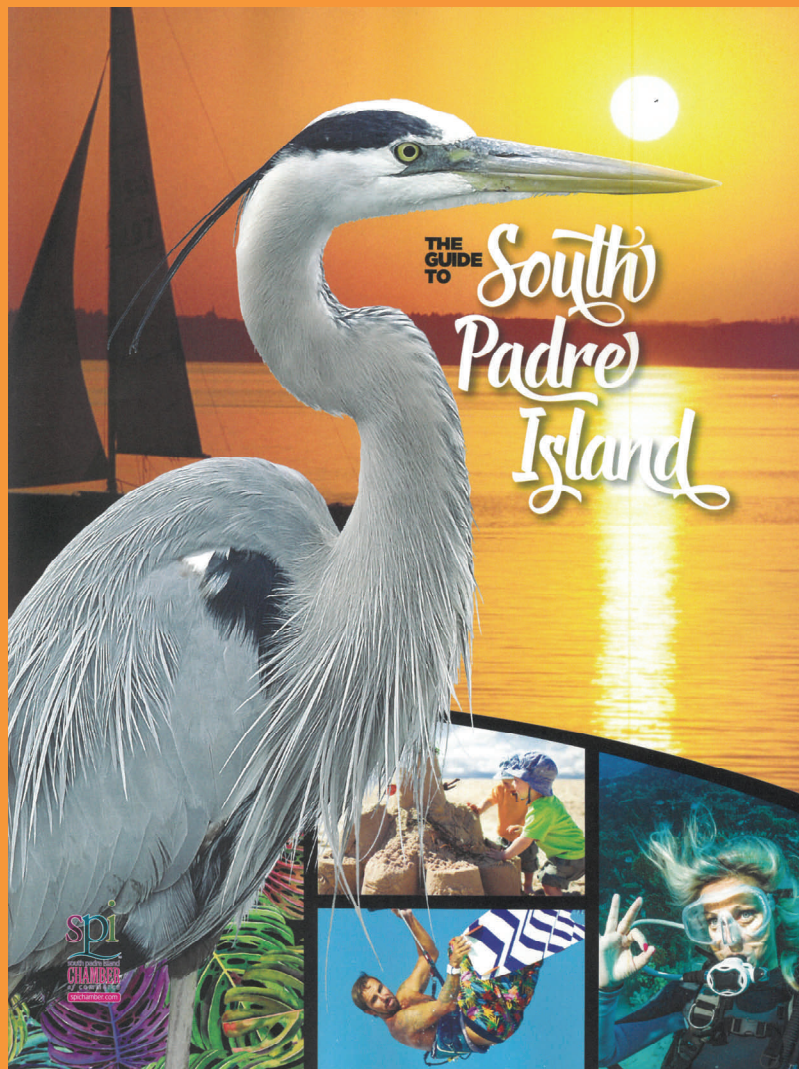




spichamber.com

2017-2018

Annual Report



The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce Annual Report - October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018

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Chamber Mission Statement

The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce is a membership based non-profit business organized to advance the business interests of its members making South Padre Island a premier location to live, work, vacation, and do business.

Structure and Membership

The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c) 6 non-profit organization, incorporated in February 1989. The Chamber's Laguna Madre Education Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Any person, association, corporation, partnership or estate having an interest in the mission of the Chamber is eligible for membership.

Past Chairmen of the Board

1989-1990	Ray Elledge
1990-1991	Keith Foree
1991-1992	Keith Foree/Jess Alford
1992-1993	Jess Alford
1993-1994	Jess Alford
1994-1995	Dave Friedman
1995-1996	Dave Friedman
1996-1997	Patricia Mayes
1997-1998	Ebbie Ahadi
1998-1999	Ebbie Ahadi
1999-2000	Tom Hansen
2000-2001	Tom Hansen
2001-2002	Jennifer Porter-Davis
2002-2003	Jennifer Porter-Davis
2003-2004	Elizabeth Money
2004-2005	Elizabeth Money
2005-2006	Charles Rogan
2006-2007	Charles Rogan
2007-2008	Marie Ferrier
2008-2009	Marie Ferrier
2009-2010	Darrell Mangham
2010-2011	Darrell Mangham
2011-2012	Timothy O'Leary
2012-2013	Timothy O'Leary
2013-2014	Timothy O'Leary
2014-2015	Courtney Hayden
2015-2016	Courtney Hayden
2016-2017	Courtney Hayden
2017-2018	Jimmy Hawkinson

2017-18 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is comprised of seventeen (17) total directors. Four (4) positions are ex-officio Community Partners, including the City of South Padre Island City Manager, South Padre Island Economic Development Executive Director, Cameron County Parks Director and the Executive Director for the South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau. The remaining thirteen directors are elected Business Members and have voting rights. Our organization is driven by our Mission Statement and governed under Corporate By-Laws.

During the fiscal year 2017-2018, **Jimmy Hawkinson** served as Chairman of the Board, **Mark Haggemiller** served as Vice Chairman/Secretary, and **Charles Rogan** served as Treasurer. **Jon Creinin**, served as the Board's additional representative on the Executive Committee. **Courtney Hayden** served as Immediate Past Chairman.

Additional directors – *Keith Arnold, Debbie Camacho, Martin Cantu, Jr., Lonnie Gillihan, Susan Guthrie, Chad Hart, Kyra Hudson, Darla Lapeyre, Alta Monroe, Karla Scimeca, and Joe Vega.* Retiring as of September 30, 2018 is *Barbara Gonzalez.*

Staff

Roxanne M. Ray, President and CEO, 17 years service
Dianna L. Harvill, Marketing and Business Services, 18 years service
Beverley P. Eymard, Membership Services, 1 year service
Alita Bagley, Membership Specialist, 12 years service

Message from Chairman of the Board, Jimmy Hawkinson

Fellow Chamber Members,

It has been an honor to serve as your Chairman for the past year. I am amazed at how quickly the time has passed.

The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce is here to help promote your business growth! Events, ribbon cuttings, Walk the Dock, business showcases and our webpage are only a few of the valuable tools at your disposal as Chamber members.

