

# BUSINESSVIEW



MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MAY 2021

## ALL ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF FOOD

**MADE IN MOBILE:  
WINTZELL'S OYSTER HOUSE**

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# AUSTAL USA ENTERS STEEL SHIPBUILDING MARKET



# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MAY 2021

## IN THE ISSUE



### 28 ON THE COVER:

Oysters still top the list of most popular menu items at Wintzell's Oysters House. Read more about this 83-year-old restaurant on pages 28-30. Photo by Chad Riley Photography.



9



18



40

- 5 Business Headlines: Austal USA, Burton Property Group, Coca-Cola Bottling Co. United, Chart Industries, Evonik and USS MOBILE
- 14 Small Business of the Month: FOY Superfoods
- 18 All About the Business of Food
- 27 Gulf Distributing Lends a Helping Hand
- 28 Made in Mobile: Wintzell's Oyster House
- 31 Mobile Area Chamber Member Food Service Providers
- 33 The Importance of Social Interactions
- 34 Back for More – Cross to Lead 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Chamber Chase Campaign
- 37 Call for Entries for Chamber's Small Business of the Year
- 38 Investor Focus: SOHO Event Rentals
- 39 Executive Profile: Dr. F. Todd Lasseigne, Bellingrath Gardens and Home
- 40 Tour Portugal with the Chamber
- 42 Board of Advisors
- 44 Calendar
- 47 Member News
- 50 New Members

## ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

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### PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

## THE BUSINESS OF FOOD

Bill Sisson, President & CEO, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

This issue of the *Business View* is all about the business of food and its importance not only to our region's quality of life, but also as an economic driver. Mobile has never had a boring food scene, but anyone who has lived here in the past 10 years can attest to the fact that our region has grown into an amazing food destination.

All the ingredients are in place for our position as a "foodie" city. We have great unsurpassed access to locally sourced seafood and produce, artisans

dedicated to singular perfections such as coffee, ice cream and baked goods, and a new generation of young chefs with fresh ideas.

Locals, newcomers and visitors all agree that they love a city that inspires their palates every day and brings a sense of fun and adventure to eating out and enjoying takeout. Mobile certainly fits the bill, and I know you'll enjoy learning more about our ever-changing and expanding culinary scene.



# AUSTAL INVESTS IN STEEL PRODUCTION

In late March, Austal USA's latest groundbreaking marked the start of a new era. The company began construction on its steel manufacturing line, helping ensure Austal will remain a major contributor to the U.S. shipbuilding industry.

The company is investing roughly \$109 million in the project to meet the emerging U.S. military demand for steel ships and preserve its thousands of jobs and the business it conducts with hundreds of local suppliers. If all goes as expected, the company will start building steel vessels in April 2022.

Last fall, the U.S. Department of Defense released details on a \$50 million agreement with Austal granted through the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security).

The new facility, along with a new assembly structure, will be built on the current property.

"As demand for the greater and larger Navy and Coast Guard fleets grows, Austal USA is investing to meet those changing requirements," said **Rusty Murdaugh**, interim president. "We're investing in our people, we're investing in our processes and we're investing in our facilities and capabilities."

"This world-class steel manufacturing line is a treasure for the Gulf Coast, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard that will provide a much-needed boost to the defense industrial base and our nation's defense," said **U.S. Rep. Jerry Carl**.

"Austal is Alabama's largest defense contractor, Mobile's largest industrial employer and one of the best corporate citizens in our community. This next step not only sets them up for future contracts – it is a move to retain the thousands of high-paying



jobs we have here. Austal's economic impact continues to grow and benefit Mobile," said **David Rodgers**, the Mobile Area Chamber's vice president of economic development.

Recently, the company announced it is expanding its service and repair business in Mobile to support increasing customer demand in that sector as well.

## AT A GLANCE

**AUSTAL USA**

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT:** \$109 million

**TIMELINE:** Under construction; operational in 2022



# TEAM MOBILE ANNOUNCES NEW INDUSTRIAL PARK

Team Mobile, in partnership with Burton Property Group, announced the South Alabama Logistics Park, a new development underway to attract warehouse, distribution and manufacturing operations.

A three-year collaborative effort between the Alabama State Port Authority, Burton Property Group, City of Mobile, Mobile County and the Mobile Area of Chamber of Commerce, the 1,300-acre master-planned industrial park will be located off I-10 near the Theodore Dawes exit, just south of the Amazon sortation center in south Mobile County.

“With over 6 million square feet planned in Phase 1, this development would not only be the largest in the state but one of the largest in the Southeast,” said **Philip Burton**, president of Burton Property Group.

The Mobile County Commission and Mobile City Council each voted to spend \$3 million to help develop roads and related infrastructure.

Mobile County Commission President **Merceria Ludgood** said, “This project addresses a growing sector in our industry mix. Its potential to attract logistics jobs can be a game changer for Mobile County.”

City of Mobile Mayor **Sandy Stimpson** said, “In order to fully capitalize on the growth from the Port and the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley, we must have sites ready for large companies to locate with utilities and infrastructure already in place. Today’s announcement is three years in the making and a huge step forward to propel our growing distribution hub. We are grateful for our partners in this project, especially Burton Property Group for their investment in Mobile and the success of our entire region.”

At full build-out of the initial phase, Burton estimates the development will exceed \$350 million in value and draw thousands of new jobs. Features include Class A industrial warehouse and distribution space for the growing number of shippers and light manufacturers that need to locate in close proximity to either the Port of Mobile or Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley.

Mobile Area Chamber's Vice President of Economic Development **David Rodgers** said, “This is a huge step in continuing our success in economic development. Product development is a core focus of what we do, and we must have quality sites ready for the final site selection process.”

Burton said while the project was on his radar, the catalyst was the Leaders Exchange trip to Savannah, Ga. With that city’s interaction between the port and economic development officials, he said “this needed to be done here.”

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# COCA-COLA BOTTLING CO. UNITED EXPANDING MOBILE FACILITY

This summer, Coca-Cola Bottling Co. United (UNITED) will begin expanding its current facility in Mobile, adding 120,000 square feet to optimize its distribution operations and install a state-of-the-art warehousing system.

Officials of the Birmingham-based company recently announced the \$48 million investment to help meet the growing demands of customers along the Gulf Coast. By year's end, once the project is complete, the company expects to add 15 jobs.

Today, the local facility produces more than 13 million cases annually and serves some 3,300 customers, according to the company.

"With this larger and more innovative facility, we will create an enhanced working environment for our associates and provide a higher level of service for our customers and communities along the Gulf Coast for decades to come," said Coca-Cola UNITED President and CEO **John Sherman**.

The 119-year-old company is the second largest privately held Coca-Cola bottler in North America, according to company officials. Coca-Cola UNITED has approximately 10,000 associates located in more than 60 facilities across six Southeastern states, including approximately 300 in Mobile.

"Coca-Cola Bottling is a longtime member of our community, and we are happy they chose Mobile for this significant investment. We can't wait to see what they do in the next 100 years," said **David Rodgers**, the Mobile Area Chamber's vice president of economic development.

The expansion is the latest chapter in a storied history between the company and Mobile. The territory, first owned by Coca-Cola UNITED founder Crawford Johnson Sr. of Birmingham, was purchased by brothers Walter and Will Bellingrath in 1903. More than a century later, in 2017, Coca-Cola UNITED again acquired the territory as part of a transformation that saw the company more than triple in size.

## AT A GLANCE

**COCA-COLA CO. UNITED**

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT:** \$48 million

**JOBS:** 15

**TIMELINE:** Construction to begin this summer



# CHART INDUSTRIES EXPANDS TO MEET DEMAND FOR CLEANER ENERGY

Georgia-based Chart Industries, a leading global manufacturer of equipment used in the clean energy and industrial gas markets, made a significant hiring announcement that will nearly triple its team at the Theodore site.

The company will add 94 employees to its current roster over the next two years, invest \$2.5 million to improve the existing facility, construct a new building and purchase needed equipment.

“The Mobile community is a great place for us to expand our business, in part due to the accessibility of the Port of Mobile, but more importantly, the highly skilled talent that we are eager to add to the Chart family,” said Chart CEO and President **Jill Evanko**.

Last fall, Chart purchased the hydrogen trailer and cryogenic trailer business from Worthington Industries. The new project will increase manufacturing capacity of hydrogen transport trailers at this location and introduce the capability of producing hydrogen bulk storage tanks at the company’s second U.S. location.

Hydrogen is widely used today in petroleum refining, technology and fertilizer production while it is taking on a greater role with fuel cells for distribution centers for companies like Walmart and Amazon.

As the push for renewable energy continues, hydrogen is at the core of that, explained Chart’s local General Manager **Josh Oakes**. “It is cleaner and more efficient,” he said.

