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## THE CHAMBER CONNECTION

### February 2009

Volume 1 Issue 1

Giddings Area Chamber of Commerce, 171 E. Hempstead, Giddings, Texas 78942  
giddingscofc@verizon.net 979-542-3455

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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& Ribbon Cuttings
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25%
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#### **The Secret Garden, Marsha Gonzales**

239 N. Main, Giddings, Texas 78942, Phone: 979-542-0141  
Floral Shop-Fresh flowers and silk arrangements. We also carry balloons.

#### **Buzz Bean, Jo Ellen Northcutt**

4135 E. Austin, Giddings, Texas 78942, Phone: 979-542-2899  
Beverages & Espresso-A small home town Espresso shop. Drive-thru or come in and sit & sip. Satisfaction guaranteed. We can customize your drinks.

#### **K&K Pet Watch, Debbie Kinas & Nancy Kipp**

2038 FM 141, Giddings, Texas 78942, 979-716-8610 or 979-304-0440  
In Your Home Pet Care-Complete Pet Care at your property where you pets will remain in their Safe & Familiar environment. Free Consultation. "The Best Pet Care When You Can't Be There".

#### *Our Mission*

*"The mission of the Giddings Area Chamber of Commerce is to create a progressive business environment, take a leadership role in the community, be an information resource for members and increase growth of tourism."*

## RIBBON CUTTINGS

### **Standard Regional Home Health- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

**Wednesday, February 4, 2009**

**2:30 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.**

514 South Main(Family Care Clinic)

Office in Cameron, Giddings, Marlin, Rockdale and Temple

Phone: 979-540-3800 Toll Free: 866-446-9809

"No Place Like Home"



## Employment Verification Changes

*By Ruth Ashurst*

Beginning Monday, February 2nd, a new version of the I-9 form must be used for all verifications and re-verifications of employment eligibility. A copy of the newly updated form can be printed from the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services website at [http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9\\_IFR\\_02-02-09.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9_IFR_02-02-09.pdf).

Also, with any new administration you can expect significant changes in many areas, including labor and employment. Whether you agree with the changes or not, they will affect your business. Based on pre-election rhetoric and the new administration's campaign website, here are some proposed changes to expect:

- The new administration will work to expand employee rights under various antidiscrimination statutes. Expect increased enforcement regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action programs.
- A Patriot Employer Act would amend existing tax laws and provide a tax credit to employers who increase their full-time workers in the U.S. relative to those outside the U.S.
- An Employment NonDiscrimination Act would make actual or perceived discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation illegal.
- An Employee Misclassification Prevention Act would increase penalties and enforcement against employers who misclassify employees as independent contractors.
- An Employee Free Choice Act would eliminate the right to a secret ballot election in some union organizing campaigns.
- A Family Leave Insurance Act would create a federal insurance fund to provide eight weeks of pay for employees taking FMLA leave. Employees would contribute 0.2 percent of their annual earnings, and employers would match employee payments.
- A Healthy Families Act would require employers with at least 15 employees who work at least 30 hours a week to provide seven days of paid sick leave, with pro-rated leave for part-time employees.
- A Working Families Flexibility Act would provide employees with the statutory right to request flexible work terms and conditions.

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*It is important to keep up to date on changes to the employment laws as we enter the new year.*

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*Turn of the century craftsmanship.*

## Membership 101

*By Denice Harlan*

Our first priority of the year is to get the membership dues up to date. We have sent out second invoices to those that had yet to pay as of last week and I hope that everyone will once again realize the extreme value offered by your Chamber. The \$165 annual fee is less than \$15.00 a month! This is a small price to pay to keep the Welcome Center of the community open. As an added bonus to your membership, we will have the ability to accept payments by credit cards, debit cards, and bank drafts for your convenience in the upcoming months. Also your membership offers your business full time web presence, up to date information on the community, presence in the directory, access to discount bulk mail, city and county demographic information, free copies and faxes and much more. Please get those dues in the mail as soon as possible.

# Sales Tax Revenues Up 25% in 2008

By Denice Harlan

For many businesses 2008 was a very good year in Giddings, Texas. According to the January 2009 City Sales and Use Tax Comparison Summary our county saw a large increase in sales tax revenue. Giddings saw a 25% increase from 2007 to 2008 while Lexington saw a 16% increase from 2007 to 2008 for the same period. This is impressive when many communities were suffering from falling sales tax revenues. Part of the increase can be directly attributed to the many ways the Chamber advertises and promotes our community. Our main purpose is to drive customers to your business, while helping the community as a whole prosper. The Chamber has many avenues for advertising and promoting the community through the website, newsletter and the extensive email list. It is important for you to take advantage of all the benefits you receive as a business member.



Lee County Courthouse NE porch.

County/City	Current Rate	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	2009 Payments To Date	2008 Payments To Date	% Change
Giddings	1.500%	109,790.92	87,818.02	25.02%	109,790.92	87,818.02	25.02%
Lexington	1.500%	14,162.25	12,168.33	16.38%	14,162.25	12,168.33	16.38%

## TIIPS FOR BETTER LIVING IN 2009

1. Take a 10-30 minute walk every day. And while you walk, smile. It is the ultimate anti-depressant.
2. When you wake up in the morning complete the following statement, "My purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_ today."
3. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured in plants.
4. Drink green tea and plenty of water. Eat blueberries, wild Alaskan salmon, broccoli, and almonds.
5. Try to make at least three people smile each day.
6. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip, energy vampires, issues of the past, negative thoughts or things you cannot
7. control. Instead invest your energy in the positive present moment.
8. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a college kid with a maxed out charge card.
9. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
10. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day. Buy a lock if you have to.

"Trust has never been more relevant in today's world, especially in such difficult economic times," said Stephen M.R. Covey. "The ability to establish, grow, extend and restore trust with all stakeholders—customers, business partners, investors, and co-workers is the key leadership competency of the new, global economy. Trust is a learnable and measurable skill that makes organizations more profitable, people more promotable, and relationships more energizing. We are thrilled to join forces with FranklinCovey and amplify our influence to fuel a global renaissance of trust."

GOD BLESS OUR VETERANS & TROOPS!

## UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS &amp; ACTIVITIES

**NEW: Chamber Member Luncheons - February 20<sup>th</sup>**

We will host a once monthly Chamber Luncheon for members. These luncheons are designed to be networking opportunities for members while creating and fostering the fellowship aspect of belonging to a membership organization. Your greatest asset in business is your relationship with your customers or the potential customers you may encounter at Chamber luncheons, Ribbon Cuttings, Open Houses and After Hours Mixers. Call to reserve your seat. We will meet at Los Patrones Mexican Grill from 11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Cost: \$10 per person, payable to the Chamber. R.S.V.P. required by Tuesday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>. No shows will be charged for reservation.

March 10<sup>th</sup> - SBA Classes- "Starting a Business", contact Joyce Bise (979) 542-2067.

March 21<sup>st</sup> - Giddings Food & Wine Fest, Local Restaurant & Food Competition and Wine Tasting

April 25<sup>th</sup> - Spring Fling Arts & Crafts and Downtown Shopping Extravaganza in Downtown Giddings

Check out our website at [www.GiddingsTx.com](http://www.GiddingsTx.com) to get up to the minute information and details about upcoming events and activities happening in Giddings and Lee County. We are your information resource. Email: [giddingscofc@verizon.net](mailto:giddingscofc@verizon.net) Office Phone: 979-542-3455 or Fax: 979-542-7060.



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