Solutions Centers, the Workforce Development Board, and partners throughout the region.

Double B Foods, located in Meridian, is the leader in the production and manufacturing of baked and prepared foods in Bosque County. According to Ralph Lujan with Workforce Solutions, the company is well aware of the needs of their employees, and



L-R: Ron Bowlin, Board Member representing Double B. Foods of Bosque County and Ralph Lujan, Business Consultant for Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas

constantly strives to create a more pleasant work environment. They encourage professional and personal development, resulting in the opportunity for employees to be promoted from within the organization. And, their hiring policies encourage a well-balanced cross section of under-

employed groups.

From an economic standpoint, Double B's volume of business has been steady throughout the year due to their diverse and expansive list of commercial and consumer products. This diversification of both product development and manufacturing, along with their 40 year sound reputation within the Central Texas area, is a true example of an employer of excellence.

"The Employer of Excellence award salutes an employer who has created or used innovative approaches to create or retain jobs and who fosters economic development and community relations," said Anthony Billings, Executive Director of the Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc. "It is a pleasure to once again honor Double B Foods for their exceptional work within the Heart of Texas."

Business Spotlight: One-On-One Personal Homecare Services

As the owners of One-On-One Personal Homecare Services, Becky and Bob Crabtree have been providing comprehensive in-home care services through their Hill County based company since May of 2004.

One-On-One Personal Homecare Services

provides custodial care to clients throughout northeast Texas, allowing individuals to remain in the comfort of their own homes with the compassionate support of a caregiver to assist with the daily

tasks that they are no longer able to handle on their own. Tailoring their services to fit the client and their specific needs,

caregivers assist with a wide variety of duties, including but never limited to meal preparation, assistance with household errands and administration of medications. As

important as assisting with daily "to-do"s for their clients, the experienced, quality caregivers also provide invaluable companionship on a full time basis.

"It was our hope when we

started this business, that we could provide such quality caregivers and services that our clients' families would feel at ease knowing that their loved ones were in our hands." Becky says she offers 24 hour support to all of her clients and their families. Conducting random home visits, being available by phone at all times and staying in constant contact with the caregivers provide her the ability to ensure that the care and service One-On-One Personal Homecare Services is providing is of the highest quality. You can call toll free (866) 225-2100 and check out their website at www.phs-texas.com.





Voters Say “Let Texans Decide” by More than Five to One

A Wilson Perkins Allen opinion survey released by “Let Texans Decide” shows voters support a constitutional amendment election on expanded gaming by overwhelming numbers. 82 percent of respondents indicated support for a ballot initiative on expanded gaming, with 62 percent – five of every eight survey respondents – indicating strong support for a constitutional amendment on gaming. In addition, Wilson Perkins Allen performed an over-sample of 511 Republican primary voters and found 78 percent of Republicans support placing expanded gaming on the ballot.

“Texans of every political persuasion, across all economic sectors and demographics, agree that voters should decide on the expansion of gaming in Texas,” said former State Senator John T. Montford, chairman of Let Texans Decide. “Texans are smart enough to figure this issue out on their own, and should have the freedom to do so.”

The survey of 1,001 registered voters, conducted January 27-30, posed the question:

“Regardless of your views on gambling, would you support or oppose allowing Texas voters to decide on a constitutional amendment to allow the expansion of gaming in Texas?”



Among a representative sample of general election voters, 82 percent said they would support voter referendum on gaming, with only 15 percent expressing opposition. Among Republican primary voters sampled, 78 percent indicated support and 20 percent indicated opposition.

75 percent of survey respondents – and 65 percent of Republican respondents – agreed with the statement:

“Texans lose billions of dollars to out of state casinos, and are paying for the public schools and highways in Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. Texas could use that money to improve our own services.”

76 percent of respondents said

they have gambled, including 70 percent of Republican primary voters. Two-thirds of Republican respondents and the total sample support, “adding additional law enforcement to crack down on illegal gambling operations that currently exist in Texas.”

Survey data is available at <http://lettexansdecide.com/facts/resources/>. Let Texans Decide is a growing organization composed of race track and casino interests. The mission of the organization is to put expanded gaming to a vote during a constitutional amendment election.

Chamber Member



Spotlight your business by sponsoring one of the 2013 Membership meetings.

\$50 includes:

- Advertising in the next newsletter
- Lunch for 2
- A five minute commercial
- Promotional materials placed on each table

Call or email to reserve a month... 6 meetings are still available.

(254) 435-2966
meridian-chamber@
sbcglobal.net

Market on the Square – Bosque County Courthouse Square

Anyone with arts & craft items or home-made goodies is welcome to set up at the Courthouse Square on any Saturday that another event is not scheduled. Most Saturday's you can



find vendors with wonderful home cooked, home canned and homemade items selling their items on the square between 9a and 2p, if the weather is agreeable.