“Chart is another example of a company that sees value in our area workforce and the community’s logistical assets that include the Port of Mobile,” said **David Rodgers**, the Mobile Area Chamber’s vice president of economic development. “Our manufacturing sector continues to grow and prosper in our community.”

## AT A GLANCE

### CHART INDUSTRIES

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT:** \$2.5 million

**JOBS:** 94

**TIMELINE:** Construction underway





# EVONIK EXPANSION WILL ALLOW MORE PRODUCTION OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE FOAM

A recently completed expansion at Evonik's Mobile site will help meet the demand for lightweight construction materials by the company's North American customers.

Evonik built an additional Rohacell® production hall to increase quantities of the high-performance, lightweight polymethacrylimide rigid foam.

This product is used in the design and construction of airplanes, cars and ships, as well as racing bikes and other sports equipment, electronics and medical technology. It is extremely light and able to withstand high temperatures and pressure.

"For many years now, we have been seeing consistently high global demand for our high-performance foams, particularly

from the aerospace industry and the electronics market, and we are responding to the marketplace by expanding our production capacity accordingly," said **Christina Walkosak**, head of the America's high-performance polymers business line at Evonik.

Originally produced in Germany beginning in the 1970s, Rohacell® production in the U.S. began in Mobile in 2008.

"We are proud to have safely expanded the Rohacell® foams production facility site in Mobile, which increases our ability to meet Evonik's U.S. supply chain demand for this valuable material," said **Kel Boisvert**, site manager, Mobile.

# COMMISSIONING THE USS MOBILE



The commissioning into active service of any U.S. Navy vessel is always an important and festive occasion, but it takes on special meaning when the ship is being commissioned in its namesake city.

Austal USA delivered the *USS Mobile* (LCS 26) to the U.S. Navy in December 2020. Commissioning has been announced for May 22.

“This is indeed a rare occasion and a great reason to celebrate the ship and crew, its builder, and the special relationship that the people of Mobile will have with *USS Mobile* for the life of the ship,” said retired Navy Captain **Bill Pfister**, president of the Mobile Council of the Navy League of the United States.

A number of activities, including the Chamber's Military Appreciation Lunch, are planned for members of the ship's crew and their families leading up to the commissioning, and the city will play host to Navy brass as well as family members from across the U.S.

“As the chairman, mayor and a resident of Mobile, I am honored and excited to celebrate the commissioning of the *USS Mobile*,” said Mobile Mayor **Sandy Stimpson**. “The committee and our citizens look forward to sharing our culture and spirit of Mobile with the ship's crew and the U.S. Navy. We are planning a Mardi

Gras parade, picnic and ceremony that will reflect our pride in being part of this great historic occasion.”

Built by Austal USA, LCS 26 will be the fifth Navy ship to bear the name of Mobile. The first was a captured blockade runner that participated in the capture of Forts Morgan and Gaines. Another was a cruiser that saw plenty of combat action in the Pacific during World War II. The most recent *USS Mobile* served from the end of the Vietnam War through the first Gulf War, and was decommissioned in 1994.

“We want to give our guests a taste of true Mobile hospitality,” said retired Navy Commander **Pete Riehm**, co-vice chair of the commissioning committee.

“What a significant moment in history this will be for our community. Named for Alabama's Port City, the *USS Mobile* was built here and will be commissioned here. All eyes will be on our city and the great work of Austal USA,” said **Bill Sisson**, Mobile Area Chamber president and CEO, who also sits on the commissioning committee.

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A photograph of two men standing in a rustic, cluttered shop. The man on the left is wearing a blue button-down shirt and khaki pants, with his arms crossed. The man on the right is also wearing a blue button-down shirt and khaki pants, leaning against a wooden cabinet. The shop is filled with various items, including a large fish mounted on the wall, a painting, a bookshelf, and a table with fruit. The lighting is warm and the atmosphere is cozy.

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# ‘GOOD VIBES ONLY’ AT FOY SUPERFOODS

For **Liz** and **John Smith**, the phrase “fresh, fast food” is a concept worth passion and investment. As the owners of two FOY Superfoods cafes, one downtown and one in west Mobile, the Smiths are dedicated to offering healthy, delicious foods and great service for dine-in and carryout customers. FOY is an acronym for Fountain of Youth.

The couple’s dedication to serving up “good vibes only” is one of the many reasons FOY Superfoods is the Mobile Area Chamber’s Small Business of the Month. The menu offers a rainbow of affordable “scratch-made food,” complete with fresh-pressed juices, smoothies, energy bowls and hearty sandwiches, tacos and quesadillas.

While pursuing a master’s degree at Spring Hill College, Liz focused on leadership and ethics, which she said has helped her in hiring and supporting FOY’s 12 employees. She said the “good vibes only” mantra starts with those employees and trickles down to customers, who are the ultimate barometers of the company’s success. That crew cohesion and buy-in has minimized turnover and empowered employees to offer suggestions and honest feedback.

“I stress to them that they are the backbone of this business, and we wouldn’t succeed without them,” she said. “I want everyone to be happy and for me to sense where each employee does the best.”

Community-driven wellness is more a necessity than a goal for Liz, who lived in Texas for a decade before moving to Mobile with John, a native of the area. In larger cities like Dallas and Atlanta, they found several businesses like FOY, indicating a larger attitude toward better health and fresh recipes.

In Mobile, the couple didn’t see anything similar to those concepts, so they created a paleo meal delivery service called Balance, which did well with area gyms, yoga studios and other like-minded businesses. Balance gave the Smiths the confidence to open a brick-and-mortar cafe, which is how FOY Superfoods became a staple in downtown Mobile.

Just over a year ago, before the limitations and shutdowns of the coronavirus pandemic, they added a second location in west Mobile. Despite challenges, Smith said she’s “not ready to give up on this dream yet,” and continues to be committed to pushing the envelope of FOY’s mission.

*FOY Superfoods owners Liz and John Smith showcase some of the healthy items on the menu at its downtown location.*

*Photo by Toni Riales Photography*

That includes developing a retail line of the cafe’s six signature sauces, to be sold at area grocers. It’s a natural point of growth for the couple, who started out offering delivery-only options, grew into physical locations and are now offering products for sale at other retailers.

To survive requires flexibility and innovation, points Liz said were driven home during the recent Roadmap for Growth program she completed through the Chamber. The program not only offered her new ideas and “true friends,” but also a place to connect with other business owners dealing with similar challenges.

“It was an awesome opportunity,” she said. “And in the end, it was like therapy.”



*Want to be featured as a Mobile Area Chamber Small Business of the Month? Go to [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) to submit an application online, or contact Danette Richards at [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com) or 251.431.8652 for questions and/or additional information.*

**COMPANY NAME:** FOY Superfoods  
**LOCATIONS:** Downtown, 119 Dauphin St.  
**WEBSITE:** foysuperfoods.com  
**PHONE:** 251.586.8995  
**OWNERS:** Liz and John Smith  
**LENGTH OF CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP:** 2 years



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**Mike O'Sullivan**, Senior Vice President, River Bank & Trust



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# ALL ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF FOOD

**M**obile is a city, a county, a region that loves to eat. And during the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses and particularly restaurants and caterers were hit hard as owners and managers maneuvered through an ever-changing environment of takeout orders and drinks to go.

Restaurants and eateries represent a little more than 10% of the Mobile Area Chamber's members.

We reached out to a few and asked them how they survived 2020 and what their outlook is for the future. And interestingly, born out of an unprecedented challenge were new ways of doing business, some that are here for good.

Several got very creative to keep their customers' attention from **219's** dancing videos to **Walk-On's** new loyalty program. A few owners used the time to research new locations (**Taco Mama, Mediterranean Sandwich Co.**) and upgrade facilities with repairs, paint and new technology.

On the following pages, you'll see these stories and more. We talked with two companies that are resources to area food providers. See how **Gulf Distributing** and **Tanner's Pecans'** commissary kitchen worked on behalf of their clients and vendors.

Plus, you'll find a list of Chamber-member eateries and an article on the importance of social interactions.



## 219

**Todd Henson, owner/manager**  
219 Conti St., Mobile | [219conti.com](http://219conti.com)

Located in downtown Mobile, 219 offers specialty sandwiches, salads, wraps and homemade soups. In early 2020, the restaurant was forced to close for six weeks. During that time, the staff worked to repaint the restaurant and make some repairs.

"While we were closed, I did some catering at different doctors' offices and I posted some silly dancing videos just to let folks know that we were still here," said **Todd Henson**, owner/manager.

