

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2011-2012



9/27/2012

97 Years in Business, 97 Years of Excellence

Established in 1915, the Laredo Chamber of Commerce is Laredo's and Webb County's longest running business organization. It is accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce with four stars.

Message from the Chairman of the Board

97 YEARS IN BUSINESS, 97 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



Dear Members and Friends:

2012 has been an exciting year. The nation will soon be engulfed in a presidential election. Our young men and women in the military are returning home to play a role in setting a new course for the country, as military conflicts abroad are brought to an end. And, albeit slowly, our economy is on its way to recovery.

This year, as Chairman of the Board of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce, I pledged to address a number of issues that I considered key in setting a course for our community. These included:

Collaboration – Working hand in hand with municipal government to present a united front.

Education – Collaborating with local schools to ensure that we prepare a solid labor force.

Governmental Affairs – Staying involved and promoting issues of importance to business.

Added Value – Guaranteeing services and benefits that make members' annual investments worthwhile.

Membership – Increasing membership, strength lies in numbers.

Accreditation – Securing the Chamber's reaccreditation – a badge of honor from the U.S. Chamber.

The Board of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce solidly endorsed the advancement of these issues. They, as me, understood the value of establishing goals and setting our sights on achievement of those goals. As my administration comes to a close I am happy to report that we have been successful in our endeavors. I thank you for your trust, participation and support.

Sincerely,

Wilfredo Martinez, Jr.

Wilfredo Martinez, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce is to provide vision and leadership to develop, promote and protect business; to encourage orderly development of business, people and infrastructure; and to be politically proactive to ensure the success of the area.

MEMBERSHIP

The Laredo Chamber ends this year with 675 members – 608 of these are business firms, 22 are individual memberships, 35 are Leadership Laredo alumni, and 10 are associate memberships. Approximately 90% of the membership is made up of business firms. As the economy moves on a road to recovery, so will the Chamber focus on strengthening its membership base. One assertion can be made as 2012 comes to a close – as representative of Laredo’s business community, the Chamber stands on solid ground.

ACCREDITATION

The Laredo Chamber of Commerce is fully accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Chambers are accredited under four possible categories – Accredited, Three-Star, Four Star, or Five-Star. The Laredo Chamber carries a Four-Star accreditation – one of only nine chambers in the state of Texas to hold such a distinction (it should be noted that there are only five chambers in the state that hold five-star accreditation). The U.S. Chamber reports that of nearly 7,000 chambers in the United States, only 223 are accredited. These represent 3% of all chambers across the country. This year, the Laredo Chamber worked diligently to renew its accreditation badge, and hopefully attain the 5th star. Results will be announced in November.

FINANCES

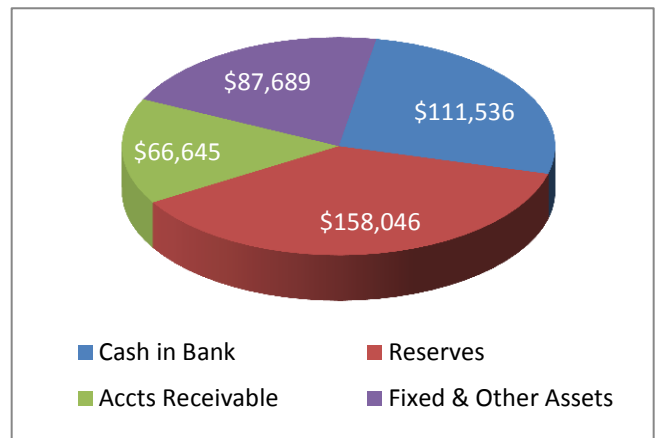
The Laredo Chamber’s membership fees constitute approximately 30% of its annual operating budget. In 2011-2012, dues billings (as of August 2012) totaled \$251,323. New accounts, which totaled 99, accounted for approximately \$31,600 of these.

