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Three Finalists Compete for the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Year Award

The Mobile Area Chamber expanded its small business recognition program by naming three finalists among those vying for its Small Business of the Year award.

On Thursday, May 7, the winner will be revealed along with this year's Outstanding Entrepreneur at the Chamber's Small Business Week luncheon, once again tying into the National Small Business Week Celebration.

"With 89 percent of our members employing 50 employees or less, it made sense to broaden the net and highlight the successful efforts of more of our members," says **Darrell Randle**, the Chamber's vice president of small business development.

This year's Small Business of the Year applications were judged by a panel of individuals with diverse expertise including management, finance and business development. Finalists were chosen based on five primary criteria:

- **Staying Power** - proof of growth, expansion, reputation and good business practices;
- **Economic Impact** - evidence of job creation and revenue and profit;
- **Innovation** - illustrating creativity and ingenuity;
- **Community Contribution** - either financially or encouraging/allowing employees to participate; and
- **Strategy** - future growth plans with specific and measurable goals.

This year's finalists, in alphabetical order, are:

- more -



American WeatherStar

Growing from a small space in the family residence to a 5,000-square-foot facility, American WeatherStar sells its nationwide contractor customers a variety of roofing materials. President Brian O’Donnell, says the company’s unique services include a business development center offering customer leads and specialized, hands-on training sessions. The 12-year-old company employs 12 people.

Note: The Chamber submitted all three finalists to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Award competition. American WeatherStar was named one of 100 Blue Ribbon Ribbons from across the country.

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McAleer’s Office Furniture

A 36-year old family business, McAleer’s carved a unique niche as an office furniture store. Staying on top of industry trends, expanding services such as interior design and customer service is what President Melissa Cross says helps the company remain innovative and relevant. McAleer’s has 21 employees.

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Wilson-Dismukes Inc.

From selling fish and groceries in 1944, Wilson-Dismukes has evolved to one of the nation’s largest retailers of outdoor power equipment and small engine parts. The key to business success says President Edward Dismukes Jr. is streamlining products and a generous inventory. Dismukes will open a west Mobile location later this year. The company has 12 employees.

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