

Business

Above and beyond for Pink

Local businesses get involved with TETWP in unique ways

By David Salcido
Las Cruces Bulletin

When it comes to community involvement, nothing beats the way local businesses come together in support of New Mexico State University Aggies Are Tough Enough To Wear Pink.

Every year, sponsors of the weeklong event organize high-profile receptions, dinners, galas, auctions and fashion shows that have become pivotal to the success of the cause in Las Cruces. But what about those businesses that paint the town pink in their own uniquely creative ways?

"I think it's very interesting that there is such a variety of grassroots efforts that local business people and organizations dream up on their own," said Rick Nezzar, event coordinator for TETWP. "They're not solicited by the Pink committee, they come to us with these really great ideas."

Leading the charge on innovation is Biad Chili Co., which, for the second year in a row, is releasing its "Tough Book of Green Chile Recipes" cookbook. Made up of recipes sent in by chileheads from all over the country, which are then reviewed by a professional chef who selects the 75 top

entries, the cookbook generated more than \$18,000 for the cause last year through the company's website, at www.biadchili.com.

"Just like last year, proceeds from the sale of the 2013 cookbook will be donated to NMSU Aggies Are Tough Enough To Wear Pink," said owner Chris Biad. "It's our way of contributing to what the pink volunteers do every year."

Not to be outdone, Steinborn & Associates Real Estate organizes an internal campaign in which the company's agents are challenged to contribute, then match the funds raised. According to Morgan McGinley, director of marketing for the brokerage, 100 percent of the money raised goes to TETWP. Last year's goal was \$12,000 and they ended up bringing in \$13,900. This year, the goal is \$13,000.

"On Tuesday, Sept. 17, we kicked off our third annual drive and by the end of the day, we had already brought in a combined \$5,220 worth of donations," McGinley said. "Every year, so far, we've surpassed the goal that we've set, because of the generosity of the teams."

In an update received on See Pink on page B2



John and Amy Hummer hold the goal poster for the 2013 Steinborn & Associates Real Estate TETWP challenge. The brokerage met its \$13,000 goal after two weeks and is continuing its fundraising efforts through Saturday, Oct. 19.

Local restaurateurs honored

La Posta de Mesilla owners Tom and Jerean Hutchinson given award

By David Salcido
Las Cruces Bulletin

It's already a well-known fact in these parts that Las Cruces has some of the best Mexican food restaurants in the country, if not the entire planet.

Maybe it's the proximity to both the international border with Mexico and Hatch, the "Chile Capitol of the World," but the secret is slowly seeping out and the rest of the country is finally catching up with what denizens of the Mesilla Valley have always known.

So, it should come as no surprise that, for the second year in a row, the owners of a locally owned restaurant have been named Restaurateurs of the Year by the New Mexico Restaurant Association.

On hand to accept their award Monday, Sept. 23, at the 2013 Hospitality Industry Awards in Albuquerque, were Tom and Jerean Hutchinson, owners of La Posta de Mesilla.

See Hutchinson on page B2



Tom and Jerean Hutchinson, proprietors of La Posta de Mesilla, display the award for Restaurateurs of the Year they received Monday, Sept. 23, at the New Mexico Restaurant Association awards, held in Albuquerque.

Pink

Continued from page B1

Tuesday, Oct. 1, McGinley announced that the 2013 goal had been surpassed with \$13,020 raised to date.

New this year, local entrepreneur Marci Dickerson has put together a promotion in partnership with Budweiser called "Pints for Pink," in which a special pink version of Woodchuck Cider has been created and will be sold at The Game Sports Bar & Grill, the M FIVE Martini Grill and Hurricane Alley. Not only will the entire proceeds of each sale go to TETWP, Dickerson has challenged other local restaurants and establishments to stock the pink cider and donate a portion of the proceeds to the cause.

"I think this is a great way to get the community involved," Dickerson said. "It's really important for the people who live and prosper in this community to give back and participate. The fact that all the money stays in New Mexico for research and much of that research is being conducted

at NMSU, to me, is so special and so very important. We are happy to participate on a higher level."

Allen Theatres also continues a tradition for the third year by selling special extra large tubs of popcorn, emblazoned with the Susan B. Komen Foundation ribbon, at its concession stands, with \$3 from each sale going to TETWP. In addition, the theater sells \$1 donation cards throughout the month of October that will be displayed in the lobby.

"Our normal large tubs are 130 ounces, but these special tubs are 170 ounces, so you're really getting a great deal," said Heather Gandy, director of concessions and promotions at Allen Theatres. "It's just while supplies last and in every community where we have theaters, but the cards will run for the entire month. The reason we do it is because we have a loyal customer base and this is an easy way for them to feel they are part of the community and help those with cancer. It's something I look forward to doing every year."

