



spi south padre island
CHAMBER
of commerce

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*Adapt
and
Adjust*



Change

[noun] 1. a transformation or the act of changing
2. a progression from a phase of life to another

ANNUAL REPORT
2019 - 2020



**South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce
Annual Report
October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020**

Table of Contents

Mission.....	1
Structure and Membership.....	1
Past Chairmen.....	1
Board of Directors.....	1
Staff.....	2
Chairman’s Message.....	2
President’s Overview.....	3
Committees	
Business Services & Training.....	4
Education.....	4
Government Affairs.....	5
Islanders.....	6
Junior Leadership Laguna Madre.....	7
Laguna Madre Education Foundation.....	8
Other Committees.....	8
Events	
Vegas at the Beach.....	9
Ladies Kingfish Tournament.....	9
Media	
Social Media.....	11
Newsletter.....	11
Website.....	11
The Guide to South Padre Island.....	12
Winter Discount Coupon.....	13
Other	
Chamber Membership and Meetings.....	13
Membership/Representation/Contributions.....	15

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
1992-1994	Jess Alford
1994-1996	Dave Friedman
1996-1997	Patricia Mayes
1997-1999	Ebbie Ahadi
1999-2001	Tom Hansen
2002-2003	Jennifer Porter-Davis
2003-2005	Elizabeth Money
2005-2007	Charles Rogan
2007-2009	Marie Ferrier
2009-2011	Darrell Mangham
2011-2014	Timothy O'Leary
2014-2017	Courtney Hayden
2017-2019	Jimmy Hawkinson
2019-present	Lonnie Gillihan

2019-20 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 2019-2020, **Lonnie Gillihan** served as Chairman of the Board, **Kyra Hudson** served as Vice Chairman/Secretary, and **Debbie Camacho** served as Treasurer. **Mark Haggemiller**,

served as the Board's additional representative on the Executive Committee. **Courtney Hayden** served as Immediate Past Chairman.

Additional directors – *Ed Caum, Jacqui Dempsey, Brad Fitch, Mickey Furcron, Anabel Garcia-Soto, Chad Hart, Christian Hasbun, Darla Lapeyre, Alta Monroe, Karla Scimeca, Randy Smith, Anabel Soto, and Joe Vega.* Retiring as of September 30, 2020 are Mark Haggemiller and Chad Hart, both having served the maximum term limit of three two year terms.

Staff

Roxanne M. Ray, President and CEO, Dianna L. Harvill, Marketing and Business Services and Beverley P. Eymard, Membership Services.

Chairman's Message

In looking back over the past year, I find it amazing how much our lives have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact to both our personal and work lives have required us to adjust how we go about our daily lives and doing business. Our local businesses have been under stressful and challenging circumstances that required revamping or adjusting their operations in order to weather this pandemic storm.

During this pandemic, I believe our Chamber of Commerce really stepped up and was instrumental in keeping our members and community informed of the many governmental notices and health restrictions that were being published. A number of our members have voiced their appreciation for our Chamber of Commerce keeping them informed during this unprecedented time.

The other challenge from the pandemic is the impact of the financial health of the Chamber of Commerce due to the cancelation of some of our fundraising events. We want to thank our membership for their continued support to the Chamber and we believe we will quickly bounce back once things somewhat get back to normal.

As we move forward, this is going to be a year of transition as Roxanne Ray has decided to retire this December and Alita Bagley will replace her as President/CEO. Roxanne has spent 20 years with our Chamber as President/CEO and her dedication and professionalism has been outstanding. She became the face of the Chamber representing our businesses with pride and the quality of her work will be greatly missed. I and the Board members want to personally thank Roxanne for her hard work and wish her the very best in her retirement. Alita Bagley worked with our Chamber from 2006 through 2018 as Membership Services Manager so she understands our Chamber and community very well. I believe this knowledge and experience Alita brings to this position will facilitate a very smooth transition of leadership.

Our primary focus this coming year will be to continue supporting our local businesses and grow our membership.

Regards,
Lonnie Gillihan, Chairman of the Board

President's Overview

Looking Back and Moving Forward -

Our fiscal year started, October 1, 2019, on solid ground, moving forward at a fast and furious pace! We were experiencing growth in membership, and enthusiastic support for our events. Our Chamber membership services evolving quickly to respond to and meet the needs of our business community.