- Total Assets for the Chamber as of the end of August 2012 stood at \$423,915.30
- Reserves total \$158,046.45
- The Laredo Chamber is completely debt-free from long-term liabilities

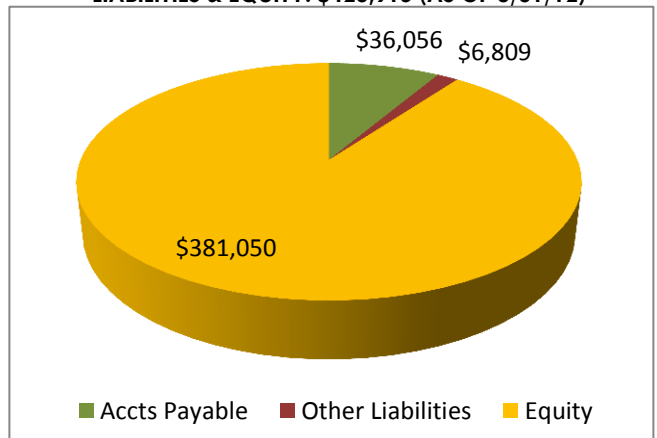
The Laredo Chamber of Commerce is ending the year in a healthy position financially – with YTD revenues (as of AUG) totaling \$624,455.87 and expenses totaling \$614,173.90. This is particularly noteworthy, given that the state of the economy during the year placed a strain on revenue sources for the Chamber. Revenues, which had been decreasing gradually in the last few years, rose slightly this year. However, so did the level of expenses. Nonetheless, thanks to measures taken by staff the Chamber was able to maintain a balanced budget.

In addition to the operations budget, which is completely funded from membership dues, sponsorships and services, the Chamber in 2011-2012 managed a contract for promotion of Webb County for \$125,000; and a contract with the City of Laredo for advertising and promotion of the Cola Blanca Hunting Contest totaling \$25,000. Furthermore, the Laredo Chamber of Commerce under an agreement with the City of Laredo CVB acted as fiscal and management agent for the Laredo Trade & Travel Center in Monterrey, Mexico during part of the year. This office, Laredo’s own extension office in Northern Mexico, operated with an annual budget of \$100,000.

ASSETS: \$423,915 (AS OF 8/31/12)



LIABILITIES & EQUITY: \$423,915 (AS OF 8/31/12)



DELIVERY OF SERVICES

This year, in delivering services to its membership and the community at large, your Laredo Chamber of Commerce -

Coordinated the “**Navidad en Laredo**” campaign in December of 2011, which promoted Laredo as shopping destination to residents of the Northern Mexico region. “Navidad en Laredo” was particularly noteworthy because it relied heavily on use of a specially designed website and social media to reach out to the market. Capitalizing on efforts initiated in 2010, the concentrated seven-week campaign resulted in a total of 9,230 visits to the promotional website, and the creation of a data base with over 1,480 contacts, making use of Google and social media.

Hosted the **Vision 2012 Economic Outlook Conference**, which, under the leadership of Ed Ramirez, Jr., brought together business leaders from the region and addressed issues of importance, such as the impact of the Eagle Ford Shale.

Total Revenue:	\$26,945.00
Expenses:	<u>\$ 9,299.67</u>
Net Gain:	\$17,645.33

Sponsored **Leadership Laredo 2011/2012** which celebrated its 26th anniversary and graduated 11 candidates under the guidance of Tonie Gamboa.

Expanded the **Youth Leadership** program with support of Leadership Laredo alumni. Originally organized under Communities in Schools, the Youth Leadership program was adopted by the Chamber in 2009 under the guidance of Juanita Solis and Leadership Laredo. Currently the program services youth from private and public schools 8th – 12th grade.

Put together an extremely successful **Distinguished Business Awards Banquet** that honored local entrepreneur **Ramon Diez-Barroso** as **2012 Business Person of the Year**. The event was organized under the leadership of Pepe Zuniga of BBVA Compass.

Total Revenue:	\$46,145.00
Expenses:	<u>\$12,485.62</u>
Net Gain:	\$33,659.38

Hosted the **16th Annual Family Chevrolet Bola Blanca Chamber Classic**, a first-class golf Tournament, co-chaired by Greg Morgensen of Family Chevrolet and John Ulbricht of Laredo Medical Center, that brought together 110 golfers and raised funds that will help support Chamber initiatives throughout the year.

Total Revenue:	\$37,660.00
Expenses:	<u>\$21,019.64</u>
Net Gain:	\$16,640.36

Delivered a second phase of the **Customer Service Seminars**, under the direction of Cassandra Wheeler and the Customer Service Committee. The group organized and delivered a total of 11 seminars completely free to Chamber members and public organizations. Over 200 individuals took advantage of this program. Twenty companies were recognized for participation in the entire series.

In addition, the committee hosted the annual **5-Star Customer Service Awards** banquet, where ten companies representing different industries were recognized as role models among their peers.

