



BEAUMONT

# ENTERPRISE.com

Vol. Cxxx, No. 23

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2009

75 Cents

BeaumontEnterprise.com

Saturday, November 28, 2009 5A

## Ex-con turned CEO speaking at prisons

By Ken Fountain  
kfountain@BeaumontEnterprise.com  
(409) 880-0729

A man who early in life served time for federal and state financial crimes and later became an Internet company CEO now tours prisons throughout the country, including Texas, trying to motivate prisoners to turn toward lives of achievement.

David Koch grew up Columbus, Ohio, where he dropped out of school sometime after his father died when Koch was 11. He worked in a variety of jobs before becoming an insurance broker in his early 20s. It was while doing that, he said, that he became "fascinated" by the way money moved through the nation's banking system.

"It was more curiosity than anything else, learning how you can create people who don't exist and draw money that doesn't exist from those people," Koch said by phone while visiting Houston to take part in a prison-themed radio program.

Koch said authorities caught up with him and he was charged in a 4,000-count federal indictment for mail fraud and other charges. He ultimately pleaded guilty to two federal charges and one state charge, and was given two sentences of between 5 years to 18 years in prison, which he served concurrently. After serving two years, he was released on parole in 1980.

"It's no fun. It's incarceration," Koch said curtly of his time in the federal penitentiary. But during his time, he said, he resolved to turn his life in a new direction.

Upon his release, Koch decided to study aviation to become a pilot. Because he only had an eighth-grade education and the G.E.D. he received in prison, he said, he had to take remedial math courses to get up to speed in his coursework.

He became a flight instructor and a transport pilot before turning his sights on the computer field. He became a software developer and in 1995 co-founded Fiber Network Solutions Inc., a company that served as one of the primary infrastructure providers for the Internet. He served as the company's president and CEO until he sold the company in 2003.

Now in semi-retirement, Koch serves as the primary financier for Green Lab Holdings Inc., a group of companies involved in the generation and distribution of renewable energy.

But "on my own nickel," he said, Koch has decided to tour correctional facilities across the country to talk to inmates and staff about the keys to success in the outside world.

Koch said too many people in prison are convinced they are destined to return there upon their release.

"That's simply not true," Koch said. "If you have a felony conviction, it does not mean you can't have a normal life."

Koch said many people released from prison too easily get caught up in the behaviors that got them into prison in the first place. When they are ultimately sent back inside, he said, they don't accept the blame themselves.

"It takes work. It's not easy," he said. "There's not a lot of difference between getting out of prison and graduating from college. Everyone has a mountain to climb. It's your choice whether you want to climb it or not."

When he speaks in prisons, Koch said, he tells inmates that they have to remain dedicated and focused on achievement, "turning from tax-consumers into taxpayers."

Koch said the nation's correctional systems themselves often help perpetuate the "propaganda" that prisoners don't have much hope when they get out, by providing information about "restricted occupations" and "barriers to entry."

While there is an approximate 75 percent recidivism rate, Koch said the vast majority of prisoners he talks to want to succeed.

Based on comments from people who have heard him speak, Koch said, he recently wrote a book, called "Slaying the Dragon: The Jour-

ney from the Dungeon to the Ivory Tower."

More information on the book and Koch can be found at [www.dkoch.net](http://www.dkoch.net).

Photo provided by Dave Koch

David Koch, who was convicted and served time for computer hacking in his early 20s and has since become a CEO, is touring prisons giving seminars to adult and youthful offenders and correctional facility staff.



**21ST ANNIVERSARY SALE**  
Now through Dec. 5th  
**Storewide Savings!**  
Me & Ro Jewelry • Hobo Bags  
Chan Luu Clothing & Accessories  
Bernardo Footwear • Flax Clothing  
*Purse Strings* 6385 Calder 866-9742

**Howell FURNITURE**  
Brands you know. People you Trust.

**LOW PRICE GUARANTEE**  
If you find the item you purchased advertised for less, within 30 days of purchase, we will adjust the price of your purchased item to match.

**FIRST TIME EVER! A \$5,000 VALUE!**

# \$2999

No other discounts apply.

## Houseful of Furniture!

**5-piece living room set**  
Set includes sofa, loveseat, cocktail table and 2 end tables.

**Plus... FREE 32" LCD/HD TV!**

**5-piece dining room set**  
Set includes dark wood table and 4 chairs.

**DINE**

**5-piece bedroom set**  
Set includes queen sleigh bed, dresser, nightstand & queen mattress from Restonic.

**DREAM**

**PLUS! FREE FINANCING FOR ONE FULL YEAR!**

brand names you trust! ● Broyhill ● LABOY ● Thomastville ● RESTONIC ● Serta ● HEMLOCK

**Howell FURNITURE**  
Brands you know. People you Trust.

**BEAUMONT**  
6095 Falsum Road  
Beaumont, TX  
409-832-2344  
Hours: Weekdays 10-8  
Sat 10-6, Sun 1-6

**CLEARANCE CENTER**  
2070 Gulf Street  
Beaumont, TX  
409-835-5308  
Hours: Tue - Sat 10-6

Hurry in today... sale ends soon!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE ONLINE @ [howellfurniture.com](http://howellfurniture.com)

\* Interest free financing for one year is provided by an independent finance company and is subject to their credit approval on purchases of \$1000 or more from Howell Furniture. Purchases of \$500 - \$999 qualify for 6 months same-as-cash financing. Down payment required on all special orders. Financing does not apply to clearance items or prior purchases. Thomastville, Tempan Pacific, and Hemlock are excluded from additional savings as they are already offered at the national minimum selling price. Some items not available in all locations. Typographical, photographic and printing errors are subject to correction at store level.