

# www.GiddingsTx.com

## THE CHAMBER CONNECTION

NOVEMBER 2008

### 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.”

## GOD BLESS OUR VETERANS & TROOPS!



# ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MERRY MARKETPLACE ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2008

SONS OF HERMANN HALL IN GIDDINGS, TEXAS

1013 CR 223 ON HWY 77 SOUTH

10AM TO 4PM



*13<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Merry Marketplace Arts & Crafts Show is a wonderful place to find gifts items for all your family and friends. Forty plus vendors selling everything from hand crocheted scarves to small furniture items will be there selling their wares. Hand crafted jewelry, gourmet food items, sterling silver jewelry, stained and leaded glass gifts, scrapbooking items, home décor, Christmas décor, hand made candy, T-shirts, handcrafted candles, goat milk products, wooden bowls and boxes, toys and so much more. We will have a Homemade Gourmet Consultant, a Pamper Chef Consultant and a Tupperware Consultant on hand to help you with your holiday entertaining. Average attendance for this event is 400 people. There will be free demonstrations, raffles, door prizes and music. Santa will be available from 11am to 3pm. Check out our website at [www.GiddingsTx.com](http://www.GiddingsTx.com).*

*Admission to this event is free, but the Giddings High School Leo Club will accept canned food items or other grocery staple as a donation to the Giddings Food Pantry. We will also take donations for the local Blue Santa program. Giddings Evening Lions Club will be selling pecans and Gerline's Quilt Angels will be selling raffle tickets for a quilt.*

*Kimberlyn Krause will be there entertaining from 11:30am to 1:00pm.*

*Vendors that will attend this year's event include: Jme Lyn Designs, Deidre's Classic Glassworks, Robert's Promotional Specialties, Brandy's Crafts, Jenz Country Candles, Tangy Accessories, The Hot Pot, Country Stamper, Simply Sassy, Frames & More, Artnstuf, White Oak Bend, RK Services, Marshall Oaks, The Lil' Bowtique and Haase's Antiques and Treasures.*

## The Business of Christmas!

*When I think of Christmas, I think parties, functions and holidays! But for a business owner, Christmas and the opportunities that arise at that time of the year should mean much, much more. We all know that Christmas is fun, but have you ever thought of using it as an opportunity to improve your business and its many relationships.*

### **Networking Opportunities**

*One opportunity that you probably have never considered is to attend another company's Christmas function. This can be a wonderful networking opportunity especially if your business is compatible with either the host company's team members demographic (as in you sell something they all want to use - in this case spend a lot of time networking and getting to know the team rather than the boss) or if there is the opportunity for a strategic alliance or host beneficiary in the new year (if a strategic alliance or host beneficiary is your goal - make sure you spend plenty of time with all the key decision-makers).*

*Networking doesn't have to be a waste of time or even traumatic. If you do it properly and with the right approach, it can make generate a significant amount of business for your company. And while the benefits to networking are many and varied, almost every business can profit from a strong networker. It can basically be seen as a business time saver. When you've got a strong network, you'll find your calls get returned more quickly and easily. You'll have quicker and easier access to more information, ideas and contacts. This in turn, can make you more efficient and productive and lead to more opportunities, more business, new business, new contacts, new clients, growing your business and most importantly, more money in your pocket.*

### **Launch your Networking Career**

*Christmas is the best time to launch your networking career. Take advantage of the Christmas spirit and introduce yourself to lots of potential clients that would normally be harder to get to. By the way, I'm not saying you should launch into a sales pitch at the function - in fact I would strongly advise against it. All you need to do is grab some business cards and follow them up before or after Christmas, after all you will never have a more perfect reason to call.*

*Remember, the last thing you want to be is overly enthusiastic, or become known as the person who shakes everybody's hands and thrusts their business cards into an unsuspecting party-goer's grip. Relax and be yourself, it's Christmas after all! You never know you may even enjoy yourself.*

### **Some Hints and Tips for Networking:**

1. **Know your focus** - When attending an event, don't try to meet as many people as possible, trust isn't built from a stack of business cards.
2. **Have an adequate supply of business cards** and make sure you get a business card from every person you meet - This will allow you to not only follow up but will help build your database.
3. **Listen and ask questions** - You have two ears and one mouth so remember to use them proportionately, also don't assume that your target person already knows your business.
4. **Give referrals whenever possible** - A good networker should believe "givers gain!" So because most successful businesses grow from referrals, be the person that does the referring. Remember the fastest way to get referrals is to give them.

5. **Don't try and close any deals** - Networking should be used to develop relationships with other professionals and not an event to hit businesspeople to buy your products or services.
6. **Write notes on the backs of business cards you collect** - This will help jog your memory when you make contact with them and will help in building rapport.
7. **Follow Up** - If you've discussed catching up with someone, call within 3 days of the meeting that person. Otherwise, just write a brief hand written note (to keep it personable) saying it was great to meet them.
8. **Keep promises** - If you've made a promise, keep it! No one like to do business with an unreliable person.
9. **Think differently** - Focus on just meeting people and not finding new customers because that's what everyone else is probably doing.