Meridian Chamber Newsletter design and layout courtesy of Kimberley Smith of Bosque Living Magazine/Studio2, (254) 675-4222.





Keep Your Bluetooth Both Hands-free and Hack-free

Cell phone users are increasingly turning to Bluetooth technology to talk hands-free on their phones. According to the Governors Highway Safety Association, ten states have passed laws which prohibit all drivers from using handheld cell phones while driving. As hands-free devices gain popularity, scammers are finding ways to exploit it.

Scammers use specialized software to intercept your Bluetooth signal and hack into your device. It's called "bluebugging." Doing this gives them access to your text messages, contacts, photos and call history.

Scammers tend to hang out in busy areas in order to hack into phones. They sometimes use hacked phones to make long distance calls. However, the newest scheme has scammers using the hacked number to set up pay-per-minute numbers to rack up

charges.

Tips to ensure your personal data stays safe from Bluetooth hackers:

- **Passwords.** Always use a minimum of eight characters in your PIN. The longer your code, the more difficult it is to crack.
- **Sign-off.** Switch your Bluetooth into "not discoverable" mode when you aren't using it. If you make a call from your car, be sure to switch it off when you get out.
- **Be wary of unknown requests.** Don't accept pairing requests from unknown parties. If you happen to pair your phone with a hacker's computer, then all your data is at risk.
- **Stay updated.** Make sure you download and install regular security updates. Device manufacturers will release updates to address threats and correct weaknesses.

April Speaker: David Winkler, County Extension Agent

County Extension Agent, David Winkler, spoke at the Meridian Chamber of Commerce meeting in April about the economic impact of agriculture in Bosque County. He referenced the late March freeze, and estimated the economic loss to Bosque County to be between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000. He stressed the magnitude of earnings provided to Bosque County business by ranching and farming related activities. Beef cattle, cereal crops, and wildlife and forages are the largest agriculture-related income providers.

Mr. Winkler also touched on the damage caused by feral hogs and the growing problem due to their destructive feeding habits, potential to spread disease and rapidly increasing numbers. Chamber members discussed ways to assist agriculture producers through promotion of feral swine control activities.

Thank You to these Members for their Special Investment in the future success of the Meridian Chamber of Commerce:

2013 Platinum Member:



Gold Members:



Business Partner Members:

City of Meridian	First Security State Bank
First National Bank	Texas-New Mexico Power
United Cooperative Services	

Bronze Associate Members:

Rick & Jan Goon	Don & Mary Beth McMahan	Mark & Teresa McMahan
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2013 Meridian Chamber of Commerce Members

(* indicates new member)

5- Five

A Plus Loans

Abuelita's Mexican Restaurant

Atmos Energy

Avirett Agency

Barker's Pharmacy

Best Western Velkommen

Bosque Cen-Tex Title

Bosque County Cowboy Church

Bosque County Properties

Bosque County Veterans Service Office

Bosque County Veterinary Clinic

Bosque Insurance Agency

Bosque Living Magazine/Studio 2

Bosque Pest & Termite

Bosque Resort Restaurant & Bar

Bosque River Retreat*

Bosque Valley Golf Club*

Bowman Tire & Wheel

Briggs Freeman Sotheby's Int'l.

Briley Auto Supply

Brookshire's Grocery

Cactus Grill

Carlisle Real Estate

Carter BloodCare

China House

Citizens State Bank

City of Meridian

Cobb Properties

Commercial Printing

Cooler Center

CTWP

Cut-N-Up

Double B Foods

Edward Jones

Edwin S. Nichols Exploration

Faith Lutheran Church *

First Baptist Church

First Community Bank

First National Bank of Bosque Co.

First Security State Bank

First United Methodist Church

First United Pentecostal Church

Goodall Witcher Healthcare

H & R Block

Highlander Spirits, LLC

Howards Note Service

Hyde Farms

Integrity Plumbing*

Jackie's Antiques

J P's Remodeling

Koehler Law Firm

Lake Whitney Chamber of Commerce

Lawson Funeral Home

LKCM Radio Group / KOME

Lutheran Sunset Ministries

Main Street Antiques & Interiors

Meridian Ace Hardware

Meridian Car Wash

Meridian Frozen Food Locker

Meridian ISD

Meridian Lion's Club

Meridian Public Library

Meridian Tribune

Michael Group, The

Miller Septic & Portable Toilets

Morgan Street Burgers*

Mr. Ed's Country Feed Store

Murphey, Jane S. PC

Mustang Dental Care

Myers Cedar Yard

National Championship

Barbecue Cookoff

One on One Personal

Homecare*

Patton Land Company

Radde Ranch & Christmas Tree Farm

RARE Motorsports

Red Caboose Winery

Rivers Bend Doggie Drop Inn, The

Rountree Appliance

Rowland Realty

Rusty Armadillo RV Park*

Screen Door Inn

Simple Simon Pizza*

Smith & Bratcher, P.C.