Once the eatery reopened, 219 offered curbside service and used social media to push menu items and store offerings. "It's been tough, but we're all in the same boat so we just make the best of it and keep pushing," Henson said. "The menu is the same with a few new additions. In my opinion, our honey garlic chicken wrap could end the chicken sandwich war."

While staffing has been an issue, Henson said he has some amazing employees as well as some guests who have remained faithful diners since 219 opened almost 20 years ago. "I don't know what the future holds," he says. "I guess I'll see how the rest of the year treats us."

## FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Restaurant Industries in Mobile County Q2 / 2020

Restaurants and  
Other Eating Places

671

Full-Service  
Restaurants

253

Limited-Service  
Restaurants

357

Drinking Places

47

Food-Service and Drinking Places

756

Source: JobsEQ, Mobile Co. + USA industry data.



## ATLANTA BREAD COMPANY

Bill and Holly Turk, owners  
3680 Dauphin St., Mobile  
[atlantabreadmobile.com](http://atlantabreadmobile.com)

When the Turks opened Atlanta Bread Company in 1999, they wanted to offer a fresh alternative to fast food. In 2020, the pandemic raised the possibility of closing the restaurant for good. “The great unknown – not knowing how and when this pandemic would play out – was terrifying,” said **Bill Turk**.

Cutting costs everywhere he could, Turk said he limited menu items, cut the store’s hours and postponed other business necessities. The most difficult and painful decision he faced was having to furlough employees, he said. “The health and safety of our employees and customers was our first concern, and cutting costs wherever possible was second,” he said.

The restaurant relied on curbside pickup, takeout and delivery, and Turk said his loyal customers were key to survival. “As a neighborhood bakery café, they stuck with us and continue to support us,” he said.

For now, Turk’s focus is rebuilding the business. “I am not sure if packed dining rooms will come back anytime soon, so we continue to do all we can, taking it one day, one week, and one month at a time,” he said. “We are incredibly grateful for the business we have.”





## GEORGIA ROUSSOS CATERING

Georgia Roussos, owner and general manager  
1608 Rochelle St., Mobile  
[georgiaroussoscatering.com](http://georgiaroussoscatering.com)

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, **Georgia Roussos** said her catering business stopped overnight. One of the first steps she took was to return all deposits and pre-payments to her customers. Then she and her team started brainstorming how to survive.

When a friend gave Roussos the idea of bringing a food truck to her neighborhood, she tried it and the first venture out drew 100 orders. From there, customers pre-ordered with a pre-determined pick-up spot, and Roussos delivered.

From the catering facility, Roussos sold shrimp and fish po-boys and cheeseburgers, and she used social media to sell items in her freezer section. Now that there's a light at the end of the tunnel, Roussos hopes to continue neighborhood food truck offerings and freezer sales to boost the company's revenue.

She is happy to report that things are looking up. "A few of our corporate customers have called within the last couple of weeks saying that their employees have been vaccinated and they want to book an event. I take that as a good sign," she said. "We have weddings booked for the summer."

## LAS FLORIDITAS

Bob Baumhower, owner  
107 St. Francis St., Mobile  
lasfloriditas.com

The Cuban-inspired speakeasy Las Floriditas opened in February 2020 to standing-room-only crowds. But it closed the following month per CDC guidelines for COVID-19, finally reopening on June 30.

Housed in the basement of the RSA Trustmark Building, Las Floriditas is designed to transport guests back to the days of Ernest Hemingway as they enjoy signature hand-crafted cocktails and a limited menu featuring small plates and desserts.

“We are still in a challenging situation even today, but we are making the best of it,” said **Bobby Parker**, director of marketing and communications. “We are hoping for the best moving forward as things begin to return to normal.”

Las Floriditas is currently open Thursdays from 4 to 11 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from 4 p.m. to midnight.

In addition to expanding its hours, “We will be announcing some theme nights that we hope will create some excitement and offer something new to do in downtown Mobile,” Parker said.



## MEDITERRANEAN SANDWICH CO.

Vlad Moldoveanu, chef/owner  
274 Dauphin St. and 2502-2 Schillinger Rd. S., Mobile  
mediterraneansandwich.com

In January 2020, **Vlad Moldoveanu**, chef/owner of Mediterranean Sandwich Co., purchased new software to give his stores the capability to accept online orders. The software worked great, and he ordered more for all his locations just months before the pandemic struck. This fortuitous move helped his stores evolve with new technology and helped him stay mostly open in 2020.

“We made the difficult decision to close our downtown location,” he said. “We used that time to make some renovations. We had some federal assistance, and we were able to open back up just a short time later. It’s always tough to reopen once you have closed.”

During the shutdown, he utilized a skeleton crew with the new online ordering system, offered curbside pickup and contactless payment for his customers.

Now, he says, his business is picking back up. He hopes to add new menu items in the future and open another location or two. “There are still some challenges, but hard times always offer opportunity,” he said. “I think the worst has passed.”



## TACO MAMA

Hunter Omainsky, owner  
2534A Old Shell Rd., Mobile  
[tacomamaonline.com/midtown-mobile/](http://tacomamaonline.com/midtown-mobile/)

A popular build-your-own taqueria, Taco Mama specializes in tacos, burritos and margaritas, all featuring fresh ingredients.

During 2020, “Like all restaurants, we operated in a to-go-only capacity for months, and it was a challenge,” said owner **Hunter Omainsky**. “Fortunately, we did not lose a single employee, and none lost significant pay. That’s our culture; it’s about the people first.”

Recently, Omainsky said he’s seen a steady increase in traffic, which he attributes to more people getting vaccinated and returning to their normal lives. In addition to carry-out, the restaurant is offering dine-in and has sanitizer spray bottles on every table.

“It doesn’t hurt having beautiful weather to enjoy hand-shaken margaritas on our spacious patio,” he said.

During 2020, Omainsky researched and opened a new Baldwin County location in Daphne.



# TANNER'S PECANS AND CANDIES

Danny Fox, president

10 Springdale Blvd., Mobile | [tannerspecan.com](http://tannerspecan.com)

As a seasonal business, president **Danny Fox** said, Tanner's Pecans and Candies "never skipped a beat" during COVID-19. In the company's gift shop, displays were arranged to encourage a circular flow of traffic to keep customers socially distanced.

The company also has a commissary kitchen where food service providers without a commercial-grade cooking facility can prepare and store food and equipment. Fox saw very little turnover of those clients and had to create a wait list almost from day one based on the number of people who were interested in the space.

"The food trucks got out into the neighborhoods early on to offset their regular lunch locations," he said. "They adapted to where the people were."

As far as the future of Tanner's goes, Fox feels cautiously optimistic: "Things can only get better... right?"



## THE HONEY BAKED HAM COMPANY

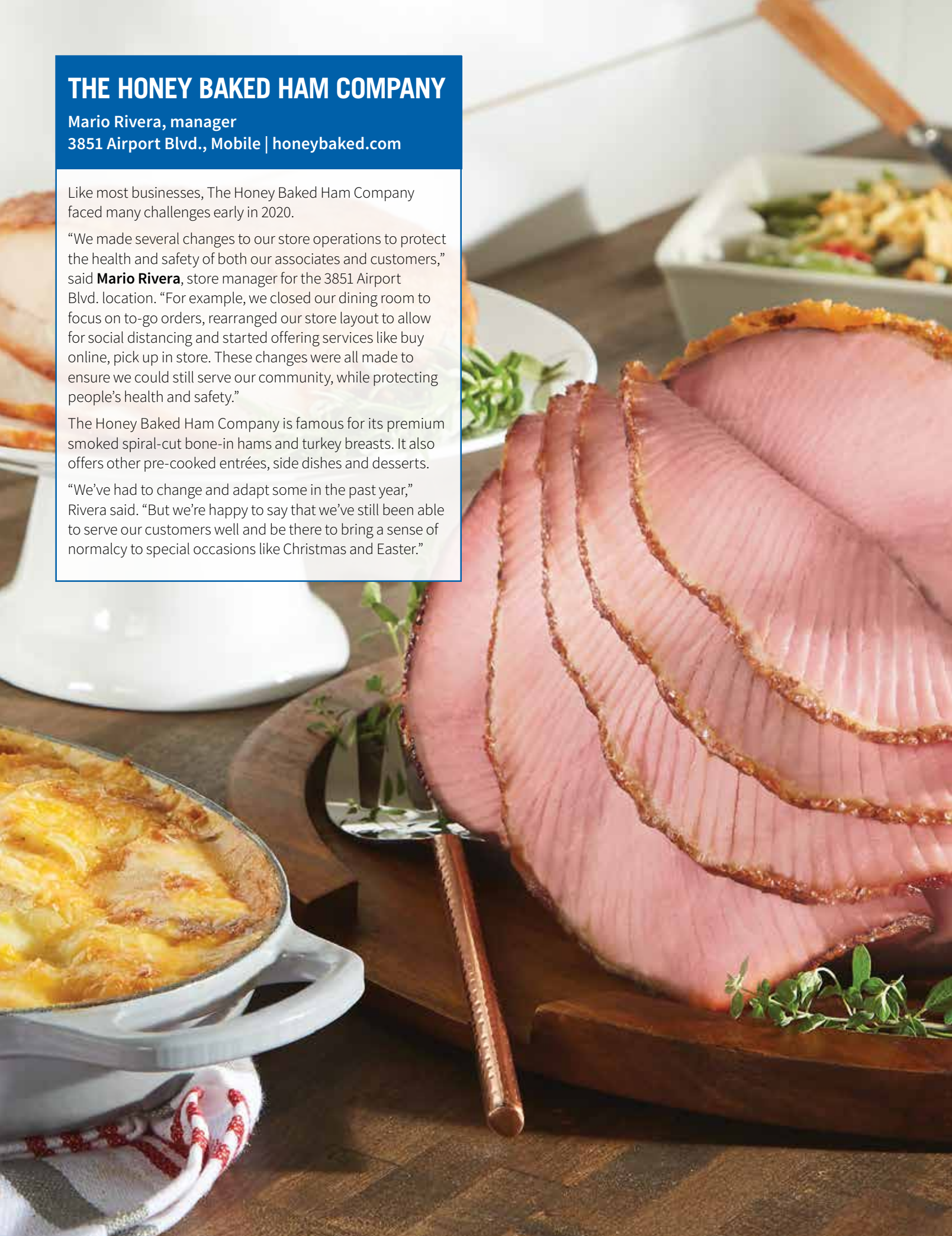
Mario Rivera, manager  
3851 Airport Blvd., Mobile | [honeybaked.com](http://honeybaked.com)

