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From the Publisher

By Win Hallett
Mobile Area Chamber President

To Our New Readers:
I want to welcome our nearly 4,000 new readers to their first issue of The Business View, a monthly publication by the Mobile Area Chamber. With the latest update of Dunn & Bradstreet’s mailing list for Mobile County, our circulation now exceeds 22,000 area business owners and managers. And a recent readership survey indicated both members and non-members are reading the magazine and depend on its business content.

Three years ago, the Chamber’s economic development investors decided it worthwhile to send business-related headlines and features to all Mobile County companies, free of charge. Our goal then, as it is today, was to make more entrepreneurs and managers aware of the numerous activities and positive business news throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties.

We hope you will continue to read The Business View and route it to others. In particular, I hope you spend a few minutes reviewing the Chamber’s 2006 annual report, found in this issue on pages 13-28. The report illustrates how we are working to fulfill our mission to serve as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the Mobile area’s economic well-being. If there are other stories or topics that interest you, let our communications team know. Their contact information can be found in the annual report.

If you are interested in membership, you’ll join a delegation of nearly 2,200 other company leaders who have found strength in numbers, as we track legislative issues, work on regional initiatives through Envision Coastal Alabama, assist entrepreneurs with growing and managing companies, and recruit expansions and new jobs to the area. For additional information or to join, contact Carolyn Golson, Chamber vice president of membership, at 431-8622 or cgolson@mobilechamber.com.

I hope you enjoy and find value in our publication.

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CORRECTION: In the December 2006/January 2007 issue of The Business View regarding aerospace training programs, an error was made. ST Mobile Aerospace Engineering (MAE) partners with Enterprise-Ozark Community College in its Aviation Maintenance Training (AMT) program. Individuals in this program do work part-time at MAE while they are attending the college. We regret this error.
New Pharmacy Program Addresses Healthcare Need

University of South Alabama and Auburn University Partner on a Pharmacy College on USA’s Main Campus

Beginning in fall semester 2007, Auburn University’s Harrison School of Pharmacy will offer doctor of pharmacy degrees at the University of South Alabama (USA) in Mobile. Graduates of this program will receive a dual degree from both universities.

“Given USA’s role as an academic health system and a major provider of healthcare for the region, we believe this program is a natural complement to our programs in Medicine, Nursing and Allied Health Professions,” USA President Gordon Moulton said. “The ultimate outcome of this collaboration between Auburn and USA will be improved healthcare for the people of the state and region.”

“Understanding that there is a severe shortage of pharmacists in our region, the pharmacy school in Mobile will not only serve a real need, but it will also add yet another facet to our economy’s continually growing healthcare sector,” said Bill Sisson, vice president of economic development for the Mobile Area Chamber.

Lee Evans, dean of Auburn’s school of pharmacy, said the agreement provides a timely and flexible way to address a nationwide shortage of pharmacists. “The quickest and most cost-effective way to meet the shortage of pharmacists is for an established, accredited pharmacy school to establish a satellite campus, preferably in partnership with a school that has an accredited medical program,” Evans said.

According to Ed Richardson, president of Auburn University, the agreement enables the two institutions to work together to improve pharmacy care in the southern part of the state while making efficient use of Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy at the University of South Alabama.

Mobile Could Be Home to $68 Million Steel Coil Facility

The end of the year rang in some good news as Berg Steel Pipe Corp. announced Mobile was one of two finalists for operations that could locate at the former International Paper site. The company has the potential to bring more than 100 good-paying jobs, and a capital investment surpassing $68 million. Average annual wages are estimated at $53,000.

Berg, headquartered in Panama City, Fla., currently uses IPSCO Steel (Alabama) Inc. products, and the Mobile location of this new facility would put the company closer to a major supplier and enable them to use more of IPSCO’s product. The company is expanding to weld and manufacture pipes for large oil transmission and drilling sites.

According to Mobile Area Chamber Project Manager Herman Tinsley, the company has no competition, and a key reason for the company’s decision to locate a facility in Mobile was the proximity to IPSCO. Locating near IPSCO as well as immediate access to rail and barges were also drivers in the decision. Annually the company expects to ship more than 3,200 cars of raw materials and 35 barges.

“This is a good project for Mobile’s plateau area because not only will it infuse additional dollars in the economy, but Berg will also be using products from a local company, IPSCO,” said Tinsley. He added this company is a clean industry, and has given assurances they will work within the local community to identify, train and hire its employees. Alabama Industrial Development Training will assist Berg with this effort.

Berg Steel Pipe Corp., through its parent company, is an international supplier of high-quality-large diameter oil and gas pipe. According to company officials, the plant’s goal is to produce 180,000 tons of pipe ranging from 24-60 inches in diameter and in lengths up to 80 feet.
The U.S. Navy has awarded a contract to the General Dynamics/Austal LTD partnership to build a second Littoral Combat Ship. Pictured here is the first LCS, “Independence,” under construction at Austal’s Mobile shipyard.

The option for a second Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) was awarded to Austal USA, through its partnership with General Dynamics. The second vessel will begin construction alongside Austal’s first LCS, named “Independence.”

Company officials announced the “Independence” is entering its advanced stages of construction, and is set to be delivered to the U.S. Navy.

“Austral is targeting to grow our workforce to 1,200 employees by the end of 2007,” said Austal USA Chief Operating Officer Dan Spiegel. “We are committed through our training programs to recruiting and developing the most highly skilled group of aluminum shipbuilders in the USA.”

Austral’s trimaran LCS design offers superior seakeeping (rough weather capabilities) via its long, slender central hull that, combined with smaller side hulls, allows unequalled beam (width) creating a voluminous internal mission deck with a high payload carrying capacity. Above this is an enormous flight deck capable of handling dual H-60 helicopter operations, a feature not available on similar size naval vessels.

Word has spread about the Austral LCS, drawing attention from potential clients. According to an Austral report, more than 25 potential buyers exist worldwide for the ship and its companion equipment with two near-term contenders and four others that have expressed active interest.

In addition to the LCS contract, Austral is also nearing completion of a second ship, under construction at the company’s smaller shed.

“With the imminent launch of the first Hawaii Superferry we look forward to providing the city of Mobile with a taste of things to come,” added Spiegel.
Minority Business Enterprise Center Opens in Mobile

The city of Mobile and Mobile Area Chamber recently received a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency worth $1.8 million. The funds will be distributed over nine years to operate an Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Center (MBEC) in Mobile. The Alabama MBEC program is designed to help minority companies gain federal and non-federal contracts and increase revenues by providing them with expert consulting and other growth assistance. The center also will help achieve the Chamber’s mission to assist ethnic minority businesses by expanding opportunities to industry markets and financial capital.

“The grant from the Department of Commerce is a tremendous success for minority-owned businesses in the Mobile area,” said Darrell Randle, vice president of small business development for the Chamber. “The addition of this center will help strengthen relationships in the community and give Mobile companies the ability to compete nationally for lucrative contracts from large corporations and federal agencies. Times have changed. We are truly in a global economy. Our minority-owned businesses must meet these changes head on. The MBEC will provide these company owners and managers with the resources they need to compete both locally and globally.”

Using several technology and numerous business resources, the Alabama MBEC will offer critical services to entrepreneurs in Alabama and the Gulf Opportunity Zone. Following grant guidelines, the center is focused on helping ethnic minority-owned businesses with annual revenues of or exceeding $500,000 and companies with rapid growth potential. However, the center staff will not turn any qualifying minority business owner away and will work to connect everyone seeking assistance with the appropriate resources.

Client services available to minority-owned businesses include:

- strategic business consulting through personalized or one-on-one consulting or group consulting through education and training seminars;
- client assessments, including identifying immediate and long-term business needs by utilizing MBEC’s Business Need Analyzer;
- access to capital; and
- access to markets, including identifying and accessing opportunities such as procurement and contracts, strategic market assessment and assistance, identifying sales leads, bid preparation assistance, and development of joint ventures and strategic alliances.

“The vision of the MBEC is to help area leaders build a strong minority business community,” said Leon Grove, project director for the Alabama MBEC. “The MBEC will help strengthen cultural and economic development in Mobile and Alabama through value-added support to increase business and cultivate social integration among all residents. Our goal is to help a minimum of 37 companies the first year, although the center has the potential and resources to do much more.”

In addition to Grove, the center also employs Pamela Ramos as business consultant. Ramos will help minority business enterprises employ a comprehensive and proven business growth strategy that includes a nationwide network of business assistance resources.

All services through the MBEC are free the first year and, using a sliding percentage scale based on company revenue, are discounted in subsequent years. The center is located at 110 Beauregard St., Ste. 105, Mobile.

For more information about the Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Center, call 433-2250 or visit www.mbecalabama.org.

Leon Grove Joins Minority Business Enterprise Center

Leon Grove, a business owner and former Marine, is serving as the Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Center’s (MBEC) project director. He activated the new center last fall in accordance with the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency’s stringent guidelines.

“I am motivated by this opportunity and passionate about helping small businesses succeed by utilizing the resources available to them from the MBEC program,” said Grove.

“We have the perfect person leading our MBEC initiative in Leon Grove,” said Darrell Randle, Chamber vice president of small business development. “He was chosen by the Chamber’s Growth Alliance Task Force to oversee the center’s day-to-day operations and has the financial background, small business experience, passion and determination necessary to manage the stringent federal requirements of an MBEC. With support from local public and private organizations, Grove and his team have the potential to make a huge impact on the minority workforce and the entire local economy.”

In his new position, Grove is providing the leadership needed to strengthen Mobile’s minority business community. He is actively involved in helping minority business enterprise owners and managers articulate immediate and long-term goals, develop the strategic plans to achieve their vision and gain access to the resources necessary to meet with success. While in the U.S. Marine Corps, Grove gained in-depth experience in managing people and budgets. Now he brings a strong financial background as an accountant and insurance representative, and firsthand knowledge of the challenges facing small business owners to his role in leading the Alabama MBEC.

Grove has an associate’s degree from the University of South Carolina, a bachelor’s degree in human resource development from the University of South Alabama and a master of business administration in accounting from the University of Phoenix Online. He received many medals for his leadership in the Marines, as well as multiple industry honors while employed in the insurance industry, and is an active community leader.

Grove can be reached at 433-2276 or lgrove@mbecalabama.org.

Pamela Ramos Named Business Consultant for Alabama’s MBEC Program

Pamela Ramos will serve the new Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Center (MBEC) as its lead business consultant. In this role, she will help minority business enterprises (MBEs) from a growth and development standpoint by providing access to a national network of business assistance resources.

Ramos’ activities for clients of the center include conducting strategic market assessment and assistance, identifying sales leads, bid preparation assistance, creating market promotions, brokering services, assisting in the development of joint ventures and strategic alliances, and more.

“I am excited about helping minority business owners transform their business to increase their bottom line,” said Ramos. “Leon (Grove, the center’s project director) and I have both direct experience developing business strategies, so it is particularly gratifying to work one-on-one with clients who don’t have strategic plans in place. I truly believe we can make a difference for them.”

Already Ramos has received positive feedback from MBEC minority business clients. “The MBEC provides exceptional service,” said Derrick McMillian, president of Lights Express, one of the first companies to receive assistance from the new program. “This is definitely needed.”

Ramos holds a master of business administration degree from The University of Alabama and a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Mobile. Her business experience includes marketing, management, accounting, finance and teaching. She has worked in the education, financial services and state government sectors.

As an owner of a small soft-skills training and consulting company, she has presented informative and entertaining messages through seminars, workshops and inspirational speeches. Ramos’ presentation topics include leadership, managing change, financial management, resolving conflicts and many others for educational institutions, faith-based companies, nonprofit organizations, small businesses and a Fortune 500 company.

Ramos can be reached at 433-2250 or pramos@mbecalabama.org.
What started out as a hobby turned into a business for David Smith, president of Fabrication Specialists Inc., the Chamber’s Small Business of the Month.

Smith started “bending plastics” as a hobby, and his skills quickly turned into a business in 1983. Since then, the company has grown into a specialized architectural millwork facility. He named it Fabrication Specialists because, he said, “I always thought we’d end up doing more work.”

Within a year, Smith met with Mercantile, Gayfers’ parent company and owner of 200 other stores. Once he started working with Mercantile, Smith gained additional department store clients and was introduced to representatives from Saks, Macy’s, JC Penney and McRae’s. Next, his team started making displays for cosmetic companies. “The stores were very particular about the custom work they wanted for their stores and were extremely critical,” said Smith.

Fabrication Specialists was able to meet its clients’ high expectations, and the company’s reputation, quality of work and business boomed, especially since department stores changed displays every four years.