The Chamber owes its success to the involvement of our members, and the various events we plan each year to help promote South Padre Island business. This involvement includes volunteering as leaders on the Board of Directors, becoming an Islander or serving on other committees. The relentless hours our volunteers give serving on committees is impressive. To learn more about the about committees, please reach out to one of the great staff members at the South Padre Island Chamber office. Also, board meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. and we encourage your attendance.

I wish to extend a special THANK YOU to all of our lifelong members, as well as others who have contributed to the success of our Chamber. Your continued support of our Chamber is needed, and a strong, dedicated membership is important to our Chamber's future.

As the Chamber enters its 30th year, we will be looking at relocation opportunities as the City of South Padre Island continues to enhance the amenities and improve pathways for visitors, for our work force, and those that live and play on South Padre Island. Please take the time to read our Chamber newsletters or attend monthly meetings as we embark into the horizon, and seek to find a new long term home for our Chamber.

As our Mission statement states, "The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce is a membership based non-profit business organized to advance business interest of its members, making South Padre Island a premier location to live, work, vacation and do business." We must all work in harmony towards the same goal to insure the future success of South Padre Island businesses, and for our visitors and residents.

Once again, I wish to express my gratitude to our outstanding staff that truly makes the Chamber work for South Padre Island Chamber members; their dedicated years of service and their invaluable experience keeps us moving in the right direction.

I also want thank each of my fellow board members for their support and contributions this past year. I look forward to serving a second year as your Chairman, and working with all of you. To our members, I encourage you to reach out anytime with ideas, suggestions or any questions you might have.

President's Overview

You can get it all-
get noticed!
get informed!
get educated!
get heard!

Promoting membership, and the many benefits of membership, was our focus this past year. 2017-18 was a good year for our Chamber. All of our programs and events were successful because of our Members. Our Board of Directors provided excellent guidance, and a diverse frame of reference, which added creativity and innovation. This report highlights the value of your Chamber membership.

Now, more than ever, Members are taking advantage of their member benefits! We see Members signing in and taking advantage of their business listing on our website, posting photos, business specials, job opportunities, and promoting their business. Additionally, the Chamber provides even more online visibility for our Members with an expanded social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google+. BUT WAIT, and listen closely to something we are very proud of – in recent surveys and statistics gathered by our SPI Convention and Visitors Bureau, our Chamber's ***Guide to South Padre Island*** is the **Number 1 requested promotional information resource requested by people considering South Padre Island as their vacation destination**. Yahoo, right!? Island businesses cannot afford to miss such a valuable advertising opportunity, and Chamber Members receive discounted rates.

Members are taking advantage of education and training classes for their staff. They are attending Community Coffee and Conversations, and networking at business ribbon cuttings and mixers. Our Members are enjoying the opportunities to interact with our local school district, and many other regional organizations. So many benefits, so many opportunities!

Our Chamber Members have more membership benefits than ever in the nearly 19 years that I have served as President. When everyone fully utilizes those benefit opportunities, we will all reach a new level of success in our community.

Let us help! Invest in our local Chamber, ask questions, use benefits and services, be an engaged business owner and manager. Together we can make the Island a better place to live, work and vacation. Joins us, you will be glad you did! You can have it all!

Thank you for being a Member of the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce.

Committees

Business Services & Training Programs

The Business Services Committee serves as the workforce education arm of the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce. **Barbara Gonzalez**, Chair and committee members *Eliza Higginbotham, Ramona Kantack Alcantara, Tracey Krieghbaum, Darla Lapeyre, and Dianna Harvill* are responsible for arranging the Quarterly Public Affairs Luncheons and workforce development opportunities.

The following is a brief overview of the accomplishments of the committee during the 2017-2018 year:

Luncheons

The January 17, 2018 luncheon was held at *Hilton Garden Inn*. Mayor Dennis Stahl presented the annual State of the Island presentation. The luncheon was sponsored by *Brisky & Perez Insurance*.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton was guest speaker at the May 10, 2018 luncheon held at Pearl South Padre. Paxton discussed the many areas his office concentrates on, and especially those affecting our local area. The luncheon was sponsored by *Brisky & Perez Insurance*.

Job Fair

The Second Annual South Padre Island Job Fair was held on February 1, 2018 at the South Padre Island Convention Centre. A joint project between the SPI Chamber, City of South Padre Island, and Workforce Solutions Cameron, 19 employers participated in the event, and saw 168 applicants.

Training

ServSafe Food Managers Certification Classes were held on October 9-10, 2017 at the South Padre Island Convention Centre. 6 people registered for the classes taught in both English and Spanish by training staff from Focal Point in San Antonio. Chamber members participating in the classes were *BurgerFi and Schlitterbahn Beach Resort*.

Basic Food Handling Classes were held at the South Padre Island Convention Centre on October 10, 2017. 3 people registered for the class taught by training staff from Focal Point in San Antonio.

Mastering Your Memory with Craig Krause was held October 16, 2017 at the SPI Visitors Center. The class was a result of Krause being the guest speaker at the September 2017 Public Affairs Luncheon. 10 people registered for the half-day class held at the SPI Visitors Center.

A partnership with UTRGV in Edinburg and their Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides the Business Services Committee the opportunity to offer numerous classes to small business owners, and their employees.

Power of QuickBooks Online Basics was held on January 18, 2018 at the South Padre Island Visitors Center. 11 people attended the class. Chamber members in attendance were *Café Karma, Friends of Animal Rescue, Padre Elite Team - RE/MAX Elite, Palms Resort & Café on the Beach, Paragraphs on Padre, and SPI Chamber of Commerce.*

The second class scheduled was **Power of QuickBooks Online Advanced** which was held on February 14, 2018 at the SPI Visitors Center with 18 people attending. Chamber members attending included *Friends of Animal Rescue, Green, Rubiano & Associates, Mirage Beachwear, Padre Getaways, Palms Resort & Café on the Beach, Paragraphs on Padre, and Rio Grande Partnership.*

E-Commerce Basics was held on February 21, 2018 at the South Padre Island Visitors Center with 9 people in attendance. Chamber members attending were *Affordable Beach House Vacation Rentals, Friends of Animal Rescue, Molly Bensen Designs, and Sisters Interiors.*