Like most businesses, The Honey Baked Ham Company faced many challenges early in 2020.

“We made several changes to our store operations to protect the health and safety of both our associates and customers,” said **Mario Rivera**, store manager for the 3851 Airport Blvd. location. “For example, we closed our dining room to focus on to-go orders, rearranged our store layout to allow for social distancing and started offering services like buy online, pick up in store. These changes were all made to ensure we could still serve our community, while protecting people’s health and safety.”

The Honey Baked Ham Company is famous for its premium smoked spiral-cut bone-in hams and turkey breasts. It also offers other pre-cooked entrées, side dishes and desserts.

“We’ve had to change and adapt some in the past year,” Rivera said. “But we’re happy to say that we’ve still been able to serve our customers well and be there to bring a sense of normalcy to special occasions like Christmas and Easter.”







## WALK-ON'S SPORTS BISTREAUX AND BAR

Bailey Richard, regional marketing coach  
3673 Airport Blvd., Mobile | [walk-ons.com](http://walk-ons.com)

Despite the obstacles brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, Walk-On's Sports Bistreaux and Bar managed to grow, according to Regional Marketing Coach **Bailey Richard**. The Louisiana-based, sports-themed restaurant chain specializes in traditional Cajun cuisine as well as seafood and burgers prepared in a from-scratch kitchen.

"When restaurants were shut down, it forced the team to put plans that had been sitting on the back burner into motion, fast," she said. "All of our departments worked together to launch several different initiatives, some in less than 24 hours."

The changes included online ordering, a new mobile app and corresponding loyalty app and streamlined "curbside to geaux" program.

"It's had an incredible impact on the entire company," she said.

In 2020, Walk-On's opened new locations in 12 different cities and plans to double that number in 2021.

"Last year was a monumental year for growth with the Walk-On's team," said Richard.



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# LENDING A HELPING HAND

*Gulf Distributing Co. employees prepare for their catered lunch in its warehouse.*

Mobile area restaurants, caterers and bars were especially hit hard by the pandemic shutdown, and most relied on their customers for support. But some actually got help from unexpected places – their own vendors.

**Calagaz Printing** shifted gears and started producing personal protection equipment for local healthcare facilities; **Tanner's Pecans** kept its commissary kitchen open to help local food trucks prep and store food and equipment; the **City of Mobile** and **Mobile County Commission** both spearheaded small business relief fund programs; and some businesses simply reached out with cash donations to their vendors.

**Gulf Distributing Holdings'** story is no different than most in dealing with the challenges of the shutdown. They focused on employee safety but also reached out to their own vendors to help them.

"Really our first focus was keeping our employees safe, and that meant over-communicating to them about COVID-19," said **Amy Baldwin**, managing director of marketing for Gulf Distributing.

Making masks mandatory and enacting strict protocols for its employees proved challenging but necessary since Gulf's employees work among people every day in grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants and bars. "We wanted [our employees] to know how serious COVID-19 was and exactly the measures we were taking to prevent the spread in the workplace," Baldwin said.

Gulf Distributing's customers are like family, Baldwin said, so the company wanted to help them as much as they could. During work hours, the company ordered catering from local

restaurants for its warehouse and delivery employees and organized lunch days for them while they were out delivering. The company provided funds for some of its retailers to volunteer at local food banks and homeless shelters and sent food to healthcare workers.

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In addition, "Gulf Distributing's legal team worked hand-in-hand with the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board and the City of Mobile to create emergency temporary regulations to allow alcohol to be sold to-go from bars and restaurants," said Baldwin.

While helping others, Gulf Distributing was able to keep its own doors open without any government assistance or losing any employees.

When asked about the company's future, Baldwin believes things are looking up. "Our company is resilient, and we are so passionate – after all, we're in the beer business, so by nature that make us very competitive. We like to win, and as an organization we have been through some very trying times. Each time our company or community faces a challenge, Gulf Distributing seems to get stronger because of it. So, are we optimistic about the future? With a team like this, you're darn right we are."

MADE IN  
MOBILE



# Made in Mobile

# Wintzell's Oyster House

**W**hen **Bob Omainsky**, president of Wintzell's Oyster House, is at the downtown Mobile restaurant on a typical day, he's busy holding doors open and thanking customers as they come in or go out. He's even been known to occasionally catch a child who's escaped his mother's grasp.

While it's one of Mobile's most popular and historic seafood restaurants, Wintzell's has weathered many storms over the years. When the Wintzell family sold the restaurant in the 1980s, it went through several ownership changes. It closed in 1994, then Wendell Quimby reopened it in 1996. In March 2000, the restaurant attracted another family willing to preserve its downtown presence and charm.

At that time, Bob Donlon and his son-in-law, Bob Omainsky, bought the business. Today, three generations of family members are involved. "Something that has the tradition of Wintzell's does not need to be tinkered with," Omainsky once told the *Mobile Press-Register*. "However, we also intend to expand the tradition."

It took a worldwide pandemic to close the doors on this unique eatery at 605 Dauphin St. The Omainskys made the decision to close for six weeks before reopening for to-go orders and, eventually, dine-in.

Founded by J. Oliver Wintzell in 1938, the restaurant is seasoned with tradition, from the founder's family gumbo recipe to the six-stool bar to the hundreds of sayings that line the walls of every Wintzell's location.

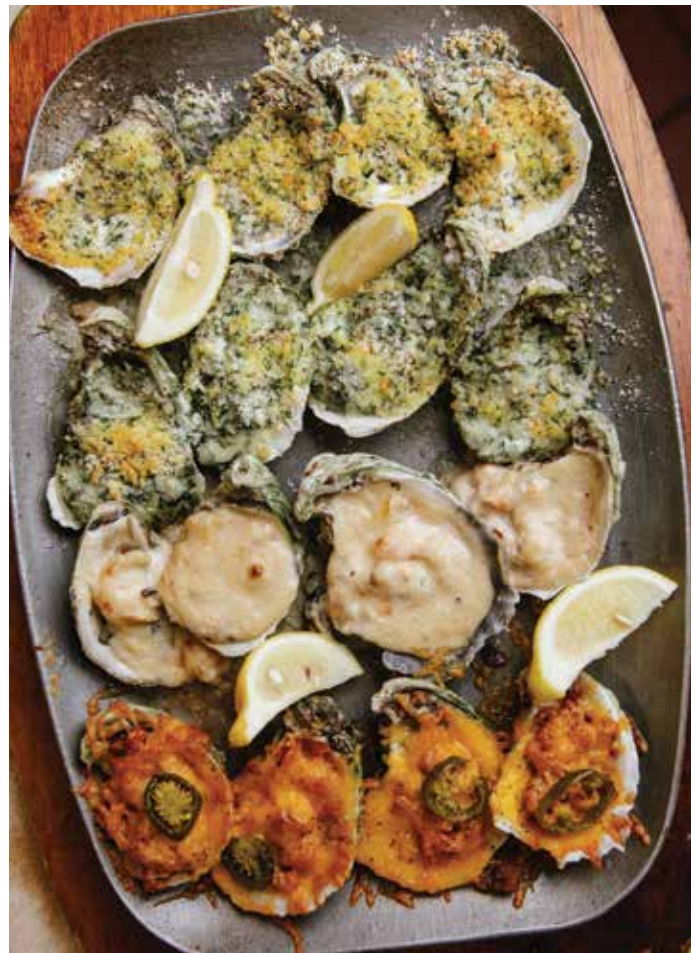


*This 83-year-old restaurant found a family as dedicated to its traditions as the founders. Pictured at left are two of the three generations involved in the business, from left to right, Clay Omainsky (son) and Bob Omainsky (father).*

Gumbo is one of the most popular items on the menu, which also includes crab claws, West Indies salad, Redfish Bienville and homemade bread pudding. But nothing tops the oysters, served raw, fried, baked and chargrilled. And if you can't decide, there's a sampler that includes Oysters Monterey, Oysters Bienville and Oysters Rockefeller.

