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High Ground

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VIDEOS

COOL THINGS ABOUT THE HIGH GROUND OF TEXAS

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Cool Things About The High Ground of Texas

Many Hands, Good Cheese

Hilmar Cheese Co. is a fixture of The High Ground dairy industry. The company, which employs 180 people, received the Panhandle Workforce Development Board's 2009 Employer of Excellence Award. Hilmar Cheese began production in Dalhart in September 2007, and is in the midst of an expansion that will create another 50 jobs. And thanks to Hilmar Cheese, Dumas landed Western Dairy Transport to handle the increasing milk transport market. Western Dairy plans to create more than 36 new jobs paying an average salary of \$50,000. Pacific Cheese Co., which started production at a facility in the Amarillo CenterPort Business Park in 2008, processes 40-pound blocks of cheese from Hilmar Cheese by shredding and repackaging it to wholesalers' specifications. Clients include Taco Bell. The company is bringing transition production for its other national customers to the Amarillo plant.

Now That's Jerky

It doesn't lay claim to the title Beef Jerky Capital of the World, but The High Ground has an ample supply of providers on its menu. Edes Custom Meats in Amarillo, for example, worked on a beef jerky process for three years to get the right flavor and texture before adding it to its full line of beef, poultry, lamb and fish products. It sells beef jerky in 8-ounce packages. BS Brand Beef Jerky in Midland started out as a kitchen business, but owner Billy Stewart has now expanded to include jalapeno, TexMex and Barbeque Beef in his company's offering of jerky flavors. Other jerky producers in the region include White's Beef Jerky in Friona, Lone Star Beef Jerky in Lubbock and Keeter's Meat Co. in Tulia.

Rooftops Wanted

The High Ground of Texas regional economic development coalition has launched a program targeted to housing developers from a five-state area that are involved in single family, multifamily and rental property projects. The program is designed to link developers to housing opportunities in some of the communities in The High Ground's 60-county service territory. The marketing initiative includes a multifaceted information campaign including print, online and direct contact promotional strategies. Cities involved in the 2009-2010 Housing in The High Ground Campaign include Aspermont, Big Spring, Crosbyton, Friona, Levelland, Midland, Monahans, Muleshoe, Perryton, Seminole and Stratford. Go to www.highground.org/housing.php for more on the program.

A High-Tech Cleanup Tool

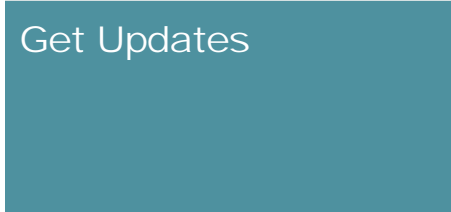
A newly developed decontamination wipe designed and developed by researchers at the Institute of Environmental and Human Health (TIEHH) at Texas Tech University has proven itself in cleaning up chemical warfare agents and toxic chemicals. Now, it's been approved by federal agencies for use in oil spill cleanups, such as the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Fibertect Cotton-Soaking, a three-layer, flexible, inert, nonwoven, nonparticulate decontamination system, is manufactured by Hobbs Bonded Fibers for First Line Technology. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved the product in May 2010. Fibertect's top and bottom layers provide structural coherence, while the center layer holds volatile compounds, like oil. The product's developers note that unlike synthetic materials currently used in many oil containment booms, Fibertect is made from raw cotton and carbon, and is biodegradable.

You Can Win for Losing

You can call Lance and Melissa Morgan losers, and that's OK. The husband-and-wife residents of Aspermont were teammates on season nine of the NBC hit show *Biggest Loser*, where contestant teams vie to shed the most pounds, get in better physical shape and win cash prizes. Lance, a rancher, lost 128 pounds to get down to 237 pounds. He was eliminated from the show in week 10. Melissa, an attorney, shed 90 pounds to get down to 143 pounds, was eliminated from the competition in week 12.

All Aboard for the North Pole

The West Texas & Lubbock Railway hosts the West Texas Polar Express, a holiday train excursion that ties to the fabled book and movie, *The Polar Express*. The train departs twice daily from Lubbock Water Rampage park for a 75-minute ride in holiday-decorated cars. The excursion includes a reading of *The Polar Express*, music from the movie, hot chocolate and cookies and, along the way, a stop at the North Pole station for a visit from Santa and his elves. You can even wear your pajamas. Go to



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Crime Doesn't Pay

Famed banking robbing outlaws Bonnie and Clyde have more than a passing connection to The High Ground. The U.S. Highway 83 Truss Bridge was built in 1939 over the Salt Fork of the Red River in Collingsworth County, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Legend has it that shortly after the bridge it replaced washed out in 1933, the dangerous duo and their gang drove into the river at high speed. In what has been called The Red River Plunge of Bonnie & Clyde, Bonnie was badly burned and left unable to walk without assistance. The duo were killed a few months after the Red River Plunge, in Louisiana.

An All-Around Athlete

Two-time Paralympic gold medalist Jeremy Campbell hails from Perryton in Ochiltree County. Campbell, who made his Paralympic Games debut in 2008, set a record in the grueling men's pentathlon, which includes long jump, shot put, 100- and 400-meter races and discus. Campbell compiled 4,662 points, breaking the previous world record of 4,444. Campbell also earned gold in the men's discus with a 55.08-meter pitch.

Putting a Head on Expansion

The San Angelo Development Corp. has approved nearly \$1 million in incentives for the creation of a regional beer distribution center. The incentive – \$930,000 to Farmer's Branch-based Glazer's Distributors – will create 79 jobs and retain 45 jobs already in San Angelo. The jobs have an average salary of \$34,000. Glazer, the 10th-largest beer wholesale company in the United States, renovated its 120,000-square-foot plant in San Angelo to convert it into a West Texas regional hub for beer and wine shipments.

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