



For Immediate Release
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Mobile Area Chamber Launches Inaugural Small Business Week

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is launching Mobile Area Small Business Week, a new initiative to recognize and celebrate entrepreneurship and small business, May 12-15. Activities include a resource fair and three workshops, each designed to offer entrepreneurs and small business owners with valuable tools and strategies to help them take their businesses to the next level.



The week culminates with a luncheon at the Mobile Marriott on Thursday, May 15 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., featuring Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey, founders of Barefoot Cellars as keynote speakers, and where the Mobile Area Chamber will present its inaugural Outstanding Entrepreneur Award to Jim Busby, chairman and chief operating officer of Centralite Systems Inc.

Houlihan and Harvey will talk about how they founded the winery in 1986 with very little money and no wine industry experience, and the obstacles they overcame to create new markets and innovative ideas to become America's No. 1 Wine Brand.

Their story also became a *New York Times* Bestselling Business Paperback, *The Barefoot Spirit: How Hardship, Hustle and Heart Built America's #1 Wine Brand*. The first 250 luncheon registrants will receive a copy of the book and have the opportunity to meet the authors and have their book autographed.

Details of the week's events follow:

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Monday, May 12 - Mobile's Best Resources for Small Business Assistance

More than a dozen organizations will be on hand to answer business questions and offer advice on how to manage and grow your business, and well as offer on-site assistance in financial analysis, business planning, marketing and market research, branding your business, social media and more.

Participating agencies include: Alabama Department of Commerce Office of Small Business Advocacy, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Small Business Development Center, City of Mobile - Community Planning and Development, Gulf Coast Angel Network, Mobile Works, South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, U.S. Small Business Administration, Women's Business Center of Southern Alabama and others.

When & Where: 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. - Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Cost: Free of charge

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or email brembert@mobilechamber.com

Registration requested. Free parking.

Tuesday, May 13 - Small Business Day

Your Greatest Business Development Tool – Your Employees

Presented by Dale Carnegie, this workshop outlines how engaging employees in the vision and strategy of your company encourages greater commitment, motivation and dedication to making your company successful. Learn the management behaviors and actions you can take to develop enthusiastic, empowered and confident employees who will drive your organization to the top.

When & Where: 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. - Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Cost: \$30 or \$25 for Mobile Area Chamber and MBDA Business Center members

The Mobile Area Chamber is offering a \$10 discount to the first 20 registrants.

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required. Free parking.

Where is the Money?

Presented by the University of South Alabama Melton Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, this workshop addresses one of the most pressing challenges to managing and growing a small business – having or finding sufficient capital – whether it's working capital, purchasing inventory, a line of credit, or first- or second-stage investors.

More than 10 financing organizations providing \$500 to more than \$2 million will be on hand to work with companies in breakout sessions focused on debt, equity and alternative sources of funding.

When & Where: 1 to 6 p.m. - RSA Tower, 11 N. Water St., 29th Floor Conference Room

Cost: \$25

Contact: Rachel Backlin at 251-414-8091 or mcei@southalabama.edu Registration required.

Wednesday, May 14 – Preparing Your Business to Reach the Next Level

This workshop will offer business owners and managers new and useful business practices to boost business growth. Learn to customize market research to identify market changes, trends, niches and how to make data-driven decisions to develop a plan that adds value to the procurement process for your clients and increases sales.

When & Where: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. - American Red Cross, 35 N. Sage Ave.

Cost: \$30 or \$25 for Mobile Area Chamber and MBDA Business Center members
The Mobile Area Chamber is offering a \$10 discount to the first 20 registrants.

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
Registration required. Free parking.

Thursday, May 15 - Mobile Area Small Business Week Luncheon Outstanding Entrepreneur Award

The week's activities conclude with the inaugural Mobile Area Small Business Week Luncheon. Jim Busby will receive the Mobile Area Chamber's inaugural Outstanding Entrepreneur Award, created to recognize and celebrate an individual who represents the characteristics of successful entrepreneurship including creativity, initiative, dynamic growth and sound management. Keynote speakers will be entrepreneurs Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey, founders of Barefoot Cellars. The first 250 registrants will receive a free book.

When & Where: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Mobile Marriott, 3101 Airport Blvd.

Cost: \$45 or \$35 for Mobile Area Chamber and MBDA Business Center members

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
Reservations required by Friday, May 9 and payment is due at time of registration. No refunds after that date.

For more information on the Mobile Area Chamber's small business week, contact:
Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com.

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