

EAGA Business Builder

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April 14, 2020 - Week 5 of the Lock Down

Today's presenter was David Rodriguez—Computer Solutions Group



Mr. Rodriguez began with a statement that he is missing all your smiling faces, hand shakes, and the general camaraderie that happens with our group when there are more than 5 in a room, and everyone could be less than 6 feet apart. He noted the “crazy”, humorous and joking attitudes that currently prevail during pre-meeting discussions; and the professional, ‘going to survive this thing’ attitude when it comes time to get down to business.

David really wants to assist others with whatever they need, but the Governor's orders are severely limiting what he and his team can do. The various government directives to stay at home, have caused a major shift in working atmosphere and location. Computers Solution Group is able to help setting up client's remote operating facilities so that they (clients) can try to stay functioning during this Twilight Zone time. The basic challenges are getting the ability to securely move data between the business computers and the remote location; and the ability to securely store data. Mr. Rodriguez, and his team, can help with that. They are also capable of doing a lot more—during normal conditions— and ‘probably, but it depends’ when operating under the current mandates. But David will survive this challenge as he has done for the past 20 plus years. Computer Solutions Group actually started operation in 1984 as a supply company. They sold toner, ribbons (remember those) and various other amenities needed to operate computers back in those days. In 1996, David found himself looking for work. He knew a lot about computers, so approached the company's owner with the idea to expand that company's offerings into the computer service arena. The owner agreed , and within 2 years, David had grown the service department to a point where it was larger, and more profitable, than the supplies portion of the company. Big supplier companies began to open shop in the Albuquerque area and that started to take a toll on Computer Solutions Group's business. The owner was thinking of closing it down. David was not ready to be unemployed, and he was definitely ready to take on the challenge himself. The owner was willing to sell the company to David, however Mr. Rodriguez found it quite difficult to get any of the ‘standard’ financing entities to loan him the needed funds. After a lot of difficult days, he was able to get the company's current owner to do the financing. In 1999, David became the proud, and nervous, owner of Computer Solutions Group. In the nearly 21 years since that date, David has grown the company, expanded its operations, and weathered a lot of challenging days. But there have been more good days than difficult ones. Under David's direction, Computer Solutions Group has expanded their capabilities so they can now assist with pretty much anything in the computer operations realm. David has a Low Voltage Contractor's License and he is able to install Cat5e, Cat6e and fiber networks, to code. Whether in new construction cabling, or add-on or expansion facilities, they will have it accomplished in a very professionally manner. Mr. Rodrigues and his team also have knowledge, and experience, in the non-cabled network arena as well. That includes wireless antennae installation and operation; cloud services for remote and on-site; and a variety of options involving video and data transmissions. Then there are also the ‘old school’ activities in David's repertoire: refurbishing computers; printer repairs; software installation; and probably hints and guidance for mastering the Pac Man game. There is nothing too big or too small for David and his team. In the ‘not too big’ discussion would be the recent project for the Air Force. The AF had a program to monitor and protect their remote water wells and sewage treatment facilities via the tedious and quite low-tech method of driving SUVs around to randomly check the various locations. CSG brought them into the current century by installing a network of remote wireless antennae and equipment that sends data to a new control room. Now all the security checking and leak monitoring can be done in real time from a single location (not in an SUV). Mr. Rodriguez also had one of his techs attend the virtual meeting. Thank you to Tapaz for some quite useful information, including a detailed explanation of “VPN” . My brief and probably quite incomplete summary of that discussion is: Virtual Private Networks come in two varieties and you should definitely understand which one you are installing. The difference is anonymity versus security. The first type is the generally advertised version which is used for privacy. They substantially minimize the ability for on line activities to be tracked, but require a large amount of network ‘overhead’, so the connection speeds will suffer. The second type of VPN is a direct connection between a remote computer and an office, or central location, computer system. This type of VPN is very secure and encrypted, and is for specific communications, not general internet activity. David and Tapaz (who is currently working from his kitchen table office) also provided details about Microsoft One-Drive (data storage site) and Team (a suite of services related to One-Drive). Any of you that are now relegated to ‘not at the office working’ should check with David to get the details about the Microsoft products. He, and his crew, will be much better, and way more accurate, at explaining how things work than you would get from a feeble attempt here. If you need anything network related, particularly pertinent to the new ‘stay at home’ office environment, give Mr. Rodriguez a call at 505-385-8000. He can provide advice, plans and services to accomplish whatever you need to make it work. At the very least the call will give you an opportunity to extend a virtual handshake and some of that positive, ‘crazy’ interaction.

Our next meeting will be a virtual event again. The link and instructions are noted below. Please remember, after the initial greetings and friendly banter....MUTE YOUR MICROPHONE ONCE THE MEETING STARTS.... Any background noises, coherent or not, intended or not, important to your remote world or not, get picked up by an open microphone and distributed to all meeting attendees. The unnecessary noise not only interrupts the speaker, but more often than not, actually blocks out what the speaker is saying. President Kit will let you know when the meeting is ready for questions, comments, announcements and reciprocity. At that point it is acceptable to un-mute your microphone, but just for when you want to talk. We all thank you.

EAGA Tue, April 21, 2020 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM (MDT)

Join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

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You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: [+1 \(646\) 749-3112](tel:+16467493112)

Access Code: 940-475-581

These bulletins have not been as regular, or as timely, as they should have been, and I apologize. With the constantly changing operating environment, however, it is probably not be very beneficial to publish full versions of the two delinquent issues. The government program guidance and the various filing directives are now moot points. Even the situational analysis and various predictions have already being proven true or false depending on whether you are on the 'Be cautious, but continue on' side or the 'Chicken Little' side. It is, however, definitely appropriate to note the individual meeting discussions that were specific to the presenters and their respective businesses.

March 31st—Mr. Randy Baker—DRB Electric (with additional insight from Rio Bravo Brewing)

This meeting Randy spoke about how his electrical business was doing OK in spite of the coronavirus activities. DRB was positioned well as the stand-by company for major medical facilities like Presbyterian Main Hospital and Rust Medical Center. As an 'essential business' they were still operating at a high percentage of their pre-pandemic levels. Rio Bravo Brewery was not on that same track. Mr. Baker provided us with some of the 'was going to be great' events that Rio Bravo had planned for their St. Patrick's Day celebration. The brewery had recently completed installation of a Beer Garden and had completed renovations of their loft meeting room. They were poised to unveil the great new gathering place—then coronavirus crashed the party. Their revenues that had been up about 60% over last year, were now deteriorating quickly. But Randy is durable. With a little help (via carry out business) from his friends, Randy will just postpone the previously planned frivolity for a short time—maybe a Cinco de Mayo / St. Patrick's Day combo event.

April 7th—Chez Steel—Century Bank

Mr. Steel's presentation did, for the most part, deal with the time-sensitive, but now passed, filings with SBA for the government's newly established PPP and related loan/grant programs. Some of the information is still pertinent though, since the government will soon activate a second phase of the stimulus plan, and it will most likely be administered via the same antiquated and overloaded systems as were the initial round activities. If you intend to, but haven't already filed, get with your banker and get everything set for submission when the new wave has opened up. Be sure to keep track of the what and how of you use of the funds should the government require detailed records for future forgiveness of the debt. Also noted was that Mr. Steel was not speaking from a Century Bank perspective, but from his new position at Southwest Capital Bank.

Upcoming Presenters:

April 21st: Scott Peck—MP Group

April 28th: Jukka Jumisko—WSI Web Enhancers

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