

# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

AUGUST 2021



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# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

AUGUST 2021



## 10 ON THE COVER:

Meet the finalists for the Chamber's 2021 Small Business of the Year. Read about these three family-owned businesses on pages 10-17. Photo by LA Fotographee



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## ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

# SMALL BUSINESSES NEED OUR SUPPORT

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

Shopping at local stores is always a good idea, but as we thankfully emerge from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's crucial to support these small businesses. Many of our small businesses – especially restaurants and retailers in the tourism and hospitality sector – were hit hard by the 2020 outbreak.

It has been amazing to watch the incredible persistence and creativity of our small business owners as they shifted their business models to survive the challenges. Many of them have been forced to put everything on the line and

make difficult decisions. In a nutshell, this unrelenting drive is what makes small business and small business owners so important and valuable to our economy and our community.

This issue of the *Business View* salutes all of our small businesses and the huge impact they have on our local economy and our Chamber. We thank you over and over for your continued resilience. Let's all remember to support these businesses – it's more important than ever that we do so.



# SPRING HILL COLLEGE RELIES ON CHAMBER'S INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

When Spring Hill College was in the planning process for one of its new undergraduate programs, college officials called on the Mobile Area Chamber to collaborate. Recently, Spring Hill announced a new supply chain management undergraduate degree program and a first-of-its-kind advisory panel.

The Chamber's role is connecting Spring Hill faculty with industry leaders who are willing to help guide the new program and encourage students pursuing the new degree. This unique collaboration is aimed at advancing innovation and experiential opportunities inside and outside the classroom, providing real-world guidance and ultimately helping to fill high-wage positions at area companies.

"The supply chain management degree program, combined with the local industry advisory panel for our business division, is a real-world ready opportunity for our students and for businesses in the Gulf Coast region," said **Dr. E. Joseph Lee II**, president of Spring Hill College. "It's a win for the city of Mobile and for Spring Hill College."

Online coursework will launch in the spring of 2022, while the face-to-face format is set to begin in the fall of 2022.

Students who earn the degree in this program will be prepared for careers such as logistics analysts, transportation managers, purchasing professionals and other logistics and related positions. They will be equipped to manage the flow of goods and services within industries, including the movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-process and finished goods from the point of origin to the point of consumption.



"This is a positive and proactive approach to preparing future professionals for the anticipated positions at our area employers. We are happy to help bridge the connection between the business community and education and support Spring Hill College's initiative," said **Bill Sisson**, president & CEO of the Mobile Area Chamber.

The supply chain management degree was one of seven new online degree programs announced at Spring Hill. The five undergraduate programs include organizational leadership, business administration (Computer Information Systems, Logistics & Supply Chain Management, Sport Management, Management & Marketing); philosophy, politics and economics; interdisciplinary studies; and RN to BSN for nursing students.

# APTIM AND ALABAMA SHIPYARD TEAM UP WITH HOPES OF WINNING ADDITIONAL PROJECTS



A recent delivery to Alabama Shipyard signaled a potential gateway for U.S. Navy projects to follow in Mobile.

On June 1, APTIM Federal Services LLC (APTIM) delivered the Navy's Surface Ship Support Barge (SSSB) to Alabama Shipyard's 425-acre ship repair, maintenance, modification and dismantlement facility located on Pinto Island.

Once used for dockside refueling of nuclear-powered vessels and disassembling spent nuclear fuel components, the barge was deemed obsolete and will be scrapped. APTIM was awarded the dismantle and disposal project, valued at \$129 million.



**Alan Weakley**, president of APTIM's business unit overseeing the work, said the project "represents a major step forward in NAVSEA's [Naval Sea System Command] campaign to reduce, in the most cost efficient and safe way, inactive nuclear reactors in both vessels and shore facilities."

"APTIM is proud of our contribution to safely and efficiently dispose of this once-strategic asset," he said. "We are also proud of our partnership with Alabama Shipyard and their impressive safety record."

