

FYIBUSINESS | NEWS, TRENDS AND EVENTS IN TULSA BUSINESS

Women's Entrepreneurship Expo Feb. 16

Students in Free Enterprise, an organization at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, is seeking women entrepreneurs to speak at an expo in February to other women who are contemplating starting a business.

Grant Alexander, co-Sam Walton Fellow for SIFE, said the ex-

po is a great opportunity for women thinking about starting a business to connect with successful entrepreneurs in various fields.

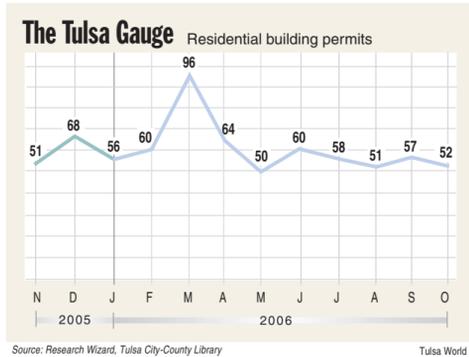
"We are very excited to bring together women entrepreneurs who are willing to share their knowledge and skills on how to

start a business," Alexander said. "Participants will get a chance to see a variety of business opportunities and actually talk with the company owners."

The expo will be held from 3-6 p.m. Feb. 16 in the University Center Rozell Ballroom on the Tahlequah campus. It is free and open to the public.

NSU Career Services will be on hand to provide information about starting new businesses and searching for a career.

SIFE is also seeking vendors for the event. For more information, or to sign up to speak at the expo, contact Stephanie Graham at 918-822-3366.



UpTime, Netbriar announce partnership

Tulsa companies UpTime and Netbriar have announced a strategic partnership that will allow the companies to expand services to clients throughout UpTime's six-state sales region.

UpTime is a systems integrator, while Netbriar is a service-oriented security and availability company. Both work with corporate IT departments in Oklahoma and the United States.

Merrill Likes, UpTime president, said Netbriar has a proven track record of quality services and customer satisfaction.

"Jeff Bewley and the staff at Netbriar have been leaders in the information security industry for over a decade," Likes said. "We are proud to welcome Netbriar as a member of UpTime's team."

"A company could not ask for a better partner than UpTime," said Jeff Bewley, managing partner of Netbriar. "We are looking forward to ensuring UpTime's current and potential clients have the most secure information technology systems available."

For more information, visit UpTime's Web site at www.uptime.net.

Car wash chain renamed

A longtime area car wash company has changed its name, and the owners recently purchased another facility in the Tulsa area.

Clear Water Car Wash, formerly known as Spot-not Car Wash, purchased Sud's Brothers Car Wash at 81st Street and Highway 51 on Dec. 19, according to Chuck Philpott, marketing director. It brings the number of Tulsa-area locations to 11, including Broken Arrow and Catoosa, and there are five locations in the Oklahoma City area.

The company employs 40 people.

Bob Compton opened Spot-not in Tulsa in 1982. Current owners and co-operating managers Glenn Elliott, Howard Janzen and Frank Semple purchased the company in 2003.

A fourth owner, Bill Farr, joined Spot-not in 1983 and is operations manager. Philpott said the owners and

management remain committed to providing the highest quality car washes in the industry, and Clear Water is carrying on the Spot-not tradition.

He explained that as car washes have been acquired, they have been updated with more sophisticated automatic systems.

"We've slowly changed the systems, both automatic and self-service, to be the best touchless and brushless washes in the industry," Philpott added.

Furthermore, all have the spot-not rinse, a sophisticated system that removes minerals from the rinse water. The systems also use hot water.

An attendant is on duty at each location from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday, and 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday.

For more information, or for coupons and other specials, visit the company's Web site at www.clearwatertulsa.com.

Monthly workout for financial fitness

Making a financial resolution for 2007? You've got plenty of company. When it comes to top New Year's resolutions, shedding debt usually runs neck-and-neck with shedding pounds, surveys show.

Here's a month-by-month workout designed to shed economic worries.

January: Pull together tax records. You'll need a copy of last year's return, and copies of all records and receipts to support your deductions.

Now, either set up an appointment with your tax professional or buy tax software and vow to get the return done by the end of the month, or as soon as you get W-2 statements.

February: Pull together holiday credit card bills and tally up how much you owe. If that's more than you've got — even after applying the tax refund to your debts — make a plan to systematically pay off the debt.

March: Check your credit report. Everyone has the right to one free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus each year.

With identity theft the fastest-growing financial crime, everyone should make sure that their records are accurate. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com and click on "Request Report" in the middle of the page. Select all three credit bureaus and follow the instructions.

April: Taunt your friends who haven't already filed their tax returns. Forget finances for a month.

May: Start an automatic savings plan. You can have the money automatically deducted from your checking account, or start a payroll deduction plan with your credit union at work.

