

Business leaders cheer raise in minimum wage

Contrary to conventional wisdom, growing numbers of businesses say increase in minimum wage is good for the bottom line

July 20, 2007, Texas – On July 24, for the first time in ten years, the federal minimum wage will go up – marking the end of the longest period without a raise since the minimum wage was enacted in 1938. Many Texans will get a raise from \$5.15 to \$5.85 next week. In fact, Texas has more workers affected by the three-step increase in the minimum wage to \$7.25 than any other state. Contrary to conventional wisdom, many businesses are cheering the raise.

Jean Hardy, Owner/General Manager of Front Street Books in Alpine and Marathon, said, "In this wealthy society, I cannot in good conscience pay merely the current minimum wage, and that decision has benefited my business — not hurt it — because my employees know how I feel, and it instills loyalty and trust. As the cost of living continues to rise, wages need to reflect that. The soundness of families in this country depends on a decent wage. As business owners, I believe we have a moral obligation to do the right thing for our employees."

The chief executives of Costco, Addus HealthCare, Eileen Fisher apparel company, Small Business Majority, the US Women's Chamber of Commerce; Bernard Rapoport, chairman emeritus of American Income Life Insurance Company, headquartered in Waco, TX; and small business owners from every state, including Texas, are among those saying a raise for those at the bottom won't hurt the bottom line. As Costco's CEO Jim Sinegal, has put it: "Raising the minimum wage is good for business."

States with minimum wages above the federal level have

had stronger small business and retail job growth than the other states.

The minimum wage is scheduled to rise to \$5.85 next week, \$6.55 on July 24, 2008 and \$7.25 on July 24, 2009. However, the minimum wage has been so eroded over time that even with the new raises; workers will have less buying power than minimum wage workers had half a century ago. Even after rising to \$7.25 in 2009, the minimum wage will still be lower than it was in 1956, when it was \$7.65 in today's dollars. It will be much lower than it was in 1968, when the minimum wage peaked in value at \$9.56 in today's dollars.

In a statement with nearly 800 signers and climbing, business leaders from Texas and all around the country assert:

"Higher wages benefit business by increasing consumer purchasing power, reducing costly employee turnover, raising productivity, and improving product quality, customer satisfaction and company reputation. We cannot build a strong 21st century economy when more and more hardworking Americans struggle to make ends meet. A fair minimum wage shows we value both work and responsible businesses. A fair minimum wage is a sound investment in the future of our communities and our nation."

In the words of Gary Theilen, owner of Theilen Farm and Cattle in Enid, Okla, "As a small business owner who has always paid well above the minimum wage, it has been my experience that paying living wages simply makes good business sense. It is good for business, workers and the community."

★ UM Army

(Continued from Page 1)

completed last week were building wheel chair ramps, porches, fences, repairing roofs, window and screen repair and painting both houses and fences.

U.M. A.R.M.Y. is an acronym for United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth and was founded in 1979 as 36 youth and adults from the Houston area held the first camp in Athens.

Since 1976 the camp has grown tremendously with over 3,500 people attending the camp in 2005 and more expected this year. In the "Texas Conference" alone Ms. Garcia stated there are 38 cities this summer from the Galveston to the Dallas area

that will be host to a team. Students attending the camp must have completed the 9th grade and have a heart to serve others. There is also a camp for college age students at least one year out of high school.

The Army's work philosophy is preparation, safety, teamwork, leadership development in teens, servant - nothing in return and free for the client. Their desire is to improve the quality of life for their client before they leave.

Normally a typical client for the Army would be one who met one of the following characteristics; low-income, elderly or disabled.

As the Army ministered

through both work and dialogue with clients they too were ministered to last week by home openers who allowed them to borrow their showers to clean up after a long work day.

Last Thursday night the group was joined for a worship service at FUMC by their clients they helped out during the week.

The typical schedule for the Army was to wake by 7:00am, participate in a morning devotional at 7:25am before leaving for their work site at 8:30am.

After work (3:30pm) the group would head to the showers before eating dinner at 6:00pm. At 7:00pm the group had a worship and devotion time before they were allowed free time. Lights out was at 11:30pm each night.

In a world that is normally focused on one's own needs, the U.M. Army is out to make a difference for the cause of Christ through servanthood. With their selfless display many hearts in the community were touched by their efforts.