The three-year project brings significant economic impact to Mobile, with local hiring and training of project personnel; utilization of local materials, supplies, trucks and hotels; maximization of the shipyard, port and rail services; and recycling of non-impacted steel.

"We are making our brand known with the Navy," said **Lee Stokes**, Alabama Shipyard's general manager. He anticipates earning the Navy's confidence in the company's environmental competence to win additional military recycling projects, he added.

**"APTIM is proud of our contribution to safely and efficiently dispose of this once-strategic asset. We are also proud of our partnership with Alabama Shipyard and their impressive safety record."**

**Alan Weakley**, president  
APTIM business unit



Board Chair Terry Harbin (left) and Mobile Area Chamber President and CEO Bill Sisson (right) presented James (Jimmy) K. Lyons (center) with the Delchamps Award at the Chamber's recent annual meeting. Photo by Jeff Tesney Photography

# CHAMBER HONORS JIMMY LYONS WITH DELCHAMPS AWARD

Mobile Area Chamber President and CEO **Bill Sisson** and Board Chair Terry Harbin presented James (Jimmy) K. Lyons the Delchamps Award at the Chamber's Annual Meeting on May 27.

Sisson and Harbin outlined a long list of Lyons' accomplishments. The former director and CEO of the Alabama State Port Authority retired in December 2020.

"While his 40-year maritime career merits acknowledgment on its own, I am here today to recognize his vision and leadership that steadily advanced not only Mobile's economic development efforts but those of the entire state of Alabama," said Sisson. "With his contributions, influential companies have established operations here and hired thousands of Alabamians."

An integral member of Team Mobile, a group of local utilities, universities, elected officials and the Chamber that recruit economic development projects, Lyons was part of the eight-year effort to recruit Airbus to Mobile. He also came up with

the solution that cleared the way for the ThyssenKrupp steel mill, which, at the time, was the largest private investment ever made in the U.S. That site in Calvert is now operated by AM/NS and Outokumpu.

Other Alabama success stories Lyons contributed to include Aker Solutions, Berg Spiral Pipe, Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, International Shipholding, MTC Logistics, SSAB (née IPSCO), Walmart Logistics and Yamaha Motor Corp.

Another success – and what some called a "risky endeavor" – was APM Terminals' five-phase plan for a container terminal that is now one of the fastest-growing in the country, according to the *Journal of Commerce*.

Lyons is the 13<sup>th</sup> recipient of the Delchamps Award named after Alfred F. Delchamps, a previous board chairman of the Mobile and U.S. Chamber of Commerce. It was first given in 1991.





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# MEET THE FINALISTS FOR THE CHAMBER'S 2021 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD

**B**ama Pest Control, Easy Heating & Cooling and Silver Ships were named finalists for the Mobile Area Chamber's 2021 Small Business of the Year Award. The winner will be announced on Wednesday, Aug. 25, at the summer reception of the Chamber's board of directors and board of advisors.

From the applications, a volunteer panel experienced in management, finance and business development, graded entries on a handful of criteria including:

- business operations and impact;
- financial position;
- innovation and entrepreneurship;
- customer service;
- market strategy; and
- community involvement.

This year, the finalists and a select number of their employees met at Innovation Portal. The location was selected to showcase Mobile's newest entrepreneurial center and highlight three of the area's growing small businesses.



*Photo by L.A. Fotografees*



# 2021 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR FINALIST





## BAMA PEST CONTROL

**Head of firm:** Clarence Johnson Jr., president

**Founded:** 1980

**Number of Employees:** 8

**Address:** 1862 Duval St., Mobile

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

Bama Pest Control serves commercial and residential customers in Mobile, Baldwin and Washington counties. Services target termites, roaches, mice and wildlife, as well as yard pests including fleas, ticks and ants.

The family-owned company offers same-day service and state-of-the-art pest control solutions while keeping the health and wellness of their clients and their properties in mind.

President **Clarence Johnson** believes the company's commitment, as well as that of those who work with them to provide immediate and exceptional service, earned this 41-year-old business loyal customers.

