



# Helping People Go to Work

Chris and Angela Ashcraft recently celebrated five years in the staffing business with Express Employment Professionals. Pictured are: front row, left to right: Chris Ashcraft, Jessica Smith, Tiffany Laskowski, Kristyn Cooley, Robin Mangum, Amy Hillebrandt, Misty Bradley and Angela Ashcraft. Back row, left to right: Claire Bolton, Becky Lovgren and Traci Collins.

Go to [mobilechamber.com/award.asp](http://mobilechamber.com/award.asp) to submit a Small Business of the Month nomination, or contact Danette Richards at 431-8652 or [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com).

“Putting people to work is what keeps us motivated,” said **Angela Ashcraft**, who co-owns Express Employment Professionals with her husband, **Chris Ashcraft**.

Express, the Mobile Area Chamber’s Small Business of the Month, offers temporary, evaluation-hire and direct-hire staffing.

Locally, Express has placed more than 4,000 people. Of these, Angela said many candidates start in temporary positions before they are hired permanently, and others are contracted to local businesses.

What makes Express’s service unique, said Chris, is that before a candidate is recommended, he or she goes through a heavy screening process, including thorough background testing, drug testing, skills evaluations,

reference checks and an interview with Express personnel.

Once that’s completed, Express clients know the top candidates are qualified and ready to be hired. “All they have to decide then is, ‘Do they have the personality?’ and ‘Are they the right fit for the company?’” said Chris.

The company has grown since the couple bought the Mobile franchise in 2006, and business is strong, said Chris, who estimates that 15 to 20 people walk into the office daily looking for a job. He estimated approximately 65 to 70 percent of employee placements are in industrial jobs, with the remaining in administration, medical billing and accounting. “For us, the economy will be back to normal when these jobs are distributed 50/50,” he said.

Before opening Express in Mobile in 2006, Chris sold chemicals to the paper industry, and Angela worked in the tourism industry. As the paper industry began to downsize, the couple looked into investing in a franchise. Express was the right fit. “This service matches our Christian values, our family values and our integrity values,” Chris said.

The Ashcrafts relocated their office last November to 3662 Dauphin St., Suite B, to make room for their staff of 12, and recently bought rights to the Baldwin County franchise and plan to add an office next year.

*Inc.* magazine recently named staffing companies among the best industries for starting a business, and the Ashcrafts agree it’s an industry with great potential.