Customer Service Plus! was held on March 7, 2018 at the South Padre Island Visitors Center with 17 people in attendance. Chamber members attending were *Affordable Beach House Vacation Rentals, Breakaway Cruises, Comfort Suites, Pirates Fishing Pier, Pirates Landing, and SPI Birding and Nature Center.*

The fifth and final UTRGV Small Business Development Center class held was **Employee Discipline & Separation**. The class was held at the SPI Visitors Center with 20 people attending. Chamber members attending were *Breakaway Cruises, Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority, Chacon Realty, Friends of Animal Rescue, Island Cinema, Sapphire Condominiums, SPI Board of Realtors, SPI Golf Club, and The Sportsman.*

17 people attended the **Social Security Planning for Women (and Men with Women in Their Lives)** class held on May 8, 2018 at the SPI Visitors Center. Representatives from Chamber member *Wells Fargo Advisors* conducted the class attended by Chamber members *Affordable Beach House Vacation Rentals, Blue Marlin Supermarket, Captain Bryan Ray Fishing Adventures, City of South Padre Island, Kantack Alcantara Law Office, Karla's Katering, Molly Benson Designs, SOS Services, SPI Art Space, SPI Chamber of Commerce, SPI Convention Centre, and SPI Economic Development.*

The Chamber joined together with U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to present **Understanding Unlawful Employment and Compliance Matters** on July 16, 2018 at the SPI Visitors Center. Two sessions were held to better accommodate business owner/manager schedules, and 12 people attended the morning session and 7 attended the afternoon session.

The Women's Business Center of Cameron County (WBCCC) presented the *Women-Owned Small Business Contracting Program* on August 22, 2018. 11 women attended the class held at the SPI Visitors Center.

The fiscal year wrapped up with the two-day *Certified Pool-Spa Operator Course* held at the SPI Community Center. 13 people attended the class including Chamber members South Padre Beach Houses and Pearl South Padre. The course is taught by National Swimming Pool Foundation Certified Instructor David Turnage with Turnage & Associates in Waller, TX.

Our Chamber also helped to plan and attended the 2017 Governors Small Business Forum and Business Recognition held in Pharr, Texas.

Education Committee

Chamber members and Point Isabel Independent School District administrators join together to meet during the school year to discuss, and address issues of common concern for the school district and the area business community, particularly as it applies to quality education and workforce development. Meetings are scheduled throughout the school year and serve to foster open communications and awareness.

Diane O'Leary served as Chairman for the committee. Other committee members and meeting attendees included: *Alta Monroe, Ginny Ossanna, Mickey Furcron, Kyra Hudson, Dr. William Roach, Nancy Gonzalez, Ana Holland, Henry LeVrier, Dr. Lisa Garcia, Maribel Valdez, Reina Salinas, Victor Barrera, Romeo Ruelas, Robin Ochoa, Josie Torres, Jose Leos, Joanna Wolfe, and Roxanne Ray.* The committee held meetings at each of the school campuses.

Highlights for the year include:

- Awarded \$150 each to Yaslin Hernandez, Brenda Pulido, Elliot Carter, and Brendan Pinkerton in recognition of **qualifying to compete** at the 2018 DECA International Competition;
- Chamber purchased 20 **DECA Memberships** in support of the PIHS DECA Club, earning them state recognition for number of members recruited;
- Chamber hosted our 17th annual **Teacher Appreciation Party**, May 16, 2018, at Sea Ranch Restaurant, with nearly 90 teachers and administrators attending. Chamber member, Bob Friedman, owner and manager for Sea Ranch Restaurant, donated food and refreshments for the teachers and many Chamber businesses donated door prize drawing gifts;
- In August 2018, our Chamber prepared **welcome bags** for 18 teachers filled with gifts and information donated by our area Chamber members. This was an opportunity for businesses to promote themselves while welcoming new teachers to Point Isabel Independent School District;
- Hosted a **New Teacher Welcome Luncheon**, Wednesday, August 15, 2018 at Marcello's Restaurant, with 30 guests in attendance. Our Chamber and the Port Isabel Chamber jointly hosted this event to welcome new teachers to our school district. Each Chamber had three representatives on hand to greet everyone;
- Represented our Chamber of Commerce at the Port Isabel High School **Scholarship Awards Night**, April 30, 2018, to announce the names of five graduating students receiving \$1,000 scholarships from the Chamber's Laguna Madre Education Foundation;

- Promoted and participated in the PIISD “It’s Time Texas and A Healthier Taste By the Sea” which was sponsored in part by Chamber member HEB;
- Chamber members attended PIISD Career and Technology Education community outreach sessions;
- PIHS DECA students attended a Workforce Solutions Job Fair, sponsored by the SPI Chamber and the City of SPI.

Government Affairs

The Government Affairs Committee included Chairman **Alta Monroe** and active committee members *John Reed, Wanda Reyes-Rice, Darla Lapeyre, Darla Jones, Ramona Kantack Alcantara and Roxanne Ray.*

“Coffee and Conversations” speaker series continued for the 8th year. Designed to create opportunities for our Chamber members to meet and greet area leaders and public officials, the program is also a learning opportunity. The program is held in a casual setting, over coffee and pastries, and is limited to one hour. Meetings were held at *Kranzler* in November, December and January then moved to *Padre Island Brewing* when *Kranzler* owner **Sue Singer** closed *Kranzler* to relocate to Colorado to be nearer her family. The Chamber recognized Singer for her many years hosting Coffee and Conversations during the January 2017 event. The transition to *Padre Island Brewing* was seamless and attendance remained steady. Thanks go out to **Mark Haggemiller** for hosting us.

2017-18 **Coffee and Conversations** guest speakers were: *Pedro “Pete” Alvarez, TXDot Pharr Engineer; Devin Hotzell, Enbridge Energy/Valley Crossing Pipeline; Joe Vega, Cameron County Parks Director; SPI Chief of Police Randy Smith and Fire Chief Doug Fowler; and Captain Jim Pigg, SPI Beach Patrol.*

Our Chamber organized a **SPI City Council Candidate Forum** on October 16, 2017. Only the candidates running in contested races participated; they were Ken Medders, Jr. and Joel Melton. Candidates running unopposed were Dennis Stahl and Alita Bagley. An estimated 65 people were in attendance. Ramona Kantack Alcantara served as moderator, and Gayle Hood, along with Alta Monroe served as timers. In September 2018, planning began for the October 9, 2018 SPI City Council Candidate Forum.