Then, in February, national news reports began warning us of the fast spreading Corona Virus. By March, our lives changed and nothing has been the same since. Slowdown; shut down; shelter in place; road blocks; border travel restrictions; reopen; shut down again; mandates; work from home; rules; masks; health and sanitizing protocols; toilet paper and paper towel shortages; don't touch your face; social distance; hand sanitizer shortage; spray disinfectant shortage; partial reopen; Governor press conferences; County Judge press conferences; hospitals temporarily over flowing, friends & families losing loved ones; 50% occupancy; 25% occupancy; beach restrictions; financial crisis!

Our Chamber quickly pivoted and became a COVID-19 related information conduit for our members and many others in our region. Our hard working staff read and sorted through daily news and social media posts, and distributed the most vital and current information to our members. Social media posts and emails became a way of life. Webinar and virtual meetings have become a new standard practice for now. 2020 was and continues to be an erratic roller coaster ride. Many just want to put this year behind us.

Our Chamber Board and staff have done an outstanding job of adapting and adjusting. Determination and hard work continues. Our Chamber operated at a loss this fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Losses were amplified, when, despite all of our efforts to comply with all COVID-19 mandates, we were forced to cancel our Ladies Kingfish Tournament. However, our Island Chamber is resilient, we have a plan, and a bright outlook. 2021 will be our year of recovery!

As your Chamber President the past 20 years, it has been my pleasure to serve our business community. December 1, 2020, I will retire. Over my 20 years, I have had the honor of working with many dedicated business people: members, directors, community leaders, and an extraordinary staff. Thank you all for supporting our Chamber, for your personal words of encouragement, and many lasting memories.

During those 20 years, I shared ALL of the ups and down with one individual, longtime Chamber Marketing Manager, Dianna Harvill, who joined the staff during the first week of my tenure back in May 2000. From day one, she had my back, and I have never known a more dedicated staff person and loyal friend. Thank you Dianna! Now, my time at the Chamber draws to an end and my personal journey begins anew. My best to all of you! Via con Dios and God Bless America, and South Padre Island.

With warm regards,
Roxanne M. Ray, President/CEO

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 *Mary Cavanagh, Tracey Kriegbaum, Darla Lapeyre, and Dianna Harvill* are responsible for arranging Quarterly Public Affairs Luncheons and workforce development opportunities. The following is a brief overview of the accomplishments of the committee during the 2019-2020 year:

Luncheons

The December 2, 2019 luncheon was held at *Isla Grand Beach Resort*. Eddie Campirano, Port Director/CEO at the *Port of Brownsville* gave an update on port operations. The luncheon was sponsored by *Brisky & Perez Insurance*.

City of South Padre Island Mayor Patrick McNulty gave the annual "State of the Island Address" along with updates from Ed Caum – *SPI-CVB* Executive Director and Darla Lapeyre – *SPI-EDC* Executive Direction on January 21, 2020. The luncheon was held at the Hilton Garden Inn Beach Resort and sponsored by *Kantack Alcantara Law Office* and *Padre Elite Team – RE/MAX Elite*.

Due to COVID-19, the remaining luncheons for the year were cancelled.

Training

More Deductions This Tax Season!, A 7-week course for non-tax professionals and business owners that gave insights on how to potentially cut business taxes by 25% was conducted by *WYCOTAX* January 6, 2020 – February 24, 2020 at the Chamber office.

After the pandemic hit in March 2020, all training and information resources became virtual. Over 80 training classes and resource opportunities were hosted and disseminated to Chamber members from Small Business Administration, WYCOTAX, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Small Business Development Center, Governor's Small Business Initiative, Texas Economic Development, Certified Pool and Spa Operators, Texas Workforce Commission, Workforce Solutions Cameron, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, RGV Partnership, Texas Association of Business, Senator Eddie Lucio, Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, Texas A&M University, Congressman Filemon Vela, Senator John Cornyn, and Small Business Development Center Network.

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. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of all meetings beginning in March 2020.

Kyra Hudson served as Chairman for the committee. Other committee members and meeting attendees included: *Theresa Alarcon, Virginia Guillot, Alta Monroe, Ginny Ossanna, Mickey Furcron, Elaine English, Nancy Gonzalez, Jose Leos, Imelda Munivez; Ana Holland, Maribel Valdez, Reina*

Salinas, Victor Barrera, Romeo Ruelas, Lindsey Zimmerman, Eduardo Juvera, Valarie Brown and Roxanne Ray. The committee held meetings at each of the school campuses.

