



Floor Trader, a family-owned business, opened a Mobile location to capitalize on residential and commercial growth in west Mobile. Pictured are: (back row, left to right) Joseph Bruhl, Carleton Mallory, Tim Johnson and Keith Rhodes; and (front row, left to right) Vicki Rhodes, Jennifer Paulk and Mike Downey. Not pictured are: Brad Snell and James Chambers.

Ground-Floor Opportunity

It's not uncommon for people in grocery store lines or at gas stations to break into song when they see **Keith and Vicki Rhodes**. Musicians? No. People just love their catchy jingle, "Floor Trader – the money saver."

The couple owns Mobile Floor Trader on Schillinger Road, the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month. They also own two other Floor Trader stores in Mississippi. The retail flooring store carries a variety of carpeting, area rugs, ceramic tile, wood flooring and laminates, including a wide selection of products made in the USA that are environmentally friendly, such as those made from bamboo and even plastic bottles.

Customers will also find on the shelves everything they need to install, clean and maintain their flooring choices.

Catering mostly to residential consumers who are remodeling or building new homes, the store also serves a number of commercial customers. "In this day and

time, people are investing in what they have," said Keith.

One of the things that makes the store successful is its inventory, explained Keith, stressing the store has one of the largest collections in the area stocked to help the do-it-yourselfer. Large displays and rolls of carpet also make it easier for people to visualize what a particular flooring would look like at home. "They don't have to make a decision based on one tile or a small carpet sample. People have a hard time visualizing, and it is our job to help them do that," said Vicki.

Flooring was ingrained in Keith, who grew up in a similar family-owned business in Mississippi. Vicki joined the company in 1984. Together the couple launched their own endeavor with what is now the Floor Trader franchise in 1997 and in 2008 opened the Mobile location.

Originally from Mobile, Vicki still has family here, so Schillinger Road was a natural choice to expand their Gulf Coast

presence. Research and statistics were also part of the decision, added Keith. "There was a lot of growth going on and there was a need in west Mobile."

The store has seven employees. All three stores share Keith who heads up operations; Vicki, who has a background in interior design and leads sales, training and advertising; their daughter, **Lauren**, who focuses on social media and promotions; and **David Salters**, vice president of operations and buyer.

"Being a family business, we like to be involved in the community," said Keith. "It is our way of giving back," added Vicki. For that reason, the store is a venue for numerous community projects such as LifeSouth blood drives and Saturday pet adoptions.

Floor Trader is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, call 251-219-8050.

Go to mobilechamber.com/award.asp to submit a Small Business of the Month nomination, or contact Danette Richards at 431-8652 or d Richards@mobilechamber.com. Small Business of the Month is a no-cost benefit of Chamber Membership.