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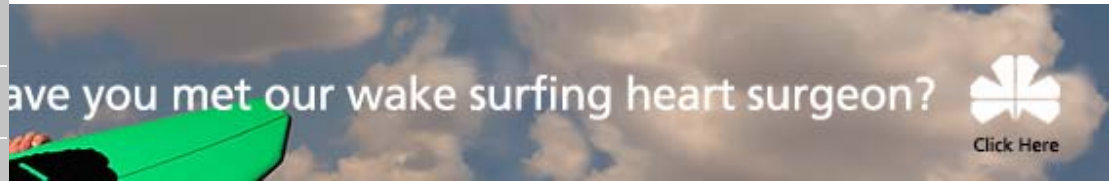
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Chamber members to honor Neighbors

Even though the San Angelo Chamber of Commerce recently received a hard blow when its President Phil Neighbors died, the chamber luncheon Tuesday is still on. It will start early.

"We are encouraged to arrive by 11:15 a.m. so that the program may start early in order to spend some time reflecting on the impact Neighbors has had on our community," said Jamie Akin, board president. Following the tribute, Akin will address plans for the chamber's continued operations following Neighbors' death.

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The program will be held in the conference center at Pearl on the Concho hotel, 333 Rio Concho Drive. Cost to attend the luncheon is \$18, and reservations are required.

For more information or to make a reservation, call 325-655-4136.

Oil and gas group to meet in Austin

AUSTIN — The Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners Association (TIPRO), the leading voice of independent producers and royalty owners in Texas, is celebrating 70 years of advocating on behalf of the state's oil and natural gas industry. The association has assembled oil and gas executives, elected officials and industry experts to speak at its anniversary convention Feb. 22 and 23 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Antonio.

Founded in 1946 by a group of 39 Texas wildcatters, TIPRO represents more than 3,000 oil and gas professionals, including producers and mineral owners.

Presenters at the conference will offer updates on legislation, regulatory and industry proposals and other matters of interest to those with an interest in energy production.

"We are honored to welcome such a strong lineup of respected leaders for our annual convention to help celebrate seven decades of supporting, protecting and promoting the Texas oil and natural gas industry," Ed Longanecker, president of TIPRO, said. "Our convention agenda reflects many of the priority issues facing our industry today from a policy, economic and operational standpoint."

Speakers will include Harold G. Hamm, chairman and CEO of Continental Resources, U.S. Rep. Mike Conaway, Speaker of the Texas House Joe Straus, State Rep. Drew Darby of San Angelo, chairman of the House Committee on Energy Resources, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar, Raymond Welder III, CEO of Welder Exploration and Production, Inc., Bob Brackett, senior vice president and senior analyst of Bernstein Research, political analyst Matthew Dowd, Peter Hennings of the Bureau of

Economic Geology, Pioneer Energy Services Corp. CEO William Stacey Locke, and others.

In conjunction with the convention, the association will host a forum featuring nine candidates seeking the open seat at the Texas Railroad Commission.

For more information visit <http://www.tipro.org/meetingevents/annual-convention> or call 512-477-4452.

Print advertising remains relevant

The Angelo State University Small Business Development Center is hosting training event "Print Advertising in a Digital World" at 6 p.m. Thursday for \$20.

The topic will consider: How to build your brand and advertise effectively with print collateral.

"In today's digital marketing world, print collateral is often overshadowed," said training coordinator Dezaray Johnson. "Marketers bombard you with need-to-know methods on an effective digital presence but forget to mention print. Print collateral is still vital in today's advertising, especially for small business. Learn how to build your brand and advertise effectively with print collateral and market in both worlds."

The speaker is Leonor Constancio, creative project coordinator for the Angelo State University Office of Communications and Marketing. The event will take place at the ASU-SBDC at 69 N. Chadbourne St. downtown.

Registration is requested by contacting the ASU-SBDC at 325-942-2098 or sbdc.angelo.edu.