In 2003, when the Internet opened on-line retail opportunities, department stores started feeling the pinch and were forced to slash their budgets. “We went from negotiating work to having to bid for jobs,” said Smith. “The industry became very competitive.”

During that period of time, Smith and his employees found a new commercial market. “The greatest relationship we have now is with owners, architects and designers,” added Smith. “Our customers are a small niche of the population. Most of the work we do involves exotic veneer, specialty wood, glass and Corian, a specialized solid surface material.”

In addition to displays, Fabrication Specialists produces woodworking for wall panels, cabinetry and custom furniture like desks and tables for professional offices. On a smaller scale, the team produces high-end wall paneling, cabinets and entertainment centers for residential customers.

Having worked all over the country, Smith soon realized there was a market for his product closer to home. Since then, his company has completed work for the Gulf Coast Exploreum, USA Children’s and Women’s Hospital, Integrity Media, Press-Register and Bellingrath Gardens and Home.

Smith noted that most of his 2006 new business was non-hurricane-related new construction, both commercial and residential.

A Mobile native, Smith said having an educated staff that knows the product and company capabilities makes all the difference. “You have to stay cutting edge and not keep doing things the way they’ve always been done,” said Smith.

Fabrication Specialists is housed in a 38,000-square-foot facility and employs 28 people. For more information, call 660-1080 or visit www.fabricationspecialists.com.

For more information on the Small Business of the Month program or to submit a nomination, contact Danette Richards at 431-8652 or drichards@mobilechamber.com.
Mobile’s economy has a history in industries like shipping, shipbuilding and aviation. Those industries continue to thrive today and have significant growth potential in years to come. However, Mobile’s new economy blends the traditional and high-tech business sectors in an unparalleled way along the immediate Gulf Coast. Nearly 110 companies are driving changes in the local economy’s dynamics, along with an estimated cumulative 6,000 employees who utilize technology as part of their core job function every day. These companies are members of the Mobile Area Chamber’s Gulf Coast Technology Council (GCTC), a program designed to promote awareness of and provide professional development and networking in the technology industry in the Mobile Bay area.

In addition to companies that develop technology, GCTC membership includes local hospitals, banks and municipalities, all of which consider technology to be one of the driving forces in their respective industry. “The GCTC began as a networking opportunity for those in Mobile’s technology sector,” said Claudia Hamilton, project manager at the Chamber and GCTC coordinator. “By promoting and growing Mobile’s technology sector over the past few years through the GCTC, we helped cultivate a highly skilled workforce with high-quality, high-wage careers. This impact is felt today and is a continued focus for the local businesses.”

The GCTC provides a forum for the technology community to come together and share common interests and ideas, according to Bayne Bridges, president of Logical Communications Services Inc. and president of the GCTC steering committee. “There are common threads across all technology companies,” he said. “Funding and staying up-to-date with the latest trends are two such issues. Through the GCTC, we have the opportunity to come together on neutral ground to address these and many other areas.”

The technology council holds bi-monthly meetings for its members where guest speakers cover a range of topics, from overviews of local companies to real-life issues like disaster recovery and business continuity planning. GCTC members work in conjunction with the Chamber to spearhead other events such as the annual Business and Technology Expo.

Another role of the GCTC is to attract more technology-based businesses to the local area, according to Hamilton. “The Gulf Coast Technology Council provides true-to-life case studies from companies that are located in Mobile, and we use these testimonials to attract other tech-related companies,” she said. “Mobile has a strong quality of life and talented workforce. Among other benefits, these help attract companies to the area and keep them in Mobile.”

Through collaborative partnerships with organizations such as the Alabama Information Technology Association (AITA), the GCTC is gaining greater exposure throughout the state. The AITA is committed to growing and supporting the Alabama information technology industry and those organizations utilizing, supporting and affiliated with information technology.

“By promoting and growing Mobile’s tech sector over the past few years through the GCTC, we helped cultivate a highly skilled workforce with high-quality, high-wage careers.”
Claudia Hamilton project manager Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and GCTC coordinator

“A result of one statewide AITA partnership is the listing of nearly 20 local companies in the Alabama High Tech Directory, developed by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. This directory provides a listing of products and services developed by Alabama-based technology companies. Companies eligible for inclusion in the directory must be significantly engaged in innovation and/or development in the product area(s) selected on the entry form, such as The SSI Group Inc., Enveloc Inc., MGG Business Solutions and Mitsubishi Polycrystalline Silicon America Corp., to name a few.

“We know that local entrepreneurs can have a dramatic impact statewide,” Bridges said. “Raising awareness throughout Alabama about Mobile’s technology sector will only help the companies in the community. The GCTC provides the perfect vehicle to do that through its partnerships and many resources.”

The GCTC is also working on collaborative efforts with technology councils along the Gulf Coast and planned a joint business continuity seminar in January with tech councils in Florida.

For more information about the GCTC or to join, free with a Mobile Area Chamber membership, visit www.gulfcoasttechnology.com or contact Hamilton at 431-8616 or chamilton@mobilechamber.com.
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The following companies were instrumental in helping the Mobile Area Chamber present its 170th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at the Mobile Civic Center. With the financial support of these area businesses, the Chamber produced a video annual report and brought more than 1,200 business professionals together for the area’s largest networking meeting. Thank you for your support.

BankTrust

BankTrust Alabama offers comprehensive banking services to satisfy all financial needs, as well as a range of accounts and lending services. BankTrust is a subsidiary of the BancTrust Financial Group Inc., holding corporation, headquartered in Mobile. The holding company provides banking services at 29 offices in Alabama and Florida. In addition to banking services, BancTrust also provides trust, investment, insurance, brokerage and financial planning services through its affiliates, BancTrust Company Inc. and BancTrust Financial Services Inc.

Alabama Power

Alabama Power Co. provides competitive pricing, a reliable electricity supply and unparalleled service to 1.4 million homes, businesses and industries in the southern two-thirds of Alabama. Alabama Power is the second largest subsidiary of and one of five U.S. utilities operated by Southern Co., one of the nation’s largest producers of electricity. More than 78,000 miles of power lines carry electricity to customers throughout 44,500 square miles. In 2005, Alabama Power had electricity available an average of 99.96 percent of the time while providing it at prices at least 15 percent below the national average. In addition, Alabama Power actively promotes electricity’s environmental friendliness, funding research and development. The first electric utility in the U.S. to establish an economic development department encouraging and supporting economic growth throughout Alabama, its employees work with customers to help improve the energy efficiency of their homes, businesses and communities.

Compass Bank

Compass Bank is a subsidiary of Compass Bancshares Inc., a Southwestern financial holding company with 409 full-service banking offices in Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, New Mexico and Texas. Compass Bancshares is among the top 30 U.S. bank holding companies by asset size and ranks among the top earners of its size based on return on equity. Compass Bank conducts a general commercial banking and trust business at all its banking centers. The company is currently organized along lines of business — each a strategic unit serving a particular group of customers with common characteristics through various products and services. The company’s primary operating segments are corporate banking, retail banking, wealth management and treasury.

Integrity Media

Integrity Media is a privately held media communications company that creates, publishes and distributes Christian music, films, church worship resources and other related materials sold throughout the United States and in more than 160 countries worldwide. Originally founded in 1987 as Integrity Music, a direct-to-consumer music club, the company quickly became one of Christian music’s biggest success stories and, in the process, helped ignite the widespread popularity of contemporary praise and worship music. Today, Integrity brings its unique approach to film, greeting cards and, most recently, digital initiatives including iWorship, a first of its kind mobile phone service. While music will always be the heart and soul of Integrity Media, it has rightfully earned its classification as a full-featured media company because of its enduring and foundational commitment to create and produce Christ-centered products and resources for individuals, families and churches worldwide. In addition to Integrity’s Mobile corporate headquarters, the company maintains offices in Nashville, Tenn., and in its major international markets in Australia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Singapore.

Meyer Real Estate

Since 1967, Meyer Real Estate has been a leader in the dramatic transition of the Gulf Coast from a tiny village of beach cottages to a major destination resort. The company is a privately held, full-service real estate brokerage company with a 36,000-square-foot corporate headquarters building in Gulf Shores designed to enhance STAR Treatment. STAR Treatment is Meyer Real Estate’s exclusive guarantee that its clients will always receive service, trust, accessibility and results from everyone in the organization. Its state-of-the-art headquarters provides evidence of Meyer’s commitment to remain sensitive to natural surroundings and protect the natural elements of all pieces of property. As the company has grown, its range of sales and property management services has expanded to include real estate sales, vacation rentals, community association management, vacation rental property management, long-term rental property management and second-home services.

Mobile Air Center

The Mobile Air Center has two locations – Brookley Field and Bates Field at the Mobile Regional Airport. The company is the proud recipient of ExxonMobil’s Premier Spirit Gold Award for exceptional performance in service, image and quality control. In business for more than 40 years, Mobile Air Center is a full-service, independent fixed-base operation offering a range of services to its customers. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the center maintains approximately 70,000 square feet of hangar space and secure, lighted ramp spaces. A leader in executive air charter in the Mobile area, the center’s aircraft are maintained and operated under strict FAA Certified Part 135 regulations with professional, highly experienced pilots. Aircraft accommodate up to eight passengers.

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www.usouthal.com

The University of South Alabama (USA) is Alabama’s fastest growing university and has the fourth largest enrollment with 13,500 students. More than 1,800 practicing physicians are among its alumni. USA is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and comprises the colleges of Allied Health Professions, Arts and Sciences, Mitchell College of Business, Education, Engineering, Medicine, Nursing and schools of Computer and Information Sciences, Continuing Education and Special Programs and the Graduate School. The USA Health System — including the College of Medicine, USA Medical Center, USA’s Children’s and Women’s Hospital — serves more than 250,000 patients annually. The region’s first comprehensive academic cancer institute complements programs in kidney transplant, burn and wound care, neonatal intensive care, trauma, sickle cell disease and others.

www.wachovia.com

With corporate headquarters in Charlotte, N.C., Wachovia’s vision is to become the best, most trusted and most admired company in the financial services industry. The company’s key subsidiaries are Wachovia Bank NA, Wachovia Mortgage and Wachovia Securities LLC. Wachovia Corp. is a diversified financial services company that provides a broad range of banking, asset management, wealth management, and corporate and investment banking products and services. With more than 110,000 employees, the company serves banking, brokerage and corporate customers primarily on the East Coast, as well as through investment banking offices in selected locations. The company is the fourth-largest bank holding company in the United States based on assets and the third-largest U.S. full-service brokerage firm based on client assets with full financial services through offices in 21 states and full-service retail brokerage with offices in 49 states through Wachovia Securities LLC.

www.whitneybank.com

Opened in 1883, Whitney National Bank is the oldest continuously operating bank in New Orleans and a banking industry leader in the Gulf South. Whitney still represents what it did in its early days: solid business experience, sound ethical values, strong capital and careful customer attention. In the mid-1980s, Whitney began expanding throughout the Gulf South, including Alabama, Mississippi, Florida and Texas, and it now operates approximately 150 branches. Over the years, Whitney also has expanded services to offer clients a strong commercial base, international banking, investment, trust and consumer services, and the bank has assets of more than $10 billion.

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*Source: comScore Media Metrix, May 2006

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al.com is the online home of The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times and the Press Register.
The verdict is in, and Mobile experienced yet another tremendous year in 2006. Aside from being blessed with an idle hurricane season, headlines of new business announcements and local companies investing in their future here told the real story. Mobile is on the right course for growth that will sustain the community for generations to come.

Personally, I am most proud of the community and business relationships this Chamber continues to cultivate. Our work, in tandem with Mobile County, the city of Mobile and each of our private investors, has been remarkable. I believe these partnerships and our ability to find a common ground are critical. We’ve seen the governor of Alabama tout our work, as well as the president of Alabama Power Company, our local, state and federal legislators and countless other executives recognize our efforts. While it’s challenging to maintain partnerships on every level in business recruitment and expansion, it’s extremely valuable.

When I first became involved in this Chamber we had seen a steady decline in membership, and it makes me so proud to look where we are today. Membership in your Chamber is right around 2,200 members. Collectively we represent 80,000 men and women in the Mobile area as the voice of business. We remain committed to offering you programs that benefit your bottom line, addressing community and legislative issues that can impact your business, and working to grow the Mobile Bay economy. In addition, our business retention and expansion program is dedicated to assisting local companies, and our Partners for Growth economic development effort is exceeding its annual goals. Both of these are the best in the Southeast, and perhaps the nation.

If you’re not already an active member of the Chamber, I’d encourage you to get involved this year. There are several committees and task forces that can use your time and talent. And if you don’t have the extra time to get involved, don’t worry – with your support we’re working hard to build you a better Mobile.

