

BUSINESS

Analysts warn that cutoff of jobless aid threatens U.S. economy. Page 4C

U.S., MEXICO EASING WAY FOR FREQUENT FLIERS PAGE 4C



TOM REEL/treel@express-news.net

The new owner of the city's Jack in the Box restaurants, Atour Eyvazian, stands with the crew of the store on Military Drive.

Hungry for success

New owner of S.A.'s 58 Jack in the Boxes started at bottom.

BY ANA G. LEY
aley@express-news.net

San Antonio's most recent immigrant success story didn't start south of the border, but east of it. Actually, Middle East.

Atour Eyvazian of Sugar Land, who, with a partner, recently bought all of San Antonio's 58 Jack in the Box restaurants, began with the chain as a janitor at a Los Angeles Jack in the Box 26 years ago after fleeing from Iran. He worked every job behind the fast-food counter, and now Eyvazian is the largest Jack in the Box franchisee in the nation.

Eyvazian bought the franchises from Jack in the Box Inc., based in San Diego, Calif., in October. He declined to say how much he and his partner paid for the franchises, citing a confidentiality agreement.

But the average cost of a franchise is \$622,000, according to a Houston Chronicle report, which might put the price around \$36 million.

Eyvazian, 45, already co-owned 49 stores in Houston



A lot of people give me credit, but somebody gave me the opportunity."

ATOUR EYVAZIAN

He and a partner recently bought S.A.'s Jack in the Box restaurants

with his partner, Anil Yadav, and he chose San Antonio as his next market because he is drawn to the "friendliness of people" in Texas.

"There was something unique in San Antonio and Texas," said Eyvazian, who had plenty of other franchising opportunities outside the Alamo City. "It's a big state but a small family."

He is looking for a home in San Antonio where he can keep an eye on his newest franchises.

The soft-spoken, mild-mannered businessman began his franchising business in Sacramento, Calif., where he co-owns 10 restaurants. Eyvazian acts as the operator for the Texas restaurants, while Yadav operates the ones in California.

The businessman said he has stayed with Jack in the Box through the years because he wants to maintain his relationship with the company.

"I feel that they are my fam-

ily," Eyvazian said. "I could call the CEO right now."

Eyvazian is remodeling 24 of the San Antonio stores and is cleaning and painting the rest. He plans to open two more.

Others at Jack in the Box have made jumps from minimum-wage jobs to high-level positions. The recently retired president of the chain, Paul Schultz, had a low-income background and started on the graveyard shift. CEO Linda Lang began at the company as an accounting clerk.

"There's a big culture of internal promotion," said Jason Brown, Eyvazian's director of operations. "We love to promote from within."

Eyvazian said he left Tehran, Iran, at 19, fleeing to Turkey from persecution for being Christian and to avoid being drafted into the Iranian army to fight in the war between Iran and Iraq. When he ar-

See OWNER/2C

BY DAVID HENDRICKS

dhendricks@express-news.net

Four Texas metropolitan areas — Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and Houston — dominate the top 15 U.S. cities in a global study to determine the level of recovery from the recession.

The report from the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program ranks 150 cities: 50 in the United States, 50 in

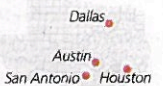
ing to the report, Global Metro-Monitor, which received assistance from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

San Antonio, Houston and Dallas rose in global rankings during the past two years from their pre-recession rankings. Austin stayed about the same, ranking No. 25 among the 150 metros before the recession.

See METROS/2C

Ranking metro areas

A look at how Texas metro areas fared in a ranking of 150 metropolitan areas worldwide, based on employment and income growth.



	PRE-RECESSION (1993-2007)	RECESSION (2007-2009)	RECOVERY (2009-2010)
Austin	25	40	26
Dallas	71	75	39
SAN ANTONIO	78	32	51
Houston	91	84	61

Source: Brookings Institution

EXPRESS-NEWS GRAPHIC

Hispanics' clout is shown on TV

The November network television sweeps rating period ended last week.

The big winner: Spanish-language networks, especially Univision Communications Inc., the Los Angeles-based network that started in San Antonio.

The big loser: English-language networks.

Univision now leads on Friday nights, according to the Nielsen Co. ratings service, which conducted its fall ratings survey from Oct. 28 to Nov. 22.

The Friday night block of Univision programs was No. 1 last month in all of television in two age categories, 18 to 49 and 18 to 34.