Total Revenue:	\$11,465.00
Expenses:	<u>\$ 9,357.49</u>
Net Gain:	\$ 2,107.51

Coordinated the **2011-2012 Cola Blanca Big Buck Contest**, (chaired this year by IBC's Fernando Santos). Cola Blanca continues to strengthen Laredo’s ranching and retail industry, and in the 2011 hunting season attracted hundreds, if not thousands, of hunters from other areas into our region. This year Cola Blanca registered 457 hunters and scored over 100 bucks. It should be noted, however, that over 50 % of the registered hunters were from outside the city of Laredo. Cola Blanca registered hunters from as far away as Virginia, Louisiana and Florida. The contest provides sport, but more importantly, it promotes Webb County as a visitor destination. The Awards Ceremony of Sept. 8, 2012, alone brought in over 100 hunters and families from out of town that made use of Laredo’s lodging industry.

Total Revenue:	\$110,235.00
Expenses:	<u>\$ 67,912.95</u>
Net gain;	\$ 42,322.05

Participated in the **U.S. Chamber's Federation Program**, which automatically gives small business members of the Chamber membership in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (at no additional cost!)

Maintained constant contact with the membership, through a modern electronic system of communication, which includes:

- **MarketPlace**, the weekly newsletter which provides the latest business information and “tips” to over 1,500 subscribers
- **A constantly evolving Chamber web site**, which provides visitors with access to a constantly updated Chamber directory and general information about Chamber activities;
- **And a new Cola Blanca web site**, launched in 2011, which not only promotes the Cola Blanca Big Buck Contest, but additionally promotes Webb County as a visitor destination.

EDUCATION

In the area of education the Chamber took on new initiatives as it continued to develop ongoing programs:

- This year the Laredo Chamber is in the process of launching an initiative with Laredo ISD and United ISD to conduct a study to identify areas where the business community can contribute to improve overall poor student performance. Over the last four months, a committee under the leadership of Javier Moctezuma and Pete Saenz has worked diligently to lay the groundwork for this project. You will hear much more in the near future.
- The Chamber's own Education Committee, guided by its chairman Mike Pescador, once again launched a program that takes business volunteers into the schools. The Laredo Scholars Program this year was able to reach 800 8th grade students at three UISD middle schools. The goal – to encourage them to stay in school and give them an idea of what the cost of living is.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Membership constitutes the backbone of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce. It is its lifeblood, its strength. Every year, as in other nonprofit organizations, the staff and volunteers labor with dedication to increase our numbers. It is not an easy task. Yet, it is one that cannot be set aside. Staff and volunteers dedicate countless hours to make new businesses part of our community

This year, the Chamber Bienvenidos Committee, our official ambassador group, headed by Jonathan Ruiz, hosted a total of 34 Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies, 2 “Business After Hours” receptions, and 4 Power Breakfasts, which have provide an excellent outlet to keep membership informed. This month, in fact, in an effort to deliver services to new and emerging markets, the Chamber delivered its first Power Breakfast in Spanish. In addition, the group partnered with the Chamber Board as 10 local companies were recognized as “Business of the Month.”

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

In External Affairs, this year the Laredo Chamber of Commerce was active in working with governmental leadership to promote a stronger business-friendly environment. This year, the Chamber took an active role in identifying and advancing issues of importance to this community. To do this the Chamber has done the following:

- Traveled with a City of Laredo delegation in their annual visit to Washington, DC, and visited with our State congressional delegation as well as federal

agency representatives to promote the Chamber's legislative agenda

- Testified in front of the House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security to voice concerns regarding the needs at our port of entry
- Met with The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce in advance of the upcoming legislative session to identify legislative priorities
- Participated in the Council for the Americas' Roundtable which sought to identify problems of infrastructure at the border
- Under the leadership of Javier Garza, continued the thrust to establish direct air service between Laredo and Mexico City
- Took the lead in working with legislators and in instituting a billboard campaign to present a positive image for our community, damaged unfortunately by events in northern Mexico
- Reinforced a partnership with the Port of Corpus Christi and established ties with Port San Antonio exploring new ways for regional promotion
- Reinvigorated ties with the Chamber of Nuevo Laredo (CANACO) and its president Said Galindo

Keep in mind that in order to advance these issues properly, we are aware of the need to keep the public sector informed. The Laredo Chamber at every step has sought the support of governmental allies, including:

- Congressman Henry Cuellar, Congressman for Dist. 28 in Washington, DC
- Mexican Consul General Miguel Angel Isidro
- U.S. Consul General Donald Heflin, and the newly arrived David Zimov
- At the state level, State Representatives Richard Raymond, Ryan Guillen and State Senator Judith Zaffirini
- ... and across the border, Benjamin Galvan Gomez, *alcalde* of Nuevo Laredo

Within the private sector, the Chamber continues to maintain a strong presence at the State and National levels through the involvement of its staff. Chamber president/CEO Miguel Conchas is active as a representative in –

- The U.S. Chamber CCC100, a committee representative of 100 select chambers across the country
- The U.S. Chamber's Transportation Infrastructure Logistics Committee, an advisory committee which plays a vital role in an industry of great value to local industry
- The Board of Directors of the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC).