With regards,

Alan L. Heffernan
Ciba Specialty Chemicals
2006 Chairman of the Board
This year alone there have been 10 new company announcements and 8 expansions, creating 1,197 jobs with more than $313 million in capital investment. Best news of all, the average annual salary is well above the goal of $32,500, and in fact closer to $45,000. These jobs have helped establish high-growth sectors such as maritime, aviation, high-tech and healthcare.

Mobile's reputation as an international city is growing as the majority of new announcements in the region are from global companies. The Chamber continues to foster international business.

**Partnerships**

Members of the Chamber's economic development team along with volunteers and County Commission President Juan Chastang met with the city of Prichard elected officials to learn more about the city's economic growth efforts.

In December, land in Prichard was named the site of choice for the Alabama Motorsports Park. The $600 million construction project will be named the Dale Earnhardt Jr. Speedway, and will be build on approximately 3,000 acres of land near Saraland. The project is expected to break ground in late 2007 with the park fully operational in 2010. Three sites were in the running for this project, including two locations in Baldwin County.

**Projects for the Stars and Stripes**

With a number of military-related contracts awarded or in the bidding process, the nation is seeing Mobile as a new hub for military projects.

Related headlines include:
- Team JCA, a joint mission of Massachusetts-based Raytheon Co., and Mobile-based EADS CASA North America, is in pursuit of a $3 billion Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA) contract, a merged program of the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force. If successful, Mobile is the proposed assembly site as it competes for the contract and construction of a North American delivery center.
- Gov. Bob Riley welcomed Sen. John McCain, who serves as Armed Services Committee chairman for the U.S. Senate, to Mobile last fall. McCain came to endorse a fair, open, capabilities-based competition in the Department of Defense aircraft procurement, and commend Alabama's efforts. EADS North America and Northrop Grumman teamed up to compete for the aircraft plant to build the U.S. Air Force's new fleet of refueling tankers, KC-30, in Mobile. The project has been estimated at $20 billion and would bring 1,100 new jobs to the area.
- Crestview Aerospace Corp. (now L-3 Communications Crestview Aerospace) was awarded a Bell Helicopter Textron contract, potentially worth more than $100 million. Major assembly production of UH-1Y helicopter airframe structures for the U.S. Marine Corps. is slated to begin in 2007 at the company's Fairhope plant. In addition, Bell awarded the company a contract for the production of 30 Bell Model 210 tail-booms. The company planned to add 40 employees to its Florida facility and 60 employees to the Fairhope manufacturing plant.
- Horizon Shipbuilding was awarded a contract by the U.S. Naval Sea Systems Command for the construction of 10 Mini Armored Trojan Carriers to be used in counter narcotics-terrorist operations in Columbia. The contract will provide employment for approximately 35 people for the next 15 months.
- Theodore-based Silver Ships Inc. expanded its shipyard to support its work for the U.S. Army. The company is refurbishing the army’s aluminum boats.
- Austal USA was awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy to build a second Littoral Combat Ship in Mobile. The second vessel will begin construction alongside Austal’s first LCS, named “Independence.” In 2006 the shipyard nearly doubled its number of employees to meet construction demands.

**NEW INDUSTRIES/COMPANIES AND EXPANSIONS IN THE MOBILE AREA 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alter Trading Co.</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>$14.7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aker Kvaerner</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>$5.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APN Terminals</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$600M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austal</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bender Shipbuilding &amp; Repair Co.</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>$10M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Concrete Products</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>$20M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinetry Express</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunhill Terminals</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>$44.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBSCO/Crown Products</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>$3.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global*Tel Link</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>$4.4 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Shipholding Corp.</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>$12.15M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly Clark</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>$38M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linde Gas</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$18.7 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Structural Insulated Panels Inc.</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prism Systems</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$670,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Ships</td>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$755,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIP Fabrication</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>$4.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Building Materials</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$3.8M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New: 10 Expansions: 8 Jobs: 1,197 Capital Investment: $245.3M

Note: These listings represent only those businesses that have reported a capital investment, expansion or new investment to the Chamber. This list is only a partial listing of all commercial/industrial investments occurring in 2006 in the Mobile area.
• The Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross will get new headquarters thanks to a donation from the Kuwait Red Crescent. The donation came following Hurricane Katrina and was intended to fund new buildings in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Mobile and Tallahassee and provide 15 emergency response vehicles in the Gulf region.

• In Retail Traffic magazine’s annual rankings of national retail construction, White-Spunner Construction Inc. was listed seventh among contractors in new retail shell space and ninth in new retail interior space in total square footage reported.

• The Gulfport-based Mississippi Structural Insulated Panels Inc. announced it would locate a facility in Citronelle. The company will manufacture structural insulated building panels for home construction. At full capacity, the facility will have between 30 and 40 employees.

• Officials celebrated the Mobile Container Terminal groundbreaking at Choctaw Point in October. The project will make Mobile a viable player in the increasing use of shipping containers. A joint venture of APM Terminals North America, a subsidiary of Maersk Inc., Terminal Link a division of CMA CGM, and the Alabama State Port Authority, the project is generating approximately 900 construction jobs. The initial capital investment was estimated at $85 million and expected to create 112 jobs with an average salary of $65,753. Phase II will add a capital investment valued at $150 million.

• The University of South Alabama and Auburn University announced a partnership in a Pharmacy College on USA’s main campus. Graduates of the doctoral program will receive a dual degree from both universities.

• A 12-year maintenance, engineering and technical support contract for Airbus valued at $63.5 million was awarded to ST Mobile Aerospace Engineering’s parent company. The work will be performed in Mobile at the company’s Brookley Complex facility.

• The Alabama Port Authority received two container cranes to meet the ever-growing container traffic. The cranes are located on the north end of the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center.

• Adding a pair of 18,000 square-foot buildings was part of a multi-million-dollar expansion announced by Austal USA last year. The company expects to hire an additional 250 employees.

**Third-Party Endorsements**

Below are a few of the accolades bestowed on the Mobile area and the Chamber's Economic Development department this past year:

• The Alabama Development Office named Mobile's economic development team the state's best during the Business Council of Alabama and Alabama Technology Network's Alabama Manufacturer of the Year awards.

• Site-Selection magazine, long recognized as a site selection professional's must-read, named Mobile as one of its Top 10 economic development groups in the country. In addition, the magazine named the $600 million EADS project as one of the Top 10 North American deals in 2005.

• Expansion Management magazine ranked Mobile on its annual list of “America’s 50 Hottest Cities.” Mobile was ranked 37 out of more than 275 cities based on a survey of more than 80 economic development consultants.

• Southern Business and Development magazine, which reaches an international audience, named Mobile as its second “hottest” market in the South for industrial growth.

• Entrepreneur Magazine named Mobile as its fifth best mid-size market in the U.S. for starting and growing a business.

• The Southern Economic Development Council awarded the Chamber its top Community Economic Development Award out of 18 Southern states for the Chamber’s outstanding Business Retention and Expansion program.
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Manufacturer of the Year**

From more than 1 million tons of scrap iron and steel, IPSCO Steel (Alabama) Inc. uses the latest modern technology to manufacture products for the maritime, automotive and pipeline industries. The Mobile division, known internally as the “darling” of the company, recently completed a $45 million expansion bringing its total investment to $500 million. Product capabilities of this world-class steel plate and hot-rolled steel complex have steadily increased since its start-up in 2001. The company employs about 400 workers, plus 275 employees through independent contractors, making it one of the largest manufacturing facilities in Mobile County.

**Business Retention and Expansion**

The Chamber’s business retention and expansion program won the 2006 Alabama Economic Development Alliance of Alabama Community Development Award and the 2006 Southern Economic Development Council Community Development Award.

Since the Chamber’s Business Retention and Expansion program started in 2004, staff and volunteers have visited more than 250 companies and solved 145 company-related problems. As a result, there has been a marked decrease in the number of businesses leaving the community over the past few years and a tremendous increase in expansions of existing industry.

**BRE Meetings Focus on Workforce Development**

The business retention and expansion committee met with various workforce advancement providers to learn more about options on hiring qualified, trained, or trainable workers. Mobile Works, the Alabama Career Center, the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, Vocational Rehab and Soft Skills Training have all presented to the group, which believes a collaborative approach to workforce development is the key to building the most effective plan to address the area’s current and future workforce requirements.

**Help Wanted. Now Hiring.** As Mobile’s economic landscape continues to change, the Chamber applied a renewed focus to the area workforce and conducted numerous activities to educate employers, train employees and build a future workforce.

The Center for Workforce Development was launched in 2000 with the mission of improving workforce quality for area employers. The center’s mission is to serve as the community’s intermediary between business/industry and education as well as helping meet the workforce needs of aviation, shipbuilding and healthcare – Mobile’s high demand industries.

**Addressing the Gulf Challenge**

In partnership with the Alabama Office of Workforce Development and Mobile Works, the Chamber held the Gulf Coast Workforce Summit, bringing 150 participants together with representatives from the U.S. Department of Labor, state and local workforce agencies. Experts from the Arlington, Texas, the Chamber and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce addressed topics focused on the importance of developing strategic partnerships for workforce development.

A follow-up strategy session was held in October to kick off the development of a comprehensive and integrated workforce plan for Mobile. More than 80 business, education and community leaders participated in the meeting.

**Scrub In**

One hundred and forty students from Mobile and Baldwin counties participated in Summer Scrubs, an annual project of the Bay Area Healthcare Coalition managed by the Chamber’s Center for Workforce Development. The program allows rising 10th - 12th grade students the opportunity to interact with healthcare professionals, observe them on the job and learn more about the educational requirements for healthcare careers. Host sites included Franklin Primary Health Center, Mobile Infirmary, Mobile Mental Health, Providence Hospital, Springhill Medical Center, Thomas Hospital, USA Children’s & Women’s Hospital, USA College of Medicine and Victory Health Partners. Students are selected through a competitive application process considering academic performance, character and interest in healthcare.

**Arriving At the Scene**

Students participating in the fourth annual interactive Health Occupations Career Fair arrived on the scene of a mock head-on car collision. Students followed “victims” through EMS, surgery, rehabilitation and other exhibits sponsored by area hospitals and healthcare providers. This event is the signature project of the Bay Area Healthcare Coalition, and is designed to pique students interested in joining the profession. More than 800 students and educators from both counties attended.

**Finding Workers**

In partnership with the Alabama Career Center and Mobile Works, the Center for Workforce Development began conducting mini job fairs in October to help member companies find qualified or trainable workers. Several factors, including a low unemployment rate, are requiring some companies to become more creative in recruiting.

Companies taking advantage of the events included Mobile Paperboard, Smith Industrial, Honey Baked Ham, Wingate Inn and Express Personnel.

More than 200 interviews were conducted during the job fairs.

**We’ve Got Connections**

Following a successful workforce development summit this fall, the Chamber produced a resource guide to help employers locate skilled and/or trainable workers to meet their ever-growing needs. **Connections – A Workforce Resource Guide for South Alabama offers valuable information on local, state and federal programs and higher education institutions.**

**For Hire**

The Chamber helped establish a Maritime Industry Coalition to address the need for improved training. Members include representatives from the area’s shipbuilding and repair sector. The group submitted a U.S. Department of Labor grant in conjunction with Bishop State Community College to fund a maritime welding and shipfitting certification program.

More than 1,000 juniors and seniors in Mobile and Baldwin County participated in the Bay Area Healthcare Coalition’s annual Health Occupations Career Fair. This hands-on event teaches students about various healthcare careers.
Guatemalan Visit
A delegation led by the Guatemalan ambassador to the U.S. visited Mobile. In addition to a tour with the Alabama State Port Authority, one-on-one meetings with area business representatives were scheduled in Mobile, Montgomery, Birmingham and Huntsville.

International Visits Promote Trade
From international dignitaries to representatives from foreign-based companies, Mobile drew attention from people and businesses looking to expand trade or intellectual property with Alabama companies.
Visitors included representatives from Quebec, Canada; and Kosice, Slovakia; the Guatemalan Ambassador to the U.S.; the Deputy Chief of Missions to the U.S.; and the Secretary of State for the Dominican Republic.

Destination China
The Chamber hosted China Business 2006, an initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The event drew representatives from local companies looking to support closer U.S.-China commercial ties and highlighted Chinese export and investment opportunities. The forum featured the Chinese Deputy Chief of Missions to the United States, Zheng Zeguang, executives from the American Chambers of Commerce in China and other Chinese business specialists who provided hands-on information on finding suitable partners, licensing, sales and marketing, distribution and trading, customs and clearance and regulatory issues.