Highlights for the year include:

- **Eduardo Juvera, Outreach Analyst with the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas** joined us at the November meeting to meet our educators and offer assistance.
- **PI High School DECA Students** received VITA training and provided Income Tax preparation assistance to the general public.
- Promoted the importance of **Hospitality and Tourism** career path opportunities, highlighting the UTRGV new degree program.
- Volunteers assisted in judging at **UIL** meets.
- Supported advancement of **Career and Technology** education opportunities through participation in stakeholder meetings and community needs assessments.
- Emphasized the importance of **soft skills** training for PIISD students.
- Using social media recognized and thanked our **PIISD Board of Trustees** in January 2020.
- What would have been our 19th annual **Teacher Appreciation Party**, usually held each May, was cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic. Arrangements had been made at the Sea Ranch Restaurant compliments of Bob Friedman.
- In August 2020, our Chamber was unable to host our annual **New Teacher Welcome Luncheon** due to the COVID-19 pandemic group gathering mandates. Arrangements had been made at Marcello's Ocean Grille compliments of Bettina Tolin.
- *Although* **Scholarship Awards Night** was not conducted, four Laguna Madre Education Foundation Scholarships were awarded in 2020.
- Staff attended the IBC Bank and **Tarponville Bank Ribbon Cuttings** and Grand Openings at Derry and Garriga Elementary Schools in February just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

Government Affairs

The Government Affairs Committee included Chairman **Alta Monroe** and active committee members *Karla Scimeca, John Reed, Ed Caum, Darla Lapeyre, Eva Jean Dalton, Mike Flores, Ramona Kantack Alcantara, Ken Medders, Jacqui Dempsey, Christian Hasbun, Mike Sularz, Wanda Reyes Rice and Roxanne Ray.*

“Coffee and Conversations” speaker series continued for the 10th 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 *Padre Island Brewing* and we thank *Mark Haggemiller, the PIB staff, and Karla Scimeca* owner of *Karla's Katering* who donated pastries. Beginning in March 2020, all sessions were suspended due to COVID-19 and mandated restrictions for public gatherings.

2019-2020 Coffee and Conversations Presenters - Priscilla Duran, Office of the Governor's Dept. of Economic Development and Tourism; Kristina Boburka, South Padre Island Shoreline Department; Juan Gonzalez & Benito Sanchez, U.S. Census Bureau Partnership Specialists; SPI Chief of Police Claudine O'Carroll, SPI Fire Chief Jim Pigg and SPI City Manager Randy Smith to review 2020 Spring

Break Plans and activities; Leaders from Laguna Madre Water District to discuss infrastructure needs and the upcoming Bond Election.

SPI Candidate Forum – Our Chamber organizes and hosts City of SPI candidate forums in advance of scheduled elections. Our Chamber has over twenty years of experience in organizing Candidate Forums, executed with integrity and independence. On **October 14, 2019**, our Chamber hosted a candidate forum for SPI City Council Candidates. Brandy Buntin, Ken Medders, Kerry Schwartz and Beverly Skloss participated. An estimated 106 people were in attendance. *Kathy Cunningham* served as Moderator, and *Gayle Hood* served as Timer.

The Forum was held at the *South Padre Island Convention Centre*. The Centre provides an excellent venue for both the candidates and the audience. The support services provided by the Convention Centre staff contributed to the successful execution of these Forums. In September 2020, planning began for the 2020 SPI City Council and Mayoral Candidate Forum, scheduled for October 6, 2020.

During the past year the committee **followed a variety of issues including**: annexation of the Laguna Madre area into the RGV MPO; FERC approval and continuing progress on LNG development at the Port of Brownsville; SPACEX development and expansion; Texas Windstorm Association rate increases; extension of the National Flood Insurance Program; U.S. Census; COVID-19; LMWD Bond issue; City of SPI actions regarding hiring of a City Lobbyist; PIISD schools; Regional, State and National elections; other expansions at the Port of Brownsville and their economic impact; immigration; median construction; Laguna Blvd. reconstruction/improvements; residential development on north end of Island/annexations; CCRMA/second access; RGV Reef development; substandard structures and condemnation; venue tax spending.