Two new businesses in town have also jumped on the big pink bandwagon. Only open since mid-July, the

Tin can

Continued from page B1

There's not much you can do about a bad product, except maybe rethink your business goals, whereas a great marketing campaign is an area you have a lot of control over.

It's a good thing, too, because according to a recent study conducted by Small Business Trends, more than 90 percent of small businesses are dedicating time to networking online and over 78 percent believe that using social networks is just as important as networking in person.

If that's true, you'd better dust off the old imagination, or find somebody whose creativity hasn't been stunted by too many hours spent staring at his or her telephone. Good marketing campaigns don't just happen. They're still a rarity and widely prized by those who understand dynamic and entertaining writing and visuals are key.

Here's another thing to consider. Just because you've got a great product doesn't mean that what you're saying, 16 tweets a day and 70 Facebook postings a month, is what your audience wants to hear.

It's not enough to keep shoving your product into people's faces, because, let's face it, you're up against some fierce competition. Most people's feeds are cluttered with pictures of pets, babies, culinary embarrassments and George Takei. Your coffee-scented wind widgets don't really stand a chance, unless you remember the three factors that make for great social media content:

Keep it informative: Dust devil droppings may not be sexy and some may feel they're downright disgusting, but are there applications that can be shared with your potential customers? Think about it. It's not enough to get people to buy your product, you've got to show

them what they would get out of the experience. Did you know you could use dust devil droppings to remove baked in armpit stains? No, I did not! Click!

Keep it entertaining: Most people are online because their lives are boring. They want desperately to be entertained and to find something that they can send to their friends in the hopes of entertaining them and, in the process, make themselves appear wittier than they actually are. A short video of a mouse juggling your droppings will probably get a lot more hits and shares than the standard sales pitch, "Get dung here!"

Keep it classy: Contrary to what you might believe, quality is still a consideration in the minds of many consumers. Blasting out expletives might be fine if what you're selling is rudeness or the latest edition of the Urban Dictionary, but if it's the high-end world of exotic whirling wingding leavings, you'd better know how to polish your words to a high-intensity shine that will dazzle your customers with brilliance, politely and inoffensively.

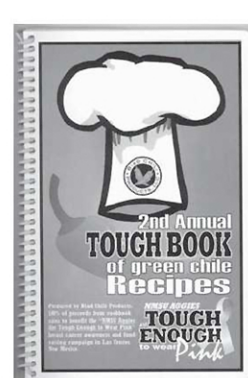
Remember, unless you've been trained on Madison Avenue or have the innate sensibilities of a Dorothy Parker, an Oscar Wilde or a George Takei, you're probably not going to be able to come up with a pithy post every single day. If this is the case, opt for quality over quantity. Forget what the experts say about the importance of endless content and give the rest of us a break.

Only post when you have something of worth to say. Inform me. Entertain me. Enchant me with your cleverness. That will go a long way toward making me take an interest in what you're trying to sell, whether I need it or not. Who knows, I might even tell my friends about your java-scented meadow muffins. With or without the tin can.

Dunkin' Donuts at 2527 N. Main St. has joined the campaign with a special offer on travel coffee mugs, contributing \$5 from every sale to TETWP and offering free coffee refills throughout the month of October.

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, Sweet Ceci's at 901 E. University Ave., which has only been open since March, is decking out its salespeople in pink aprons and bows, setting out the pink spoons and sprinkles and setting up a big pink TETWP jar for donations. David and Rhonda Masters, the owners of the shop, will match the amount in the donation jar at the end of the month.

"This is great stuff," Nezzar said. "You go from a chile farmer who produces a cookbook, to a real estate company that challenges its agents, to a franchise that hasn't even been open for 90 days yet and they're already becoming a part of the community by offering pink coffee mugs. Tough Enough To Wear Pink has become so widespread and almost universally accepted that it motivates people on their own to get creative and think of their own ways to be involved. It's just fantastic."



For the third year in a row, Allen Theatres is going pink with extra large tubs of popcorn bearing the Susan B. Komen Foundation logo, which can be sold separately or in a premiere combo. For the second year in a row Biad Chili Co. is putting out its "Tough Book of Green Chile Recipes" cookbook, featuring 75 of the best recipes sent in by chileheads from all over the country. \$3 of each popcorn purchase and 100 percent of the cookbook proceeds go to New Mexico State University Aggies Are Tough Enough To Wear Pink.

Hutchinson

Continued from page B1

"This is an award that we share with our entire staff," Jerean Hutchinson said. "We have 110 great employees and it's a tribute to them as well." "There are a lot of deserving people in this state," Tom Hutchinson added. "There are a lot of good operators that do a lot of good things for their communities and we're just fortunate that it was our turn."

