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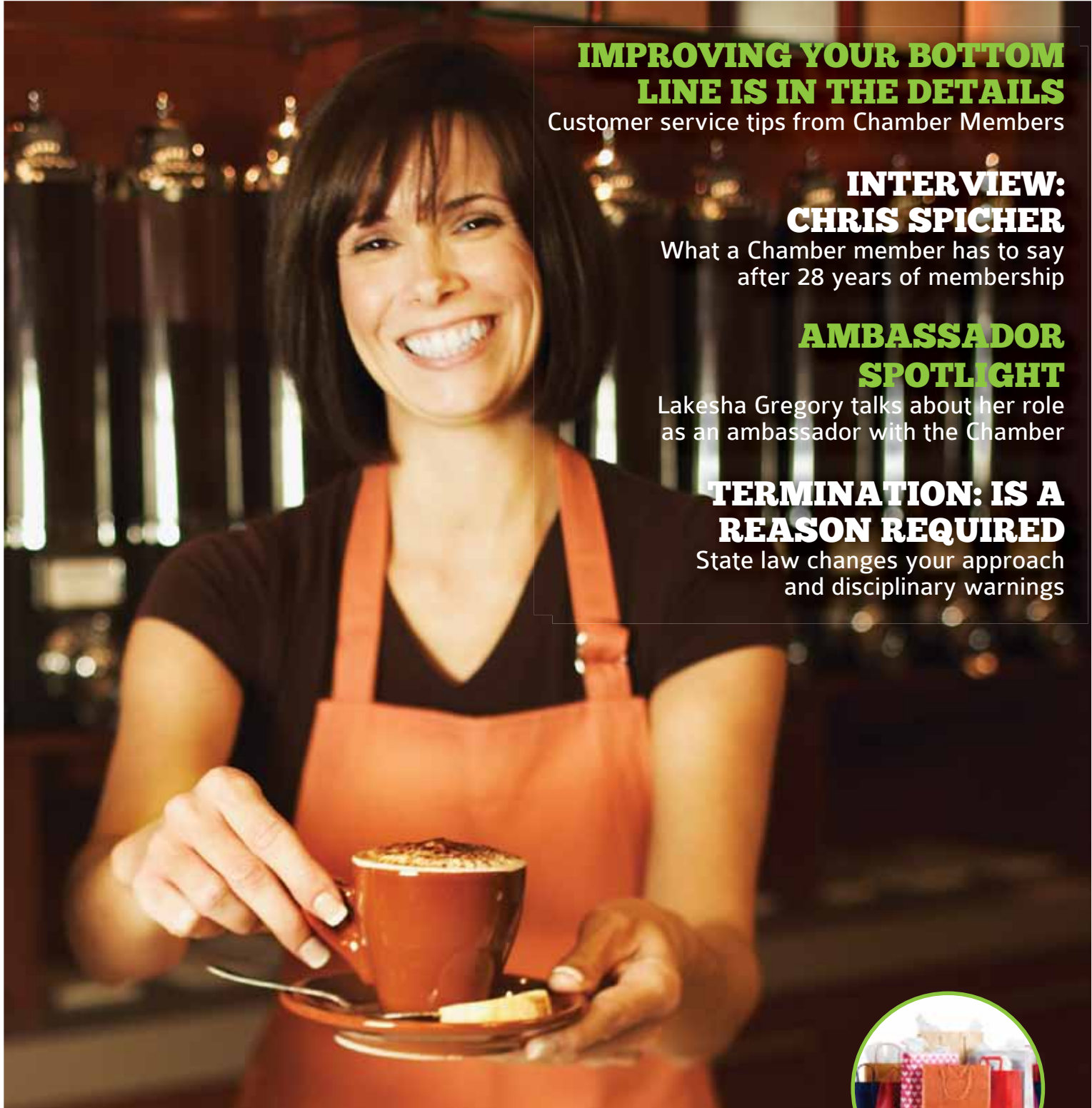
TASTE OF PALMDALE