2011-2012 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wilfredo Martinez, Jr.	Chairman of the Board
Jose A. Palacios, Jr.	Chairman Elect
Javier Moctezuma	Treasurer
Ed Ramirez, Jr.	Past Chairman of the Board
John Ulbricht	Council Chair
Cassandra Wheeler	Council Chair
David Newman	Council Chair
Catalina Zaragoza	Council Chair
Miguel A. Conchas	President/CEO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS**TERM -- OCT. 1, 2009 – SEPT. 30, 2012**

Pablo Arenaz	Texas A&M Int. University
Lupita R. Canales	A.R. Canales Intl. Brokers Inc.
Reynaldo Godines	Reynaldo Godines, MD
Bill Green	Laredo Morning Times
Dan Hastings, Jr.	Daniel B. Hastings, Inc.
Judy Martinez.	Doctors Hospital
Greg Morgensen	Family Chevrolet
Federico 'Kiko' Trevino	Southern Distributors Co. Inc.
Bob Zachariah	La Quinta Inn
Catalina Zaragoza	Molina Healthcare of Texas

TERM -- OCT. 1, 2010 – SEPT. 30, 2013

Alfonso Arguindegui	Arguindegui Oil
A.B. Barrera	PMDG Marketing Comm.
Chendo Carranco	Carranco & Lawson
Horacio De Leon	City of Laredo
Matt Gibson	Image Shaping
Willie Martinez, Jr.	IBC
Javier S. Moctezuma	Laredo Federal Credit Union
Ed Ramirez, Jr.	4-R Minerals, LTD
Adelaido 'Lalo' Uribe	Individual Member

STAFF

Miguel A. Conchas	President/CEO
Miriam Castillo	Director of Special Projects
Elisa Zubeldia	Special Projects Coordinator
Vanessa Garcia	Membership Coordinator
Brizzy San Miguel	Payroll & Accts. Manager
Lupita Vogel	Asst. to the President
Karina Flores	Receptionist

2012-2013 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jose A. Palacios, Jr.	Chairman of the Board
Javier Moctezuma	Chairman Elect
John Ulbricht	Treasurer/Vice Chair
Wilfredo Martinez, Jr.	Past Chairman of the Board
Cassandra Wheeler	Council Chair
David Newman	Council Chair
Catalina Zaragoza	Council Chair
Susana M. Valencia	Council Chair
Mario Pena	Council Chair
Miguel A. Conchas	President/CEO

TERM -- OCT. 1, 2011 – SEPT. 30, 2014

Juan Carranza	Carrel Forwarding
Blackstone Dilworth	San Isidro Development
Viviana Frank	Streets of Laredo Mall
Javier Garza	Former Chairman
Belinda Guerra-Meurer	Guerra Communications
David Killam	Killam Oil Co.
Danielle D. Marasco	McDonald's
David Newman	B.P Newman Investments
Mario Pena	IBC
John Ulbricht	Laredo Medical Center

CHAIRMAN APPOINTEES - TERM OCT. 1, 2011 TO SEPT. 30, 2012

Hermenegildo Gonzalez	ALFA
Natalie Hernandez	Falcon Int. Bank
Susana M. Valencia	BBVA Compass Bank
Joe Palacios, Jr.	Texas Community Bank
Jonathan Ruiz	Staff Connection
Cristy L. Swisher	Swisher Martin Realty
Cassandra Wheeler	TAMIU

BOARD OF DIRECTORS**OCT 1, 2012 TO SEP 30, 2015**

Pablo Arenaz	Texas A&M Int. Univ.
Drew Claes	Southern Distributing Co.
Hermenegildo Gonzalez	ALFA
Natalie Hernandez	Falcon Int. Bank
Judy Martinez	Doctors Hospital
Susana M. Valencia	BBVA Compass Bank
Jose A. Palacios, Jr.	Texas Community Bank
Jonathan Ruiz	Staff Connections
Cristy Swisher	Swisher Martin Realty
Cassandra Wheeler	Texas A&M Int. University



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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