During the past year the committee followed a variety of issues including: Cameron County/Hidalgo County MPO efforts; CCRMA SPI second access progress; federal tax reform; Island infrastructure improvements; school start date; EIS for the RGV Artificial Reef and local funding; LNG at the Port of Brownsville; immigration; NAFTA; Big River Steel at the Port of Brownsville; SPACEX; venue tax spending; cruise ship port of call feasibility; Port of Brownsville; rising cost of flood insurance and windstorm insurance; litigation exposure for franchises; elections; oil and gas impact on Texas economy; federal fishing regulations impacting local charter businesses; plastic straws; application to County for a strip club north of the SPI city limits; legal challenges to local plastic bag ban ordinance; and spring break.

Our Chamber sponsored a table at the **U.S. Senator John Cornyn “State of the Congress”** luncheon on December 1, 2017. President Roxanne Ray was honored to attend the pre-luncheon meet and greet

with Senator Cornyn. Others representing our Chamber were Mayor Pro-tem Paul Munarriz, Arnie Creinin, Jon Creinin, Dave Davis, Alta Monroe, Jules Wilk, Laurie Howell and Gayle Hood.

The Chamber issued **letters of support and resolutions** in regard to the following: Architectural Design approval for a sea turtle façade at a business located at Padre & White Sands; supported NAFTA through a sign on letter with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; to FERC and TCEQ expressing continued support for LNG development at the Port of Brownsville; Texas Department of Insurance opposing 10% rate increase to TWIA insurance; to TPWD supporting Phase 2 development of John Tompkins Park; to City of SPI supporting the SK8 park; to SPI EDC and CVA in support of the RGV Reef; in support of the Canadian Snowbird Visa Act; to TEA in support of PIISD Math Innovation Zone grant; to Senators Cruz and Cornyn regarding federal fisheries management; to U.S. Department of Transportation in support of Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport; to U.S. Congress, with the U.S. Chamber, in support of the Main Street Program; in support of Native Plant Center; to GLO for TPWD/RGV Reef; in support of City of SPI CMP Beach Access grant application; with U.S. Chamber, to Congress, in support of healthcare and tax reform.

The Chamber attended many **public workshops and events** including Shoreline Master Plan; Island Thoroughfare Plan; Drainage Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan. Staff also attended the TPWD Public meeting to gather input on the Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit Application regulations. Committee member Alta Monroe attended the RGV Seminar on the Bilateral Relationship between Mexico and the United States – NAFTA. Met with Lower Rio Grande Development Corp. about Explore RGV and Active Transportation Plan; attended Port of Brownsville – State of the Port luncheon; Port Isabel – State of the City luncheon; and the UTRGV Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development Open House.

The Chamber maintains an active membership with the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Texas Association of Business**. Both serve as active advocates for Texas business at all legislative levels. Our Chamber is also a member of the **Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives** and the **SPI Board of Realtors**. Both associations provide active representation on the state legislative front. Additionally, Roxanne Ray serves as an Advisory Board Member for the **Rio Grande Valley Partnership**.

Islanders

The Islanders Committee serves as Chamber Ambassadors and acts as hosts at Chamber member mixers, ribbon cuttings, anniversaries and open houses. Islanders also provide volunteer services for many Chamber and community events. The committee is chaired by **Cristin Howard**. Other committee members are *Alita Bagley, Jim Enholm, JoAnn Evans, Mark Haggemiller, Karla Scimeca, Lisa Graves, and Beverley Eymard*

During the past year Islanders organized and promoted seven **mixers and ribbon cuttings**, and attended two **groundbreakings** for member businesses. All new member mixers, ribbon cuttings, and groundbreakings are featured in the Chamber's Island Business Connection newsletter, and placed on the Chamber's social media pages. In addition to member events, Islanders attended a mixer at Kranzler, on November 14, 2017, to **honor outgoing Mayor Barry Patel** for his years of service to our community as Mayor and City Councilman, and Liz Money and Diane Denson's **25th Anniversary at Ship Shape**. Additionally, Islanders celebrated with Sherry Pindard at the **Rescue ME Resale's 6th Anniversary and Christmas Party**. Texas Chamber of Commerce Week was celebrated October 16-

20, 2017 with a series of email blasts and Facebook posts boasting the positive impact of Chambers throughout the State of Texas.

Through the **New Member Call Program**, Islanders visited approximately 44 new Chamber business members delivering a small gift and completing a brief questionnaire about the new member's experiences. It is a chance for Islanders to get acquainted with new businesses, and for the Chamber to receive feedback from our newest members.

The Islanders organized the 11th **"Shop the Island"** promotion in November/December 2017. **"Shop the Island"** promotes holiday shopping on South Padre Island by offering shoppers prize incentives. Shoppers registered for a \$500 shopping spree drawing at designated locations by showing their shopping receipts of \$20.00 or more. The more you shopped the more chances there were to win! This year the chamber received \$56,700 in receipts for this promotional event. The winner of the grand prize drawing held on December 21, 2017 was Trish Strickland from North Carolina. The national **Shop Small Business Saturday** was also integrated into the 2017 **"Shop the Island"**. The Chamber received a number of promotional Shop Small Business items which were distributed to retail businesses on the Island.

In February 2018, the Islanders organized and promoted the 2nd Annual **"Walk the Dock" at Sea Ranch Marina**. 16 Chamber businesses participated, and over 250 guests attended. In April 2018, the Islanders held a **"Member Showcase"** event at the Hilton Garden Inn Beach Resort with 72 members participating, and over 350 guests attended. These events were excellent opportunities for members and the community.

In conjunction with the City's Environmental Health Services Department, the Islanders' continued **The 5 Star Club** which recognizes Chamber member restaurants who score a 90 or above on the City's Environmental Health Services Department Inspection Report Card. The members are awarded a decal for display at their business, and are listed with all other recipients on the Chamber Website.