Learning International Options
During the year, the Chamber offered eight educational export seminars for local companies interested in doing business abroad including seminars on tax strategies for exporters, U.S. government financing for exporters and market briefings on various countries.

Habla Espanol?
To help the maritime industry better communicate with a growing Hispanic workforce during the hiring process, the Chamber, in conjunction with Mobile Works and the Associated Builders and Contractors, conducted a 12-week Spanish class for human resource professionals.
The Gulf Coast Technology Council (GCTC) continues to grow as the region’s premier technology business association. It is a networking and outreach effort of the Chamber, working to foster the area’s technology growth and position the region as a leader in the technology industry. The group meets bi-monthly and is comprised of 90 companies. During this year’s Business and Technology Expo, 50 of the region’s premier technology companies participated in the event that drew more than 1,000 people.

Four members from the group were nominated for the Alabama Information Technology Association (AITA) awards. Jim Busby, of QMS fame and owner of CentraLite, won the organization’s Lifetime Achievement Award in technology.

Programs offered this past year included The Latest Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery (BC/DR) Technologies, a business continuity/disaster recovery forum; Symantec/Software Plus; addressing Backup Exec 10d and Life State Recovery.

Chamber Participates in BIO 2006

The Chamber partnered with the state of Alabama and University of South Alabama to participate in BIO 2006, an annual bio-tech show held in Chicago. Thousands of participants attended this event where a local delegation marketed the Mobile area and the Mitchell Cancer Institute to biotechnology companies from all over the world.

Innovator of the Year

Innovation comes not only in technology but in ideas, and in this case commitment to the idea to create a clinic to serve the Central Gulf Coast’s medically uninsured. Strategic partnerships with Infirmary Health Partners and Providence Hospital in conjunction with a network of more than 150 physicians and dentists helped Dr. Robert Lightfoot establish Victory Health Partners in 2003. In 2006 the medical group was named Innovator of the Year by the Gulf Coast Technology Council and the Mobile Area Chamber.

Last year, the clinic’s team of two full-time doctors, two nurse practitioners and a dentist conducted more than 12,000 patient visits, a 39 percent increase over 2005. Patients were served from 22 counties in Alabama, Mississippi and the Panhandle of Florida.

More than 50 members of the Gulf Coast Technology Council exhibited at the annual Business and Technology Expo at the Mobile Civic Center. The council’s signature event featured several technology-focused seminars for its members.

Capital Investment Growth

Manufacturing investment and expansions in the Mobile metropolitan statistical area including Baldwin County  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Capital Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'06</td>
<td>$245.3M (preliminary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'05</td>
<td>$636.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'04</td>
<td>$414M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'03</td>
<td>$74.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'02</td>
<td>$84.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'01</td>
<td>$318M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alabama Development Office

Capital investment data is collected by the Alabama Development Office with figures from local developers and the Alabama Department of Revenue, and is limited to manufacturing investments and expansions.

Mobile Area Employment

Number employed in increments of 1,000  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'06</td>
<td>260.7 (preliminary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'05</td>
<td>246.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'04</td>
<td>230.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'03</td>
<td>224.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'02</td>
<td>225.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'01</td>
<td>229.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations (based on Place of Work Survey; most recent data through 2000)
The Chamber sponsored a number of professional development opportunities to help small businesses boost their knowledge on key issues or update skills. Along with other consultation services, the Chamber assisted 1,380 local entrepreneurs.

Among the professional development opportunities were Gulf Coast Construction Safety Conference; Lean Enterprise seminar; Dale Carnegie's Dynamics of Effective Communications; Back to School Sales Tax seminars; and a Smart Managers workshop, co-sponsored with Mobile Area Water and Sewer System.

This year's forum, Smarter Business 2006, drew 270 attendees to hear international speaker, author and consultant Mark Mayberry. Produced by Compass Quest Inc., a seminar marketing company, Mayberry addressed how employees can manage their position as a business owner manages his or her business; the best way to capture growth through decision-making; upgrading communications skills and new solutions to age-old business issues and practices.

SBA Presentation Aims to Increase Investment

The Chamber hosted a successful Small Business Administration (SBA) event to help local lenders better understand and use the SBA for more of the federal program’s loans in the Mobile area. Currently Mobile’s MSA has the lowest number of SBA loans in the Southeast.

The banking and lending company executives roundtable was facilitated by the SBA Regional Administrator NuBry Fowler and the SBA State Director Michael Ricks. Another SBA initiative included a lender training workshop.

Go Power

More than 70 participants attended two Chamber workshops to explain how the Gulf Opportunity-ZONE Act will work and encourage the local business community to provide Gov. Bob Riley with input on where the money should be spent. Signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2005, the act establishes tax incentives and bond provisions to support rebuilding the areas of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi that impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. Under the provision, the state of Alabama has the authority to approve the issuance of private activity bonds (Gulf Opportunity Zone Bonds) up to $2.17 billion for non-residential real property and improvements; public utility property; and residential rental projects meeting certain tests for low- and moderate-income.

Small Business Certification

The Chamber's Small Business Council, resource partners that deliver services, met to introduce area companies to the small business certification process offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA). The process is designed to help businesses grow and access contracting opportunities.

New Government Assistance for Small Business

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) chose Mobile as its Gulf Coast location to serve the many needs of area small business owners. MBDA focuses on providing business services to minority entrepreneurs who are pursuing accelerated growth, and coordinates and leverages public and private-sector resources in support of its mission.

Created in 1971, it provides services to African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Haiside Jew, Hispanic and Native American/Alaskan entrepreneurs.

NASA Forum a Success

The Chamber along with Rep. Jo Bonner hosted a Business Opportunities Forum with NASA to help local businesses learn how to do business with the federal government agency. Last year alone, NASA spent $996 million in Alabama on procured services, prime contractor support and local construction. NASA prime contractors made presentations and afterwards networked with attendees representing 125 local businesses.

This is the second consecutive year the Chamber sponsored a similar forum with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration agency.

Each month the Chamber selects a Small Business of the Month, based on nominations from members. Pictured here is the August 2006 winner, Business Cards Tomorrow.

Monique Rogers Ruffin, owner of Bay Security (left), spoke to a U.S. Congressional Committee and at a media conference about how Hurricane Katrina affected her company and why she should have the opportunity to win a government contract. The opportunity was launched from a Mobile Area Chamber e-mail. Also pictured are New York Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez, Cathy Denison-Wicke and Janet Brewster.
During the annual Eagle Awards, a ceremony honoring minority business owners and their companies, the Chamber also presented the Minority Business Advocate Award to BellSouth. Pictured here, along with BellSouth representatives, are Eagle Award winners Makeda Nichols State Farm Insurance, Parker’s Adult Day Care, Superior Masonry, Commonwealth National Bank and Accurate Tax and Accounting.

Small Business Success Stories

Small Business of the Month winners were selected by a volunteer task force. Member companies recognized employ fewer than 100 people and make an impact on Mobile with a growing financial base, outstanding reputation and community involvement.

Featured in 2006 in the Chamber’s monthly news magazine, The Business View, were:
- Bar-B-Quing with my Honey
- Bay Bank
- Business Cards Tomorrow
- Goldstein’s Jewelry
- Hughes Plumbing & Utility Contractors Inc.
- La Pizzeria
- MCG Business Solutions
- MHS Printing and Ad Specialties
- Safety Source
- Spherion Staffing Solutions
- Tanner’s Pecans

Business Incubator Adds More Jobs

Over the last 20 years the Business Innovation Center (BIC), known as Mobile’s Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence, housed 140 businesses, employing 402 people in its small business incubator program. To date, 81 businesses have graduated from the program. The BIC boasts a business success rate of 78 percent. Through outreach efforts, 442 additional companies have been assisted, helping create 824 jobs. The Chamber is one of several funding sources for the program.

Eagle Awards

The Chamber opened the annual Eagle Awards to past winners of the award created to strengthen relationships with the minority business community, and honor the achievements and growth of five outstanding area minority-owned companies.

Winners were chosen based on criteria including: Mobile-Baldwin headquarters, at least three years producing revenue or employee growth, a solid financial base and community service and involvement.

Famous Amos Cookie founder Wally Amos headlined the ninth annual event, and drew more than 300 attendees.

Four of the five companies are two-time winners, denoted with an asterisk. Two of the companies were named to the hall of fame and have two asterisks. Companies honored were:
- Accurate Tax & Bookkeeping Management Inc.
- Commonwealth National Bank **
- Parker’s Adult Foster Homes Inc. *
- State Farm Insurance - Makeda Nichols **
- Superior Masonry Inc. *

Minority Business Advocate Named

BellSouth was selected as the 2006 Minority Business Advocate of the Year. The selection committee recognized the commitment BellSouth has to diversity throughout the company. BellSouth implements corporate diversity and inclusion strategies across all functional areas and business units, including advertising and marketing, purchasing deployment of services, recruitment and philanthropic efforts.

Previous winners include Mobile Housing Board (2005) and Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (2004).

Small Business of the Year

From meager beginnings in a garage, the Chamber’s 2006 Small Business of the Year became an employee-owned company in 1999. Southern Earth Sciences employs nearly 100 people and has expanded to include offices in eight Central Gulf Coast states including Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

A leader in professional engineering and environmental sciences, the company built a multi-disciplinary team of registered engineers, scientists and geologists who have developed an integrated project management approach to problem solving.

Southern Earth offers a range of services to both government and private-sector clients, specializing in evaluations including soil, water, air quality testing and compliance — conducted both in the lab and in the field.

The award was presented to Southern Earth by a volunteer judges’ panel for its staying power, job creation, sales increases, innovation, response to adversity and community contributions.

The remaining finalists were:
- Fabrication Specialists
- Prism Systems
- Gulf States Engineering Inc.
- Tanner’s Pecans and Candies

The Loan Express

The Mobile Area Chamber, University of South Alabama’s Small Business Development Department and the U.S. Small Business Administration hosted a lending clinic. The clinic was aimed at educating small business owners on the application process for the SBA Community Express Loan Program. More than 25 people attended this clinic and applied for five loans.
Hot Topics

On behalf of the business community, the Chamber worked to turn back attempts to implement a stronger eminent domain constitutional amendment that would have negatively impacted economic development statewide.

The Chamber’s Governmental Affairs Committee monitors legislation on the local, state and federal level, recommends action to the Chamber’s board of directors and advocates on behalf of members. In addition to volunteers, the Chamber’s partners are critical to passing the organization’s pro-business agenda. Partners include the city of Mobile, Mobile County, the University of South Alabama, Alabama State Port Authority and Mobile Airport Authority.

Members influence the Chamber’s Community agenda via an on-line survey. The 2006 agenda focused on several initiatives aimed at creating a more positive business climate, developing jobs and addressing fundamental state issues. Specific items included protecting funds to maintain the Mobile ship channel, immigration reform, trade agreements, energy, improving workforce training programs and ensuring affordable healthcare for small business.

Hot Topics

The Chamber sponsored several workshops and collaborative meetings to address critical issues to businesses and the community including eminent domain, immigration, community-planning grants and the Alabama Department of Transportation recommendation for an I-10 connector bridge to relieve congestion along Interstate 10.

Energized About Energy

In February, the Chamber coordinated a regional Gulf Coast Energy Forum, believed to be the first of its kind in the country. More than 250 business leaders attended the half-day event that featured energy experts offering diverse viewpoints on the national natural gas crisis and how to address it. The forum was organized to offer member organizations information on the energy situation and to let them know they have a voice through the Chamber.

Event partners included the Business Council of Alabama, The Forum, Manufacture Alabama, Mobile Area Chamber, Partners for Environmental Progress and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Later in the year, when gas prices hit record highs, the U.S. Department of Interior’s Minerals Management Service (MMS) held a public hearing in Mobile to get public feedback on opening up more offshore areas for oil and gas drilling. A dozen Chamber staff and key volunteers participated in the hearing in support of additional drilling to help ease the volatile energy supply and price situation.

Energy Policy

The Chamber adopted a comprehensive energy policy for 2006 in support of a federal energy policy to increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment; improve the regulatory climate; and promote energy conservation and encourage research and development of alternative energy sources. In the closing hours of the congressional session, a package of measures was passed that included Gulf of Mexico offshore drilling.

Chamber Hosts Elected Officials to a Reception

The Chamber’s Governmental Affairs Committee hosted a reception in Montgomery for the Mobile-Baldwin delegation of house and senate members. Most of the evening’s discussion centered around the Chamber’s position on the eminent domain bill that was in the Legislature during the session, and why the Chamber did not support it.

To the Capitol

Business and community leaders were part of a 20-person delegation traveling to Washington D.C., in March. The group met with the Alabama delegation to present the Chamber’s 2006 legislative agenda. Top items were small business health plans, immigration laws and the infrastructure priorities of the University of South Alabama Brookley Industrial Complex and the Alabama State Docks.