Young professionals to host candidates

The Young Professionals of San Angelo will present candidates for 391st District Court Judge at its monthly meeting Feb. 18.

The noontime bring-your-own lunch meeting involves networking,

meeting new members and learning about the San Angelo community.

Part of its mission is to help young professionals become more civic-minded and involved in government.

The meeting will take place at the Chamber of Commerce Riverview Room at 218 W. Ave. B.

Area bankers gather for annual meeting

Nearly 125 local community bankers and others in the financial services industry gathered at Bentwood Country Club on Wednesday for the Independent Bankers Association of Texas (IBAT) annual regional meeting. Attendees came from Tom Green, Coke, Nolan, Taylor, Runnels, Coleman, Concho, McCulloch, Menard, Mason, Kimble, Sutton, Schleicher, Crockett, Irion, Reagan, Sterling and Glasscock counties.

A key topic for community bankers from the San Angelo area was the effect of continued low energy prices on local community banks, as well as the overall American economy.

Other topics included:

The impact of new regulations developed after the financial crisis, and the effect that these rules are having on community banks' ability to serve their customers.

New players in the financial services industry, driven largely by technology companies looking to disrupt the traditional banking model.

Fund your business through this seminar

The Angelo State University Small Business Development Center hosting the training event "Finding Funding for Your Business" at 3 p.m.

Wednesday at 69 N. Chadbourne St.

"Attend this seminar to learn about the many funding options available and how to go about obtaining them," said SBDC training coordinator Dezary Johnson.

Topics include overview of sources of startup funding, alternative financing options (such as venture funding and angel investors), SBA loan guarantees, how to put together a loan proposal, tips on what the banker is looking for, how to estimate your funding needs, and more.

The speaker will be Adriana B. Havins, MBA, certified business adviser.

Registration is requested by contacting the ASU-SBDC at 325-942-2098 or sbdc.angelo.edu.

Texas, U.S. rig count declines further

HOUSTON — Oil field services company Baker Hughes Inc. said the number of rigs exploring for oil and natural gas in the U.S. declined by 48 last week to 571.

The Houston firm said Friday 467 rigs sought oil and 104 explored for natural gas amid depressed energy prices.

A year ago, 1,456 rigs were active.

Among major oil- and gas-producing states, Texas declined by 19 rigs, Oklahoma dropped eight, Louisiana dropped five, Pennsylvania lost three, North Dakota, Utah and Wyoming each declined by two and Ohio dropped by one.

Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico and West Virginia were all unchanged.

The U.S. rig count peaked at 4,530 in 1981 and bottomed at 488 in 1999.

Energy chairman decries \$10 tax plan

George Rogers, chairman of the board of the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers, issued this statement in response to President Barack Obama's proposed \$10-per-barrel tax on the sale of crude oil produced in the U.S.

"President Obama's proposed \$10 tax on each barrel of crude oil produced in the U.S. is another needless attempt to strangle an industry that is critical to our nation's economy and national security," Rogers said. "A

\$10-per-barrel tax on an industry already in a deep decline would be a death sentence. The Texas Alliance of Energy Producers will vigorously oppose this tax increase."

The drilling rig count in Texas is down by 68 percent from 2014, drilling permits are off 70 percent, and oil and gas well completions have each declined by about 60 percent, Rogers said.

Karr Ingham, petroleum economist and author of the Texas Petro Index, said the steep declines have resulted in massive layoffs, causing statewide oil and gas industry employment to decline from a record 306,330 jobs in December 2014 to about 234,150 jobs in December 2015, Rogers said. Texas has lost more than 72,000 jobs and counting.

"This is not a tax on Big Oil, because 92 percent of the oil produced in the U.S. is produced by independent oil producers not the major, integrated oil companies. It is an attack on small business and American energy security.

Rogers believes that in addition to crippling the country's independent producers, crude oil imports will increase, and consumer prices will rise.

The Texas Alliance of Energy Producers is the largest statewide oil and gas association in the nation that represents independent oil and natural gas producers solely.



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