The Chamber issued **support letters and resolutions** in regard to the following: Letters for City of South Padre Island Shoreline Dept. for five grant applications; Letter for Annova LNG to Judge Trevino; Letters for passage of the USMCA to Congressman and Senators; Letter for PIISD P-Tech Grant; Letter for City of South Padre Multi Model, FTA Capital Grant; Letters to Senators and Congressman for inclusion of Chambers (501 c 6) in PPP funding opportunities; Letters for City of South Padre Island for CMP grants for life guard observation towers; Sapphire Circle Beach Access; Sea Island Circle Access; and Letter for City of South Padre to National Parks and Wildlife Coastal Resiliency Fund for living sea shore assistance.

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 Enholm**. Other committee members are *Elaine English, Jim Enholm, JoAnn Evans, Lisa Graves, Mark Haggemiller, Karla Scimeca, Flower Guerrero, Fernando Molina, and staff member Beverley Eymard*.

During the past year Islanders organized and promoted 11 **mixers and ribbon cuttings**. All new member mixers and ribbon cuttings 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 celebrated with Sherry Pindard at *Friends of Animal Rescue* Anniversary and Christmas Party. Texas Chamber of Commerce Week was celebrated October 14-18, 2019 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 50 new Chamber business members 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 13th **"Shop the Island"** promotion in November/December 2019. **"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 \$45,596 in receipts for this promotional event. The winner of the grand prize drawing held on Friday, December 20th, at 11:00 am was Lynn Nichols, an Island winter resident. The national Shop Small Business Saturday was also integrated into the 2019 **"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 2020, the Islanders organized and promoted the 4th Annual **"Walk the Dock"** at *Sea Ranch Marina*. 17 Chamber businesses participated, and over 350 guests attended. This event was an excellent opportunity 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.

Under the Islanders umbrella of membership efforts, the Chamber also embraced #SPIStrong on social media as a means of uniting our community, as we faced the many challenges due to COVID-19. The Chamber purchased and distributed 1000 #SPIStrong bumper stickers throughout our community.

Islanders and the Chamber also assisted with promotion of participation in the U.S. Census 2020 count. Using social media and Chamber emails to remind citizens of the importance of responding to the 2020 Census.

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 XVI was led by Chairman **Heather Scott** along with Steering Committee members *Cecilia Castillo, Jacqui Dempsey, Mickey Furcron, Kyra Hudson, Jimmy Vela and Dianna L. Harvill*. Accompanied by Junior Leadership PIISD representative *Victor Barrera*, all 19 Port Isabel High School students graduated and

received their Certificate of Completion and their silver cord. Due to COVID-19 Class 17 was not held. The Junior Leadership program is managed by the Leadership Laguna Madre Steering Committee and all costs are covered by generous sponsors. Sponsors to the Class XVI class were: *Cameron County Insurance Center, City of South Padre Island - Community Center, Dennis and Anna Stahl, Ed Caum, Gallery Built Homes, Gulf Seafood's Mini Mart, Karla's Katering, Padre Elite Team - RE/MAX Elite, Rio Grande Valley Abstract, Rotary Club of Port Isabel, Shallow Sport Boats, and SPI Economic Development Corp.*

In March 2020, Chamber volunteers arranged to work Spring Break Parking Concessions at the SPI Convention Centre in an effort to raise funds to support the Junior Leadership Program. While parking concession have been financially successful in the past, 2020 fell flat due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused spring break activities to be cancelled, as were the parking concessions.

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 2019-20.

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 2020, a total of \$290,250 has been awarded to 144 graduates of Port Isabel High School.** 2020 scholarship recipients were: *Viviana Cantu, Wendy Medina, Preston Mena and Kaitlyn Stiers.*

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. The Chamber's Vegas at the Beach Event is the largest fundraiser conducted by the Chamber for funding scholarships. In 2020, the Vegas at the Beach event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. As the fiscal year drew to a close, a decision was made by the Foundation members to suspend all Foundation activities, including the Scholarship and Junior Leadership Program.

For four years, *The SPI Wahoo Classic Fishing Tournament* has supported the scholarship program and in October 2019 they made a contribution to the program. The future of both the Foundation's leadership and scholarship programs is completely dependant upon the ability to raise money and cover the costs with future fund raising efforts.

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 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Recognition Awards Selection Committee – The 2020 committee was comprised of Chamber directors *Alta Monroe, Jacqui Dempsey and Karla Scimeca*. 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 2020 committee was comprised of *Kyra Hudson, Lonnie Gillihan and Karla Scimeca*. 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. The Nominating Committee also makes recommendations for the selection of the Chamber Executive Committee.