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VANTAGE

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IMPROVING YOUR BOTTOM LINE IS IN THE DETAILS

Customer service tips from Chamber Members

INTERVIEW: CHRIS SPICHER

What a Chamber member has to say after 28 years of membership

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Lakesha Gregory talks about her role as an ambassador with the Chamber

TERMINATION: IS A REASON REQUIRED

State law changes your approach and disciplinary warnings



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04



Chimbole
Honored in
Legislature

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Chris Spicher
of Antelope
Valley Florist

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 817 East Avenue Q-9
 Palmdale, CA 93550
 Phone: 661-273-3232



Improving your bottom line is in the details

Customer Service Tips from Chamber Members

GUY BRAY

General Manager of jcpenny

“WE ARE ALL STRIVING TO DELIVER CUSTOMER SERVICE THAT BUILDS DEEPER, MORE ENDURING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR CUSTOMERS. THIS LEADS TO LOYALTY, WHERE CUSTOMERS COME BACK TO US AGAIN, AGAIN, AND AGAIN. FOR ME, TWO PARTS (OUT OF MANY) ARE ENGAGED ASSOCIATES AND A ROBUST REWARDS PROGRAM.”

We like to think our rewards program is simple & easy to use.

Customers can link up to 3 cards to their jcpRewards account, and all purchases made from any of those cards accumulate into points each month. The points can become a \$10 certificate or more. Customers redeem their rewards through email or with a free mobile app. You can even pull up your certificate from your phone and redeem it at checkout. We have found many customers enjoy earning & using their rewards which leads to more return visits.

As many other companies do, we call our employees, associates. What I mean by “engagement” is associates who feel valued, feel involved, committed & satisfied to be a part of our team. This is a group that will take great care of

their customers & deliver improved performance. A “disengaged” associate, among other things, has lower productivity and will not make the extra effort.

Happy, engaged associates are not just about being nice to everyone that works for you. We work to promote core principles such as teamwork, recognition, integrity, and community. Nowadays, many of us have customers take online surveys so we can assess our performance and find ways to improve on their experience. Here at jcpenny, we even have our associates take an annual online survey so we can continuously improve their work environment. I could go on, but we know that sustained success comes from our customers returning to us again & again. Great customer service is the engine that powers it.



his month's editorial theme of Customer Service provided us with the opportunity to survey a few members to find out how they provide quality customer service.

The committee appreciates the willingness of our members to share their ideas.

We hope the following thoughts, ideas, and solutions inspire you in your business.

1. *How does your business provide quality customer service?*
2. *How do you deal with a difficult customer?*
3. *If you have a loyalty program, how does that fit into your customer service program?*



ANTELOPE VALLEY PLUMBING, INC.
Mike Bevington, Owner



PARENT TEACHER AIDS
Jackie Zibble, Owner



STEER N STEIN
Jennifer Nelson, Owner

1. We are always here to answer the phones with a smile. When you call, you get a same day or next day appointment. If it is an emergency we do our best to get you in right away. We also have several ways for our customers to contact us. Customers can e-mail us at avplumbing1@aol.com, they can contact us through our website, they can reach us through our facebook business page, or they can simply call us. Either way they choose, they will reach one of our friendly staff members who are ready to help them. Our plumbers are courteous and respectful of customers home. When they arrive they greet with a smile, anticipate the need and leave a lasting impression.
2. When we are faced with a difficult customer we respectfully try to accommodate the customer to solve their problem by listening and acknowledging, then solving.
3. We keep our loyal customers informed with rebate info, water saving tips, and other helpful information through our website and facebook business page. We also keep our loyal customers up to date by sending them reminders and money-saving discount cards to help them when they need us.