Junior Leadership Laguna Madre

Junior Leadership Laguna Madre is a nine-month program designed to increase awareness of community needs, opportunities, challenges and resources; and to develop the leadership concept of active involvement combined with integrity as an integral part of community responsibility. Class XIV was led by Chairman **Heather Scott** along with Steering Committee members Alita Bagley, Cecilia Castillo, Joy Hartung, Jimmy Vela and Dianna L. Harvill. Accompanied by Junior Leadership PIISD representative Victor Barrera, 19 of the 20 Port Isabel High School students graduated and received their Certificate of Completion and their silver cord during PI-ISD Award Night on April 30, 2018. 30 students will be participating in Class XV which began their year with a full-day Leadership Retreat on September 26, 2018 at the Port Isabel High School. The Junior Leadership program is managed by the Leadership Laguna Madre Steering Committee and all costs are covered by the Chamber's Leadership Program.

Laguna Madre Education Foundation

The Foundation was organized May 1, 1996 as a 501(c)3 non-profit by the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce *for charitable and educational purposes, to include but not limited to, leadership training and fundraising to provide scholarships.* The Foundation encompasses both the

Chamber's Leadership Laguna Madre Program and the Chamber's Scholarship Program. The South Padre Island Board of Directors is designated as the Foundation's members and the members elect four (4) Chamber members to serve as **Directors of the Foundation**. **Alta Monroe, Mickey Furcron, Diane O'Leary and Ginny Ossanna** served as the Foundation Directors for 2017-18.

The Directors oversee the activities of the Foundation and administer the student scholarship program. The first student scholarship of \$1000 was awarded in 1996 to then high school senior Daniel Salazar, now General Manager at the Isla Grand Beach Resort. **Through 2018, a total of \$279,250 has been awarded to 133 graduates of Port Isabel High School.** 2018 scholarship recipients were: Jasmine Bautista, Victor Brian Chavez, Caitlin O'Leary, Susana Torres, and Nisa Luna.

The Foundation's scholarship program relies upon the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce and our members for funding. The Foundation itself does no separate fundraising. For two years The SPI Wahoo Classic Fishing Tournament has supported the scholarship program with generous cash donations and in 2018 donated \$3,000. The future of both the leadership and scholarship programs is completely dependant upon the ability to cover the costs with future funding.

Other Committees

Several important single purpose committees are called into action throughout the Chamber year.

By-Laws Committee – Comprised of Chamber directors with expertise in organizational bylaws, this committee is appointed by the Chairman when there is a need to review, update and propose revisions to the Chamber's by-laws. No meetings were held in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Recognition Awards Selection Committee – The 2018 committee was comprised of Chamber directors *Jimmy Hawkinson, Kyra Hudson and Alta Monroe*. This committee is appointed annually by the Board of Directors to select deserving recipients for the Chamber's various leadership recognition awards in accordance with established criteria.

Nominating Committee – The 2018 committee was comprised of *Courtney Hayden, Jimmy Hawkinson and Kyra Hudson*. This committee is appointed annually by the Board of Directors to make nominations for election to the Board of Directors based on vacancies and needs of the Chamber. They also make recommendations for the selection of the Chamber Executive Committee.

Events

Gala and Scholarship Fundraiser, November 18, 2017

The 28th annual gala, "*A Little Night Music*" was the first major event of the Chamber's fiscal year. Hosted at the **Isla Grand Beach Resort**, guests enjoyed a wonderful Chef's Buffet, which featured various serving stations along with dancing and music provided by **The Agency**. Special wine arrangements were provided by **Ben's Liquor, Fine Wine and Tobacco**. Guests had the opportunity throughout the evening to bid on numerous auction items in the silent auction. In addition to being a fabulous night out, the evening activities raised money to fund the Chamber's program of work and Laguna Madre Education Foundation scholarship program. Thanks to the community's support of the annual Gala, over \$279,000 in scholarships have been awarded to area students since 1996.

Committee members for the 2017 event were **Chairman - Courtney Hayden**, *Alita Bagley, Beverley Eymard, JoAnn Evans, Bea Johnson, Lesa Labar, Ginny Ossanna, and Karla Scimeca*. Countless others were involved with donations, sponsorships and decorating.

2017 Gala Table Sponsors included: American Diving/The Original Dolphin Watch, The Arts Group, Cameron County Insurance Center, City of South Padre Island, Dennis and Anna Stahl, First Community Bank, First National Bank-SPI, Furcron, Inc. REALTORS® and Property Mgmt. Co., Hilton Garden Inn Beach Resort, Isla Grand Beach Resort, La Copa Inn & Suites, La Quinta Inn & Suites Beach Resort, Law Office of E. Pena & Associates, Marcello's Italian Restaurant & Bar on the Piazza, Port of Brownsville, Rio Grande LNG, Rio Grande Valley Abstract Co., Shallow Sport Boats, Sisters Interiors, South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau and South Padre Island Economic Development Corp.

Planning for the 2019 event began in June and will be held May 4, 2019 at the Hilton Garden Inn Beach Resort featuring "Vegas on the Beach" with Casino games, music, dancing, and heavy hors d'oeuvres.

Ladies Kingfish Tournament, August 10-12, 2018

The Chamber's largest event, *LKT*, celebrated its 37th anniversary. 2018 saw a decrease in participation. Staff and committee members feel this decrease was a result of the early school start date and sales tax free shopping weekend. Several schools throughout the state, and locally, returned to school on August 13, 2018. A total of 186 lady anglers in 72 boats hit the Laguna Madre Bay and the Gulf of Mexico fishing for seven species of fish. 67 anglers weighed in seeking the chance to be named bay or offshore grand champion.

This signature Island event was planned by committee chair **Javier Ch. Garza** and committee members *Kyra Hudson, Charla Givens, Diane Johnson, Janie Petty, Sharon Taylor, Jon Wilson, Patty Johnson, and Tommie Elium, along with Chamber staff*.

Registration and awards activities were held at the South Padre Island Convention Centre, which generously donated Convention Centre space and support staff to our event. The Shrimp Haus Restaurant with *David Clark* and staff took on all catering responsibilities. Sea Ranch Marina provided dock space for weigh-in at SouthPoint Marina in Port Isabel. A complete list of winners is on the Chamber website www.spichamber.com.