"We know an infestation can't wait a week, or even a day, so we hire only those who understand that as well."

The company was previously inducted into the Mobile Area Chamber's Eagle Award Hall of Fame in 2018.

Photo by L.A. Fotographee

# 2021 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR FINALIST





## EASY HEATING & COOLING

**Head of firm:** Enoch Lamar Smith, president

**Founded:** 2005

**Number of employees:** 8

**Address:** 11 Water St., Suite 10290, Mobile

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

Servicing, repairing and installing HVAC equipment for residential and commercial clients drives this family-owned business. In addition, Easy Heating & Cooling offers preventative maintenance contracts, job-site consultations and services equipment from attic fans to gas piping services.

President **Enoch Lamar Smith** says his 16-year-old company's workload increased during the COVID-19 pandemic because many clients were working from home. "We invested heavily in the required/necessary personal protective gear to enter homes, offices and facilities," he said. "Our business still thrived by educating employees, clients and ourselves on ways to stay safe and continue to provide services to our customers."

Company officials credit recent growth to new products and services, including smart home products and indoor air quality solutions. To be competitive in recruiting employees, the company provides on-the-job-training and mentoring.

Photo by L.A. Fotographeer

# 2021 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR FINALIST







## SILVER SHIPS

**Head of firm:** Steven Clarke, co-owner and chief financial officer

**Founded:** 1985

**Number of employees:** 70

**Address:** 9243 Bellingrath Rd., Theodore

**Website:** silverships.com

Founded in 1985, this family-owned company builds high-quality aluminum workboats used for fire/rescue, law enforcement, military operations, surveying and more. Since 2001, Silver Ships has constructed approximately 1,100 boats, with more than 100 in production or on order. Vessels ranging from 20 to 70 feet in length are customized and outfitted to meet their customers' needs.

Company officials say business more than doubled over the last few years. In 2019, the company completed a new storage building and built space for its engineering team. Silver Ships launched an affiliate company, Gulf Coast Suzuki, to repair or service local recreational equipment and commercial boats.

Co-owner **Steven Clarke** says, "As new technology becomes available and challenges arise, my team relies on feedback to design and build a vessel to meet their requirements."

Photo by L.A. Fotographee

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 A photograph showing Michelle Crowe, the owner of e-worc, sitting on a large wooden conference table. She is wearing a grey sleeveless top and white pants, smiling at the camera. Around her are four staff members: Amber White, Ashley Ritter, Justyn Phillips, and Courtney Jackson. They are all engaged in a meeting, looking at documents and a laptop on the table. The office has a modern feel with a large abstract painting on the wall behind them.
 

# E-WORC EVOLVES TO MEET CLIENTS' NEEDS

Michelle Crowe sits comfortably with her staff as they work on the company's next project. Her staff includes (from left to right) Amber White, Ashley Ritter, Justyn Phillips and Courtney Jackson. Photo by L.A. Fotographee

A few years ago, e-worc owner **Michelle Crowe** made a significant investment in her business, her city and to her company's hand-picked, highly trained employees: she bought her own office building.

It was a big step for the full-service marketing and advertising agency founded more than a decade ago in Crowe's spare bedroom. But the move was indicative of how e-worc has always operated, with an understanding that you have to be positioned to succeed when opportunity comes calling.

For the second time, the firm is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

Founded as a web developer, e-worc now handles everything from social media marketing to videography, graphic design and search engine optimization (SEO). The company's client base grew alongside its menu of services. After a few years, the

agency started booking more work with industrial partners across the country, especially industrial suppliers.

Twenty years of experience in broadcast media taught Crowe not only how to build relationships, but how to identify the right people to connect with. That was a lesson she followed into several professional development initiatives, such as the University of South Alabama's RAMP business mentorship program and the U.S. Small Business Administration's and Mobile Area Chamber's 2019 Emerging Leaders initiative.

"Mentorship gives me the opportunity to take what I have learned and share it with somebody else so they can go do something with it," she said. "But it also helps me learn what the challenges and struggles are for other business owners. Then I can apply that back to what I'm doing in my business and what I'm doing with new clients."