June: Start planning your summer vacation, with a simple parameter: plan to spend only the amount that you'll have in the savings account that you set up in May. So, if you plan to vacation in late August and are saving \$500 a month, you can figure on a \$2,000 vacation.

July: If you're not exactly where you want to be with saving and investing, get a notebook and start jotting down



every dollar you spend, every day.

You'll need to cut down on the less important discretionary spending and use the saved funds to pay off bills or sock more money into savings.

August: Do a retirement checkup. Many mutual funds, financial services companies and other organizations offer retirement calculators to help you estimate how much you will need.

September: Consider life insurance. If you have a spouse or children who rely on you for financial support, you probably need it.

October: Consider tax-saver accounts, also called flexible spending accounts, offered by employers. These come in two varieties — dependent care and healthcare.

The accounts allow you to set aside money on a pretax basis for day-care and health-care costs that you expect during the year.

November: Do a portfolio checkup. Look at what percentage of your portfolio is in each asset class — stocks, bonds, real estate and cash — and decide whether that allocation will meet your long-term and short-term goals.

December: Spend wisely. Take a look at the money you have left in the automatic savings account set up in May and consider how much of that you'll need for holiday spending. Vow not to spend more than is in the account. If you can spend less, all the better.

By keeping your spending below this threshold, you can start 2008 without additional debt.

Los Angeles Times staff writer Kathy M. Kristof welcomes your comments and suggestions but regrets that she cannot respond individually to letters or phone calls. Write to Personal Finance, Business Section, Los Angeles Times, 202 W. First St. 90012.

Video Records opens in Tulsa

A new Tulsa company offers area residents video services to document their possessions, as well as to preserve family histories.

Video Records Inc., located at 4444 S. 66th St., Suite 200, offers Valuable Portfolio and Living Legacy video production services. Founders Bill Brunton and Lavern Cole opened the company on Oct. 1, and have two videographers on staff.

Cole said it "was a merger of two ideas" — while she wanted to preserve family histories on video, Brunton wanted to document household items for estate and insurance purposes.

As a result, homeowners can have an itemized inventory, or they can go into detail about each item — for example, an antique china cabinet that goes back three generations in the family.

Similar services are offered for businesses, as well

as damage assessment showing the condition of items following a fire or weather-related loss.

The company can also secure expert appraisers for people wanting to know the current value of paintings or collections.

The base fee for the service, which involves a survey of the home or business, is \$150 per hour, and there is a two-hour minimum. Cole said the base fee includes editing services, which can take several hours.

There are additional fees for scanning services (including photographs, newspaper clippings and legal documents), data input services beyond the customary household items, and for travel outside of the Tulsa metropolitan area.

For more information, call 398-0536, or visit the company's Web site at www.video-records.com.

JETS:

In October, the six worst carriers in baggage were all regionals.

FROM E-1

frequently were regionals.

Comair dropped to 64.9 percent on-time from 84.9 percent a year earlier. American Eagle canceled flights three times as frequently as its parent airline in October.

SkyWest Inc.'s Atlantic Southeast Airlines, the Delta "feeder" service, was the worst airline in on-time performance in the third quarter, with only 57 percent of its flights arriving within 15 minutes of schedule, compared with 66.8 percent a year earlier.

Some problems have resulted from unexpected changes — a faster passenger train at the Dallas airport means passengers can now make connections faster than their bags, resulting in more mishandled baggage for American Eagle, a spokesman said. Also, higher passenger loads and longer flights in small jets mean baggage is more frequently left behind, so the planes, loaded with fuel, aren't overweight.

Regional airlines say they are scrambling to fix the problems by spreading out schedules and increasing the weight small jets can carry.

Though operations last year were worse than historical averages, regional carriers say structural differences mean they are unlikely to perform as well as bigger airlines.

While bigger airlines fly across the country, regionals are usually confined geographically, operating out of one or two hubs. When bad weather strikes, the carrier's entire operations can be affected.

In addition, being subservient to a larger airline can hurt. The major carrier can force cancellations at the regional to open takeoff and landing slots for bigger airplanes, so the most pas-

sengers get moved. The main airline also can force regional flights to wait for passengers.

In Atlanta in October, 63.2 percent of Delta flights arrived on time, but only 52.7 percent of Atlantic Southeast flights did. Same for American in Chicago, where 62.2 percent of mainline American flights arrived on time in October, compared with only 57 percent of Eagle flights.

Comair, which historically has ranked well in DOT standings, says its problems began last summer with Delta's major expansion at New York's Kennedy Airport.

Dropping lots of new Comair flights into JFK, an airport already jammed with JetBlue Airways Corp., a major American operation and the afternoon and evening rush of European flights, meant the time airplanes spent taxiing in a conga line to takeoff increased 50 percent, said Don Stephens, Comair's vice president of system planning.