The **Sand Mountain Band** provided music during Friday night registration. The Committee decided to bring the Team Spirit Contest back this year, with audience applause deciding the winner, which was gauged by a sound meter loaned by the SPI Police Department.

For the 13th year, marine and nature artist *Dinah Bowman* was commissioned to create unique event logo art, and to design and produce one-of-a-kind awards for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th places in seven different species, bay grand champion and offshore grand champion. Each of the thirty framed art trophies was sponsored by Chamber members and other area businesses.

Trophy sponsors included: American Diving, Captain Bryan Ray Fishing Adventures, Coral Reef Lounge, First Community Bank-SPI, Fudge Consulting, PLLC, Furcron, Inc. REALTORS® and Property Management, Gabriella's Italian Grill & Pizzeria, Harbor Street Laser Wash, Inertia

Tours, Isla Grand Beach Resort, Island Cinema, Jordan Luera, Kay Young Ezell - RE/MAX 1st Choice, Laguna BOB, Louie's Backyard, Lynn and Gary Tate, Mike and Patty Johnson, Padre Elite Team - RE/MAX Elite, Padre Island Brewing Co, PI/SPI Guides Association, Red Mango South Padre Island, Renee's of South Padre, Rio Grande Valley Abstract, Sea Ranch Restaurant, Shallow Sport Boats, Sharon Taylor, Ship Shape, South Padre Marie, Tequila Sunset, White Lumber and Yummies Bistro.

For the 17th year, the tournament weigh-in was held at Sea Ranch Marina at SouthPoint. *Javier Ch. Garza* headed up the Dock Crew and served as Dock Master. *Jon Wilson* served as Assistant Dock Master, and provided invaluable assistance with dock setup. Over **thirty volunteers** worked from 10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Saturday to pull together a first class tournament weigh-in. With the assistance of Rental World, for the 14th year, comfortable and covered dockside seating was arranged for spectators, and was again an overwhelming success. Laguna Madre Youth Center provided refreshment concessions.

Again this year the LKT Committee arranged for angler event bags, which were stuffed with many great items donated by local businesses, bearing the LKT Chamber logo along with the logos of all our important event sponsors. **Event sponsors** were: **Title Sponsors** La Copa Inn & Suites/La Quinta Inn & Suites/Hilton Garden Inn, Rio Grande LNG, Shallow Sport of Texas/The Sportsman, South Padre Island Convention & Visitors Bureau and Valley Crossing Pipeline; **Gold Sponsors**, Rental World, and Sea Ranch II at SouthPoint; **Bronze Sponsors** Louie's Backyard and Palms Resort & Café on the Beach, and **Friend Sponsors** A Clean Portoco, Anglers Marine Center, Blackbeards', Blue Marlin Supermarket, CAS-CPA, LLC, Cameron County Insurance Center, Inc., Central Texas Concealed, Core Business Solutions, First National Bank-SPI, Padre Island Brewing Co., Pirate's Landing Fishing Pier, Republic Services, Rio Grande Valley Premium Outlets, Schlitterbahn Beach Resort, Sea Ranch Restaurant, and Tequila Sunset. This year's **Awards Lunch Sponsor** was Furcron, Inc. REALTORS® and Property Management.

Sharon Taylor and her crew of volunteers did an extraordinary job selling LKT logo and promotional items this year. Event shirts displaying the commissioned event artwork of Dinah Bowman were sold along with caps and visors.

At registration, and at awards, we welcomed some great vendors. **Dinah Bowman Studio & Gallery, Flickers & Flutters, Laguna Lifestyle, Premier Laser & Aesthetics, Rio Grande LNG, Scentsy, SPI Leather, The Sportsman, Walk for Women and Young Living Essential Oils** promoted their businesses, and sold merchandise to attendees. Sponsors promoted their businesses by providing banners which lined the perimeter of the convention hall.

For the 9th year our Awards Brunch was sponsored to help defray costs, and for the fifth year **Furcron, Inc. REALTORS® and Property Management** graciously offered to be the sponsor. Chamber staff member *Alita Bagley* served as our event emcee for awards and dockside.

An event raffle was again included in this year's tournament and added extra fun for the anglers and another fundraising activity for our Chamber. Many great items were donated and our vendors donated the majority of the raffle items.

Coastal Winds Classic Golf Tournament - June 2, 2018

The Chamber's newest event, the Coastal Winds Classic Golf Tournament was the first venture into the golf tournament world in 15 years. Held at the **South Padre Island Golf Club**, a shotgun start at 9:00 a.m. kicked off the 4-person scramble with 14 teams for a total of 56 players.

The event was planned by committee members *Dan Gutierrez, Jim Harvill, Darla Jones, Johnny Martinez, SPI Golf Club representatives Jack Blundell and Don Lackey, and SPI Chamber staff Roxanne Ray and Dianna Harvill.*

Participants had a "shot" at a \$25,000 cash Hole-In-One prize on hole #3, along with prizes on all other par 3 holes, all sponsored by **AEP Texas**, and monitored by *Kyra Hudson and Roxanne Ray*. Players also competed for Closest to the Pin, Straightest Drive, and Longest Drive for Men and Women prizes. Trophies were presented to each team member for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Trophy Sponsors were **Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport, Captain Bryan Ray Fishing Adventures, Gabriella's Italian Grill & Pizzeria, Gallery Built Homes, Inertia Tours, Pearl South Padre, Rio Grande Valley Abstract Co., Inc. Schlitterbahn Beach Resort, Shallow Sport Boats, South Shore Automotive, SPI Economic Development Corp., and Toucan Graphics.**

The day started with volunteers *Dolly Castillo, Susan Hill and Kyra Hudson* checking in participants, handing out goody bags filled with items donated by **Captain Bryan Ray Fishing Adventures, City of South Padre Island, Emma L. Gavito, DDS, Furcron, Inc. REALTORS® and Property Mgmt. Co., John Haywood - Attorney, Neighbors Emergency Center, SPI Convention & Visitors Bureau, Susan Brown - RE/MAX Elite, and Weddings at the Queen**, and selling participants mulligan tickets, the opportunity for the team to take a Tiger Wood Drive, and tickets for the Bucket Raffle.