Crowe said one of e-worc's strengths is making sure she and her staff are passionate about each client. That carefully curated loyalty extends to her management style, as well. Compared to media companies, where performance was often valued above family, e-worc offers competitive benefits.

She insists on treating employees like human beings first. Long before COVID-19, working remotely was a staple at e-worc – so not only did the digital company thrive during the pandemic, but its employees had the freedom to give family business the same priority as e-worc business.

“The plan has always been to be prepared for, and good at, whatever’s coming next,” Crowe said.

**COMPANY NAME:** e-worc  
**OWNER:** Michelle Crowe  
**PHONE:** 251.414.3130  
**WEBSITE:** e-worc.com  
**LOCATION:** 4254 Cottage Hill Rd., Mobile

*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 [d Richards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:d Richards@mobilechamber.com) or 251.431.8652 for questions and/or additional information.*



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# PREVIOUS SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR WINNERS HOW ARE THEY NOW?

With this year's nominees for the Chamber's Small Business of the Year award, the *Business View* editors decided to take a look back and see what has happened to our previous winners and how being Small Business of the Year affected their businesses.

## 2015 - McAleer's Office Furniture

Melissa Cross, president  
mcaleers.com



McAleer's Office Furniture

### What made you apply to be the Chamber's Small Business of the Year?

More than anything, I wanted to recognize our dedicated employees and all the hard work it has taken to be successful. We definitely couldn't have done it without them. Sharing in this victory made us all so happy and proud to be a part of something wonderful.

### What has winning this award done for you or your business?

I'd be lying if I didn't say how much I greatly enjoyed the visibility that being the Mobile Chamber's Small Business of the Year gave to McAleer's Office Furniture. The Chamber plays such a crucial role in Mobile's business community, and winning their most prestigious small business award provided us a recognition that we still enjoy today.

### What advice would you give to this year's finalists?

Being celebrated as one of the top three small businesses in Mobile is a huge honor, especially when you consider all of the amazing businesses in our community. Enjoy it!

## 2016 - B&B Pet Stop

Sally Trufant, general manager  
bbpetstop.com

### What made you apply to be the Chamber's Small Business of the Year?

I don't remember why we applied – it seemed like a good idea at the time!

### What has winning this award done for you or your business?

The recognition by the Chamber put a little pep in our step and is something we used at the time to commend our krewe and congratulate them for being on a winning team. It's a little bit of the secret sauce contributing to the sense that we're doing good work here and we can be proud of ourselves.

### What advice would you give to this year's finalists?

Embrace what makes you special. Whatever it is that makes your business stand out, or makes your business successful, go all in on that.



B&B Pet Stop - 2016

Anyone who is a finalist for this award is doing something right. I advise them to focus on that and make it as much fun as possible.

## 2017 - 3 Echoes

Marc Ingram, producer  
3echoesproduction.com



3 Echoes

**What made you apply to be the Chamber's Small Business of the Year?** We thought it would be a great opportunity to make connections within the Mobile business community, and to develop a stronger relationship with the Chamber.

**What has winning this award done for you or your business?** It has raised awareness about 3 Echoes in our Mobile area community and this recognition has shone a light on our staff talent, work ethic and the quality of national level media that we produce right here in our hometown.

**What advice would you give to this year's finalists?** Make the most of every opportunity to network and build relationships. People do business with people, and we've had the chance to forge exciting new relationships by getting involved.

## 2018 - Blue Fish

Marcos Neto, founder  
bluefishds.com



Blue Fish

**What made you apply to be the Chamber's Small Business of the Year?** I was encouraged by some friends. I did not think I had a chance but I was okay with that. I was just hopeful that we would be mentioned along with the other candidates and that the promotion would get us some additional exposure that might lead to business opportunities.

**What has winning this award done for you or your business?** The recognition we received helped get our name out there. And we have had a number of people who were not contacts in 2018 mention to us that they know about the award. It is certainly helpful.