Southern Charms Antiques & More

Teddi Marks Antiques

Texas-New Mexico Power

Tha Washhouse & Gift Shop*

The Michael Group

United Cooperative Services

Wallace Sight & Sound, Inc.

Webb-Hardin Warehouse

Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC

Yellow Book USA

Your Community Phone Book

Associate Members

Peggy Brantley

Jim & Patricia Cole

Kenn & Karen Cornett

Tom Cospert*

Richard & Jane Creech

David & Kay Duke

Rick & Jan Goon

Gene & Aline Harville

Mary Jones

Sue B. Kerley

Don & Mary Beth McMahan

Mark & Teresa McMahan

Ray & Ernestene Miller

Pat Perry

Fuzz & Bobbye Spitzer

Great Ways to Get Involved...

Monthly Chamber Membership Meeting

Second Thursday of each month: Informative Speakers, Good Community Fellowship, Great Meal. Call 435-2966 for reservations

Committees

Join One of Our Committees in 2013 & Help Make a Difference

By becoming active and involved, you help determine the direction the Chamber takes on issues that are important to the businesses and the community.





Top 10 Consumer Tips for 2013 to Combat Scammers and Protect Yourself from Fraud:

1. Do your research.

Whether it's a business you're looking to hire or a product you're looking to buy, take the time to do your research. Check out a business at bbb.org. For product information, go to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

2. Keep your computer safe.

Install anti-virus software on your computer and regularly check for software and operating system updates. Don't open attachments or click on links in emails unless the email came from someone you know and trust.

3. Get it in writing.

Don't just take a business's word for it. Get every verbal agreement in writing to limit miscommunication and misunderstandings.

4. Never wire money to someone you don't know.

Many scams require money

to be wired back to the scammers. Tracking money sent via a money wiring service is almost impossible.

5. Protect your identity.

Always shred paper documents that include sensitive financial data and dispose of computers, cell phones and digital data safely. Safely store all personal documents, such as your Social Security card, pull your credit report at least once a year and check your credit and debit card statements frequently.

6. Shop on trustworthy websites.

Online shopping is increasingly become more popular, so before you provide any personal or banking information over the web make sure you're using a trusted site. Look for the "s" in <https://> as opposed to <http://> in the address box.

7. Give wisely.

Most philanthropists give year-round. To ensure your time, treasure and talent are going to the

cause you're looking to support, research all charities at www.give.org to check their legitimacy and to see how their monetary donations are distributed.

8. Don't be pressured.

If a company, organization, or salesperson uses overly-aggressive sales tactics to pressure you into making a purchase or on-the-spot decision, that's a red flag. Walk away.

9. Limit the amount of information shared on social media pages.

Scammers use social media sites to gather information on potential victims. Avoid sharing too much personal information and check your privacy settings. Additionally, never announce through a social media site that you are going out of town, or won't be home for a specified amount of time.

10. If you have an issue with a business or feel you have been scammed, file a complaint with your BBB.



2013 Scheduled Events:

2nd Thursday:	Membership Meeting & Luncheon: 12p-1p Meridian Civic Center
Each Saturday:	Market on the Square 9a-2p Bosque County Courthouse
March:	Bosque County celebrate Texas Independence Meridian Public Library-Jewels & Jeans Easter Egg Hunt & Spring Fling
April:	Bosque County-Wide Garage Sale Annual Chamber Banquet
June:	Heart of Texas/Bosque Go Texan BBQ Cookoff
October:	Lords Harvest @ First United Methodist Church National Championship Barbecue Cookoff @ Bosque Bottoms
December:	Christmas on the Bosque



**Please mark your calendars & plan to attend these events.
For more information call the Chamber office at 254-435-2966**





Facebook Graph: What Is It and How Will It Impact Your Business?

Article by Mark Hayward

Over the next few months Facebook will be rolling out its new Facebook Graph Search in the U.S. The new function will act as a search engine within the platform, but instead of showing results determined by keywords or website optimization, it will be driven by “likes” and connections. This creates a huge potential for small businesses to be found by new customers and provides a major incentive for small business owners to engage and connect with fans.

Below are the key five things you need to know about the Facebook Graph and how to prepare your business for this new dimension in search.

1. How Facebook Social Graph Works

Graph Search is Facebook’s latest evolution to help users easily connect to what their friends like. For business owners, this new search feature provides you with another way to be found on the platform.

When your customers “like” pages on Facebook, and when their friends search for “friends who like <insert your type of business here>,” their connections’ “likes” will appear in the Graph Search results. What the end user will see are results and suggestions based on the business’s association with their wider Facebook social network. For example, the results for a restaurant will be prioritized by whether a user’s friends have visited or “like” the business, instead of sorted by overall number of likes.