In general, Univision delivered double-digit percentage gains in viewers over the same period in 2009, while the English-language networks fell in numbers of viewers with double-digit percentage losses.

Here are some specifics:

In primetime, Univision viewers were up 16 percent among adults 18 to 49 and 13 percent for adults 18 to 34. Viewers 12 to



DAVID HENDRICKS

34 rose 11 percent. Among all viewers age 2 and up, the percent increase from 2009 was 11 percent.

English-language networks ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox and CW suffered a 6 percent decline in all viewers over the same period in 2009. Adult viewers 18 to 49 were down 10 percent. Adults 18-34 fell 13 percent. Viewers 12-34 declined 11 percent.

Univision's main weapons were Mexican-produced telenovelas, "Eva Luna" and "Soy tu Dueña," running weekdays last month from 7 to 9 p.m.

The two Mexican soap operas both were made with high pro-

See HENDRICKS/4C

VirTex had completed drilling the new well near Pearsall when, on Nov. 14, there was a blowout from an abandoned well nearby.

Friedrich moves HQ to near the airport

After almost 40 years at its previous location, Friedrich Air Conditioning Co. has moved its headquarters to a building near the San Antonio International Airport.

The air conditioning company moved into a 22,000-square-foot space at the Union Square II building at 10001 Reunion Place near Isom Road and U.S. 281 North. About 90 employees were relocated to the new facility. Its close proximity to the airport makes it easier for customers and vendors to visit, according to a media release from the company.

Friedrich, which manufactures heating and cooling units, previously was at 4200 Pan Am Expressway.

Catamount to open San Antonio office

Catamount Constructors Inc., a privately held commercial general contractor with offices in Denver, Atlanta and Savannah, Ga., will open an office in San Antonio in January.

The firm hopes to serve existing private, government and military clients, including Penske Automotive Group and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Services include general contracting, construction management, sustainable construction, design-build, cost estimating, conceptual budgeting, scheduling and value engineering.

The local office will be lead by Scott Reynolds, principal and division president, who started Catamount's Atlanta office in 1999.

Catamount's offices will be at 3522 Paesano's Parkway.

Xpel Technologies posts 3Q profit

San Antonio-based Xpel Technologies Corp. swung to a profit in the third quarter, posting net income of \$81,590 compared to a net loss of \$638,904 for the same period last year.

Xpel, which sells paint- and headlight-protection kits for cars, trucks and motorcycles, said revenue in the quarter grew 17 percent, to almost \$1.2 million from \$994,250 in the earlier period.

CEO Ryan Pape said sales of the company's Xpel Protection Film have been rising, a trend he expects to continue.

The company said general and administrative expenses fell 7 percent, to \$404,046, compared to \$434,103 in the same period a year ago.

— From staff reports



TOM REEL/treel@expressnews.net

Atour Eyvazian, an Iranian immigrant, says he is humbled by his success story.

OWNER

CONTINUED FROM 1C

rived in Turkey illegally, he was robbed by his smugglers and imprisoned for four weeks as a suspected spy. He eventually bribed his way out, using \$200 his mother had sewn into his trousers.

After visiting the U.S. Embassy in Istanbul, he was allowed to move to the United States, where his uncle helped him answer a "help wanted" ad at a neighborhood Jack in the Box. After taking English classes for a few months, the promotions started coming.

"When you struggle in other places, they build barriers," Ey-

vazian said. "Here, people help when they see you are trying."

Through a company tuition-reimbursement program, he earned an undergraduate degree and a master's in business administration. He bought some houses in California and sold them at a big profit.

He said he tries to help his employees "with the little things," such as when Cesar Gutierrez, manager of a West Side restaurant near U.S. 90 and West Military Drive, asked for a check instead of a trip to Hawaii when he won a performance competition.

"My wife had just had a baby," Gutierrez said. "It didn't feel right going on a vacation."

Mavis Baker, who has known Eyvazian for 15 years, described

him as "an instant friend." Baker, who met him when they were working as guest service specialists for Jack in the Box in California, had already retired from the business when Eyvazian approached her and asked her to join his team as an area manager in Houston when he entered the market there. The Houston woman said yes.

"We talk about his story a lot in our company," Baker said. "He always jokes and says he's the best cleaner in town. He takes a lot of pride in our business."

Eyvazian said he is humbled by the praise he receives. "A lot of people give me credit, but somebody gave me the opportunity," Eyvazian said. "I was lucky, and I was hungry."