The annual trip is designed for Chamber leaders, local elected officials and key community partners to push pro-business legislation that will positively impact the Mobile area economy.

Boston Harbor Yields

Workforce development, affordable housing and the downtown waterfront were the programs and projects studied as the annual Leadership Trip delegation, consisting of 82 community and business leaders from Mobile and Baldwin counties, traveled to Boston.

The goal of the trip was to find workable solutions to some of the current issues facing Mobile.

As a result, a local group of educators along with Mobile Area Education Foundation and The J.L. Bevill Foundation staff took a return trip to Boston to learn more about an engineering literacy program for elementary schools with a goal of modeling the program for Mobile County public school students.

Past delegations over the last 19 years have ignited initiatives such as the downtown String of Pears re-development, the Mobile Area Education Foundation, the Business Improvement District, the environmental court and Envision Coastal Alabama, a regional strategic planning initiative.

Corporate Community Service Award Winner

Arkema Corp., a French-owned manufacturing facility in north Mobile County, has dedicated thousands of hours, backed by financial contributions from employees and the organization, to a diverse list of worthy causes, from helping with a sick child’s medical bills to an innovative science teacher program, and working with United Way of Southwest Alabama, Pine Grove Baptist Church, Habitat for Humanity, American Cancer Society and McDavid-Jones Elementary School through the Partners in Education program.

In 2006 the company was presented the Corporate Community Service Award from Volunteer Mobile, Envision Coastal Alabama and the Mobile Area Chamber.

Employees have a voice in what they support and bring ideas to a Contribution Team that votes on which programs and services to support. Nearly 100 percent of Arkema’s 160 employees have helped in one or more ways through the year.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Military Honors

Col. William (Bill) Callender was named Veteran of the Year for his dedication and service in the U.S. Army. Callender is a decorated veteran who served in Vietnam, earning the Combat Infantry Badge, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, two Purple Hearts, Soldiers Medal and three Bronze stars. He has continued to serve veterans locally serving on committees honoring Desert Storm veterans and welcoming the LST 325.

Sen. Jeff Sessions was selected as Patriot of the Year and served as the Veterans Day luncheon’s keynote speaker. The luncheon was sponsored by the Chamber’s Military Affairs Committee and the city of Mobile’s Veterans Day Commission.

More than 473 people attended the event. Other Veterans Day activities included a parade in downtown Mobile and Freedom Celebration at USS Battleship and Memorial Park.

In May, the Chamber’s Military Affairs committee paid tribute to area service men and women for their contributions at the annual Armed Forces Day luncheon. The event honored outstanding ROTC, JROTC and NJROTC students, plus guard, reserve and active duty personnel. More than 300 people attended this event, which featured keynote speaker U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Paul D. Capasso, commander of the 81st training wing at Keesler Air Force Base.

The Chamber hosted the country’s first-ever forum to address the ever-growing energy crisis facing us today. Nationally recognized speakers on oil and gas exploration, alternative fuel sources and the federal government’s response to the crisis participated. Pictured here are Chamber President Win Hallett; Gov. Bob Riley; Al Heffernan, Ciba Specialty Chemicals; and Rep. Jo Bonner.
DASH of the Gulf Coast is an Envision initiative created to satisfy the ever-growing needs for affordable housing in Mobile. Pictured here are city and county elected officials, the Chamber and Envision volunteers as DASH opened its doors in downtown Mobile.

Envision Coastal Alabama continues to impact Baldwin and Mobile counties. Action team volunteers worked on crucial economic development issues including workforce housing, public transit and literacy in the workplace.

During the Envision annual meeting, Donald Epley PhD with the University of South Alabama gave an economic overview of the Coastal Alabama region based on employment, wages, property values and the economic index. Epley is a Distinguished Professor of Real Estate in the University of South Alabama’s Mitchell College of Business, and author and co-author of eight textbooks and more than 80 referenced journal articles.

Envision, a regional strategic plan with the goal of shaping a common vision between the two coastal Alabama counties, celebrates 10 years in 2007. More than 200 vision partners – companies, community organizations, including the Mobile Area Chamber – and hundreds of volunteers have donated time and resources.

**Branding Envision**

Two logos were created to identify organizations as an “Envision Strategy Partner” or an event as an “Envision Strategy in Action.” These designations promoted the cooperation and collaboration taking place to foster growth and change along Coastal Alabama.

**Joint Leadership**

Karen Glover with the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance took on the role of Envision coordinator in Baldwin County. She will work in tandem with Envision Director Linda Ingram of the Mobile Area Chamber. Glover will coordinate Baldwin County responsibilities, initiatives and volunteers.

Phil Norris and Ron Martin were installed as the 2007-2008 co-chairs for Envision. Norris represents Baldwin County and is the director of the University of South Alabama’s Baldwin County Campus in Fairhope. Martin represents Mobile County and is business office manager of Alabama Power’s west Mobile office.

**DASH Home**

In May, Envision Coastal Alabama, Government Street Presbyterian Church and Fannie Mae rolled out a plan for DASH for the Gulf Coast. DASH stands for Dependable, Affordable and Sustainable Housing for the Alabama and Mississippi Gulf Coast areas.

The nonprofit community revitalization housing program was started three years ago in LaGrange, Ga., and works to provide safe, affordable housing, homeownership and financial fitness opportunities, spurring economic development in all 50 states.

**Getting There**

Envision Coastal Alabama hosted a Public Transit Workshop at the Baldwin County Annex in Robertsdale. Bill Millar, with the American Public Transportation Association, led a workshop addressing transportation in the Coastal Alabama region. Also on hand were experts to address a model transit system and legislation. A total of 120 participants from Mobile and Baldwin counties joined the forum.

As follow up, as many as 48 elected officials from Mobile, Baldwin, Monroe and Washington counties attended a public transit workshop focusing on regional transportation. Mobile’s The Wave Transit System and the Baldwin Rural Area Transit System announced an agreement linking the two systems with daily runs in 2007.

**Literacy Prevails**

Envision Coastal Alabama and the Literacy Coalition of South Alabama hosted a forum on workforce literacy. The two organizations asked for input from area human resource directors and the region’s Chambers of Commerce who have a special interest and perspective in this issue. Margaret Doughty, consultant with Literacy USA - the National Alliance of Literacy Coalitions, facilitated the session as the group explored workforce literacy and how to deliver a program to businesses in Coastal Alabama.
The Chamber earned national recognition from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives for growth in membership and retention. As of Dec. 31, 2006, the membership department recruited 436 new members for the year. The Chamber has nearly 2,200 members, representing approximately 80,000 employees.

Million Dollar Woman
With a goal of $1 million, volunteers helped Chamber Chase Chair Angela Grice with Whitney National Bank earn the nickname “Million Dollar Woman.”

The 14-week total resource development effort raised $1,035,400 in the form of memberships, sponsorships, advertising, and donated goods and services. In addition, 140 companies joined during the Chamber’s 10th annual campaign, and 48 companies upgraded to join the board of advisors.

More than 100 volunteers representing more than 40 companies were involved in this year’s effort.

Proceeds from Chamber Chase help the organization offer programs and services for its members.

Annual Expo Successful
Only needing a business card to enter, approximately 1,200 area professionals gained free access to an afternoon of networking with representatives from more than 200 companies that hosted a booth at the Chamber’s annual Business & Technology Expo. Included was a Tech Pavilion made up of nearly 50 area technology companies. Seminar topics offered at the event included convergence — merging business communications; strategic planning; document security; first impressions; fraud prevention; access to capital and leadership.

In addition to the business booths, several restaurants served specialty items from their menus.

Contacts Count
Networking is one of the main reasons members join the Chamber. In 2006, thousands of attendees participated in a variety of opportunities to make new contacts at networking-based events such as the monthly Business After Hours, Networking@Noon, Diversity Business Network and the spring golf tournament, Chamber Classic.

Committed Investors
The Chamber’s board of advisors represents key businesses whose significant dues investments lead the way in funding Chamber programs and initiatives. The group meets periodically with the Chamber’s board of directors.

In 2006, 50 new companies joined or upgraded their dues, bringing the total number of companies on the board of advisors to 188.

Customer Service Workshop
To help small business owners meet some of their immediate needs in customer service, the Chamber led a training workshop called Managing Customer Service — A Workshop for Small Business Owners. This session helped participants understand what customer service means to their business and how to build a strong customer service program.

In addition, the Chamber offered a basic customer service seminar three times in 2006. A total of 150 attendees participated in the workshops.

2006 Customer Service Winners
Customers are the key to business survival, and customer service is instrumental in keeping them. In The Business View, the Chamber again highlighted 10 companies in its annual salute to customer service. Customers nominated winners, then a panel of “secret shoppers” selected featured companies. Those recognized were:

• Bienville Day Spa
• Brownell/Abeta Travel
• Don’s Catering Service
• Gerhardt’s Luggage and Gifts
• Lenny’s Sub Shop
• Hillcrest Automotive
• Master Printing Co.
• Metzger’s Inc.
• Praytor Realty Co. Inc.
• Universal Supply Co. Inc.

It takes a little fun to meet the Chamber Chase goal. This year’s theme, “Breaking Records,” played on Chairman Angela Grice’s love of music. Holding the Chamber Chase gold record is Grice with Whitney National Bank.

On the second row is Frank Barragan, WNSP Radio; Beverly Crandall, Alabama Power; and Greg Bowen, UBS Financial Services. Third row: Karyl Hanisch, Riverview Plaza Hotel; and Monica Wiggins, Whitney National Bank.

Extending Chamber Services
With the help of volunteers serving as diplomats, the Chamber assists with many business and community events. Representatives are from member companies and attend grand openings, ribbon cuttings, networking events and visit members.

The Diplomat of the Month distinction is based on the volunteer’s participation level, and winners are featured in The Business View, the Chamber’s monthly news magazine. Diplomats recognized in 2006 were:

• Wendy Anderson, Spherion Staffing Service
• Trish Banker, Regions Bank
• Roy Blaylock, Scatter Joy Photography
• Linda Faulkner, * Degussa Corp.
• Karyl Hanisch, PCH Hotels and Resorts
• Millie Sue Hawk, Welcome Friends
• Debra Kenny, * Waddell & Reed Financial Service
• Teresa Martin, ITC^delta com Inc.
• Lana Mosley, * Clark Personnel

• Nancy Peoples, * Multi-Staffing Services
• Victoria Perry, Bishop State Community College
• Janeea Rogers, Adams & Reese LLP
• Donna Turner, World Omni Financial Corp.

* designates the Diplomat of the Month distinction was shared

Diplomat of the Year
Jo Shannon, vice president of business banking with Regions Bank, was named the 2006 Diplomat of the Year. Shannon has been a diplomat since 2002 and also recently earned the Diplomat of the Month distinction.

In addition, Shannon will serve as chairman of the Diplomats in 2007. Chosen for her group participation, she has represented the Chamber at numerous ribbon cuttings and networking events.

Cost-Effective Membership
The Chamber works to build and maintain a number of cost-saving benefits through affinity programs. Benefits for members include: long distance discounts from ITU^delta com; office supply discounts through Office Depot; and Member-to-Member discounts available through the Members Only page on the Chamber’s Web site, www.mobilechamber.com.

A National Connection
The Mobile Area Chamber partnered with the U.S. Chamber, offering membership at no additional cost to the world’s largest not-for-profit business association representing 3 million businesses and 2,800 state and local chambers. By maintaining membership in the Mobile Area Chamber, companies have an expanded menu of small business resources, legislative updates, discounts and services.
International Media and Site Selectors

The Chamber and its partners, the city of Mobile and Mobile County, selected Development Counselors International (DCI) to ensure business brokers, site selectors and key corporate decision makers across the globe know that Mobile is a beacon on the Gulf Coast, primed for explosive growth. The 40-year-old company is an industry leader for its contacts with site selectors, the “middle men” for companies looking to expand into new territories, and international business media.

DCI organized media trips to Atlanta, Washington D.C., and New York City, and tours of Mobile for six reporters representing Foreign Direct Investment, Manufacturing Aviation, Gulf Chopper, U.S. News & World Report, Fairplay and Las Echos.

Marketing Services to Small Business

Through a series of focus groups, the Chamber worked with Imagery Marketing & Research Consulting on developing a marketing plan to promote its services geared to small businesses.

Sullivan St. Clair donated its expertise to develop a series of ads featuring a variety of owners of area small businesses, based on the research. The ads will appear in print venues in donated space, based on the research. The ads will appear in print venues in donated space starting in 2007.