Events

Vegas at the Beach

Vegas at the Beach, Chamber & Scholarship Fundraiser was scheduled to take place on April 18, 2020 at the new Courtyard by Marriott. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the event was re-scheduled for June 13, 2020, and ultimately cancelled.

The **Vegas at the Beach** Planning Committee was led by Co-Chairs **Janet Lockwood and Alta Monroe** and included dedicated volunteers *Elaine English, JoAnn Evans, Courtney Hayden, Karla Scimeca, Cianna Perez, Anabel Soto and Beverley Eymard*.

Sponsors secured before cancellation included: **Event Headliner:** Courtyard by Marriott; **Poker Sponsor:** House of Cards; **High Roller Sponsors:** AEP Texas, International Bank of Commerce, NextDecade, Rio Grande Valley Abstract, Dennis & Anna Stahl; **Royal Flush Sponsors:** Cameron County Insurance Center, Inc., City of South Padre Island, First Community Bank, Island Cinema, RE/MAX Elite, S.O.S. Services, SPI Convention & Visitors Bureau; **Straight Flush Sponsors:** Furcron Inc., Realtors & Property Management, Pearl South Padre Resort, EPI EDC; **4 of a Kind Sponsors:** American Diving, Bayside Distributing, LLC, Blue Marlin Supermarket, Captain Bryan Ray Fishing Adventures, El Paseo Arts Foundation, First National Bank – SPI, Flamingo Inn, George Cunningham Company Inc., Gomez, Fragoso & Associates, P.C., Higginbotham Insurance, Isla Grand Beach Resort, Karla's Katering, Kelly's Irish Pub, Millennium Engineers Group Inc., Padre Elite Team – RE/MAX Elite, Ship Shape, SPI Board of Realtors.

Ladies Kingfish Tournament, August 7-9, 2020

The Chamber's largest event, **LKT**, celebrated its 39th anniversary, or would have, if **Angler Corona had not decided to register for the tournament**. The committee and staff got a late start on the tournament due to COVID-19 mandatory shelter-in-place, but when they started they started and finished like true lady anglers do, and did an amazing job of securing sponsors and raffle items. Unfortunately, the belief we would be able to hold the tournament met with complications. When mandates came down limiting the number of people allowed, even for outdoor events, staff hit the floor running and did a complete change of the event. Working with TIFT, a plan was developed and presented to the County Judge, as required by the mandate, but not approved. Further changes were made to bring all aspects of the tournament to the Island, and while it was felt a plan was developed that could have been a template for other events, it was ultimately determined it was in the best interest of everyone the tournament be cancelled.

Not all was lost. We encouraged anglers to keep their dates with captains and come on down for a week-end of fishing and relaxation, and to stop by the office on Friday to purchase their angler shirts, bags and other goodies. Anglers sent us their fishing photos during the week-end and we posted them on our website and social media. The anglers that came down had an amazing week-end of fishing, and several, that would have been first time tournament participants, said they would definitely be back next year!

As you can see, *Adapt and Adjust*, became the motto of the tournament and we did just that. Staff opened an online merchandise store and set up a merchandise corner at the Chamber offices. Sales were great, both online and in person. Long and short sleeve shirts with tournament artwork were available along with the tournament bag which was scaled down this year to an insulated lunch bag with the tournament logo. Everyone loved the new bag. Committee member *Janie Petty* stated it was the perfect size for transporting all of your filets following a successful day of fishing. Staff also included previous years merchandise and anglers were happy to be able to pick-up shirts from years they missed, or just really liked the shirt!

Committee member *Charla Givens* did such a wonderful overseeing the gathering of items for the much loved bucket raffle that we decided to go ahead with the raffle, but open it up to the public. Raffle items were set up at the Chamber office and emails and social media posts encouraged people to come by and buy their tickets August 7 – September 11. The *Javier Challenge* was a huge success when LKT Planning Committee Chairman *Javier CH Garza* came by and bought his stretch for \$50. He got 47 tickets in his stretch and each person that came in and asked for the *Javier Challenge* got one more ticket than the person before them that asked for the challenge. The drawings for 43 awesome items was held on Friday, September 11th and the final tally resulted in going over budget! A big thank you again this year to *Donald and Sylvia Wernecke (longtime tournament angler)* for bringing in several items (2 Consuela Bags and a \$650 gift certificate for fresh cut meat, just to name a couple) that helped break the bank!