1. Quality customer service begins with having the owner on site. When you are a small business owner customer service is everything. The owner oversees the daily operations and goes the extra mile for the customer. Customers also like to see the owner and like the fact that they are called by their first name. Being attentive to their needs is the only way we can survive.
2. In dealing with difficult customers, we try to understand what we can do to make it right. We recognize our limitations of what we can and cannot do. We try to make them understand our point of view. At times we have to explain the business operations so they understand why we do what we do. Many times all it takes is spending more time with the customer.
3. Our loyalty program is a Frequent Shopper Card, which offers customers a percentage off on their third visit. It is a way to reward loyal customers that shop often. It helps our customers to save some money. We have a new Facebook page and write the names down of those that "Like" our page. They will receive PTA Bucks on their next visit if they let us know they "Liked" us on Facebook.

1. Customers really need to be sure they are being treated well and getting quality product and service for their dollar. To that end, we have made sure that we are more visible to our guests, more accommodating to their wishes and desires and we are willing to expand our services and products to fit their needs.
2. In working with a difficult customer, we must first determine what has made the customer unhappy. Once we know what the real problem is we can find a solution to make them happy. If we have made a mistake, we own up to it and correct it, diffusing a lot of problems. We are fortunate to have great customers and great management and crew to treat our customers with respect. These factors eliminate a lot of potential problems.
3. We offer a variety of "deals" all the time. We use social media to let customers and potential customers know what we have going on. We also make ourselves very available to the community; people love knowing they have a direct line of communication with the owner of a business. We also offer in house offers, enticing our guests to return within a certain period of time for another special offer.



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Interview^{with} **Chris Spicher**

A Chamber member for 28 years, Chris Spicher is the owner of Antelope Valley Florist



CHRIS SPICHER
Owner of Antelope Valley Florist

Q How has being a Chamber member benefitted your business?

A It helps me become known, improves my credibility and makes me a part of the community.

Q How has the economy affected your business?

A I'm not sure it's the economy, the age we live in, or the particular retail business I'm in but I think all the above affect what we do. The last time the economy did this back in the early 90's I had dropped my membership to the Chambers of Commerce. I thought if I could save some money it would help me but what I realized is that not being a chamber member was a bad move. Being involved in the business community is so important to your business. It's like Mom, apple pie, and join the Chamber.

Q How do you plan on overcoming the economic landscape?

A I was brought up with the mindset that the way I was going to make money is with my imagination, my creativity. I think building relationships with people is important because it's a people business. We are heavily involved into social networking. People are getting to know me through these venues and deciding that they might like me or understand me and that's where they want to spend their money. We go back to the basics of meeting people, knowing people, being involved in the community, and in social networking. Even though we've been in the same location for 50 years it's having a presence in the community.

Q Do you think being involved in social networking helps you to make those connections?

A Part of what it does is keep me excited. So instead of

going home and being depressed I go home and think of new promotions. Which is what I used to do when I was 25-30. The sky was the limit, I'd run like crazy all the time, thinking of fun ideas and staying up late. It was so much excitement but after you've been doing it for a while you have this feeling of entitlement. Then you have to realize that you are only as good as your last arrangement. You continually have to thank people for being your customer.

Q Do you feel like the internet and price are affecting your business?

A I think people have always thought of flowers as expensive but at least we got past the need for only two occasions; funerals and weddings. If I had to wait for funerals and weddings to sell what we sell I would be in big trouble. Flowers are every day now, they are still built around holidays but now it's about what's the cheapest. People will go online to save 12 cents but that's not the customers problem. That's the problem of the proprietor and so we have to offer them something that they can't get anywhere else.

We received an order and the card read, "I know it's not Friday but it's the 13th, have a nice day." What kind of occasion is that? It touched her and she'll never forget it. That's what it's about! What did you have for dinner three weeks ago? You don't remember? You spent money on it. You might remember last night. What do you have that you've spent money on that you still have today? There are few things we spend money on today that we will keep forever but an emotion or a feeling, that will last. Especially, if it's done at the right time and the right reason they will never forget it.

For the full interview visit palmdalechamber.org/avflorist



Taste of Palmdale, Great Success

Many people think it's about price but being the least expensive isn't always best.

I want to thank those that participated and gave an enormous amount of time and effort to make the Taste of Palmdale a great success. It was our most successful Taste of Palmdale and look forward to next year.