State of the City and County

For nearly a decade, a sellout crowd has come to hear the past year’s accomplishments and plans for the future at the Chamber’s annual State of the City and County luncheon. Mobile Mayor Sam Jones and County Commission President Juan Chastang spoke at the event.

In addition, Chamber Chairman Al Heffernan with Giba Specialty Chemicals shared the Chamber’s vision as it relates to economic development and quality of life.

Weekly News & Events

Circulation of the Chamber’s weekly electronic newsletter, The Business View, continued to increase, reaching nearly 5,400 recipients. Offered free of charge to members and non-members, subscribers are given a look at the week’s top business news and information on upcoming events.

Spotlight on Mobile

Headlines in some of America’s most respected newspapers, magazines and radio programs are putting a new face on Mobile—one that’s seeing rapid growth, bucking the national trend of a cool housing market and, despite its growth, bucking the national trend of a cool housing market and, despite its system’s size, impacting the lives of tens of thousands of students.

Publications like The Wall Street Journal, Parade magazine, Entrepreneur magazine and Louisville Courier-Journal have included Mobile in stories with content ranging from Hurricane Katrina recovery to the Mobile Area Education Foundation to being a stellar market for entrepreneurs to a viable destination for tourists.

The Chamber, along with the Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau and Public Education Network, worked to lay the groundwork for reporters’ interest in the area.

In other news, the Mobile-Pensacola television market moved up three spots to 59th in the nation in the annual Nielsen ratings. Nielsen measures U.S. television households and influence advertising rates.

In addition to the numerous reporters who visited the Port City, other popular shows debuted in Mobile. In July the PBS program Antiques Roadshow made Mobile one of the stops across the country to evaluate antiques and collectibles.

Chamber Shares Crisis Manual

The Chamber recently completed its new crisis manual and made the updated version available to its members. The comprehensive plan has information about natural disasters, going one step further in post-hurricane or natural disaster planning, including temporary office space, wireless communications and the Chamber’s computer network.

Covering Local Business News

The Chamber continued to send its monthly news magazine, The Business View, to members and all companies listed on the Dun & Bradstreet List in Mobile County. Circulation exceeded 18,500 in 2006, and has been used as a model for dozens of Chambers across the country.

Partners for Growth Investors helped underwrite the additional costs associated with this project.
First Place
The Gulf of Mexico Program announced the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory at the University of Southern Mississippi received the first place Gulf Guardian Award. The program recognizes and honors businesses, community groups, individuals and agencies taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful and productive.

Yes We Can
In May, Mobile County residents and educators celebrated the five-year anniversary of the “yes” vote for education. The monumental tax referendum paved the way for broad-based changes in public education. That same year, the Mobile Area Education Foundation developed the YES WE CAN community agreement, and along with the federally mandated No Child Left Behind Act, placed a new emphasis on student achievement in the Mobile County Public School System.

A New Decade for Baseball
The Mobile BayBears, the local professional baseball team, celebrated its 10th anniversary. The team started out the year as a Double-A affiliate for the San Diego Padres and following the season announced they would be the Double-A affiliate for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Grand Hotel Reopens
Making another historic comeback, the Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa reopened in late spring following renovations and repairs from damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. The AAA Four Diamond property has 405 rooms and includes a Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail golf course.

Carnival’s Cruis’n
After a seven-month hiatus to house Hurricane Katrina victims, Mobile’s Carnival cruise ship, the Holiday, had a multi-million-dollar renovation and returned to service from the Port City.

Historic Fundraising for USA
The University of South Alabama launched its first-ever comprehensive fund-raising campaign with a goal of $75 million to further its missions of teaching, research, service and healthcare.

Sound Financial Condition
The Chamber remains in sound financial condition and is committed to using its resources and talents to grow the Mobile area economy. McKean & Associates PA audits the Chamber’s financial statements and activities on an annual basis. The certified public accountants report the audited records accurately reflect the organization’s financial position in all respects.

Chamber Partnerships
The Chamber is a private, nonprofit organization supported by members, contributions and service contracts. The Chamber provides economic development activities for the city of Mobile and Mobile County and, through a public/private entity, Washington County. The Chamber also partners with Mobile Works Inc. to assist Chamber members with workforce needs and the Bedsole Foundations for International Trade Development.

Chamber’s Hearin Room Renovated
The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation completed a renovation and expansion of the Hearin Room, now known as the Bill and Emily Hearin Executive Conference Room. This facility is used primarily by the Chamber’s economic development team to host prospects and hold related meetings. The room is named for William J. Hearin, former owner and publisher of the Mobile Press-Register who passed away in 2002, and his wife, Emily, who passed away last year.
A Generation of Dedication

With 36 years of service, Walter Underwood, the Chamber’s small business director, retired during 2006. Underwood established programs locally that included SCORE, where retired executives offer volunteer help to business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. Executive Roundtable, a monthly forum where speakers address pertinent small business topics; and the Small Business of the Month award, acknowledged by the Chamber’s board and in The Business View.

Peers Give New Perspective

Chamber President Win Hallett meets with the American Chamber of Commerce Executive’s Southern Metro Council to discuss economic issues, trends, best practices and benchmarks for success in the Chamber industry. The council is made up of peer chambers in the Southern region who meet semi-annually. Many of the communities represented face issues that are of importance to Mobile as well, such as the port and homeland security, workforce training and sustainable growth.

Increased Role

In addition to his current work with several Mobile Area Chamber departments, the Chamber gave Bob Chappelle additional responsibilities and promoted him to executive vice president. Chappelle is serving as an additional Chamber liaison with major trade and professional organizations such as the U.S. Chamber and the American Chamber of Commerce Executives, as well as key private and public sector partners. He will continue to oversee the Chamber’s community and governmental affairs, finance and operations, membership and small business development departments.
2006 Executive Committee

David R. Barnett
Bender Shipbuilding & Repair Co. Inc.
Vice Chair
Workforce Development

E. Bayne Bridges
Logical Communications Services Inc.
Vice Chair
Technology

Kenneth E. Coleman
Alabama Power Co.
Vice Chair
Economic Development

Angus R. Cooper III
Cooper Marine & Timberlands Corp.
Vice Chair
Trade

Randall S. Adams
BankTrust

Whitney National Bank

James E. Barnes
Jim Barnes Enterprises Inc.
d/b/a McDonald’s

Hon. James E. Buskey
Alabama State Representative-District 99

Allan R. Cameron Jr.
Grubb & Ellis/Peebles & Cameron

Stephen G. Case
Coastal Builders Inc.

Sam W. Covert
Alabama Power Co.

Mark P. Eiland
Hudgens & Eiland LLP

Dr. Jane C. Ellis
Alabama School of Mathematics & Science

Lorie Gaillard
Baldwin Transfer Company Inc.

Robert W. Galbraith Jr.
University of South Alabama

Joseph G. Gerard
Coastal Ford

Richard Perry
DuPont Agricultural Products

Mary Kay Polys
Mercy Medical

V. J. Reddy
Mobile Group Inc.

Yolanda Richardson
Digidraft Inc.

Monique Rogers Ruffin
Bay Security Co. LLC

William P. Shanahan
Mobile BayBears

Clay Walden
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama

Richard H. Weavil
The Weavil Company LLC

Paul B. Wilson
IPSCO Steel (Alabama) Inc.

Elbert Wingfield
Saucy Q Bar B Que

Thomas A. Zoghby
Volkert & Associates Inc.

In addition to the Executive Committee, serving on the 2006 Board of Directors were:

E. Bayne Bridges
Logical Communications Services Inc.
Vice Chair
Technology

Kenneth E. Coleman
Alabama Power Co.
Vice Chair
Economic Development

Angus R. Cooper III
Cooper Marine & Timberlands Corp.
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IPSCO Steel (Alabama) Inc.

Elbert Wingfield
Saucy Q Bar B Que

Thomas A. Zoghby
Volkert & Associates Inc.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Aggressively market the Mobile region for business locations and expansions. Marketing activity is based on community strengths and the recognition of community quality of life objectives to support the Partners for Growth goal of creating 1,100 net new jobs per year.
- Maintain relationships with communities in the region to identify specific business location needs and opportunities by regularly visiting with local officials (public and private) and existing industry in adjacent counties and outlying communities.
- Market Mobile with a proactive, prepared and professional approach to potential investors and location-influencing organizations.
- Provide business support to specific existing business clusters in the Mobile area for the purpose of identifying expansion opportunities and related projects to create/retain value-added jobs and tax revenues.
- Participate in the development and improvement of Mobile's infrastructure to make the community more attractive to potential investors and create a better business climate for existing businesses.
- Maintain a high level of direct involvement by Chamber volunteers leadership, City and County elected leadership and local agency allies in the Plan of Action implementation, as well as long-term economic development planning and funding. Seek continued performance contract revenue sources.
- Systematically generate, collect, organize, provide and publish information to support economic development activities that service our member needs.

COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

- Develop and obtain passage of the 2007 Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda.
- Promote a local business-friendly political and legislative climate that encourages economic growth, is responsive to business needs and supportive of business success.
- Converse key groups and organizations to identify and work on vital community issues.
- Improve communication with the membership and Chamber staff on key community issues.
- Sponsor the Leadership Trip with a focus on workable solutions to regional and local issues.
- Encourage positive military and civilian relationships.
- Leverage involvement in the Gulf Coast Regional Chamber Coalition (GCRCC) to obtain federal support for key regional needs.

MEMBERSHIP

- Exceed budgeted goals for dues and non-dues income to support Chamber operations.
- Provide innovative programs and services that our members desire and value.
- Ensure awesome customer service to improve member retention and development.
- Coordinate the programs and activities of the diplomats to assist with membership retention and development.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

- Provide and maintain financial control and related services.
- Develop and maintain all records, forms and reports relating to human resource management.
- Coordinate maintenance of the Chamber building, grounds, fixtures and equipment.
- Enhance Chamber and Foundation operations through improvement of processes and procedures.

2007 PLAN OF ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

2006 Annual Report and 2007 Plan of Action Highlights

451 Government Blvd. • P.O. Box 2187 • Mobile, Alabama 36652-2187
(251) 433-6951 • www.mobilechamber.com
BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Friends of the Mobile Animal Shelter

Board President: Donna Turner
Location: 855 Owens St., Mobile
Member since: 1949

Brief description of business: Friends of the Mobile Animal Shelter (FOMAS) is a volunteer-run 501(c)3 non-profit animal welfare organization focused on improving the quality of life for shelter pets at the city of Mobile Animal Shelter. FOMAS participates in public awareness events for high-quality adoptable pets to decrease the number of healthy pets euthanized each year due to lack of adoption.

What is unique or innovative about your business? “We strive to ensure everyone adopting from FOMAS receives a healthy pet,” said Donna Turner, FOMAS president. All FOMAS pets are vet checked for appropriate shots, treated for illnesses if needed, spayed or neutered, and microchipped.

Most significant challenge: “Decrease the number of unwanted pets roaming the community and find adoptive pet parents for available pets,” said Turner.

Telephone number: 208-2800
Web site: www.petfinder.com

Embroidery by the Bay

Owner: Jim and Judy Fleischamel
Mailing address: 312-T Schillinger Rd. S., PMB 200, Mobile, AL 36608
Member since: 2006

Brief description of business: The company is a home-based commercial business specializing in customized embroidery for businesses and organizations, with a complete line of name-brand, quality shirts, jackets, caps, robes and other items including blankets and bags.

What is unique or innovative about your business? “We combine the personal service and attention to detail of a local embroiderer with the advantages of a large commercial embroidery house without the large overhead,” said owner Judy Fleischamel. Embroidery orders range from one to 1,000-plus items using state-of-the-art technology to produce more than 30,000 stock designs or custom design. “We always go the extra mile for our customer because they are our greatest advertisement,” Fleischamel said.

Most significant challenge: According to Fleischamel, getting their business name out and displaying products is challenging because they do not have a storefront to attract walk-in customers.

Telephone number: 634-2175
Web site: www.embroiderybythebay.com

DIPLOMAT OF THE MONTH

Jo Shannon

A Regions Bank vice president and business banker, Jo Shannon is the Mobile Area Chamber’s Diplomat of the Month.

Regions Bank is one of the nation’s largest full-service providers of consumer and commercial banking, trust, securities brokerage, mortgage and insurance products and services throughout 16 states with access to over 2,800 ATMs (automated teller machines).

With her 29 years of commercial banking experience and knowledge, Shannon assists businesses in determining the best products/financial services they need to run their business smoothly.

“As with most businesses, the key to success is relationships, and being a diplomat provides the opportunity to meet and build relationships with a variety of people I may not normally have crossed paths with otherwise,” said Shannon. Her years as a diplomat have afforded her the chance to build long-term relationships professionally and personally. “The business exposure through Chamber membership has provided an array of recognizable business opportunities in the marketplace,” she added.