As with any event, sponsors are the most important. Following the cancellation of the event, Roxanne Ray, Presidents/CEO, personally contacted each sponsor to determine what they wanted done with their sponsorship. Those that had not paid were written off, and those that had already paid either stated the tournament could retain the money to help offset the expenses already incurred, and others requested the money be credited to their membership. Due to the economic hardship seen on the Island there were some that requested a refund.

Paid and Trade 2020 event sponsors were: *Elite Sponsor:* WB Pipeline; *Title Sponsors:* Shallow Sport Boats / The Sportsman, and South Padre Island CVB; *Gold Sponsors:* Rental World, Sea Ranch II at SouthPoint, and Texas Outdoor Lifestyles TV Show; *Silver Sponsor:* Sutherlands Express; *Bronze Sponsor:* AEP, Generous Anonymous Donor and International Bank of Commerce; *Award's Luncheon Sponsor:* Furcron Inc., REALTORS® and Property Mgmt. Co., *Friend Sponsors:* A Clean Portoco, Beach Weddings by Sammi Kaye, Blue Marlin Supermarket, Breakaway Cruises, Cameron County Insurance Center, Inc., Pearl South Padre, Republic Services, and Shepard Walton King; and *Patron Sponsor:* Anglers Marine Center, Ibis Insurance, Padre Island Hardware ACE, SPI Designs and Stronghold Security.

Trophies for the tournament had also been produced and were delivered to the sponsors. Artwork for the tournament this year was created in-house by staff and trophies were produced as unframed canvas prints with engraved plates added that included the winning species, place and sponsor name.

Trophy sponsors included: Annie's Girls, Captain Bryan Ray Fishing Adventures, Coral Reef Lounge, First Community Bank-SPI, Fudge Consulting, PLLC, Furcron, Inc. REALTORS® and Property Management, Harbor Street Laser Wash, Isla Grand Beach Resort, Kay Young Ezell – SPI Realty, Laguna BOB, Las Brisas Rentals, Louie's Backyard, Lynn and Gary Tate, Mike and Patty Johnson, Padre Elite Team - RE/MAX Elite, Padre Island Brewing Co, Renee's of South Padre, Rio Grande Valley Abstract, Sea Ranch Restaurant, Shallow Sport Boats, Ship Shape, White Lumber and Yummies Bistro.

Adapt and Adjust ... yes we did, and we deem it a success as we worked with what we had. The Planning Committee met to review the event and begin planning on the 40th Anniversary tournament scheduled for August 6-8, 2021. Mark your calendar to join us for an exciting year. Please note – we have already informed *Angler Corona* she **IS NOT INVITED** to participate in next year's tournament!

This Signature Island Event was planned by committee chair **Javier Ch. Garza** and committee members *Tommie Elium, Kyra Hudson, Charla Givens, Janie Petty, Amy Robinson, Sylvia Wernecke and Jon Wilson, along with Chamber staff.*

Media

Social Media

The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce continues to utilize Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to interact with members and people interested in our Island. During the pandemic the Chamber's social media played an instrumental part in keeping the community up-to-date on mandates, changes, and resources available for our businesses. 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 and website. This informative newsletter highlights Chamber meetings and events, ribbon cuttings and mixers, items of interest for businesses, job postings, training opportunities, MarketSpace, member "Spotlight", member events and community events.

Chamber members have the opportunity to include promotional flyers in the emailed newsletter, at no cost, and 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. All information entered into member records automatically populates into the website. *Members continue to have their own personal login and can add features to their listing such as job postings, events, hot deals, photos and videos.* A new addition to the website during the pandemic and a great benefit to our members was MarketSpace. For those members that have online sales, they can include those sales on the Chamber website and link direct to their online portal.

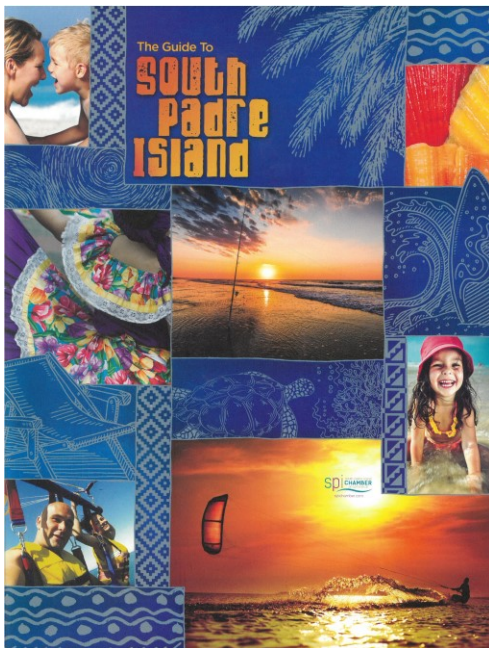
Another way of driving business to their site for **FREE**. The Chamber website continues to be a reliable and up-to-date information source for members, visitors and those wishing to relocate to South Padre Island.