More transparency for drillers?

Feds look to require the disclosure of gas-well chemicals.

BY JENNIFER A. DLOUHY
jdlohy@hearstcd.com

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration may require energy companies to reveal more details about the chemicals they use to help extract natural gas from public lands, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said Tuesday.

The federal government is weighing the new disclosure requirements for natural gas wells that rely on a controversial technique — hydraulic fracturing — amid fears the practice can contaminate nearby drinking water supplies.

"There is a bright future with respect to natural gas in the United States of America,"

tures deep underground — to break up shale rock formations and to release natural gas.

Combined with horizontal drilling, hydraulic fracturing enables companies to produce gas from rock that isn't very permeable and is unlocking what industry analysts generally describe as a 100-year supply of natural gas.

But environmentalists worry that water sources could be tainted if harmful chemicals used in "fracking" are spilled or natural gas escapes out of poorly built wells.

Late Monday, those fears prompted the New York state lawmakers to pass legislation that would bar approval of new hydraulically fractured wells in the state until next May. New York Gov. David Paterson is expected to sign the temporary moratorium into law.

ministration wants "to hinder energy production."

Fracturing already is allowed on public lands, where about nine in 10 wells used the practice. But the federal Bureau of Land Management, which oversees 250 million acres of public lands and about 48,000 drilling leases, hasn't updated regulations for hydraulic fracturing in years.

There currently is no chemical disclosure requirement, and the BLM's well integrity requirements now are modeled after what state regulators mandate and standards developed by the American Petroleum Institute, according to Steve Salzman, a fluid minerals division chief for the bureau.

In the fiercely competitive oil and gas industry, companies are wary of revealing proprietary information, they be-

total income. The No. 51 ranking during recovery came from a 0.2 cent increase in job growth a 3.5 percent increase in income growth.

"We're very stable," Phillips said of San Antonio. "We're prone to swings."

San Antonio's industry mix health care, military and tourism that is not a "fly-to" destination makes the city resist large economic swings, Phillips said. "The data prove that, it feels like that here," he said.

San Antonio also possesses a low cost of living and a diverse business, making companies here less likely to reduce spending during economic downturns, Phillips said.

Just as low-wage and low-business-cost areas did around the world, Texas climbed the U.S. metropolitan rankings for the same reasons, Phillips said.

Companies can move to Texas from high-cost areas of the country and pay lower wages. But wages, after housing and taxes, are higher for Texas workers than in high-cost U.S. metropolitan areas, Phillips explained.

CALENDAR

TODAY
SEMINAR — SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, 10-11:15 a.m., San Antonio District Office, North Park Corporate Center, San Pedro Ave., Building 2, Suite 200. To apply for small-business certification through SBA programs. Free. (210) 403-
MIXER — SOUTH SAN ANTONIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Absolutely Everything Catering, 3915 San Pedro Ave. Chamber presents its fourth annual tieloe Mingle. \$15 for individuals; \$7 couples. Contact (210) 533-1600.

THURSDAY
EVENT — TEXAS NURSING ASSOCIATION UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD, registration and networking, 9 a.m. event, Oak Hills Country Club, 540 dericksburg Road. Nursing leadership challenges and strategies for success were discussed. \$100 for nurses, \$65 for school students and \$125 for others. Contact (210) 829-3978. Contact (210) 829-
WORKSHOP — NORTH SAN ANTONIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 8-11:45 a.m., Hiltop Antonio Airport, 611 NW Loop 410. The session in four-part series for small businesses by the chamber's small-business council will offer information on how to access to capital. \$15. Contact (210) 4848.

WORKSHOP — ASEZN MARKETING, p.m., Asenz Marketing, 2520 McCull Ave. The Lunch and Learn series will continue with methods for online marketing. Contact www.asezn360.com or (210) 737-

MONDAY
NETWORKING — SAN ANTONIO HISTORICAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 7:30-9:30 Drury Hotel, 91 NE Loop 410. The monthly networking breakfast also will serve to drive to benefit SAMministries. Bring unwrapped toy to participate. Contact 225-0462.

TUESDAY
LUNCHEON — SAN ANTONIO MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., 1 Shawl, 819 Augusta St. Bob Buckley president of manufacturing for the San Antonio Lighthouse, will present "Think Proactive in Leading Your Team to Per-