Shannon said because the Chamber offers a variety of networking opportunities, she finds it difficult to have one favorite event, when all are very beneficial from Business at Breakfast to Business After Hours. She supports Chamber Chase, Chairman’s Circle, Business Expo and the Annual Meeting.

“We really appreciate how Jo always steps up to the plate and joins right in at Chamber events,” said Carolyn Golson, the Chamber’s vice president of membership.

Other organizations Shannon volunteers with are MARC (Mobile Association of Retarded Citizen), Mobile Association for the Blind, Mobile Lions Club, Friends of Mobile Animal Shelter board Member, and the Bay Area Chapter of Business Networking International.
CEO Profile
Dan Spiegel

Company: Austal USA
Title: Chief Operating Officer
First job: A farm-hand on a neighbor’s farm
Education: Spiegel received a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan and a master of business administration (MBA) from Indiana University.

Previous experience: Prior to working with Austal, Spiegel’s 20-year manufacturing career was in automotive and industrial equipment manufacturing. His primary focus during the past 11 years has been leading his company in manufacturing improvements through the Lean Manufacturing process, an initiative focusing on eliminating waste.

Accomplishments: “Being married for 15 years with three healthy and brilliant children, and building teams that outperform their own perception of their abilities,” he said.

Career-changing moment: “Quitting a great job to pursue my MBA and having a mentor teach me the difference between being a boss and being a leader,” said Spiegel.

Secret to success: “The secret to success is to hire great people and build a team,” said Spiegel.

Family: Spiegel and his wife, Antoinette, have three children.

Which historical figure would you like to invite to dinner and why?
“Jesus is the person I would like to invite to dinner,” said Spiegel. “I want to go to Heaven, but I don’t want to go today. Dinner would answer many questions.”

Brief company description: Austal USA is a leading manufacturer of commercial vessels for the international market. Operations in the U.S. employ more than 750 shipyard workers. Austal USA is a member of the Chamber’s board of advisors and is a Partners for Growth investor.

Diplomats are volunteers from member organizations who assist with Chamber activities. To get involved in the diplomat program, contact Carolyn Golson at 431-8622 or cgolson@mobilechamber.com.
At Interstate Inc., the ordinary becomes the extra-ordinary, the routine is challenged daily, the standard is continuously raised. Meeting needs and producing quality printed products, accurately and at a reasonable price, put Interstate Inc. in a category all its own.
For more than 20 years, we’ve put our heart into keeping yours healthy.

After experiencing chest pains, Tom was understandably anxious about the possibility of heart disease. The doctors at Cardiology Associates, using the very latest, non-invasive cardiac CT technology, were able to take a complete look at his heart in a matter of seconds. Much to his relief, no problems were found. As Tom will tell you, it’s a story with a very happy ending. For Cardiology Associates, it’s another chapter in our legacy of caring that includes the most comprehensive cardiovascular care in the area.

Investor Focus

Joe Bullard Automotive Companies

Company officials: Joel “Joe” B. Bullard Jr., owner; Walter A. Naman, COO; John N. Galanos, CIO; Dennis J. Tucker, CFO

Years in business: 52 years

Brief company description: Automotive sales, service and collision repair. Dealerships include Cadillac, Hummer, Land Rover, Acura, Jaguar, Mitsubishi, Saturn, Infiniti and the Mobile Auto Outlet.

Why are you located in Mobile? “The company is a family business,” said Joe Bullard, owner. “I was born and raised in Mobile, so the business has always been located here.”

Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce’s Partners for Growth initiative? “Win Hallett and his team do a great job of quarterbacking our community’s efforts to attract, develop and retain new industry and business to our area,” said Bullard.

What do you see as Mobile’s greatest potential? “The two most obvious areas where we have tremendous potential are our waterfront (i.e. the State Docks-Mobile Container Terminal, shipbuilding, cruise ships and tourism) and opportunities relative to the aeronautical industry,” said Bullard. “A less obvious but equally impressive opportunity exists in the healthcare arena, with the University of South Alabama Mitchell Cancer Institute coming online and Infirmary Health Systems’ major role in our community.

These industries are significant, but our greatest potential lies in the quality of people that make up our community. The work ethic, Southern hospitality, core values and loyalty of our residents is a differentiating factor for our community and one we need to continue to nurture and promote,” he said.

Length of Chamber membership: 46 years

From left to right, John Galanos, Dennis Tucker and Walter Naman stand next to the 2005 Acura Precision Team Award. Joe Bullard was ranked in the top 3 percent of Acura dealers in the country.

Partners for Growth (PFG) is the Mobile Area Chamber’s long-term economic and community development program. For more information on PFG contact Shelly Mattingly, the Chamber’s investor relations coordinator; at 431-8655 or smattingly@mobilechamber.com.
Chris Conrad is general manager for Mobile Paperboard Corp. (The Newark Group). He earned a bachelor’s degree in paper science engineering from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Conrad joined The Newark Group in 1993 after spending 10 years with USG Corp. He is a member of the Habitat For Humanity construction committee.

Janson Graham is president of C & G Boat Works Inc. The company was established in Bayou la Batre in the 1980s and moved to its downtown Mobile facility in 2001. Graham holds a bachelor’s degree from The University of Alabama and is president of Graham Gulf Inc. and Silver King Golf Club LLC.

Ben Hinton is regional retail manager for T-Mobile, a wireless communications company. He earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from the University of Southern Mississippi. Hinton has been employed with T-Mobile for eight years, the past three years in his present position.

John S. McClelland Jr. is executive vice president of Midstream Fuel Service LLC and has a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. McClelland is director and Southern region chairman of the American Waterways Operators, president of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association, chairman of the U.S. Coast Guard’s Maritime Advisory Committee and director for the Warrior Tombigbee Waterway Association. Additionally, McClelland serves as regional chairman for the American Heart Association and as a trustee for UMS-Wright Preparatory School. Midstream Fuel Service is a Partners for Growth investor.

Paul B. Wilson is president of IPSCO Steel (Alabama) Inc. He graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso and has spent 30 years in the steel business, previously as general manager of Chaparral Steel and as vice president of Birmingham Steel in Seattle. IPSCO Steel is a Partners for Growth investor. Wilson is also a member of the Chamber’s board of directors.

Who’s In Town?

Conventions are the backbone of Mobile’s burgeoning tourism industry. From statewide associations to national sports events, on any given day, hundreds of tourists descend upon the Port City. In an effort to keep you informed about “Who’s In Town,” the Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau (MBCVB) provides The Business View a list of the current month’s conventions coming to the Bay area. If you have any questions about the groups listed below, contact the MBCVB at 208-2000.

Source: Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau

Feb. 2-7
Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists
Annual February Southern Regional Conference
Mark Legendre, meeting planner
LSU Agricultural Center
P.O. Box 25203
Baton Rouge, LA 70894-5203
Phone: 225-578-4164
Delegates: 1,200
Room Nights: 1,200
Hotel: Riverview Plaza Hotel
Location: Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center

Feb. 26 - March 3
International Association of Black Professional Firefighters
Black Chief Officers Committee Annual Meeting
Mark Trenier, local contact
International Association of Black Professional Firefighters
701 St. Francis St.
Mobile, AL 36602
Phone: 251-454-6494
Delegates: 200
Room Nights: 215
Hotel(s)/Location: TBD

Comparative Economic Indicators
November ’06 vs November ’05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Mobile/Baldwin counties</th>
<th>City of Mobile</th>
<th>Mobile County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rates</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes Sold</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Passengers From Mobile</td>
<td>25,426</td>
<td>26,160</td>
<td>26,160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ANNUVERSARIES

#### 35 YEARS
- Prudential Cooper & Co. Inc. Realtors
- 30 YEARS
- Bay City Conventions & Tours Inc.
- Stuart C. Irby Co.
- 25 YEARS
- Michael A. Campbell DMD PC
- Mobile & Baldwin Co. Apartment Guide
- 20 YEARS
- Aaron Oil Co.
- Cingular Wireless
- Coastal Courier Inc.
- Dauphin Realty
- Davidson & Co. Claims Inc.
- D.B. Henry Enterprises, Inc.
- The Maid's Home Services
- Douglas C. Bevill DMD & Garrett A. Graham DMD
- Ernest W. Todd Jr.
- Folmar & Associates
- Glyn Cas Case Interior Inc.
- J & J Furniture Co. Inc.
- Kitchens Electric Co. Inc.
- La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries
- Mobile Air Center Inc.
- Seabulk Towing
- T. Malcolm Warren DMD
- The Weller Co.

#### 1-4 YEARS
- A & C Home Lending Inc.
- Al Employment
- Acupuncture Clinic of Mobile
- Accurate Tax & Bookkeeping
- Management Inc.
- Aerostar Environmental Services Inc.
- AIG/American General Life & Accident Insurance Co.
- America’s Junior Miss
- American Red Cross Alabama, Gulf Coast Chapter
- Ashley Furniture Home Store
- Assist 2 Sell, Buyers & Sellers Realty
- Barlow & Associates
- Bay Area Advertising Federation
- Beneficial Alabama Inc.
- BES Inc.
- Blu Rabbit’s Paradise
- Bogan Supply
- Brown’s Hallmark
- Carr Allison
- Central Insurance Management and
- Mortgages
- Cleveland The Florist
- Covenant Hospice
- Crane Title Inc.
- Crenshaw Machine Systems
- Epiphany Development
- Encore Rehabilitation Inc.
- Family Promise of Coastal Alabama Inc.
- Farmers Insurance
- Felix’s Fish Camp
- First Command Financial Planning
- Fringe Benefits LLC
- Gaillard Builders
- Genesis Redevelopment & Construction
- The Giving Tree Inc.
- Gunnion Oaks LLC
- Gulf Coast Supply LLC
- Good Faith Enterprises
- Gorrie-Reagan & Associates Inc.
- Hall’s Theodore Wholesale Florist
- Harmony Realty & Development
- Imagery Marketing & Research
- Consulting Inc.
- Infinity Homes Inc.
- Intoprint Technologies
- The Ivy Cottage
- Jackson Myrick LLP
- Joe Lewis Music Studio
- John Dendy & Associates Architects
- Kemper Industries Inc.
- L3 Communications Crestview
- Aerospace Corp.
- LDS Employment Resource Services
- The LPA Group Inc.
- Magnetech Industrial Services Inc.
- M & C Association Inc.
- The Medical Assurance Co.
- Met Life
- Odyssey Networking
- Olive Garden Italian Restaurant
- Outlaw Plastic Surgery PC
- The Pillars
- Prichard & Dewberry PC
- Quality Acoustics & Drywall Inc.
- Real Ships
- Rhinoshield Gulf Coast
- Riverview Plaza Office Building, an Argus Realty Investors
- Royalty Products Inc.
- Safe Archives - Safe Shredding LLC, a division of Ward Properties Inc.
- Serenity on the Bay
- S. Baker Medical
- Sand Dollar Lifestyles
- Silver Ships
- Site One on the Internet
- Sofas & More
- Solid Rock Promotions
- Tameron Honda Eastern Shore
- Top Priority Freight Inc.
- TORP Technology Inc.
- United Marketing Solutions of South Alabama
- United States Postal Service
- The Van Bemen Agency - Farmers Insurance Group
- Vaughn Inspection Professionals
- Verns & Bowling of Southern Alabama LLC
- Walks and Wags d/b/a Alabama Dog
- The Watermelon Patch
- Who’s Who in Mobile & Baldwin County
- The Wilton Caterer
- Zea Rotisserie

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Please show your support through the patronage of these businesses. Thank you.

