



Jim Lambeth
Chairman
2009-2010

Chairman's Letter

Tyler is fortunate to have a diversified economy with a major segment of that economy being the travel and hospitality industry. This industry is made up of hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality providers. The hospitality industry serves Tyler's business, medical, legal and educational hubs that draw many daytime and overnight visitors. We also have a unique combination of factors that many communities envy and that is a genuine tourist destination coupled with close proximity to over 7 million people within 150 miles of Tyler. Now that is a huge pool of potential visitors who can be drawn to the East Texas scenic beauty and our own authentic local events like the upcoming Azalea Trails, the Rose Festival in October, Festival on the Square and the Tyler Jazz Festival among others. We also have state and local parks, a dynamic zoo, museums and exciting and entertaining offerings from our three local colleges. In short we have a lot to offer.

Travel and tourism had a total direct impact of over \$325,000,000 in 2008 and provided 3350 direct jobs to the Tyler and Smith County Economy according to Dean Runyan Associates' estimates. Our local economy benefits from travel and tourism dollars spent in our city and county in several ways. First there are those 3350 jobs and that \$325 million that the good folks leave behind, and that isn't bad, but more important is those are often new dollars that get recirculated in our economy. Let's take my daughter for

(Continued on page 2.)



2010 Azalea and Spring Flower Trail

March 19-April 4

As the snow melts and spring comes to East Texas and the Tyler area, a popular flower is once again honored with its own festival. The Azalea flower has made Tyler one of the most popular spring time stops for travelers to our area attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. The 2010 Azalea and Spring Flower Trail is scheduled for March 19-April 4. The annual celebration now features over ten miles of residential gardens, showcasing colorful azaleas, dogwoods, tulips, wisteria and many beautiful spring flowers. Media coverage of the beauty extends nationwide with coverage in *Southern Living*, *Better Homes and Gardens* and many other national gardening magazines.

The 10 mile driving tour begins at Broadway and E. Houston St. From there visitors can follow the posted Azalea Trail signs as they tour one of Tyler's most attractive residential areas. Photography is a popular past time during the trail and is highly encouraged.

There are several other events for visitors and residents during the trail dates. They include an arts and crafts fair, Historic Tyler on Tour, quilt show, living history exhibits and demonstrations, plant sales and historic home tours.

Visitors may obtain trail information at the Visitors Information Center located at the Chamber of Commerce office, 315 N. Broadway from 8:30 am-5:00 pm, Monday-Saturday and 9:00 am-3:00 pm on Sundays. The Visitors Center will be closed on April 4th, Easter Sunday. For a complimentary visitor packet and further trail information please call (800) 235-5712 or visit www.TylerAzaleaTrail.com.

(Continued from front cover.)

example, she works part time at a local restaurant. She gets paid indirectly by some of these travelers and she goes down to her favorite local hair salon and spends her hard earned cash like 19 year olds are known to do. The hairstylist then uses that same dollar to pay her receptionist who pays her gasoline bill to the local service station, and you get my point. The money gets recirculated several times within our local economy.

The Tyler Convention and Visitors Bureau, which comes under the umbrella of the Tyler Area Chamber, is the collective agency responsible for marketing Tyler to the world. They organize events, respond to inquiries and develop a marketing plan to assist in bringing in conventions, visitors and guests to our fair city. In the last few years, the hotel business in Tyler has seen a noticeable improvement and additions to the quality and number of rooms and venues offered and this is good thing, a very good thing. But we have some improvements yet to make in our travel and tourism infrastructure. We lack a comprehensive venue for conventions. We do not have an accommodating special events center for large crowds like concerts and graduations, and we are missing out on real economic impact that could increase those dollars and jobs that the industry brings. To take our collective civic game up a notch or two we need to address the infrastructure issues and take a closer look at the economic impact that new venues can have on our economy. This issue has come up in many recent civic and economic impact planning initiatives and we need to get creative in finding ways to make these needed new venues possible.

And one final thought on travel and tourism; the average leisure traveler is now a baby boomer or younger and they have different expectations and interests. We need to take our current lineup of civic events and tailor more offerings to these generations. One great example is the East Texas State Fair adding a concert to its lineup of events. This is the example of what can be done to add some additional interest and even larger attendance, and of course some more out of town dollars spent. After all this is the Chamber of "Commerce."



VOLUNTEER TYLER OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMUNITY

The City of Tyler's new Volunteer Tyler program provides opportunities for people in and around the city who are looking for a way to give back to the community, to serve others and make a difference in the community.

Volunteer Tyler is the product of the Tyler Apprenticeship Program; the City's leadership development effort. Volunteer Tyler is modeled after the Tyler Police Department's very successful Volunteers in Policing program that uses citizens to augment and supplement the Department's paid staff and officers.

Still in the development stages, volunteers are being recruited to help at the Tyler Public Library and at the Police Department with new areas expected to come online in the coming months.

Anyone interested in learning more about the program or wanting to volunteer can go to the Volunteer Tyler web page at: www.volunteert Tyler.com or contact Volunteer Services Coordinator Gary Lynch at 903.531.1071.

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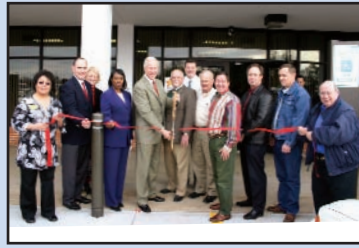
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VOLUNTEER OF THE 1ST QUARTER



Jim Lambeth presented B.J. Hornbostel with the Volunteer of the Quarter plaque.

2010 TOURISM AWARD



The CVB Tourism Award winner for the 1st quarter is Amber Smith, Front Desk Clerk, Candlewood Suites. She was nominated by David Wilson, a guest from Dallas, who said "Amber was extremely helpful, courteous, friendly and always greeted him with a smile."

contactors of the **month**



Nicole Cox
December 2009

Contactors of the month for December, Nicole is a marketing representative for Express Employment Professionals. She is a 2 year resident of Tyler and a graduate of Baylor University. Nicole is married to Daniel and they have one daughter, Mackenzie.



Holly McFarlin
January 2010

A first year member of the Contact Club, Holly is the Sales Manager and PR Director for American Classifieds. She is active in the Rose City Chili Pod, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and the Humane Society. Holly and her husband, Bryan are the parents of Tilly.



Denver Dyer
February 2010

Denver is the Contactors of the month for February and has earned his second Production Award. He works for Income Portfolio Strategies and currently serves as President of the Tyler Young Professionals Network as well as the Tyler Lunch Bunch BNI Chapter. Denver is also a member of Leadership Tyler Class 23.



4th Annual *Seniors* Celebrating Life "Just Out and About in Tyler"

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Tyler Area Chamber News (USPS 447-540) is published monthly by the Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce, 315 N. Broadway, Tyler, Texas 75702. Member rate \$4.00 annually. Periodicals postage paid at Tyler, Texas. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Tyler Area Chamber News, P.O. Box 390, Tyler, Texas 75710, 903-592-1661, www.tylertexas.com

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