2. Update Your Facebook Page

To ensure your venture is displayed in results, you need to make

sure your business information is fully completed. Make sure your page category is set to “Local Business or Place” and you have provided a valid address. This will allow your customers to “check-in” at your establishment through their Facebook Mobile App on their mobile devices, and “like” your business, both of which create an eco-system that fosters high search rankings.

3. Increase Your “Likes”

Small business owners can gain and maintain customer interest and sharing of content by posting interesting photos or videos. Or, better yet, ask your customers to post their favorite photos of themselves at your business or write a review about their experience on your Facebook Timeline.

As an example, if you own a house wares store, consider creating a Facebook-based weekly decorating series. Similarly, if you own a repair shop, create tutorial videos and mix them with stories and funny anecdotes.

If you own a services business, such as a law firm, you can create daily posts that provide advice on what actions clients should take in certain legal situations (e.g. what to do when you get into a fender bender). You can track how engaged your customers and clientele are with your Page through your business’s personal “Notifications” feed.

4. Claim Your Small Business Listing on Bing

Bing is the default provider of social search for Facebook Graph. Meaning, if there are no results available through “likes” or connec-

tions, the results will be powered by Bing’s algorithm.

This means you should claim your business listing on Bing. To do this, visit the [Bing Business Portal](#) and click the orange “Get Started Now” button. From there you will see a “Find Your Listing” page where you will enter basic information about your business such as business name, address, etc. Bing will then determine if your venture’s listing already exists. If your business is listed it will show up in the results under the “Search” button. Conversely, if your business enterprise is not listed, you can choose “Add New Listing.” When filling out your details, remember to be as thorough as possible and include your physical address, website address, social media accounts and photos (you are limited to nine images of your business).

5. The 20% Text Cover Photo Rule

Facebook is implementing a new policy and technology that will remove any cover photos containing more than 20% text in an attempt to halt the spread of photos that look more like banner ads. Based on their terms and conditions, Facebook has the right to reject or Remove a business’s profile if they do not comply with the [Page Guidelines](#).

Let people who have “liked” your page know how special you are in the creative content that you are sharing. Use the Facebook Content Tabs to provide additional information such as menus, offers or product details. See [Six Ways to Use Custom Content Tabs on Your Business Facebook Page](#) for more information.





Highlights: Meridian Chamber Luncheons



Top row, left to right: Jason Hurley, Mustang Dental and Lori Lake, Integrity Plumbing; Lovely Easter lily donated by Dennis Clark, Meridian Ace Hardware as a door prize; Ray & Ernestene Miller (Ray was recipient of the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award); (April Speaker) County Extension Agent, David Winkler, speaking about the economic impact on Bosque County due to the late freeze this spring and the subject of feral hogs. Damage caused by feral hogs is a growing problem because of their destructive feeding habits, potential to spread disease and rapidly increasing population. Middle row, left to right: Board member, Jim Cole, Pat Cole and Rick Goon get more answers from speaker, David Winkler; Rosemary Trujillo, Meridian Frozen Food Locker and sister, Dahlia; Bill Heiney, Liz Davis and Sonia Monrreal, Bosque Insurance Agency. At left: Stef Cobb, Cobb Properties and Linda Calhoun, Main Street Antiques & Interiors.

Don't Mess With Texas® "CANpaign" Gets New Look, Reminds Drivers Not to Trash Texas Roadways

TxDOT's world famous anti-litter campaign "Don't mess with Texas®" has a new look designed to appeal to young adults between the ages of 16 and 34 who were not born when TxDOT first rolled out the program in 1986. The centerpiece of the new campaign is the iconic red, white, and blue "Don't mess with Texas" trash can. The cans will be prominently placed at Texas travel information centers, popular tourist attractions and stadiums to remind Texans to properly dispose of their



cigarettes, food containers, plastic bags and candy wrappers.

You might think Don't mess with Texas® is just a saying, but it's way more. It's a call to action to stop litterers in their tracks. An estimated 1.1 billion pieces of trash are tossed along more than 80,000 miles of state-maintained roadways. the "CANpaign" will be visible to Texans everywhere as more than 300 of these barrels will appear across the state to remind drivers to properly dispose of litter.

Texas is home to more than 25

million people, and an estimated 1,000 people move into the state every day who may not realize that littering is against state law. Litterers can be fined up to \$500 for the first offense. Repeat offenders can face fines of up to \$2,000 and 180 days in jail.

More information on *Don't mess with Texas®* can be found at dontmesswithtexas.org. This website features background on the campaign, research information about litter on Texas roads and highways, and engaging content to help raise awareness about the importance of litter prevention.