**Gumbo is one of the most popular items on the menu, which includes crab claws, West Indies salad, Redfish Bienville and homemade bread pudding. But nothing tops the oysters, served raw, fried, baked and chargrilled.**

During the restaurant's 83-year-history, literally thousands have sat at the original six-stool bar where, each June, Distinguished Young Women contestants and others attempt to set an oyster-eating record. And this story cannot be told without a nod to the current champions – Ken Orndoff, who ate 421 raw oysters in September 2010; and Kristen Amy McElhaney, who ate 223 of the bivalves in April 2019.





Photos by Chad Riley Photography

In the early days, Wintzell put up a sign in the restaurant featuring a pretty girl and the slogan, “A man can sometimes get a pearl out of an oyster, but it takes a pretty girl to get a diamond out of an old crab.”

That sign was a huge hit, said **Clay Omainsky**, communications manager. From there, Wintzell spent more than \$5,000 creating more signs to fill the restaurant.

The winner of a fan favorite poll was the sign that reads, “It takes a man to admit he’s wrong, but it takes a woman to prove it.”

While maintaining its commitment to tradition, Wintzell’s began to grow. The first expansion came in 2002 with a west Mobile location, followed by others in Fairhope and Saraland. The company’s first franchise was sold in 2008, establishing a restaurant in Guntersville. Two more Alabama franchises are in Greenville and Montgomery.

With approximately 60 employees per location, Clay Omainsky estimates the restaurant employs between 180 and 200 people in Mobile County alone.

Company-wide, Wintzell’s serves about 93,000 pounds of shrimp, 182,000 pounds of fresh oysters and 21,000 gallons of gumbo annually.

As the state’s mandatory mask order expired in April, the restaurant was seeing “a burst in business lately,” said Clay Omainsky.

**Company-wide, Wintzell's serves about 93,000 pounds of shrimp, 182,000 pounds of fresh oysters and 21,000 gallons of gumbo annually.**

When he looks to the future, he sees the company continuing to perpetuate its legacy and tradition. “With three generations of family weighing in on all matters on everything from menu development to marketing, it sets up a unique dynamic of being able to bridge the old with the new,” he said. “We are always looking for ways to evolve while staying true to who we are.”



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baumhowers.com

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# WHY SOCIAL INTERACTIONS ARE IMPORTANT

As Mobile and Alabama businesses start opening back up and precautions are being lifted, some people are still wary of being close to others. According to the *Benefits of Social Interactions*, an article on [mercyare.org](http://mercyare.org), too much time on your own can make you feel lonely so it's important to make an effort to spend time with others.

In addition to promoting the Mobile area's economic wellbeing, the Mobile Area Chamber is about networking and bringing people together; being a connection between member businesses.

"We know that our members are individuals with families and friends too. People need people, right?" said **Carolyn Golson**, the Chamber's vice president of membership.

Eating out, networking or gathering with friends and family, outside or at home – but being face-to-face – can have a positive effect on one's mental health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), public health actions like social distancing are necessary but can lead to isolation and stress.

EAP Lifestyle Management LLC's **Patricia Vanderpool** warns stress and uncertainty of the COVID-19 outbreak can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Her company offers five key practices to help cope with stress:

- 1 Limit your media exposure about the topic** – It is important to obtain accurate and timely public health information about COVID-19 and being properly informed and educated can reduce stress and anxiety. However, hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories about the pandemic, including social media.
- 2 Be good to your body** – Mental health starts with physical wellness. Take care of your body. Get regular sleep and rest, eat healthy foods and stay physically active. Find a way to move

every day. Consistent physical activity is well known to lower stress and anxiety and improve mood, not to mention strengthening your immune system. Try to avoid using alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with the stresses of isolation and uncertainty.

- 3 Manage your thinking** – Your thoughts can be a powerful ally or formidable foe, perhaps now more than ever. Learn to manage your thinking in ways that support your well-being. Examine your worries and aim to be realistic in your assessment of the actual concern as well as your ability to cope. Avoid catastrophic thinking – ruminating about irrational, worst-case outcomes. To combat this, try to catch yourself when you go down a path of unhelpful or extreme thinking. Ask yourself, "Is this based on fact, and is it helpful to me right now?" Learn to put stressful situations in perspective.

- 4 Create and follow a daily routine** – Maintaining a daily routine can help both adults and children preserve a sense of order and purpose in their lives despite the unfamiliarity of isolation or sudden life change. Try to include regular daily activities such as work, adequate sleep, exercise, spending time with family and friends, relaxation, learning or hobbies and activities that you enjoy.

- 5 Connect with others** – Psychologists suggest using phone calls, text messages, video chat and social media to stay connected to family and friends. If your face-to-face interactions are limited, schedule a virtual meeting with family and friends for a virtual happy hour. If you're feeling stressed or anxious, talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

"Although likely not a substitute for in-person socializing and working, experts recommend taking advantage of virtual events to stay connected, such as the Mobile Area Chamber's virtual events," said Vanderpool.

For more information and business resources, visit [EAPLifestyle.com](http://EAPLifestyle.com).



Back row (left to right) Rachel New, Trustmark Bank; Nate Patterson, A Culture of Excellence; Cross; Ryan Allenbach, Alabama Power; Janet Johnson, Century Bank; and seated, Linda Faulkner, Evonik (retired) and James Alexander, BancorpSouth. Photo by Chad Riley Photography

## BACK FOR MORE – CROSS TO LEAD 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CHAMBER CHASE CAMPAIGN

The Mobile Area Chamber kicked off its total resource campaign in late April. Chamber Chase is a multi-week campaign in which volunteers and staff recruit new members, secure sponsorships for Chamber events and more to help the Chamber continue its mission.

The 2020 effort was a unique opportunity – and even with social distancing, still reached the campaign goal and broke many “COVID” records for the campaign – a favorite mantra set by **Melissa Cross**, president of McAleer’s Office Furniture and 2020 Chamber Chase chair.

“I really enjoyed the time during the 2020 campaign, even though it was a challenge for our volunteers to sell sponsorships – but they really pulled it off and made a huge impact on Chamber initiatives,” she said. “This year will be groundbreaking.”

Cross was asked to bring her energy and enthusiasm back to serve as chair for a second year. She hopes to lead Chamber Chase volunteers to break even more records during the 2021 campaign.

“People are ready to get back to meeting in person and being involved with the Chamber, even with some restrictions, but we can make events work again and network with our friends, colleagues and other business professionals,” she said.

“Volunteers have unique interactions with the business community by contacting their clients and customers,” said **Carolyn Golson**, the Chamber’s vice president of membership. “Teams benefit from the exposure and networking with other volunteers, and it’s a link to developing stronger relationships with customers. The volunteers can let their customers know about opportunities available at the campaign to open doors with potential customers.”



When asked why she participates each year, **Rachel New** of Trustmark Bank said, “I participate to enjoy the friendship with fellow Chamber Chase volunteers, to network with employees of other companies and help grow the Chamber. Mobile has so much to offer, and I want to be a part of the growth.”

“I participate because I believe the Chamber is an essential driver of economic development in our community, which directly results in more jobs, better salaries and, ultimately, a higher standard of living in our community,” said **James Alexander** of BancorpSouth.

The campaign goal is \$1.2 million. To get involved, volunteer, participate with a company team or donate a door prize for the volunteers, contact Carolyn Golson at 251.431.8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com).