As players made their way around the 18-holes of play they observed Hole Sponsors signs donated by **American Diving / Original Dolphin Watch, Bay-B-Boomers Bar-N-Grill, Ben's Liquor, Blackbeards' Restaurant, Blue Bay Inn, Blue Marlin Supermarket, Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport, Emma Gavito, DDS, First National Bank - SPI, Gabriella's Italian Grill & Pizzeria, Gallery Built Homes, Hilton Garden Inn, Hino Gas Sales, HMG Mortgage, Isla Grand Beach Resort, Jim's Pier, Karla's Katering, Louie's Backyard, Marcus D Enterprises Pool Service & Repair, Oak Tree Grill at SPI Golf Club, Olga Vega Carter - RE/MAX 1st Choice, Padre Elite Team - RE/MAX Elite, Pearl South Padre, Rhino Linings, Rio Grande Valley Abstract Co., Inc., Sapphire Condominiums, Schlitterbahn Beach Resort, Sea Ranch Restaurant, Shallow Sport Boats, South Shore Automotive, SPI Chamber of Commerce, SPI Economic Development Corp., SPI Rentals, LLC, Suites at Sunchase, Susan Brown - RE/MAX Elite, Tom & Jerry's, Weddings at the Queen, and Yummies Bistro.**

Following the tournament everyone returned to the Oak Tree Grill for a wonderful lunch sponsored by **SpawGlass**, and to find out who the winners were.

Media

Social Media

The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce continues to utilize Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Google+ to interact with members and people interested in our Island. Search us, like us, and share with others!

Newsletter

The Business Leader is sent each Friday and is also available on the Chamber's Facebook page. This informative newsletter highlights Chamber meetings and events, ribbon cuttings and mixers, items of interest for businesses, job postings, member "Spotlight", member events and community events.

Chamber members have the opportunity to attach their promotional flyer to the emailed newsletter, at no cost, and it is a great way for members to promote and highlight their business and services not only to other Chamber members, but to thousands of potential customers who visit the Chamber website.

Website www.spichamber.com

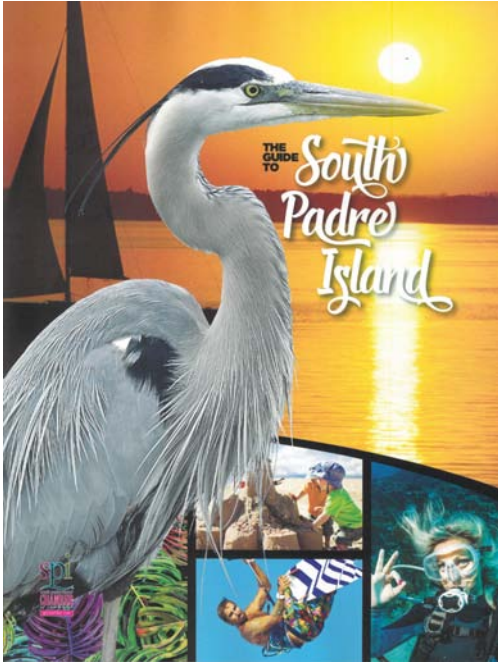
Chamber staff continues to work with members regarding the many benefits available through the membership software purchased in March 2015. All information entered into member records automatically populates into the website. The Board of Directors approved the upgrade of the website in January 2018, and Chamber staff worked with the new platform to design a new fresher more modern looking and operating site. The new platform allows more control by staff, and went online in March 2018. Members will continue to have their own personal login and can add features to their listing such as job postings and events. With these changes the Chamber website continues to be a reliable and up-to-date information source for members, visitors and those wishing to relocate to South Padre Island.

Visitors making telephone inquiries are regularly referred to our website to shop for services. The home page provides a snap shot look at important upcoming events, and training, sponsorship and networking opportunities, as well as a complete planning calendar of all scheduled meetings at the Chamber. Links are also available on the site to City of South Padre Island, SPI CVB and SPI EDC, as well as many helpful links for both residents and visitors such as Texas Beach Watch and tide charts.

A full-color 3-D flip version of the *Guide to South Padre Island* is also available on our website along with a click through to allow the request of a hard copy.

The website is under the direction of Dianna Harvill, Marketing/Business Services Director for the Chamber.

The Guide to South Padre Island



Since 2001, *The Guide to South Padre Island* has been produced in-house by the Chamber of Commerce Marketing/Business Services Director, Dianna L. Harvill. The 2018 *Guide* was 76-pages and was delivered on schedule in December of 2017. Copies of *The Guide* were delivered to all advertisers and Valley distribution points before Christmas.

Ads were sold in the 2018 *Guide* by Chamber staff to defray costs of creating and printing *The Guide*. Local graphic design company, *Toucan Graphics*, produced the majority of the ads, Chamber staff did the conceptual design and layout of the book, and the computer-generated layout of *The Guide*, was contracted out to Clarissa Creel in Corpus Christi. Printing of *The Guide* took place in San Antonio, Texas at *Shweiki Media*.

The number of copies was again increased from 75,000 to 100,000 through a partnership with the SPI Convention & Visitors Bureau. The SPI-CVB paid for the printing and shipping of the additional 25,000 copies for use in their marketing program. All 100,000 copies of *The Guide to South Padre Island* were printed and distributed on an international basis. All calls that come into the Chamber office and the South Padre Island Visitor Center requesting information about the Island received *The Guide*, as well as being available at both locations for visitors and residents. *The Guide* was also available in-room at many hotels/motels/condos on the Island, and mailed to Chambers and welcome centers around the state, including all entry points into Texas.

The Guide was distributed to travel agents, visitor centers and tour companies throughout the United States, as well as Europe, Mexico and Canada. The South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau used *The Guide* at trade shows attended throughout the year and mailed the additional 25,000 copies to requests received through their fulfillment house, and the South Padre Island Economic Development Corporation included *The Guide* in their relocation packet used for both individuals and businesses looking to locate on South Padre Island.