In today's market the economy is up and down, it's hard to find the right thing that will bring customers through the door. Many people think it's about price but being the least expensive isn't always best. Sometimes it's

about how your employees treat your customers. When people feel they have been treated well by a company they will not only come back but they will not mind paying a premium for it. Customer Service has always been and will always remain to be the best differentiating factor for you in the marketplace. We buy from people we trust, from people we like, and from people who take care of us. It is also the best way to retain customers and clients. When a client feels wronged they will tell their friends but when they feel important they will make sure you see all of their business. That's why we decided to make Customer Service the theme for October.



STACIA NEMETH
CEO

CEO'S LETTER

Palmdale Chamber at Your Service

Providing quality customer service is a critical component of any successful business.

In today's competitive business climate, consumers are looking for more customer service from business than ever. The Palmdale Chamber of Commerce has always provided quality service, but we are striving more than ever to keep up with our members' needs. If you haven't been in the office late-

ly, please stop by to see us. Liz De La Cruz and I will take the time to show how the Chamber can best serve your needs. We offer a multitude of advertising options, educational courses, and networking opportunities. Our partnerships with the City of Palmdale, the SBDC, and the WorkSource Center provide our members with plenty of business resources. The Palmdale Chamber of Commerce is a valuable information center and we look forward to helping your business grow.

Customer Service is Everybody's Business

by LAURA GORDON Great Hill Services, Inc.



The October luncheon guest speaker will be John Perry, President, Human Productivity Systems.

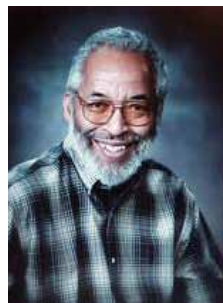
The quality of customer service is dependent upon the quality of relationships among service providers. The stronger this "chain" of relationships is across the organization, the higher will be the quality of service. As resources and work in progress move along this chain, it is important that each "link" accepts responsibility for adding value and maintaining the organization's quality standards. During his talk, John will present ways to strengthen the "chain" and explore the likely consequences if even one "link" is weak.

The cost of the luncheon is \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members, \$5 non-eating members, \$10

non-eating non-members. We are expecting a large turnout so please don't forget to RSVP to the Chamber 661-273-3232.

If you would like, your name can be added to the permanent RSVP list. Remember once you are on the permanent list you are included in the head count. If you can't make it please call and cancel your reservation.

We hope to see you at our luncheon on Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at 11:15am for networking.



JOHN PERRY
Luncheon Speaker

Spirit of Palmdale



Randy Keller, Embassy Suites, received the "Spirit of Palmdale" banner from Little Miss City of Palmdale, Mackenzie Burton



Lorenzo Murillo, Rhey Comm, received his member plaque from CEO, Stacia Nemeth.

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- Rincon Dynamic,
Nestor Rincon
Palmdale CA 93552
www.rincondynamic.com
- RheyComm, Lorenzo Murillo
Palmdale CA 93550
(661)794-2619
rheycomm.acndirect.com

We Appreciate You!



Thank you to all of our wonderful sponsors who made our 4th Annual Taste of Palmdale event a success. We appreciate your dedication to our community.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO TASTE OF PALMDALE GOLDEN SPOON WINNERS. Best Restaurant - Fresco II, Best Dessert - Nadia Cakes, Best Caterer - LeMaes' Fine Cuisine Catering

NLRB Requires Notification of Unionization Rights

The National Labor Relations Board issued a final rule, scheduled to take effect on November 14, 2011, requiring employers to notify employees of their rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

The Palmdale Chamber of Commerce plans to have a compliance product available for our members before the November 14 deadline.