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**New Members**

Continued from page 39

- **Servpro of South Mobile County**
  - William Kemp
  - 6850 Carol Plantation Rd.
  - Theodore, AL 36582
  - 251-653-9127
  - Cleaning Service

- **Shipyard Supply**
  - Randy Johnson & Jeremy Wilemon
  - 5495 E. Rite Rd.
  - Theodore, AL 36582-1657
  - 251-653-4354
  - Hose Couplings & Fittings

- **Smith’s Towing Inc.**
  - Douglas Smith
  - 2400 Michigan Ave.
  - Theodore, AL 36615
  - 251-662-8504
  - Towing

- **Southern Leather Gallery**
  - Eric Durum
  - 3992 Government Blvd.
  - Mobile, AL 36693-4723
  - 251-665-5288
  - www.southernleathergallery.com
  - Furniture Stores

- **Southwest Funding**
  - Kathryn Weidh
  - 199 Shell Rd., Ste. B
  - Saraland, AL 36571-2221
  - 251-895-5757
  - www.southwestfunding.com
  - Mortgage Loans

- **St. Luke’s Episcopal School**
  - Palmer Kennedy
  - 4908 Oak Cir. Dr. N.
  - Mobile, AL 36609-2928
  - 251-666-2991
  - www.sles.com
  - Schools/Private

- **Stork’s Next Preparatory CDC Inc.**
  - Janice Moore
  - 4908 Oak Cir. Dr. N.
  - Mobile, AL 36609-2928
  - 251-665-5566
  - Child Care Centers

- **Synovus Loan Production Office**
  - Alex Arendall
  - 3290 Dauphin St., Ste. 302
  - Mobile, AL 36606-4052
  - 251-450-1300
  - www.synovus.com
  - Banks

- **Thomas Medical Center**
  - Howard Holcomb
  - 27961 U.S. Hwy. 98
  - Daphne, AL 36539
  - 251-626-6646
  - www.thomasmh.com
  - Medical Clinics

- **CDW LLC d/b/a White’s Big & Tall**
  - Calvin D. Weaver Jr.
  - 2648 Government Blvd.
  - Mobile, AL 36606-2602
  - 251-470-9832
  - Men’s Clothing & Furnishings

As of 11/30/06
Diversity Business Network

Sponsored by Alabama Power Co., Diversity Business Network will be held on Thursday, Feb. 8, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Bishop State’s Baker-Gaines Central campus in the Black History Museum. This quarterly networking event is designed to give minority-owned business managers and owners the opportunity to promote their companies, learn how to market products and services, and find out more about Chamber activities.

There is no charge to attend, however, reservations are requested and can be made by contacting Brenda Rembert at 431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com.

Business@Breakfast

Business@Breakfast will be held Wednesday, Feb. 14 at Saucy-Q Bar B Que, 1111 Government St., from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

B@B is a bi-monthly event offering members 45 seconds to introduce themselves and their business. Following a brief presentation, introductions and breakfast, attendees are invited to continue to network. The event is limited to Chamber members only and one representative per company.

The cost is $8 and includes breakfast. Reservations are required no later than Monday, Feb. 12 and can be made by contacting Erica Maize at 431-8617 or emaize@mobilechamber.com. Reservations not cancelled by Feb. 12 must be honored to cover the cost of the breakfast. (Members Only)

New Member Welcome/Business After Hours

On Thursday, Feb. 22, new Chamber members are invited to attend the New Member Welcome at DTI Partners Inc., 1555 University Blvd. S., from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Learn about the Chamber and how to get the most from your membership.

At 5:30 p.m., join Chamber members and diplomats for Business After Hours until 7 p.m. This is a great opportunity to network with area business professionals at a popular Chamber event.

For information on Chamber events, visit the Chamber’s Web site at www.mobilechamber.com.
Share the Good News

Member News features a variety of announcements from Chamber members. Submission deadline is two months prior to publication. News releases should be one or two brief paragraphs. Photos must be professional headshots in either color or black and white. Labeled with person’s last name, and must be 300 dpi at full size and saved in .eps, .tif or .jpg format.

Send your information to news@mobilechamber.com or Member News, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 2187, Mobile, AL 36652.

Who’s New?

Storm

Mercury Medical announced Jesse Storm, Carolyn Williams, Mary LaMont and Ian Burge assumed leadership positions within the company. Storm serves as director of plant management. Williams was hired as patient care manager for Mercy Medical Mobile. LaMont was named director of human resources. Burge was promoted to hospice patient care manager for Mercy’s Baldwin County Home Care.

LaMont

Aquaterra Engineering named Jim Foster PE to its team as Mobile operations manager. Foster has engineering and management experience.

Burge

Christee Mitchell was promoted to associate director of the Senior Citizens Services.

Who's New?

Weichert Southern Properties hired the following people as real estate agents: Caleb Lewis, Debra Williams, Melanie Turner and Terry Sturm.

Amanda Eck with EAP Lifestyle Management LLC was named office manager and research specialist. Also Donna Szymanski-Bartelt joined the company as a community service representative. She will be working out of the company’s Pensacola office.

Bob Jones joined Wilson-Dismukes Inc. as senior sales consultant for outdoor power and lawn equipment. Jones owned and operated Bob Jones’ Photo Supply for more than 25 years before joining Wilson-Dismukes.

The University of Mobile welcomed seven new faculty members. They are: Debra Chancey, instructor in education; Leo Denton, assistant professor of computer information systems; Bridgette Hill, assistant professor of human performance and exercise science; Jane Pockett, instructor in education; Pete Sanchez, director of church music and worship renewal program and assistant professor of church music; Linda Fontenot, associate professor of nursing; and Richard McElhaney, assistant professor of nursing.

Joe Denton was named chief financial officer for Infirmary Health System. With more than 20 years experience in healthcare, Denton was most recently with Baptist Health in Montgomery. He holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of South Alabama and an MBA from Maryville University.

Hand

Arendall LLC hired two lawyers as associates in the firm’s litigation section – Paul Beckmann and Craig Campbell. Beckmann received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Mississippi and a juris doctorate from the University of Mississippi School of Law. Campbell received a undergraduate degree from Georgetown College and a juris doctorate from Cumberland School of Law.

Crow, Shields & Bailey PC, an accounting and consulting firm, welcomed several new team members. Lisa M. Norris and Timothy M. Adams joined the firm as staff accountants and Crystal M. Goolsby as a bookkeeper.

Amy Lumpkin joined Brownell/Abeta Travel in the Mobile office as a travel consultant, moving from the company’s Fairhope office.

EAP Lifestyle Management LLC Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team members received extensive critical incident response training sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard and offered at the Pensacola Naval Air Station. In addition, the company – recently re-certified – opened a Pensacola office in Historic Pensacola Village.

Sullivan-St. Clair Marketing/Public Relations was named the agency of record for Verizon Wireless in Mobile and Pensacola. The agency will work to coordinate the wireless communications company’s overall marketing efforts along the Gulf Coast.

Verizon Wireless opened a new retail location in Spanish Fort. The full-service store is located in the Eastern Shore Plaza. Store hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and on Sundays, noon to 6 p.m.

Central Lite Systems Inc., an innovative developer of lighting control and home automation products, announced the acquisition of FusionPoint Media Inc., a multi-media company specializing in corporate marketing solutions and business software applications. The company will be operated as a wholly owned subsidiary of CentralLite and will retain its own name.

In addition, CentralLite announced it made a strategic investment into SRA Services LLC (SRA). SRA brings providers together for the development, integration and support of technology bundles for condominiums and multi-dwelling developments.

Airbus awarded a $635 million contract to Singapore Technologies Aerospace Ltd., parent company of Mobile’s ST Mobile Aerospace Engineering Inc., to service up to 66 A320 single-aisle planes. Slated to begin this quarter, the work will be done at MAE’s facilities at the Brookley Industrial Complex and will continue for more than 12 years.

SouthernLINC Wireless now provides the BlackBerry 7100i from Research In Motion. This device allows wireless connectivity with support for ‘push-based’ e-mail, Push to Talk, text messaging, organizer, Web browsing and corporate data applications in a phone-like form.

EAP Lifestyle Management LLC

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Elissa Pressley Robertson joined First Community Bank as mortgage loan originator. Robertson graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor’s degree in business management.

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Landrum Companies announced its subsidiary AmStaff Human Resources will change its name to Landrum Professional Employer Services or Landrum Professional. A new logo, corporate identity and Web site will accompany the name change and can be viewed at www.LandrumCompanies.com.

Gwin’s Stationery & Engraving Inc. and Southern Lithographing, will consolidate the operations of Gwin’s Commercial Printing and Southern Litho into one building located at 957 - 959 Springhill Ave. The move will not affect the retail division of Gwin’s Stationery, located in Holiday Place at 4513 Old Shell Rd.

The Wachovia Foundation donated $50,000 to the University of South Alabama as part of the Wachovia Endowed Scholarship Fund for under-represented groups. The Wachovia gift is part of Campaign USA, the university’s first comprehensive fund-raising campaign that seeks to raise $75 million for USA programs, faculty, students and construction over the next three years. The new scholarship will help an incoming freshman student beginning fall semester 2007 and will be renewable for up to four years.

Software Plus, a full-solution software licensing company and corporate reseller of software, licensing and accessories, was honored by Microsoft as Partner of the Year for Operational Excellence. The company was chosen out of the North American field of top Microsoft partners for delivering market-leading customer solutions built on Microsoft technology.

Thomas Hospital recently received nine awards from the Alabama Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Society, an affiliate society of the Alabama Hospital Association, honoring outstanding efforts in the field of healthcare public relations and marketing. The hospital received a Best of Show award, the highest honor given, for its Women’s Best Weekend brochure.

In other news, the hospital was named one of the nation’s 100 Top Hospitals for cardiovascular care by Solucient, a Thomson healthcare business and the nation’s leading source of information products for the healthcare industry. Thomas Hospital is the only hospital in Alabama to receive the award this year.

Northrop Grumman Corp’s integrated systems sector in Moss Point, Miss., was recognized for meeting stringent international industry standards for environmental management and employee health and safety. Advanced Waste Management Systems, an accredited third-party registrar, presented the awards following rigorous certification audits.

Jaime Betbeze, a partner at Hand Arendall LLC, was selected to serve on the board of directors of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society-Alabama Chapter. Buzzy Riis, a member of Hand Arendall LLC, was re-elected president of the Mobile section associate board of the Associated General Contractors of Alabama. In addition, he was elected as second vice president of the state associate board of the Alabama AGC.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Alabama YMCA was named the 2006 Big Brothers Big Sisters agency of the year for its outstanding work and significant achievement in serving children in the south Alabama area.

Springhill Medical Center was the only Mobile/Baldwin-area hospital ranked among the nation’s top 200 hospitals for its billing accuracy, as recognized in the third annual Top 200 Coding Hospitals in the U.S. report. Also, the hospital was selected one of the most connected healthcare facilities nationally, according to Health Imaging & IT magazine.

The Alabama Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross received a $10,000 State Farm Insurance Good Neighbor Citizenship grant. State Farm awarded the $10,000 grant to the Gulf Coast chapter to purchase disaster preparedness materials to be distributed throughout the community to educate Gulf Coast residents on the precautions they should take before, during and after a disaster.

The Mobile Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) was named the 2006 Sharon Heflin Chapter of the Year by PRCA. The award honors the PRCA chapter that exhibited excellence in overall chapter operations during the previous year.

In other news, the chapter named new officers. Leigh Perry Hernando, Mobile Area Chamber, president; Susan Rak-Blanchard, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, vice president of membership and president-elect; Leslie Schraeder, Elevator-Escalator Safety Foundation, treasurer; Cassandra Comings, University of South Alabama, secretary; Lindsay Hutchinson, Mobile Assn. for Retired Citizens, students; Anitra Belle, Mercy Medical, community service; Misty Register, Comcast, projects; Kinnamon Phillips APR (accredited public relations), The Belfwetter Group, programs; Toni Vinterella Kemper, Lewis Communications, communications; Amber Guy Wiseman, Mobile Public Library, publicity; Pat Hartman APR, Imagery Marketing, and Suzanne Fornaro APR, Volkert & Associates, accreditation; Ashley Collins, Mobile Area Chamber, historian; and Traci Gyan, Cooper-Gyan, past president.

Mobile Works received the Governor’s Partners In Progress award from the state of Alabama workforce development division for work in both securing $1,892,574 in national emergency grant monies from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide temporary jobs for the city of Mobile, Mobile County and other municipalities, within the county of Mobile for Hurricane Katrina disaster relief and for using the money to quickly implement actual jobs for Mobile-area workers.

In other news, Ralph Bufkin was named chairman of the Mobile Works board. Steve Perry, with The Forano, was elected vice chair, Richard Davis, treasurer and Yolanda Richardson, secretary.

The Mobile Chapter of SCORE installed its new officers for the 2006-2007 year. Ron Muschel was named chairman, Dorothy Ryan was named vice chair and secretary, and Christopher Hume will serve as treasurer. SCORE is a group of retired business executives who provide free, confidential one-on-one counseling to entrepreneurs and small business owners. The Mobile Chapter of SCORE is housed at the Chamber and can be reached by calling 431-8607.
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
leads to the best catch of all.

Stephen Toomey
Toomey’s Mardi Gras
12 employees
Member since 1996

The Chamber’s referrals and networking opportunities have made Stephen Toomey the king of Mardi Gras supplies, bringing him order after order for shiny plastic beads. As one of 2,200 Chamber members, Stephen has access to resources, networking and exposure to grow his business and make it thrive. It makes every day feel like Fat Tuesday.