

BPA management group wins New Mexico title

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

Raton High School's Small Business Management Team recently won first place in the state of New Mexico during the Business Professionals of America annual State Leadership Conference in Albuquerque. Competing against more than 800 students from all sizes of high schools, from 1A to 5A, the team is now preparing to represent New Mexico at the national conference in Washington, D.C., May 4-8.

Seniors Phillip Mendez, Savannah Arguello, Raquel Herrera, and Thomas Hattaway will be joined in the national competition by junior Sabrina Jaramillo, who won a slot as an alternate team member after being named national voting delegate at the state conference.

For the year's project, the team created an elaborate business plan for a general merchandise discount store called "TG World" which might compete with the likes of Wal-Mart. "We researched and selected inventories, pricing, target age groups, and locations," said Mendez. "We considered online aspects of marketing as well as physical stores."



Photo by Tim Keller

Raton High School's Small Business Management Team is preparing to compete in the nationals of the Business Professional Association in Washington, D.C., after winning first place in New Mexico against schools of all sizes, from 1A to 5A. From left, the team consists of Phillip Mendez, Savannah Arguello, Thomas Hattaway, Sabrina Jaramillo, and Raquel Herrera.

Hattaway added, "We decided to compete with Wal-Mart, selling products from electronics and toys to clothing and groceries." For the judges in

Albuquerque, Arguello said, "We gave a PowerPoint presentation of all our product lines, with charts and graphs. We planned for grocery sales to

dominate the store, but we developed a complete business plan for the whole operation."

In competition, Herrera said the judges throw an

added twist or challenge at each team. In Albuquerque, the Raton team was given 15 minutes to add an online grocery sales component to their plan. "After our allot-

ted time, we presented our ideas to the judges verbally. We included shipping of non-perishables purchased online."

Mendez said the group was thrilled to win, though not entirely surprised. "We just had a good feeling. The judges kept giving us great comments about how much they were enjoying our project."

From the state competition at The Marriott in Albuquerque, the Raton team is honing its business plan to present at the BPA's National Leadership Conference at The Hilton in Washington, D.C. They'll fly from Denver, getting out of a whole week of school for the trip. However, they'll be in a hurry to get back: not only is it from weekend, but Hattaway is the catcher on the RHS baseball team, which hopes to be competing in the first round of the state championship that weekend.

Despite hoping to return in time for the prom, they're planning to get a congressional tour of The White House while they're in the nation's capital. They're also hoping to bring home an exciting souvenir in the form of a national award for their business plan.

Chamber luncheon speakers touch all the bases

By **MIKE GARRETT**
The Chronicle-News

The monthly Trinidad & Las Animas County Chamber of Commerce luncheon in the Trinidad State Junior College Pioneer Room offered three speakers and lots of valuable information for the price of one Wednesday.

Col. Ken Knapp spoke on behalf of the Colorado Procurement Technical Assistance Center, now getting firmly entrenched in Trinidad; Joe O'Brien spoke for luncheon sponsor Mobile Record Shredders that dispose of confidential business transaction documents; and Colorado Lottery Director Abel Tapia outlined what the lottery is doing to help support numerous Southern Colorado projects.

Colorado PTAC sponsored a Wednesday afternoon seminar and Thursday Brown Bag lunch in the Bell Block Building

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Col. Ken Knapp

chamber offices at 136 W. Main St. Chamber CEO-Executive Director Kim Schultz and retired Marine Col. and Trinidad Community Foundation executive Lou Simpleman sit on the PTAC board of directors.

"We are here to help any business in Colorado that wants to do business with the government," said Knapp. "You can be a small, medium or large business who wants to do business with anybody in the government system—federal, state, city, county, local, Trinidad State Junior College, the housing developmental authority. That is all government, taxpayer money for any business who wants to do business with them but isn't quite sure where to do that is where we can help you out."

Colorado Springs-based



Photo by Mike Garrett

The Trinidad and Las Animas County Chamber of Commerce presented its monthly Comcast Spotlight Award on Wednesday to Mount Carmel Health, Wellness & Community Center. Accepting the award, center, on behalf of Mount Carmel is Col. Lou Simpleman. He is joined by, from left, chamber board member John Schecter of Digi-Care, Paula Murphy of the Times-Independent, chamber board member Cheryl Clark of Black Jack's Inn & Steakhouse, chamber President Janna Tranter, Mount San Rafael Hospital administrator and board member Jim Robertson, and his marketing director and board member Kim Lucero.

PTAC also helps the business find procurement opportunities, do the marketing and talk to a prospective government client. "We will proof your proposal before you submit it if that's what you want us to do," said Knapp. "We will work with you anywhere along the acquisition process where you would like our help. And we're a free service being granted through the federal and state governments and through private donations."

Knapp said PTAC counselors are willing to travel to Trinidad to see two to three clients a day here, using current office space occupied by the chamber. Colorado PTAC first established its presence in Trinidad with 14 counseling sessions last March involving five active clients working with 31 different businesses here, Knapp said. By late last year, that

number had grown to 132 counseling sessions.

"Of the (Trinidad area) clients we're working with, they have received \$5 million worth of government contracts, which equates to over 100 jobs for the local area down here," said Knapp. "That's a success story for Trinidad and Las Animas County."

For those who need to destroy or recycle confidential documents, Pueblo-based Mobile Record Shredders (719) 544-5460 at 205 N. Elizabeth, Suite 120, has the manpower and technological equipment to get the job done, said O'Brien.

The seven-year-old document disposal company serves Southern Colorado from Colorado Springs to Trinidad and as far east as Lamar and as far west as Alamosa and Salida.

"A lot of people think of getting rid of your confidential documents as being

a doctor's office, a hospital or whatever," said O'Brien. "As of Dec. 31, 2010, federal legislation has increased the area for businesses that have to get rid of their confidential documents. We actually provide a free service to any business that comes to us to put together a program for getting rid of your documents."

Such documents can include any business credit transaction information with name, address phone number or other private data that if discovered by a third party could lead to identity theft, O'Brien said, noting such document disposal can be done on site. "Nowadays, 80 percent of identity theft though the loss of confidential documents is directly related to the drug trade. That's the fastest growing crime in the United States."

He said the company now has more than 70

Trinidad clients and more than 700 in Southern Colorado. One-time or monthly services are provided.

The company also benefits the environment.

"All the paper that we take in, we recycle," he said. "In this day and age, we're all concerned about excess materials. We take the paper, bale it and send it out to a recycling broker who puts it back into the system. Since 2004, we've saved over \$5 million what we call value savings in trees saved, kilowatt hours saved and water saved."

Residential "shoe-box" type paper disposal services are also now available from Mobile Record Shredders, O'Brien noted.

Former state representative and senator Tapia said, "I'm all about Southern Colorado and have spent all my life here." His primary goal is to expand lottery sales into more area retail outlets while educating the public where and how those \$2.2 billion in state lottery funds are distributed throughout the state.

While 62 percent of all lottery revenues are offered as prize money to the players, he said 23.5 percent of the proceeds are returned to state projects and parks through the Department of Local Affairs, Great Outdoors Colorado and Conservation Trust Fund. His slide presentation showed several Trinidad area projects, mostly environmental and river walk, that have been funded by the state lottery.

Tapia said this year's state lottery proceeds are on pace to be significantly ahead of the total \$112.9 million received in 2010.

Mount Carmel Health and Wellness Center was selected as the April Comcast Business Spotlight winner of free advertising on Comcast Cable.

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