

Wylie sees 'ground swell' of professional, tech jobs

Bobby Heath is president of the Wylie Downtown Merchants Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of downtown Wylie in partnership with city officials and the Wylie Economic Development Corporation.



BOBBY HEATH
robbertheath2@gmail.com

cook off and arts and crafts fair. Oct. 29 is Boo on Ballard, with free trick-or-treating. You can check us out at discoverwylie.com and like us at facebook/discoverwylie to keep up with all the happenings downtown.

Q: What potential do you foresee for local job growth this year?

A: Looking at the new commercial construction going on in Wylie, I believe the jobs outlook is bright. Wylie used to be a bedroom community with the citizens commuting to other cities to work. That has changed significantly with many people now driving into Wylie to work.

Q: How do evolving demographics influence business offerings in your community?

A: I think a good example would be the new B&B Theater in Wylie, which boasts one of the largest screens in North America. They sought us out because of our demographics, and since ticket sales are exceeding their goals, it appears they knew what they were doing. Also, as Wylie continues to develop, the spectrum of businesses offering unique or specialized services also continues to flourish.

Q: What advances in technology, transportation and communication have affected business this year? What role will those advances play next year?

A: Social media continues to change the way we do business, and I foresee many businesses relying more heavily on this relatively new outlet.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share?

A: I think our local government, especially here in Wylie, has created a welcoming atmosphere for both commercial and residential expansion. Nerdwallet.com just named Wylie one of the top 10 best Texas towns for young families, and Wylie ISD is one of 12 school districts in Texas named to the AP District Honor Roll. The Wylie EDC and city staff are also both working hard to attract new businesses to Wylie, and I believe they have laid down those foundations for a prosperous 2015.

Q: What challenges and opportunities do you anticipate for local businesses in 2015?

A: The biggest challenges and opportunities can be summed up in one word: growth. We are seeing a ground swell of professional, high-tech and light industrial jobs coming into Wylie, many of which started as a home business working out of a spare bedroom or garage. The biggest challenge comes in finding and keeping skilled employees to keep those businesses growing.

Q: What are your expectations for the economy, both locally and nationally?

A: Nationally, I expect to see steady growth with pockets of the U.S. still facing a difficult future. Texas will be near or at the top in economic development. I also expect Collin County and Wylie to follow that trend with better than expected numbers come the close of 2015.

Q: What are the most important things local businesses will need to do to succeed in the new year?

A: I would again have to say keeping their skilled employees. Whether it is the local restaurant cook or high tech computer programmer, opportunities will arise for them to either move on to a better paying job or start their own endeavor. Fortunately, Wylie is an attractive destination for young families, so while losing an employee can be a strenuous time for a small business, finding a replacement is not as burdensome as it was just a few years ago.

Q: What are some of the highlights of your group's planned events and programs?

A: The WDMA events are a way to give back to our community and are family oriented. All our events are free to attend, with a reasonable fee to participate in some activities, such as the car show or pedal car race. May 3 is the Ballard Street 500 Pedal Car Race with free food and children's activities.

Proceeds go to our local Special Olympics. June 27 is Bluegrass on Ballard with live bluegrass, a car show, a chili