Jesse Cook displayed his artwork at Taste of Palmdale



Staff from Applebees restaurant enjoyed Taste of Palmdale

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- 20 High Desert Broadcasting LLC**
(661)947-3107
- 19 Dewey Pest Control**
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- 15 A.V. Committee On Aging**
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- 14 Hunter Dodge, Chrysler, Plymouth, Jeep**
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(661)285-9184
Stater Bros. Market #130
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- 8 Secure Mini Storage**
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- 6 Antelope Valley Health Care**
(661)948-7501
Hampton Inn & Suites
(661)265-7400

Lakesha Gregory

ServiceMaster by Master and Sons

Q: *How has being a Chamber member benefitted your business?*

A: Being in the Chamber has helped our business because it is getting us in front of more business owners. It allows us to market in our area with confidence, and gives us business tools for free that we can use to move our business forward. The Chamber membership also lets residents of Palmdale know that our company is here for them.

Q: *Why did you become a Chamber Ambassador?*

A: I became a member of the Ambassadors for the opportunity to volunteer, but also so that other Palmdale businesses see that ServiceMaster is a community oriented company that supports the area in which it is located. I like that we socialize with new business and support them in anyway possible.

Q: *How has this economy affected your business?*

A: As with the other businesses nationwide, we have seen a decline in business.

Q: *How do you plan on overcoming the economic landscape?*

A: We are overcoming by keeping



our nose to the ground and getting out there no matter what. We continue to do business in the same manner as we always have and so we get business from referrals as well as repeat customers.

Q: *What do you most like about your business?*

A: I like that fact that we get a variety of different business and we meet different people with every new loss.

Q: *What is a typical day like?*

A: Nothing about the disaster remediation business is typical. Every day is different and rarely is there a set schedule for the techs. We can change the schedule in the blink of an eye or have 15 losses come in at one time and have to scramble to fulfill the obligation. So there is nothing typical about the day in the life of ServiceMaster.

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- 3 Antelope Valley Volkswagen**
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Fire Island Grill
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- 2 Ashley Furniture HomeStore**
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Casablanca Apartments
(661)285-3118

- 2 Cielo Azul**
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EURO Aesthetics Medispa
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- 1 All American Self Storage**
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Tarzana Treatment Centers
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Former AV Assemblyman Chimbole Honored in Legislature

By Larry Grooms

SACRAMENTO – Larry Chimbole, the first Mayor of Palmdale and the first Antelope Valley resident to be elected to the California State Assembly, added another first to his biography in late August when he was introduced in the state Capitol as California's oldest living legislator at age 92.

a surprise to Chimbole, who was invited to be honored in both the Assembly and Senate on Monday, Aug. 22, along with other present and former legislators of Italian heritage. Chimbole's singular seniority was discovered by Assemblyman Anthony Portantino's staff while doing research for the Italian American Legislator Project of 2011.



Larry Chimbole and Sharon Runner

Concurrent Resolution 68 in both the Assembly and the Senate, and in the presence of Chimbole and other former and present members who were introduced from the floor of each house. Chimbole, who served in the Assembly from the Antelope Valley from 1976 to 1980, also attended two receptions and visits with Senators Sharon Runner and Jean Fuller, and Assembly members Steve Knight and Connie Conway who leads the Republican Caucus.

Chimbole, a lifelong Democrat, was accompanied on the drive to Sacramento by Larry Grooms, a lifelong Republican and close friend.



Former Assemblyman Larry Chimbole, former Senate Pro Tem David Roberti and former Assemblymen Sal Canella were honored by Assemblymember Anthony Portantino (right)

A: No. California law does not require that you give an employee a reason why he/she is being terminated; it is part of the “at-will” policy in California. Indeed, the “Notice to Employee as to Change in Relationship” that is required by the Employment Development Department does not have a mandatory section for an employer to note why it is terminating an employee.

If you do give a reason, however, it is imperative that it is the truth and the real reason. If your termination is challenged (i.e., a wrongful termination lawsuit), you don’t want to be “back pedaling” and changing your story.