For now, Comair has convinced Delta to space out regional flights more at JFK and add minutes to schedules to more accurately reflect trip times. Comair has also bulked up its crew base at JFK to have more pilots and flight attendants available.

American Eagle says it tried to cram more flights into its schedule in 2006 so it could grow without buying new aircraft. That meant flying planes more each day and turning them around more quickly between flights.

"In some cases, we stretched too far," said spokesman Dave Jackson.

The airline also ran into a problem with its Embraer 145 jets, which carry 50 passengers.

The airplane, one-third of the Eagle fleet, often was overweight. Taking baggage off meant lots of mishandled bags for customers — Eagle's mishandled baggage rate was up 68 percent in October from a year earlier. To help, the airline has been modifying its E145 jets so they can carry an additional 1,300 pounds, Jackson said.

This story was written by the Wall Street Journal, with additional reporting by the Tulsa World Business staff.

PHONES:

Executives cite increased productivity.

FROM E-1

They're also changing the very way people work, as companies now have one more way to get information to and from employees at any time, whether they're in a meeting or out to a movie.

Local users such as Parker and Melissa Kozicki, a spokeswoman for Williams Cos. Inc., say the devices make them more effective and flexible on the job. Work and information have become so accessible, in fact, that the two had to learn how to manage the devices so their jobs didn't consume their lives.

Which explains the device's nickname: "CrackBerry."

"I can be sitting at a table at a restaurant, typing a message, and my kids are begging me to put it away," Kozicki said.

Cellular providers are offering more and more e-mail-oriented phones for their customers, and customers are biting. Josh Ontko, a Sprint store manager in Muskogee, said nearly a third of all the devices he sells are now e-mail ready.

"They've definitely hit a niche, and that niche is growing," he said.

Ontko said the devices aren't new, as the technology was available at the start of the decade. But relatively few people realized they were available and useful until more recently.

"Now people understand them and ask for them specifically."

Most cell phones have at least some Internet capabilities, and determined users can download applications allowing them to peck out e-mail messages on a 12-button pad.

But BlackBerries and other devices have e-mail capabilities built in, as well as many more buttons that allow users to send messages much more easily.

John Kamphee, a national spokesman for Cingular, said that, contrary to the trend of smaller and smaller cell phones, wireless e-mail users are gravi-



Don Parker reads e-mail on his BlackBerry device in a conference room at Bank of Oklahoma Thursday.

tating toward larger phones with clearer screens and full keyboards.

"The devices with QWERTY keyboards are certainly gaining in popularity," he said.

Kamphee and Ontko both said most buyers of these devices are business people — and sometimes the businesses themselves.

Parker said BOK purchases the phones for many of its employees, particularly those who travel frequently and make presentations to customers outside the office.

Nearly every employee eligible for a company BlackBerry accepts one; Parker said it's considered a perk.

"Clearly, these devices are a productivity tool," he said. "As our business gets more complex, faster-paced and more competitive, we need to be able to compete."

Parker said the capabilities of e-mail phones make BOK employees more productive, as they're able to keep up with company news and answer client inquiries while out of the office.

"If people needed approval or guidance from me in the past, they would have had to wait until they could get ahold of me," he said. "Now, if I see something someone's waiting for, I can go ahead and approve it right then."

Kozicki said Williams also provides e-mail phones to employees at the discretion of managers, and that she became noticeably more efficient once adopting the phone herself.

"My job is very reliant upon keeping communication with people and forwarding drafts back and forth, and I can do that with the BlackBerry," she said. "Before, I had to do that at my desk."

Some executives says the devices have caused them to change their work behavior for the better. Parker said he only checked his e-mail at the start and end of each work day. Now, he can respond immediately.

"You have to capture all the bits along the day to be more productive," he said.

Kozicki said her phone allows her to better balance her work with her responsibilities as a single parent to three children.

"I can take them to the doctor's office or to a ball game, and I can keep my work moving," she said.

Sometimes, the e-mail phones can make it almost too easy for work to reach people. Parker said work matters began taking up more of his time, and he had to consciously decide when he should answer a message and when he should set it aside.

"My wife occasionally tells me to put the thing down," he said. "You don't have to answer the phone every time it tells you that you have a new message."

While Kozicki's phone allows her to spend more time on work, she said she doesn't allow it to encroach on her personal life too much.

"I don't like to type on the little keyboard, so I keep my responses pretty short," she said.

Parker said the continued creep of work into personal lives isn't new, since it began with cell phones and continued with laptops capable of accessing work functions remotely.

What is new are the types of problems BOK's tech department receive regarding the pocket-sized devices.

"You get some interesting calls when people drop theirs in the lake or they get run over by a bus," he said.

Robert Evatt 581-8447
robert.evatt@tulsaworld.com