Many places of LaSalle's murder

On March 19, 1687, as spring's first blossoms began to bring color to the gray winter landscape, a French explorer approached a rustic hunting camp somewhere in an area now known as Texas.

Making his way through the brush, he paused to listen for voices from the camp. From a hiding place in the tall grass, a fellow countryman rose from his cover and fired a musket at the Frenchman. The ball struck him in the head and knocked him to the ground.

Even before Rene' Robert Cavalier, Seieur de La Salle died, his murderer and several accomplices stripped him naked, divided his clothing and other possessions and threw his body to the wolves.

It may have been the first known murder of a Caucasian male in East Texas and, ever since Texas became a civilized land, the site of La Salle's murder has been a source of unbridled speculation. At least eight communities have made claims as "the place where La Salle was killed."

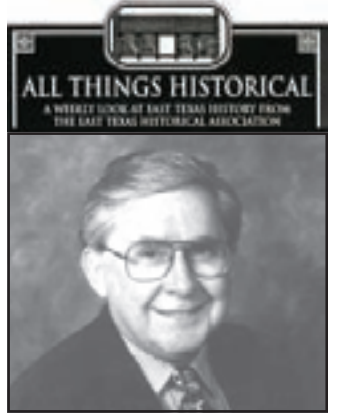
E.J. Gum, a professor of French history at the University of Nebraska, once told the East Texas Historical Association a search of French records had convinced him La Salle was murdered in eastern Oklahoma. Dr. Gum was a native of eastern Oklahoma.

At a succeeding meeting of the Association, Charlie Langford, a former Rusk County judge from Henderson, argued that Spanish records pointed to a crime scene in East Texas. He said the descriptions matched Rusk County.

Dr. Lee W. Woodard, in an internet article titled, "Secret La Salle Monument and Historical Marker," claimed that Oklahoma's Heavener Runestone is a "secret La Salle monument and historical marker (that) sooner or later will be recognized" as where the French explorer died and was buried near the Poteau Valley of Oklahoma.

Another claim on La Salle's murder site is made by the Weiss family of Beaumont, Texas. The family asserts that La Salle was buried where the Beaumont Country Club now stands, about fifty miles up the Neches River from the Texas Gulf Coast.

In Hardin County, Kountze at-



By Bob Bowman

torney Stanley Coe studied many of the available La Salle documents and concluded that the explorer was killed and buried beside Village Creek.

Coe said that La Salle, wanting to avoid man-eating Indians on the Gulf Coast, led his party across what are today's Brazos and Trinity rivers and reached Village Creek, knowing it would empty into a river. Somewhere on Village Creek, La Salle was shot, his body stripped, and dragged into the brush.

The late F.W. Cole, a Cherokee County historian, spent years tracing La Salle's movements in East Texas and concluded he was shot to death on the east bank of Bowles Creek in the Martin Lacy Survey two and a half miles southeast of Alto.

In 1913, Jasper native Jesse J. Lee wrote to a friend at The University of Texas in Austin that a camp of German stove makers cut down a large white oak tree near Burkeville, in Newton County, and found carved in its trunk the words, La Salle, leading to local speculation that La Salle may have been killed near the nearby Sabine River.

The most convincing claim of La Salle's murder scene is made by Navasota historians, who years ago raised funds to erect a statue of La Salle on the town's main boulevard. The Navasota claim is strongly supported by a book, *The La Salle Expedition to Texas: The Journal of Henry Joutel, 1684-1687*. Edited by William C. Foster, the book includes a map indicating that the explorer was assassinated somewhere in western Grimes County about twelve miles west of Navasota. La Salle's expedition crossed the Brazos River on March 14, 1687, and he was supposedly killed five days later north of the crossing.

Texas Tech student receives RN-BSN degree

Texas Tech University presented degrees to approximately 2,525 graduated students in the Spring 2007 Commencement in the United Spirit Arena on campus on Saturday, May 12, 2007, and approximately 5,270 students qualified for either the President's List or the Dean's List in the Spring semester.

To make the President's List, a student has to take at least 12 qualifying credit hours and have a 4.0 grade point average (GPA). Students qualifying for the Dean's List also must take at least 12 qualifying hours and have a GPA of 3.5 to 3.9.

A student from Chandler, Roy Kent Vandergriff, senior, majoring in Nursing, was on the Dean's List receiving an RN-BSN degree.

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