*Photos by Chad Riley Photography*

## 2021 CHAMBER CHASE TEAMS

*as of March 26, 2021*

Alabama Power Co.	LLB&B Real Estate
Arkema	MACC Ambassadors
BancorpSouth	MACC Board of Directors
BB&T now Truist	MACC Growth Alliance
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama	Task Force
Blue Fish	McAlee’s Office Furniture
C Spire	Regions Bank
Century Bank	Renasant Bank
Crow Shields Bailey	Roberts Brothers
Hancock Whitney Bank	ServisFirst Bank
Hargrove Engineers + Constructors	Spire
Harper Technologies	The Stewart Lodges
iberiabank	Trustmark Bank
	Yellowhammer Investment Group

## Get Involved

**How can the business community be a part of the Mobile Chamber’s annual campaign?**

- Visit the campaign website, [chamberchase.com](http://chamberchase.com), for ideas.
- Join the Chamber.
- Raise your visibility by joining the Chamber’s Board of Advisors.
- Gain exposure for your company by sponsoring an event.
- Promote your business with an advertisement in a Chamber publication.
- Contact Carolyn Golson at 251.431.8622 for details.



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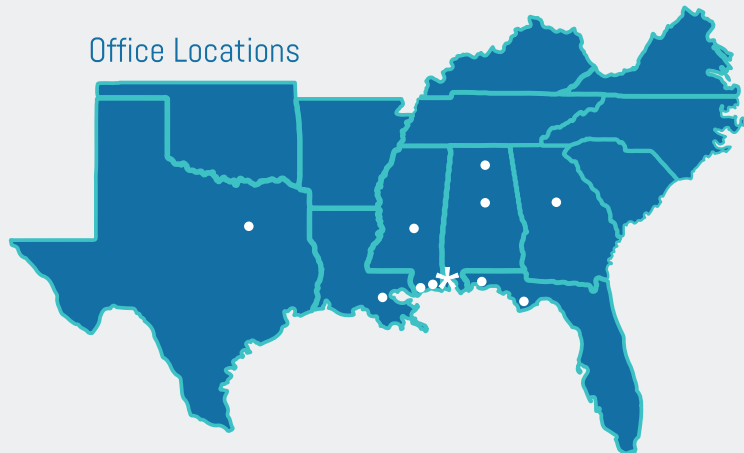
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# WE'RE LOOKING FOR 2021'S SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Many businesses found innovative and creative ways to deal with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, while others barely skipped a beat. Whichever scenario is part of your 2020 business story, the Mobile Area Chamber wants to hear it, along with a few other details on the application for its Small Business of the Year award.

Companies that exemplify business and civic leadership, financial performance, growth in employment and community involvement are encouraged to apply.

Do you know a deserving company? Maybe a customer or vendor?

Applications must be submitted online and will be reviewed by a volunteer selection committee. Three finalists will be selected and recognized at the Chamber's joint Board of Directors and Board of Advisors summer reception, where the winner will be announced.

The application deadline is Tuesday, June 1. For more details, tips and to apply, visit [mobilechamber.com/small-business](http://mobilechamber.com/small-business) or contact Danette Richards at [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com) or 251.431.8652.



APPLICATION  
DEADLINE  
TUESDAY, JUNE 1



FINALISTS  
ARE CHOSEN FROM  
THE APPLICANTS



WINNER  
REVEALED  
ON AUGUST 26 AT  
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## INVESTOR FOCUS

# SOHO EVENT RENTALS



*In business since 2015, SOHO Event Rentals offers event rentals for all occasions including this Losberger engineered structure tent at a wedding in Alys Beach, Fla.*

**Company officials:** Amy and Josh Kohn

**Address:** 8117 McGowin Dr., Fairhope

**Number of employees:** 30

**Website:** [sohoeventrentals.com](http://sohoeventrentals.com)

**Years in business:** 7

**Brief company description:** SOHO Event Rentals was born out of a passion for delivering Southern hospitality (“SOHO”). Over the last seven years, the company has grown from 50 chairs in a garage to an extensive rental inventory housed in more than 35,000 square feet of warehouse space. As the Gulf Coast’s leading tent provider, SOHO frequently travels to New Orleans and 30A in the Florida Panhandle.

**Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce’s Partners for Growth Initiative?** “The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce does a great job supporting small and large businesses through classes, networking events and recruiting efforts,” said **Amy Kohn**. “The Partners for Growth initiative was an opportunity that SOHO could get behind and support the Chamber’s recruiting and investing in our community. We are a big proponent of the phrase ‘A rising tide lifts all boats,’ and we feel Partners for Growth epitomizes this saying.”

**How long have you been a continuous Mobile Area Chamber Member?** 6 years

### About Partners For Growth:

Growing Global, Investing

Local 2018-2022, Partners

For Growth is a five-year, public-private initiative of the

Mobile Area Chamber, to grow and diversify Mobile’s economy. Its five pillars include: 1) new business recruitment and investment attraction; 2) existing industry support, innovation and entrepreneurship; 3) workforce attraction, retention and development; 4) diverse business development; and 5) business advocacy and quality of place.

Join the Chamber’s economic development investors by contacting **David Rodgers**, vice president, economic development, at **251.431.8657** or **[drodgers@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drodgers@mobilechamber.com)**.



## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

# DR. F. TODD LASSEIGNE

## BELLINGRATH GARDENS AND HOME



**TITLE:** Executive Director

**HOMETOWN:** Thibodaux, La.

**EDUCATION:** Lasseigne has a bachelor's degree in horticulture from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; a master's degree in horticulture from the University of Georgia; and a doctorate in horticultural science from North Carolina State University.

**FIRST JOB:** Working for his father's landscape company in Thibodaux

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:** Lasseigne was president and CEO of Tulsa Botanic Garden in Oklahoma. He has visited more than 450 gardens during his career.

**PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Under his leadership, the Tulsa Botanic Garden became a nationally recognized botanical garden.

**WHAT SLANG OR TREND MAKES YOUR FEEL OLD?**  
Alternative music from the 1990s is now considered "classic."

**HIDDEN TALENT?** I can identify most plants while driving 65 mph or faster.

### WHAT COULD YOU TALK ABOUT ALL DAY LONG?

Plants and biodiversity

**WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CAR?** Chevrolet Caprice Classic station wagon

**WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ?** *The Invention of Nature* by Andrea Wulf

**WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST INDULGENCE?** Food

**WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO OF FICTION?** Speed Racer

**TOP BUCKET LIST TRIP?** Guilin City (Guangxi Province, China) natural areas

**BRIEF COMPANY DESCRIPTION:** Bellingrath Gardens and Home, the state of Alabama's oldest public garden, is a 65-acre estate and historic home in south Mobile County. Created by Walter and Bessie Bellingrath in the 1920s and 1930s, Bellingrath Gardens and Home offers blooms and beauty every day of the year along with a variety of special events, from Winter Wednesdays in January and February to Magic Christmas in Lights in November and December.



# TOUR OF PORTUGAL

## 9-DAY LUXURY TOUR - NOV. 13-22

Lisbon | Cascais | Obidos | Sintra | Evora | Alentejo | Monsaraz | Lagos

**I**n an effort to meet the growing demand for group travel, the Mobile Area Chamber announced an eight-night tour of Portugal leaving Mobile on Saturday, Nov. 13 and returning home on Monday, Nov. 22. The cost of the trip is \$2,999, based on double occupancy and the deadline to book was recently extended to May 31. The price includes flights from Mobile, all hotel stays, tours and 12 meals (8 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners).

The group will fly into Lisbon before traveling to the Portuguese Riviera, specifically to Cascais, for three nights.

Day trips during the three-night stay include a day tour of Lisbon, Obidos and Sintra. From there it's on to Evora, where guests will learn about cork harvesting and travel down to Algarve region. In Lagos for three nights, you'll spend days in Monsaraz and Tavira enjoying quaint fishing villages, seaside cliffs and Roman walled towns. The tour ends with a night in Lisbon before flying home, or staying in Portugal for another four nights in Madeira Island.

### ITINERARY

3 Nights in Cascais

1 Night in Evora

3 Nights in Lagos

1 Night in Lisbon

To learn more about the tour, or reserve your spot, contact **Brooke McIngvale** at 251.431.8640 or [bmcingvale@mobilechamber.com](mailto:bmcingvale@mobilechamber.com).





#### Trip highlights include:

- Spend the night in Evora, known as the “Museum City of Portugal.”
- Taste the wines of the Alentejo region during a winery tour.
- Venture to Lagos, where Prince Henry the Navigator began his explorations.
- Admire the stunning Cape St. Vincent, where 200-foot cliffs plunge into the Atlantic Ocean.
- Savor the flavors of the Algarve with a tasting menu featuring iconic local dishes, liquors and pastries.
- Tour Lisbon, Portugal’s capital overlooking the Tagus River.



