

# Working Together, Succeeding Together

By Luis Melodelgado and Nora Haenn

With today's economy, it seems urgent we pull together to build a better world. Here, we report on a business doing just that. Owned by Doug Wieland and Enrique Gonzáles, Pittsboro Motors has been open since 2007. Located on the town's north side, next to the Citgo, the duo sells used cars and rents U-Hauls. Their specialty is car sales below \$5,000 under a "buy here, pay here" plan.

The Wieland-Gonzáles partnership defies easy comparison. For example, the U.S. Census carries out a "Survey of Business Owners" that distinguishes businesses owned by different genders, by American Indians, Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites. The Census includes a category of businesses owned equally between a man and a woman, but it does not contemplate co-ownership between people of different ethnic backgrounds. (As of the last, 2002 survey, an estimated 7 percent of U.S. businesses were

Hispanic owned, while 87 percent were White owned.) Wieland and Gonzáles may be trendsetters, or they may be part of a world of partnership that is little observed.

The idea for the business grew when Wieland and Gonzáles formerly worked at a separate establishment. Gonzáles recalls: "Fifteen days before losing our jobs and without knowing we were about to be laid off, Doug said to me, 'If we had the capital, we could open our own shop.'" Gonzáles refinanced his house and, with money in hand, approached Wieland. The rest, as they say, is history. Wieland notes that working together had given him the chance to observe Gonzáles in action: "Enrique didn't have the experience, but he's a good, honest person, with good family values." Of course, they both had to assess their finances before closing the deal, and,



WIELAND



GONZÁLES

so far, they have both been satisfied with their decision. The team sees themselves as complementary. Wieland has the experience in car sales, and Gonzáles is bilin-

gual. Wieland is a savvy businessman, while Gonzáles is enterprising.

Wieland is thankful for Gonzáles's hard work and also for opening his eyes to another culture and to the daily struggles immigrants face in the United States. Wieland recognizes a need to ease those struggles; he views his strength as one of bringing an entrepreneurial spirit to the topic.

Gonzáles offers an optimistic message for these times: "It's hard not to sound like a preacher, but we should keep our spirits and hopes high and look toward the future. Things will get better." And, he adds of his business, "We're pledged to give 100 percent to our community." For his part,

Wieland can't resist advertising his business: "We're honest. We have big hearts, and we firmly believe in providing good service. We never reject a person, because we know that's the only way to fulfill our vision."

That vision, one of a common prosperity built on the mutual efforts of hard working people, is one we might all share.

*Luis and Nora are Chatham residents. Luis is a translator with interests in theater and writing. Nora teaches the anthropology of Mexico at NCSU. Email: wordxchange@yahoo.com*

**Trabajando Juntos, Prosperando Juntos**

The Spanish translation of this article is on page 12.

## BRIEFS

continued from page 2.

time is 7 p.m. Admission is \$8 (\$6 for senior citizens and children under 5).

## Calling all Chatham artists

Chatham Artists Guild is calling for artists who either live or work in Chatham to apply for participation in

the 2009 Chatham Studio Tour. Interested artists may email [artstour@blast.com](mailto:artstour@blast.com) for an application or go to our website: [www.chathamstudiotour.com/artists/application-files/New-Artist-App1-2009.pdf](http://www.chathamstudiotour.com/artists/application-files/New-Artist-App1-2009.pdf).

## Authors to speak to Chatham audiences

Chef, businesswoman and cookbook author Sara Foster will be the Friends

of the Pittsboro Memorial Library's featured guest on March 10 at the Senior Center, Route 87 North, Pittsboro. The program begins at 7:30 p.m.

Author Kathryn Stockett will speak about her new book, *The Help*, March 21, 11 a.m. at The Barn at Ferringington.

It has been chosen as one of the two books central to the theme of the Community Read 2009: Exploring our Shared Racial History. Both events are free and open to the public.

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