*Another opportunity you've probably overlooked is your internal Christmas party. And while it won't contribute directly to sales or to your bottom line, a happy, contented and appreciated team will always outsell an unhappy, restless and unappreciated one.*

*Although most businesses do "something" for Christmas, take the time to try to make the occasion special, as it is a great tool for boosting team morale. And no, by that I don't mean supplying enough alcohol so that your team members won't remember the party and will "think" they've had a good time! Christmas parties are a wonderful way to thank your team for all their hard and diligent work throughout the year. It's also a great time for team members to get to know each other and you.*

### **Keeping Your New Customers**

*Lastly, the most important opportunity to seize during the Christmas period is getting and keeping new customers. Most retailers get a massive influx in customers they've never seen before during the festive season. That's a massive opportunity and yet most will never see those customers again until next Christmas... maybe.*

*To begin with, your marketing and advertising campaigns (at every time of year, but especially at Christmas) should be more about getting a customer to keep buying from you - it should be about pro-actively keeping them coming back again and again. So the question is, how are you going to keep new Christmas customer coming back in the New Year? Most retailers use the common excuse that "we don't have enough time to service customers, let alone record their names and addresses." But the thing is, you can't afford not to do this because how else are you going to get them coming back. If you're ready to handle this influx in business, this will be just the start of bonuses you'll get from the increase in store traffic. If you're ready to do this, great! If not, you'll be throwing away a goldmine in opportunities. So let's refine this process. Obviously you have to ask for the customers name and address. This easiest way to do this is to simply ask them. If you give people a reason like special members only offers or newsletters, or a VIP card, you're more likely to get a better response. Even something as simple as a "thanks for buying from us" note is a great start because no one else does it so it will stand out a mile. People will come back to you and refer their friends because your business stood out from the crowd. Remember, if you're not communicating with your past customers at least every 90 days you'll lose all the rapport you've built with them to get the first sale. From here, get ready for the increased sales during the Christmas period, get ready to collect customers details and get ready to keep them coming back well into the New Year...*

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### **Business After Hours Lee County General Store November 18<sup>th</sup> 5:00pm to 7:00pm**

**RENEWING MEMBERS:** Thank you to every renewing member. We appreciate your continued support.

- First Class Cottage Bed & Breakfast
- Giddings Study Club
- Mayer Auctioneering, Inc.
- James Medack, PC
- Leeco Plastics
- Stuermer Store
- Dr. Amy Jatzlau
- All Star Convenience Store
- All Around the Block Quilt Shop
- Giddings Economic Development Corp.
- Rotary Club of Giddings
- USCRA
- Aubaine Supply Company
- Reba's Village Deli & Pizzeria
- City Meat Market
- Lee County Co-Op

**OUR OFFICE IS  
LOOKING FOR A FEW  
CHAMBER CHAMPIONS.  
THESE VOLUNTEERS LOVE TO  
MEET PEOPLE AND TALK ABOUT  
GIDDINGS. THEY ARE  
INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY OF  
GIDDINGS AND LEE COUNTY.  
VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEART  
OF OUR COMMUNITY. THESE  
VOLUNTEERS WOULD BE  
WILLING TO COME TO THE  
CHAMBER BOARD MEETINGS AND  
CHAIR COMMITTEES, ATTEND  
GRAND OPENINGS, RIBBON  
CUTTINGS AND OPEN HOUSES.  
WE NEED YOU!!!**

Our office is busier than ever planning more events and activities for our community. We have one full time and one part time staff person, however we have many areas that need more attention. Let us know where or how you would like to help. Some of the things we handle in our office include: answering phone calls requesting information about Giddings and Lee County, handing out County and City maps, giving directions, giving tours at the Lee County Heritage Center and making up Visitors Bags for guests (about 2000) per year just to name a few. We answer about 25 calls per day on average. We average between 40 & 50 emails per day requesting all sort of information. We manage the day to day information that is listed on the Digital Sign that is displayed on the corner of Hwy 290 and Hwy 77 on the City Meat Market Building. Our office keeps an Event Calendar for the community to have information about events and activities available 24/7. We also maintain our website with updated information about our community, our businesses and any information a guest might be looking for about Giddings. And our office publishes a monthly newsletter for members. So you can see we are very busy with just the day to day activities of running the local Visitors Center in Giddings. We welcome our guests with "Hometown Hospitality" everyday. You can help by volunteering a few minutes or a few hours. Call

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If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.  
~ John Quincy Adams

#### **Just a reminder to our members-**

Contact the Chamber office at 979-542-3455 or [giddingscofc@verizon.net](mailto:giddingscofc@verizon.net) to let us know when your business will have their Holiday/Christmas Open House so we can add it to the Event Calendar and on the Website. Deadline for 8 ½ X 11 inserts into the newsletter is the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. The monthly newsletter is a great way to let other members know what services and products you sell.

**WE NEED HELP!!!**

our office for more information about how you can help.

#### November 2008 Events

- Nov. 3- Country Music Monday*
- Nov. 4- Election Day Walk-In Coffee*
- Nov. 4- Giddings Neen Lions Club Mop & Broom Sale*
- Nov. 9- Giddings Evening Lions Club Pecan Sale starts today*
- Nov. 11- Veterans Day*
- Nov. 11- Camp Tejas Ladies Day Out-Tour of the Lee County Heritage Center*
- Nov. 12- Happy Hearts Tour from Houston to the Lee County Heritage Center.  
Menzi's & Lohm Berg Winery*
- Nov. 15- Birthing Classes at St. Mark's Medical Center*
- Nov. 23- Christmas Merry Marketplace Arts & Crafts Show*
- Nov. 27- Thanksgiving Services at all Churches*
- Nov. 27 & 28- Chamber offices closed to observe the holiday*
- Nov. 28 & 29- Christmas Lane of Lights in Ledbetter from 6-9pm*



# HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!! GIVE THANKS FOR ALL YOUR BLESSINGS!!

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Inserts included in this newsletter-Flavors of Christmas, Holiday Happenings, Capital One Bank, First Assembly of God Church Event Calendar, Annual Christmas Merry Marketplace and the Christmas Lane of Lights. Thanks to these businesses & organizations for their contributions. Please post for customers & staff.

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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.



BULK  
RATE  
U.S.  
POSTAGE  
PAID