During the pandemic, the Chamber website was transformed into the go to spot for up-to-date information on mandates from the State of Texas, Cameron County and City of 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 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



The 2020 Guide to South Padre Island was the 20th edition produced in-house by the Chamber of Commerce Marketing/Business Services Director, Dianna L. Harvill. The *2020 Guide* was 76-pages and was delivered on schedule in December of 2019. Copies of *The Guide* were delivered to all advertisers and Valley distribution points before Christmas.

Ads were sold in the *2020 Guide* by Chamber staff to defray costs of creating and printing *The Guide*. Local graphic design company and Chamber member, *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 2021 *Guide to South Padre Island* started late due to the pandemic. Changes were made in the guide to allow for reduced printing cost and the savings were passed to advertisers with a 30% reduction in rates for the 2021 Guide. Ad sales began in August 2020 and were completed in September 2020. **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 2021 edition in December 2020.

Winter Discount Coupon Book

In 2019-2020, our Chamber, along with our Chamber members, published a very successful 12th 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 a record 43 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 2019 through early March 2020. 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 2020-2021 Winter Discount Coupon Book, 13th Edition, began in September 2020.

Other

Chamber Membership/Meetings

During the year, **53** new members joined our Chamber. As of September 30, 2020, our membership totaled **340** active members, **322** business members and **18** associate members.

The Chamber keeps our members updated through the weekly newsletter, email blasts, and frequent Facebook, Twitter, 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, videos and additional services description, post special deals, create job postings, and a new feature, “Marketspace”, which allows members to link their website sales to our Newsletter and chamber website. Staff continues to actively promote full utilization of these benefits by our members.

On November 7, 2019, at our **Annual Membership Meeting**, Chamber members gathered to reflect on our achievements. The 2019 meeting was held at the new *Isla Blanca Park Event Center*. Written annual reports were distributed and annual recognition awards presented.

Mickey Furcron, owner of Furcron, Inc. REALTORS® and Property Mgmt. Co., received the **2019 Director's Award**. Mickey, has been on South Padre Island as a resident and businessman for 29 years! He served as a Chamber Board member in the early 1990's until 1995 when he was elected as a Point Isabel Independent School District Trustee, where he served until 2018. 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, Diane O'Leary, Jim Enholm and Barry Patel.*

Jeri Garrett, owner of Cactus Flower was presented the 2019 Kukui Award. Jeri is a well-known South Padre Island business owner and has been a member of our Chamber since 1994. Jeri served this past year on our Ladies Kingfish Tournament Planning Committee and made an immediate impact. Her creative ideas, astute observations, and expert business experience brought fresh and beneficial changes to our 37th Annual Ladies Kingfish Tournament. 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, Chad Hart, Charles Rogan, Victor Barrera and Mark Hagenmiller.*

The 2019 **Ambassador's Award** went to **Elaine English**, an extraordinary community volunteer. She always has a smile, is interested in what you have to say and shares her enthusiasm for life. Elaine serves as an Island Ambassador, is on the Education Committee, and is a volunteer for Vegas at the Beach. First awarded in 2009, past Ambassador's Award recipients include *Bob Fudge, Jim Harvill, Bobby Vanzant, Anne Weiss, Candace Gray, Victor Baldovinos, Cristin Howard, Lesa Labar, Judith Beat and Karla Scimeca.*

The 2019 **Community Partner Award** went to **Padre Island Brewing Company** for everything they have done for our Chamber including their longtime membership, a venue for Coffee and Conversations, and dedicated sponsorship of our Ladies Kingfish Tournament. Mark Hagenmiller is always quick to volunteer and the Brew Pub's name can be seen listed as a sponsor for many community events. Opening in 1995, Padre Island Brewing is an island icon as the Island's first and only micro-brewery, and is the 2nd oldest brew pub in Texas. 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, Shallow Sport Boats, Blue Marlin Supermarket and Louie's Backyard.*

Porky's Pit earned the honor of the first **Outstanding New Business Member Award**. The Leadership Awards Committee decided this year to recognize NEW business members who fully embrace and utilize the many opportunities our Chamber provides. By being fully engaged, Porky's Pit has become widely recognized and successful. They joined our Chamber about 1 year ago and have attended Chamber luncheons, participated in Member Showcase events, sponsored Vegas at the Beach, advertised in our annual Coupon book, attended Coffee and Conversations, and the list goes

on! All of that PLUS with the owners' extra-ordinary enthusiasm and zest for life they are very simply fun to be around.