In existence since 1946, the NMRA promotes the food service industry in New Mexico and represents more than 1,000 member restaurants, which are also dual members of the National Restaurant Association. The Restaurateur of the Year award is the NMRA's highest honor.

What may come as a surprise is that the Hutchinsons were nominated for this award by competitors in their field, Jerry Harrell, general manager of Double Eagle – whose owner Buddy Ritter was last year's award winner – and Ed Linderman, Las Cruces franchise owner of Village Inn, Applebees and the Corner Bakery. Tom Hutchinson doesn't really view it as a competition.

"When we talk about Ed and Jerry, we're really talking about peers," he said. "We don't even see them as competitors. Sure, we have different restaurants, we offer products at different prices, but the reality is, we're all very respectful of what each has accomplished over the years. Both Ed and Jerry are very deserving past award winners."

The Hutchinsons' restaurant, La Posta de Mesilla, is a landmark in the Mesilla Valley, having been in existence since September 1939, when Jerean Hutchinson's great aunt Katy Griggs Camuñez began serving food made from family recipes in the pre-Civil War adobe that had previously served as the Butterfield Stagecoach Line stop and hotel.

Boasting legendary patrons such as Billy the Kid, Kit Carson, Pancho Villa, President Ulysses S. Grant, and Gen. Douglas McArthur, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

As all-encompassing as that history may be, it's La Posta's menu – made up of tried-and-true family recipes which have been handed down for more than 100 years – combined with decades of local relationships that are the real secrets to the Hutchinsons' success in the Mesilla Valley.

"We have relationships with Chavez farms, off Shalem Colony Road, going back over 40 years," Jerean Hutchinson said. "That's where we still get our red chile, which we are famous for. We've gotten our green chile from Hatch down to the Biad farms for probably the last 40, 50 years. We've even found a way to use Mesilla Valley pecans. We believe in supporting our local industries."

Because of this long-standing tradition of excellence and the Hutchinsons' dedication to preserving both the culture and the history of Mesilla's most famous landmark, La Posta de Mesilla and its owners have received dozens of community awards, as well as numerous national honors, over the years.

It was recently named one of the Top 10 Great Mexican Restaurants Across the USA by USA Today and was listed as one of New Mexico's culinary treasures, "that have stood the test of time," by the New Mexico Tourism Department.

To celebrate these accomplishments and others like them, the NMRA awards ceremony took place at the Route 66 Hotel and Casino in Albuquerque, where Gov. Suzana Martinez was on hand to present the award to the Hutchinsons.

That same evening, another Las Cruces resident, Collette Caskie, was given the Front of the House Employee Excellence Award. Caskie works at a relative newcomer to the fine dining landscape of Las Cruces, De La Vegas Pecan Grill & Brewery.

"I think it says a lot for the caliber of the restaurants in southern New Mexico," Jerean Hutchinson said. "I think we rival any restaurant in the state and the country."

"It's wonderful to share this year's honor with De La Vegas. It shows we, as a city, continue to have a lot to offer."

“ This is an award that we share with our entire staff. ”

JEREAN HUTCHINSON, owner, La Posta de Mesilla

Off the market



David Salcido
On second thought ...

A growing topic that seems to be on everybody's lips these days is social media marketing.

For those who are still living in 2003, better known as the dark ages, social media marketing is the way that businesses try to leverage attention and sales by using existing social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Linked In, etc. In a sense, it takes grassroots marketing to its most desperate and onerous extreme.

Why? Because if you believe the hype, you know that without a solid, on-going social media marketing campaign, you might as well be selling dust devil droppings out of a coffee tin on a dirt road somewhere southeast of Deming. The logical conclusion, therefore, is that with the aforementioned campaign you can sell almost anything, even those caffeinated nugatory nuggets, with or without the tin can.

Or so the experts would like us to believe.

The simple truth is, the experts are not always right, especially when it comes to "endless content." All the time and effort that goes in to updating, reformatting and tweeting information out into the void is pointless if A. your product is excrement and B. your content is about as scintillating as a late night infomercial on cable.

I know I don't have to tell you that there are a plethora of social media marketers out there who hammer the web incessantly to promote the latest and greatest gadget, item or medical breakthrough guaranteed to revolutionize the way you conduct your day-to-day life and enhance your social standing exponentially.

But you know that when it comes right down to it, crap is crap and one man's gold-plated thingamabob is another's overpriced whatzit. A snake oil salesman is a snake oil salesman, no matter what platform he's using to hawk his wares and just because you inundate me with your marketing, doesn't mean I need whatever it is you're selling. I will never need to hear drafty droppings rattling around in a tin can. Ever.

See Tin Can on page B2

INSIDE

School pride cashes in
Citizens Bank issues debit cardsB5

Urban renewal guru
Polyzoides reconstructs Main St....B6

Business After Hours
Chamber invades De La Vegas's.....B11