

# EAGA Business Builder

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## Today's presentation was by Guy Berger—Palms Trading



Mr. Berger is President, and owner, of Palms Trading Company. That particular business has been around for nearly 50 years, but its origin actually goes back much farther than that. In 1933, Guy's grandfather Guido and his grandfather's brothers Luigi and Francisco decided to open the Palms Beer Garden on Rio Grande and Central. They named it after the trees that they had planted in an effort to have some of the ambiance of Italy. The trees didn't survive the Albuquerque winters, but the name did. Over time the business' product line evolved and in the 1960's it was the Palms Food store. That was the scene of an armed robbery in 1965. The criminals came in at closing and physically assaulted Guy's uncle to get him to open the safe. The robbers were able to get money from the finicky safe, but their getaway was terminated abruptly by a 410 gauge shotgun and a determined clerk that had managed to escape out the back door at the beginning of the event. He lay in wait for the robbers to exit the store, and made good on his verbal warning to "...stop or I will shoot you". No more robberies for that business. A few years later, the chain stores began arriving in Albuquerque. They drew customers away from the smaller, locally owned markets. Palms Food Store was struggling. In 1970, Guy's grandfather encountered a friend that often traveled to Arizona to buy and sell Indian jewelry. Palms had often sold goods to Indian clientele by trading food and other products for jewelry, so Mr. Berger's grandfather sent the accumulated jewelry with his friend on the next trip. The friend returned with \$15,000, and the light bulb went off. Why keep trying to compete in the grocery business when there are other industries to explore. They sold their liquor license (in those days worth probably \$100K), began buying Indian crafts for resale, and the business became Palms Trading Company. Before we progress further in the business' business, lets find a bit about Mr. Berger. He hasn't been in Albuquerque as long as the Palms entity. He has been here since he was born in 1959. His grade school and Junior High matriculation took place at St. Mary's in downtown Albuquerque. For high school, he went to the much larger, and more culturally diverse, West Mesa High. Mr. Berger played basketball for the high school and satisfactorily progressed through his classes. After graduation, he headed to UNM where he received his degree in 1981. To fund his gas money or replenish his 'general operating funds' during the high school and college years, Guy and his brother operated Burger Brothers Painting. They would paint houses for \$2 per hour (making it, maybe \$80 for a house). In the latter years of that business they were bidding jobs and getting 10 or 12 times the original hourly rate. Before 'settling down' he and some friends took two months of 1982 to tour Europe, enjoying the great experiences. That 'before settling down' was just about right. The next year, in 1983, Guy married Danielle and they began their family. Daughter, Diana, is a graduate from Gonzaga University; and son, Peter, is a graduate from St. Mary's in California. Both great children; and Guy proudly notes that they are both now an important part of Palms Trading Company (which Guy purchased, with a partner, in 1988; then as sole owner in 1999). Palms sells a wide variety of American Indian handcrafted items. Rugs; jewelry; pottery; and kachinas. Palms also sells some other New Mexico made products, like pistachios from Alamogordo; various chili products; and hand made soap. They sell wholesale and retail; involving over a hundred customers. Guy, and his company, know that their business depends on cultivating and maintaining a good relationship with the various craftsmen. Guy values his personal association with those folks and has even taken it on himself to put together some biographies of the craftsmen and their families. Those biographies, along with some of Guy's personal experiences can be found in the books that he has written. In the very near future, you will be seeing some Palms shops in local hotels, too. If you would like to find out more about the wide variety products sold by Palms Trading Company, give Guy a call at 505-247-8504; or you can visit their website [palmstrading.com](http://palmstrading.com). Although it is not obvious from the name 'Berger' , Guy, through his grandparents and uncles, can provide an extensive, and probably very interesting, discussion about Italian family involvement in New Mexico's history. Maybe even some thoughts about a 1925 encounter that could explain why Albuquerque is not THE Las Vegas.

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## Business Leads:

DULE CITY URGENT CARE is going into free standing building at 7200 Montgomery NE, Louisiana Plaza.

TRACTOR BREWING is opening a “taproom” in Four Hills Shopping Center.

SHORTY’S MATTRESS DEPOT is opening in the shopping center nears Coors & Sequoia.

- Lionel Specter—Zeon Signs

## Reciprocity:

Thank you to Jim Asperger—Crest Mechanical for replacing the HVAC unit at the preschool on Saturday.

- Paul Losey—Covenant Schools of America

◆ President Dave’s Tech Tip for the week: [virstotal.com](http://virstotal.com) It is a Google owned web app that lets you upload files to check them for viruses before you install them. You can also scan a URL directly or search the VirusTotal database to help you avoid malicious sites.

◆ Gun raffle tickets are now on sale. \$20 each or 6 for \$100. See T. J. Maloy for tickets. The trap shoot will be held on September 22nd. More details and directions will be provided at upcoming breakfast meetings.

◆ First Announcement of a potential new member:

Aurae3, LLC

Representative: Joshua Vallano

Category: Advertising & Marketing Agency

Sponsor: Kevin Lorenzen

Second Announcement of a potential new member:

Balzano Government Relations

Representative: Chris Balzano

Category: Government Relations

Sponsor: Adam Tafoya

If you have an objection to either of these companies becoming a member, or if you have information that you feel should be considered during the review process, please contact Membership Committee Chairman, Jack Zipper ([jdzipper@comcast.net](mailto:jdzipper@comcast.net) or 505-259-5959) as soon as possible.

## Badge Board Greeters

Aug 15th

Aug 22nd

Aug 29th

Sept 5th No Meeting—Labor Day Holiday

Sept 12th Jim Asperger—Crest Mechanical

## Upcoming Speakers

Aug 15th Larry Kennedy—Walla Engineering

Aug 22nd Andrew LoBue—The Grove Café & Market

Aug 29th Lynn Sharp—Sharp Law Firm

Sept 5th No MEETING—Labor Day Holiday

Sept 12th Klint Hall—Lobo Wealth Strategies

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