The Guide is easily obtainable online, in a full-color 3-D flip format, at the Chamber website www.spiChamber.com. With just a click of a button, the Chamber office continues to receive thousands of requests for *The Guide* from around the world.

Production of the 2019 *Guide to South Padre Island* began in May 2018, and ad sales were completed in September 2018 with a significant increase over the previous year. **Used for vacation planning, relocation purposes, new business development, and convention and conference development, *The Guide to South Padre Island* is the single most comprehensive and professionally produced promotional tool published for our community.** We look forward to unveiling the 2019 edition in December 2018.

Winter Discount Coupon Book

In 2017-2018, our Chamber, along with our Chamber members, published a very successful 10th Edition of our *SPI Chamber Winter Discount Coupon Book*. With design and printing assistance from Adrian and Stan Hulse, owners of *Toucan Graphics*, advertisers proved that Island visitors still love “a coupon discount”. The Chamber coordinated the production of 20,000 coupon books, which included 34 advertisers. The books were distributed by Chamber staff, with the assistance of Lili DeRousie and the staff at the SPI Visitors Center, during the period of November 2017 through early March 2018. Our SPI Convention and Visitors Bureau visitor surveys showed a high demand for coupon discounts, and our Chamber members are happy to provide those to our Island visitors.

Work on the 2018-2019 Winter Discount Coupon Book, 11th Edition, began in September 2018.

Other

Chamber Membership/Meetings

During the year, **47** new members joined our Chamber. As of September 30, 2018, our membership totaled **323** active members, **304** business members and **19** associate members.

The Chamber keeps our members updated through the weekly newsletter, email blasts, and frequent Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram posts. Additional opportunities are provided for our members with the Chamber's investment in state of the art membership software and mobile friendly website. The membership software offers our members a chance to enhance their website listing with photos and additional services description, post special deals and create job postings. Members can also purchase website banners or go really big with an ad placement on our homepage. Staff continues to actively promote full utilization by our members.

On October 25, 2017, at our **Annual Membership Meeting**, Chamber members gathered to reflect on our achievements. The 2018 meeting was held at **the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center with catering by Karla's Katering**. Written annual reports were distributed and annual recognition awards presented.

Jim Enholm, Sea Ranch Marina Harbor Master and active Chamber member, was recognized with the Chamber's 2017 **Directors' Award** for his support of the Chamber and as an outstanding volunteer in our community. He has served many years on our Islanders Committee and brought us the idea for our highly successful “Walk the Dock” chamber mixer. As a community volunteer Jim is an active Rotarian and regular volunteer at the SPI Birding and Nature Center. **Past recipients include: Tom O'Connell, Sharon Taylor, Rick Legere, Cynthia Sellers, Dan Stanton, Loraine Johnston, Darrell Mangham, Ginny Ossanna, David Clark, Tom Hansen, Liz Money, JoAnn Evans, Alta Monroe, Courtney Hayden, Guy Blatnik, Bob Friedman and Diane O'Leary.**

Charles Rogan, President at First National Bank South Padre Island, and Victor Barrera, Port Isabel High School Instructor, were each awarded the 2017 **Kukui Award** for their outstanding leadership as active Chamber members and community volunteers. First awarded in 2004, **past recipients include: Dianna Harvill, Shelton Coleman, Mary Ann Tous, Russell Judah, Liz Money, Alita Bagley, Bobby and Betty Vanzant, Guy Blatnik, Tim O'Leary, Alma McLeroy, Sue Singer, Joy Hartung, Javier CH Garza, Jody Hughes, Karla Scimeca and Chad Hart.**

The 2017 **Ambassador's Award** went to **Judith Beat, owners of Gaia's Flowers**, for her unwavering support of our Chamber, frequent attendance at chamber events and always putting in a good word about all the benefits of chamber membership. Judith has operated many different businesses over the past 20 plus years and all have been chamber members! First awarded in 2009, past Ambassador's Award recipients include **Bob Fudge, Jim Harvill, Bobby Vanzant, Anne Weiss, Candace Gray, Victor Baldovinos, Cristin Howard and Lesa Labar.**

The 2017 **Community Partner Award** went to **Blue Marlin Supermarket – Gary Meschi.** Community Partners are awarded for their extraordinary contributions to the success of our Chamber of Commerce, and their investment in our growing business community. First awarded in 2010, previous recipients include **South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, Brownsville South Padre International Airport, Sea Ranch Restaurant, Toucan Graphics, Point Isabel Independent School District, Hilton Garden Inn Beach Resort, and Shallow Sport Boats.**

In January 2018, the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce nominated Chamber member, **Bharat Barry Patel, owner of La Quinta, La Copa and Hilton Garden Inn on South Padre Island,** to the **Rio Grande Valley Walk of Fame.** Patel was inducted into the 2018 RGV Walk of Fame in honor of his life achievements in our area business community. **Previous Walk of Fame recipients include Troy Giles (2005), Richard Franke (2006), Robert N. Pinkerton, Jr. (2007), Jake Falgout (2008), Darrell Mangham (2009), Dan Stanton (2010), David Friedman (2011), Lynne Tate (2012), Bill Donahue (2013), Gary Meschi (2014), JoAnn Evans (2015), Mickey Furcron (2016) and Jimmy Parker (2017).**

Memberships/Contributions

In 2017-18, our Chamber held memberships in the following organizations, and our association with these organizations provided valuable business advocacy, information, and resources to our Chamber members: **Texas Association of Business, Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, SPI Board of Realtors, Rio Grande Valley Partnership, and the Better Business Bureau.**

Our Chamber also made contributions to many worthy organizations and events: **RGV Partnership 2017 Scholarship Golf Tournament; El Paseo Arts Foundation; PIISD student DECA program; Helping Our Heroes - Wounded Warriors/ALS Golf Tournament; Rotary Club Flag Program; SPI Birding and Nature Center HalloWings; Laguna Madre Youth Center; Laguna Madre Humane Society; Friends of Animal Rescue; Museums of Port Isabel; Sea Turtle Inc.; and SK8 Park.**

Many other members and Island based non-profit organizations benefited by the Chamber providing them with complimentary email blasts and Facebook announcements.