Termination Approaches

There are different schools of thought as to how to handle a termination. Many employers prefer to simply tell the employee, “This isn’t working out,” and not enter into an elaborate discussion with the individual. Other employers prefer to explain to the person the reason behind the termination. There is no right or wrong way to handle this situation—it may depend on the person being termi-

State Law Does Not Require Employers to Give Reason for Termination

Q: We are terminating a problem employee today. Do we have to give him/her a reason?



nated. Some individuals want to argue the decision, and that is probably when it’s best to stay simple and explain it isn’t a topic for a discussion, but it is a decision that has been made. Other individuals may benefit from a simple discussion of why they are being let go and accept it as closure. It’s also best not to call a termination a “layoff” when it’s truly a termination. If the position is filled relatively quickly, the ex-employee might find out and claim the layoff was a subterfuge and the termination was discriminatory in nature.

Disciplinary Warnings

If an employer follows the progressive disciplinary path, most employees will

know why they are being let go. If they receive oral warnings, followed by written warnings, and possibly even a suspension, there will be ample evidence supporting the decision to terminate in the event the decision is challenged. A stated policy of progressive discipline tends to erode into the at-will relationship, since the courts have held that a promise of progressive discipline guarantees the employee ample warnings before termination. However, the practice of progressive discipline supports the employer. If a termination of employment is a difficult decision to make, it is always wise to consult an employment law attorney to guide you through the process.

Junior Miss Katrina Henstrand

What a fun month it has been. Even though I went back to school in August, I have still been really busy representing Palmdale. During the past month Ivy, Mackenzie and I attended several parades and festivals in neighboring communities, walked at Relay For Life, went to the 9/11 Ceremony at the A.V. Mall, and attended the

International Heritage Festival at Poncitlan Square. It has been so busy we even had one Saturday we attended 5 events. We started the day in Antelope Acres at a parade and ended at home in Palmdale at Relay For Life. Just another day in a Queen's life.

The Palmdale Queens also got to host a Queen's Duck Race held during the Antelope Valley

\$1,000,000 Duck Race at DryTown. A big thank you to the race organizers who let the Queen's Race return after being gone for a few years. But my favorite event was the Taste of Palmdale. With all that yummy food how is a girl to keep her Queenly figure?

Until next month I am your Jr Miss City of Palmdale
Katrina Henstrand.



Antelope Valley Veterans Day Parade

Saturday, November 5, 2011, 9:00am

The Palmdale Chamber of Commerce is proud to sponsor the Antelope Valley Veterans' Day Parade on Saturday, November 5, 2011. The parade will honor veterans from all wars.

Veterans' Day is actually on November 11th, but parade organizers scheduled the parade for the previous Saturday, November 5th, so that more supporters and working people would be able to participate as well as attend other Veterans' Day activities in the Antelope Valley.

This year's parade will be on 5th Street West, from Avenue Q to Technology Drive, starting at 9:00 am. Following the parade a family-friendly Veterans' Appreciation Lunch will be hosted at Desert Sands Park. There will be one main food vendor with other "snack-type" vendors and veteran-support related booths. Food will be free to veterans and active duty military. The parade will include various guard units, two heritage flyovers, military and local bands, floats and other interesting parade entrants.

Grand Marshalls for the parade are local veterans Army Specialist Jerral Hancock and

Army Staff Sergeant Andrew A. Ramirez.

The Palmdale Chamber of Commerce invites Chamber members who are veterans to ride on our float. Please contact the Chamber office to sign-up. We encourage all Chamber members to participate in the parade by volunteering, entering a float, or watching the parade.

Sponsorships supporting the parade, including the Lincoln for Liberty, and more information, are available on the parade website, www.avvparade.com.

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Great Hill Services, Inc.

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Laurie Cook, Vice-Chair Fund Development
The Palmdale Hotel

Elena Treat, Vice-Chair Community Affairs
Antelope Valley Mall

Ralph Vasquez, Vice-Chair Governmental Affairs
TF Designs

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Eduardo Huerta, Halley Olsen Murphy

Robbie Royster, L.A. County Sheriff's Department

2011 Ambassador List

Chief Ambassador, Tina DeRienzo
Mental Health America

Vice Chief Ambassador, Eli Colvin, Digitech Inc.