## JOHN BARTON

### TC BOILER INC.

**Barton** is CEO of TC Boiler Inc., an industrial contracting company located in Mobile. He has a background in real estate investment trusts and private equity and previously worked as a Level 1 certified financial advisor commodities broker at Morgan Stanley with Series 7, 66, 63 and 31 licenses. He is also a licensed real estate broker in five states and the owner of Avington Realty. Barton, a general contractor in Alabama, Mississippi, Florida and Louisiana, is a member of Partners for Environmental Progress and 3 Circle Church. He earned a bachelor's degree in finance at The University of Alabama.



## STEPHEN LIM

### ST ENGINEERING NORTH AMERICA

**Lim** is chief operating officer of ST Engineering North America, as well as president of ST Engineering Aerospace America Inc., the aerospace division of ST Engineering North America. Lim earned a degree in aerospace engineering from RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. He obtained a graduate finance certificate from the Southern Methodist University Cox School of Business and completed the executive development program at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Lim also holds an airframe and powerplant certificate from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration.

## KATE LUCE

### ALABAMA EXPORT RAILROAD AND MISSISSIPPI EXPORT RAILROAD

**Luce** is president and CEO of Alabama Export Railroad and Mississippi Export Railroad. Her career includes additional experience with General Electric Transportation and Bain & Co. Luce earned a bachelor's degree in supply chain management from Auburn University and a master's degree in business administration from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. She is a recipient of the Keohane Leadership Award for exceptional leadership and currently serves on the board of visitors at Duke's Fuqua School, the board of directors of the North American Shippers Association and the board of governors at the Mississippi Economic Council. Mississippi Export Railroad is a Partners For Growth investor.





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**REGIONS**

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# MAY 2021

For more information on Chamber events, visit [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com)

## 11 MILITARY APPRECIATION LUNCH

**When:** Noon to 1:30 p.m.

**Where:** USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

**Speaker:** Commander Christopher Wolff, Commanding Officer – PCU Mobile (LCS 26)

**Cost:** \$30 for members/\$40 for guests

*Due to social distancing guidelines, this event's capacity has been reduced and tables will now seat 6. No refunds after May 3.*

**Contact:** Mallory Tyson at 251.431.8621 or [mtyson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:mtyson@mobilechamber.com)

**Presenting Sponsor:** Alabama Shipyard LLC

**Sponsors:** All in Credit Union, Austal USA, Century Bank, Coastal Alabama Community College, Fausak Tires, Ingalls Shipbuilding, Keesler Federal Credit Union, Mobile County Commission, Trustmark Bank

**Supporting Sponsor:** FMC

**Photography Sponsor:** Jeff Tesney Photography

**Venue Sponsor:** USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

## 12 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

*Start your day with the Chamber and network with other business attendees to benefit from your membership.*

**When:** 8 to 9 a.m.

**Where:** Frios Gourmet Pops, 1201 W. I-65 Service Rd. N., Ste. A

**Cost:** No charge.

**Contact:** Carolyn Golson at 251.431.8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com)

**Sponsor:** S&S Sprinkler

**Hosted by:** Frios Gourmet Pops

## 13 GULF COAST FUNDING SYMPOSIUM

*Capital is the lifeblood of any business but especially for a small business. In this day-long symposium, meet experts and learn about a variety of funding options.*

**When:** 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., followed by happy hour

**Where:** Innovation Portal, 358 St. Louis St.

**Cost:** No charge.

**Contact:** Brenda Rembert at 251.431.8607 or [brembert@mobilechamber.com](mailto:brembert@mobilechamber.com)

## 18 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE

*\*Members Only*

**VIA ZOOM:** A monthly forum for Chamber-member small business owners and managers featuring speakers on important business topics.

**When:** 8 to 9 a.m.

**Topic:** She's the Boss: Successful Women Business Leaders Discuss Their Successes and Challenges Along the Way

**Speakers:** Melissa Cross, president, McAleer's Office Furniture; Kate Luce, president & CEO, Alabama and Mississippi Export Railroad Co.; and Suntrease Williams-Maynard, special counsel, Adams & Reese LLC

**Cost:** No charge.

**Contact:** Brenda Rembert at 251.431.8607 or [brembert@mobilechamber.com](mailto:brembert@mobilechamber.com)

**Sponsor:** BancorpSouth

*Registration requested for Zoom meeting code.*

## THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF OUR MAY EVENTS



## 27 ANNUAL MEETING

*\*Members Only*

*It's a new time of year for the Chamber's Annual Meeting, a celebration that will address the challenges and accomplishments of 2020 and update attendees on what's happening in 2021. The program will be followed by networking with food and drink.*

**When:** 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**Where:** Mobile Convention Center

**Cost:** \$60 for Chamber members/  
\$75 non-members/\$360 for a table of six

*Reservations are required. The event's capacity is greatly reduced to maintain social-distancing guidelines. Tables include six seats.*

**Contact:** Carolyn Wilson at 251.431.8606 or  
cwilson@mobilechamber.com

**Presenting Sponsor:** Trustmark Bank

**Supporting Sponsors:** AM/NS Calvert, Austal USA, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, Burr & Forman LLP, C Spire, Crow Shields Bailey PC, Ingalls Shipbuilding, Lenzing Fibers Inc., Mobile Airport Authority, Nudraulic Inc., Outokumpu Stainless USA, University of South Alabama

**Caterers:** ASM Global/Savor Mobile, Battle House Hotel, iCater Wedding & Events LLC, Naman's Catering, Pollman's Bake Shops

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## 31 MEMORIAL DAY - CHAMBER CLOSED

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**2020-2022 CHAIR, METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**CHAIRMAN**  
**Todd L. Denison**  
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# Military Appreciation Lunch

May 11, 2021 | Noon  
USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

Awards will be presented by the Navy League, Air Force Association, ESGR, USCG and National Guard, Marine Corps League and recognition of distinguished JROTC & ROTC Cadets.  
Keynote speaker will be Commander Christopher Wolff, Commanding Officer of the future USS MOBILE.

PRESENTING SPONSOR:



Tickets are \$30 for members and \$40 for guests.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MAY 3  
NO REFUNDS GIVEN AFTER THIS DATE.

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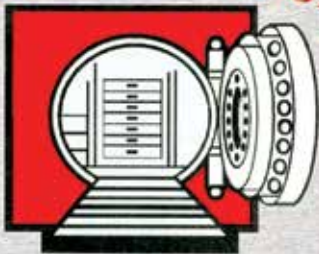


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SUPPORTING SPONSOR: FMC  
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VENUE SPONSOR: USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

Due to social distancing guidelines, this event's capacity has been reduced and tables will now seat 6.

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## WHO'S NEW

### Austal USA Names New Executives



Ryder



Murdaugh

Austal USA's business development executive **Larry Ryder** is the company's

new vice president of business development and external affairs. Ryder has served as the company's senior director of business development and customer relations.

**Rusty Murdaugh** is chief financial officer and interim president of Austal USA. Murdaugh brings more than 30 years of financial management experience. He has a bachelor's degree in finance and management from Saint Leo University and a master's degree in government contracting from the Florida Institute of Technology.

### Sam Winter & Co. Hires Wagoner



Wagoner

**Sam Winter & Co.** added agent **James "Jim" Wagoner** to its team of real estate professionals. Formerly an attorney with experience in real estate law and a licensed Realtor, Wagoner received a bachelor's degree and a law degree from The University of Alabama.

### Murphy Joins FASTSIGNS of Mobile



Murphy

**FASTSIGNS of Mobile** hired **Sheila Murphy** as a visual communications specialist. She brings more than 30 years of outside sales experience to the company.

### Roberts Brothers Expands Team



Lovvorn

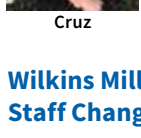


Henderson



Tuokkola

**Roberts Brothers** added Realtors **Natalie Lovvorn**, **Christina Henderson**, **Laura Tuokkola** and **Tereasa Cruz**.



Cruz

### Wilkins Miller Announces Staff Changes

**Wilkins Miller LLC** accounting and advisory firm promoted **Jordynne McCarty** to senior accountant. McCarty earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting from The University of Southern Mississippi.

**Mitchell Wolfe** successfully completed and passed the Uniform Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination and was promoted to senior accountant. Wolfe earned bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting from The University of Alabama.

## BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

### Blue Haven Pools Sold to Crescendo Capital Partners



Kleinschrodt



Whiston

**Transworld Business Advisors of the Gulf Coast** announced that **Bill**

**Kleinschrodt** and **Bill Whiston** served as exclusive mergers and acquisitions advisors to Mobile-based **Blue Haven Pools on the Gulf LLC** in its asset sale to Crescendo Capital Partners. Transworld Business Advisors serves business owners in the confidential marketing and sales of private businesses, mergers and acquisitions, and strategic exit planning.