In January 2020, the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce nominated Chamber member, **Elizabeth (Liz) Money, co-owner of Ship Shape to the 2020 RGV Walk of Fame.** Money was inducted into the 2020 RGV Walk of Fame in honor of her 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), Jimmy Parker (2017), Barry Patel (2018), and Doyle Wells (2019).*

Memberships/Representation/Contributions/Other

In 2019-2020, 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.**

Throughout the year our Chamber was represented at the following meetings and events so that we remain visible and active participants in our community and beyond: Municipal Court Dedication to Judge David Colwell; Texas Historical Museum grand opening at the Port Isabel Lighthouse; AEP Transmission Line Open House; Noble Charities 3rd Annual Fishing Tournament Captain's Party; Next Decade/Bechtel LNG live demonstration; RGV Ducks Unlimited Annual Fundraising Dinner and Auction; RGV Partnership Golf Tournament/hosted State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr.; SPI City Council meetings; Meet & Greet with Congressman Vela's Chief of Staff Sandra Alcala; TCCE Site visit with Aaron Cox; Laguna Madre Humane Society Fundraisers; Rio Grande Valley Partnership Board Meetings; Winter Texan Style Show; PI Museum – Taste of the Laguna Madre; Walk for Women; Shallow Sport Fishing Tournament; RG LNG Leaders Reception; El Paseo productions; Meet the Artists of the Sea Turtle Trail; SPI CVB Special Events Committee; CVA meeting; and RGV Metropolitan Planning Organization – MPO meeting; Cameron County Address in Harlingen; Census 2020; Port of Brownsville Customer Appreciation Luncheon; CVB Client Appreciation Party; RGV Partnership Annual Christmas Party at IBC in Brownsville; Seales Annual Toy Drive Christmas Party; Texas Economic Development Corp. Regional Business Summit at Port Of Brownsville; ABISPI Winter Texas Appreciation Event; KGBT Channel 4 interview on job opportunities; Annova LNG Thank you reception in Brownsville; Cristin Howard, SPI BNC; Duncan Wood – Mexico Relations Update; RGV Reef Leadership meeting; WOWE at BNC; Darla Lapeyre – SPI EDC; SPI Median Groundbreaking; CVB Parking Concessions nonprofit meeting; Artisan Festival; Texas A & M Luncheon; PIISD and IBC Tarponville Bank grand openings. After February 2020, in person gatherings became impossible to conduct or attend due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting in March 2020, with the onset of COVID-19 and with the many related mandates, our staff spent a great deal of time “attending” many press conferences, webinars and virtual meetings. Staff member Dianna Harvill took on the monumental task of sorting out information and sharing the most important news and updates to our members and our community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via internet and social media, during some of the most active and uncertain times our world has ever experienced in recent history.

Our Chamber also made **contributions** to many worthy organizations and events: RGV Partnership 2019 Scholarship Golf Tournament; SPI Windsurfing; Walk for Women; El Paseo Arts Foundation; PIISD student DECA program; Helping Our Heroes - Wounded Warriors/ALS Golf Tournament; PI Rotary Club Flag Program; Laguna Madre Humane Society; Isabel Y Garcia Animal Shelter Aye Chihuahua; Friends of Animal Rescue; Winter Texan Style Show; PI Museum Taste of Laguna Madre; SPI BNC W.O.W.E.; Port Isabel Museums. Many other members and Island based non-profit organizations benefited by the Chamber providing them with complimentary email blasts and Facebook announcements.

Additional outreach efforts included planning the regional **Governor's Small Business Conference – Women in Leadership** to be held on South Padre May 2020. With conference planning nearly complete, the State Office of Economic Development made the difficult decision to cancel the conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also cancelled were plans, a full year in the making, to hold the **Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives Annual Leadership Conference** on South Padre June 2020. The conference was canceled due to COVID-19 and has been rescheduled to June 2021.