Bruce Haney, Lamar Outdoor Advertising

David Gasper, Digitech Inc.

Debra Munden, Farmers Insurance - Robert Munden

Diane Tomerlin, Brunswick Vista Lanes

Don Ryan, Farmers Insurance

Dusti Patterson, LeMae's Fine Cuisine Catering

Kim Perkins, First City Credit Union

Lakesha Gregory, ServiceMaster

Lisa Mazzeo, Costco Wholesale

Patricia Powers, The UPS Store

Patti Holt-Pulsifer, ProCare Hospice

Paul Porteus, Prospect Mortgage

Pepe Eads, Gary Rardon & Associates

Rose Sladek

Stephanie Bolin, Avon

Stephanie Naylor, Honorary Ambassador

Tammy Romero, Lamar Outdoor Advertising

Wendell Cuffy, Wendell Cuffy State Farm

2011 Chamber Staff

Chief Executive Officer, Stacia Nemeth

Communications Coordinator, Liz De La Cruz

Vantage Committee

Laura Gordon, Eric Rasmussen, George Rasmussen,
Justin Rasmussen, Sharon Renteria, Stacia Nemeth,
Liz De La Cruz



Maternity care at its finest.

At Antelope Valley Hospital, we understand the importance of delivering world-class maternity and newborn care to our patients. "With more than 5,000 babies born each year at our Women and Infants Pavilion, these quality services have long been one of our top priorities," says Edward Mirzabegian, CEO. Our spacious, contemporary facility includes labor and delivery rooms, comfortable private rooms, modern operating suites and a newborn nursery. A state-of-the-art level 3B neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) cares for newborns with special needs while numerous support programs and classes are available to families on site. So if you're counting the days until your baby arrives, rest assured that you can count on us. Now you can receive the most comprehensive maternity care, without ever leaving the Antelope Valley.

Antelope Valley Hospital. Your destination for advanced care.



**ANTELOPE VALLEY
HOSPITAL**

A facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District

1600 West Avenue J • Lancaster, CA 93534 • (661) 949-5000
www.avhospital.org





Palmdale Chamber
OF COMMERCE

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October 2011

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9:00am
LCC – Flea Market
AV Fairgrounds

4

7:30am
Executive Board Meeting
Embassy Suites, Palmdale

11:30am
AVHCC – Luncheon
Hilton Garden Inn

5

11:30am
QHCC – Luncheon
Cascades at Rancho Vista Golf
Course

4:00pm
Joint Legislative Committee Meeting
L.A. Co. Fire Training Station,
Lancaster

6

7:00am
Palmdale Business Breakfast
HomeTown Buffet, Palmdale

12

7:30am
Board of Directors Meeting
The Palmdale Hotel

11:30am
LCC – Luncheon
University of Antelope Valley

13

5:30pm – 7:30pm
QHCC – After Hours Mixer

14

9:15am
Luncheon Committee Meeting
Palmdale Chamber Conference
Room

17

11:30am
AVBCC – Luncheon
Hilton Garden Inn

19

11:15am
Monthly Membership Luncheon
The Palmdale Hotel

5:30pm – 7:30pm
AVHCC - Mixer

20

8:15am
Ambassador Committee Meeting
Palmdale Chamber Conference
Room

9:15am
Breakfast Committee Meeting
Palmdale Chamber Conference
Room

5:30pm – 7:30pm
LCC - Mixer

25

7:30am
AVHCC – Breakfast
Applebee's

8:00am
Finance Committee Meeting
Palmdale Chamber Conference
Room

11:30am
AVBOT – Luncheon
J.P. Eliopoulos Hellenic Center

27

7:00am
7:00am
LCC – Breakfast
University of Antelope Valley

5:30pm – 7:30pm
Halloween After Hours Mixer
Embassy Suites, Palmdale
39375 5th St. West, Palmdale

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Halloween



Palmdale Chamber
OF COMMERCE

Our Mission

To promote, develop
and service business,
industry, and
community.