### USA Creates School of Marine and Environmental Sciences

The **University of South Alabama's** (USA) newly created school of marine and environmental sciences will generate new undergraduate and graduate programs to complement existing degrees. Four professors of environmental science will be hired over the next four years.

In addition, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education approved an interdisciplinary doctorate program at USA in chemical and biomolecular engineering.

### UM Streamlines Center for Christian Calling

The **University of Mobile** revamped its School of Christian Studies to create the Center for Christian Calling. The program will prepare students for ministry, based on four programs: theology, intercultural studies, Christian ministry and graduate studies.

## WELL DONE

### Jones Passes CFC Exam



Jones

**Rebecca Jones** of **Transworld Business Advisors of the Gulf Coast** recently completed and passed the International Franchise Professionals Group's (IFPG) franchise consultant training, earning a new certification as certified franchise consultant (CFC).

### Mobile Medical Museum Honors Murphree



Murphree

**Dr. Rendi Murphree** was among honorees at the **Mobile Medical Museum's** second Mobile Community Health Leadership Awards. Murphree, an epidemiologist at **Mobile County Health Department** and director of the Bureau of Disease Surveillance and Environmental Services, was honored for contributions to improving community health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### UM Alumna Named 2021 Boykin Award Honoree



Henry

**University of Mobile** alumna **Dr. Tracey Henry**, a physician and professor in Atlanta, was awarded the 2021 Samuel Boykin Medal of Excellence by her alma mater, the University of Mobile. Henry earned a degree in psychology. She attended medical school at Georgetown University and earned a master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University and was chosen as one of 60 U.S. Presidential Leadership Scholars. The award recognizes outstanding African American graduates of the Christian university who reflect the ideals of virtuosity, faith and charity.

## COMMUNITY

### SSAB Delivers Steel for Battleship Repair

**SSAB Mobile** recently delivered a shipment of steel to **USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park** to be used in repairing decking on the *USS Alabama*. The SSAB Mobile team has been involved in donating steel to the park for more than 20 years.

### Thompson Engineering Foundation Gives \$1M

**Thompson Engineering's** foundation reached a major milestone – \$1 million in charitable giving. In addition to the company, the Thompson Foundation is affiliated with **Watermark Design** and **Thompson Consulting Services**, and raises money through company and employee donations, along with employee-managed fundraisers.

Submission deadline for Member News is two months prior to publication. News releases should be one or two brief paragraphs. Photos must be professional headshots labeled with the person's first and last name, and must be 300 dpi at full size and saved in an eps, tiff or jpg format. Send your information to [news@mobilechamber.com](mailto:news@mobilechamber.com)



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## ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER CHAD RILEY

A native of Mississippi, Chad Riley is a commercial photographer and photojournalist located in Mobile. He graduated from the University of Mississippi and moved to Mobile in 2008 for his wife, Cameron's, graduate school studies. Riley launched his photography career in 2010 capturing weddings and has since photographed more than 300 weddings and 1,000 assignments. Today, his focus is primarily in commercial photography and photojournalism. His work has been featured in magazines and newspapers locally and nationally including *Mobile Bay*, *Alabama Magazine*, *Lagniappe*, *Business Alabama*, *Business View*, *Forbes Magazine*, *Best Magazine*, *TheKnot*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Philadelphia Daily News*. In this issue, Riley's photography is featured on the cover, *Made in Mobile: Wintzell's* and *Chamber Chase*. To see more of his portfolio, visit [chadrileyphoto.com](http://chadrileyphoto.com).

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The Mobile Area Chamber was awarded the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's highest designation. Of the 6,936 chambers in the U.S., only 3 percent achieved five-star distinction.

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Katrina Lovett  
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Mobile, AL 36608  
251.434.5634  
apcocu.org  
*Credit Unions*

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251.301.0700  
advancedtechstaffing.com  
*Employee Staffing*

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P.O. Box 40534  
Mobile, AL 36640  
251.298.7183  
*Marketing Consultants*

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cherrypestcontrol.com  
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Ange Baggett  
P.O. Box 400  
Daphne, AL 36526-0400  
251.620.2302  
daphneciviccenter.org  
*Event Planning Management*

**COASTAL NUTRITION**

Sunny Randle  
6750 Airport Blvd., Unit C  
Mobile, AL 36608  
251.725.7501  
*Health & Diet Food Products*

**COASTAL READY MIX LLC**

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8421 Zeigler Blvd.  
Mobile, AL 36609-8382  
251.634.2400  
esfellerconstruction.com  
*Concrete-Ready Mixed*

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404 Yerby Dr.  
Mobile, AL 36617  
251.643.6505  
*Powerwashing and Steam Cleaning*

**CPSI**

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Mobile, AL 36695  
251.639.8100  
cpsl.com  
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3709 Lakeside Dr. S., Ste. D  
Mobile, AL 36693  
251.422.2830  
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709 B Azalea Rd.  
Mobile, AL 36609  
251.661.9414  
helpathome.com  
*Health Care Services and Nursing Services*

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Don Hembree  
7921 Tanner Williams Rd., Ste. E  
Mobile, AL 36608  
251.259.4664  
hembreeac.com  
*Air Conditioning Contractors*

**HENINGBURG'S PRESSURE WASHING LLC**

Darren Heningburg  
1759 Boykin Blvd.  
Mobile, AL 36605  
251.406.5875  
heningburgspw.com  
*Powerwashing & Steamcleaning*

**JUBILEE SUITES ON MOBILE BAY**

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Fairhope, AL 36532  
251.517.7515  
jubileesuites.com  
*Hotels & Suites*

**KB WELLNESS**

Kendra Barnett  
3979 Wimbledon Park  
Mobile, AL 36608  
251.391.8249  
kbwellness.net  
*Health Coach*

**L & G INDUSTRIES LLC**

Gisele Figures  
7000 Champions Run  
Mobile, AL 36618  
251.513.3528  
*Construction*

**MARSH & MCLENNAN AGENCY**

Debbie Harbour  
1110 Montlimar Dr., Ste 430  
Mobile, AL 36609-1735  
251.545.3889  
mma-midatlantic.com  
*Insurance Brokers*

**MCDERMOTT & SMITH PC**

Gray McDermott  
3217 Executive Park Circle  
Mobile, AL 36606  
251.473.8497  
*Accountants-Certified Public*

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Doug Nelson  
7690 Tara Dr.  
Semmes, AL 36575  
251.649.0061  
nelcomaintenance.com  
*Pressure Washing, Commercial & Industrial Pressure Washing, Parking Lot, Lawn Maintenance*

**OLD MAJESTIC BREWING**

Chad Marchand  
656 St. Louis St.  
Mobile, AL 36602  
251.283.3132  
oldmajesticbrewing.com  
*Brewery*

**QWALLY**

Chris Offensend  
419 Grand Ct.  
Golden, CO 80401  
917.796.0814  
qwal.ly  
*Software Services*

**SOUTHERN CRAFTSMAN CONSTRUCTION**

Chad Grueber  
1552 Shan Dr. S.  
Mobile, AL 36693  
251.391.8151  
Southerncraftsmanconstruction-unlimitedllc.com  
*Construction*

**TRINOVA INC.**

Chad Green  
4485 Laughlin Dr. S.  
Mobile, AL 36693  
251.378.7837  
trinovainc.com  
*Process Control*

**TRULAND HOMES LLC**

Jennifer Cooper  
29891 Woodrow Ln., Ste. 100  
Spanish Fort, AL 36527-8681  
251.621.0850  
trulandhomes.com  
*Home Builders & Realtors*

**VIVIAN'S DOOR INC.**

Janice Malone  
P.O. Box 40534  
Mobile, AL 36640  
251.618.9880  
viviansdoor.com  
*Nonprofit Organization*

*As of March 31, 2021*

Know a company interested in benefiting from Chamber membership? Contact Jackie Hecker at 251.431.8642 or [jhecker@mobilechamber.com](mailto:jhecker@mobilechamber.com). Also, find a membership directory at [web.mobilechamber.com/search](http://web.mobilechamber.com/search).

# MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNUAL MEETING



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Your Chamber is planning an UPBEAT Annual Meeting sure to provide an UPLIFTING experience and prove that together we are UNSTOPPABLE!

■  
Thursday,  
May 27, 2021

■  
5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

■  
Mobile Convention Center  
■

Register securely at  
[web.mobilechamber.com/events](http://web.mobilechamber.com/events)  
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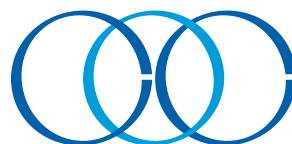
Meeting Presented By



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environment that promotes  
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