**What advice would you give to this year's finalists?** Enjoy this moment. Recognition like this does not come that often. Even being nominated is an absolute honor and should be celebrated. Don't let it slip by.



## 2019 - BCM Moring Co. Inc.

Grant H. Moring, president  
bcmorning.com



**What made you apply to be the Chamber's Small Business of the Year?** Applying to such a great organization was a big decision. Knowing the competition, with all the tremendous companies within the city, we thought it would be a long shot. But we were confident in our contributions to our community that we had an opportunity that was worth the attempt.

**What has winning this award done for you or your business?** Mostly the recognition by other great businesses in our community confirmed it to be the right choice. The pride our people felt when being recognized for all their labor was the proverbial "fruit" of their work.

**What advice would you give to this year's finalists?** As a Christian, I would say never deviate from your path, be intentional and know that failure is temporary, but forgiveness is not. If you made it this far, know that losing to another great company is not really losing. We are all one community!

## 2020 - Calagaz Printing

Joe Calagaz, president  
calagazprinting.com



**What made you apply to be the Chamber's Small Business of the Year?** I have always respected and admired what the Chamber does for the business community, but because of "life" getting in the way (three daughters, National Guard and an ever-changing business landscape) I have not been as involved as I should have been. A staff member suggested I apply, and I am glad I did, for a lot of reasons: (1) the application forced me to take a look at the business side of my business, not just the daily "fires" that needed to be put out; (2) by reflecting on the business of the business, it helped me rejuvenate some of the projects I had on the back burner; and (3) it gave me a platform to tell the business community about the AWESOME team that I have.

**What has winning this award done for you or your business?** Unfortunately, coming from a background with a strong, well-known family business the evolution of our business happened almost in secret. Winning the award has allowed the changes and evolution to be seen by the local community. I jokingly say that if you asked the 300-plus members of my McGill graduating class what Joe does for a living, they would be convinced they knew, but very few would actually know. The publicity around winning has allowed the local community to have a better picture of what we can do.

**What advice would you give to this year's finalists?** Enjoy and embrace the ride! Just being a finalist will help your business in ways that you could never imagine.

# MEET THE PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS

## Alabama Small Business Development Center at the University of South Alabama

**Mel Washington, regional director**  
**University of South Alabama, Alpha Hall East**  
**555 University Blvd. N, Rooms 307 & 308, Mobile**  
**251.460.6004 | [southalabama.edu/sbdc](https://southalabama.edu/sbdc)**

The Alabama Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of South Alabama provides small business counseling, loan packaging assistance, international trade and procurement technical assistance for businesses including companies wanting to do business with the government.

**Mel Washington** is the regional director of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of South Alabama (USA), where he provides one-on-one confidential counseling to entrepreneurs and small business owners in six counties in south Alabama.

After receiving his education in Washington, D.C., and New York City and pursuing a career in the corporate sector, he moved back to Mobile in 2011. He knew he wanted to work with entrepreneurs and small businesses in the area, and in 2013, he started with the SBDC, which provides expert assistance, tools, training and education. “We offer these services at no charge to the small business owner and are one of 10 centers in the Alabama Small Business Development Center Network, all under the direction of our lead center at The University of Alabama,” Washington said.

Washington’s greatest joys are helping individuals start and/or grow their businesses; knowing he is making a difference in their lives; and having a positive impact on the local economy. “Over the past eight years, I have worked closely with resource partners to strengthen and develop the local entrepreneur ecosystem into one of the best in the nation,” he said.

When he talks with clients, he says his advice is usually that starting and growing a business is hard work that requires dedication, commitment, persistence, flexibility, capital and knowing what you don’t know.



## Better Business Bureau of Central and South Alabama (BBB)

**Monde Donaldson, vice president of BBB Educational Foundation**  
**150 Government St., Ste. 1004, Mobile**  
**251.300.3388**  
**[bbb.org/us/al/mobile](http://bbb.org/us/al/mobile)**

The Better Business Bureau of Central and South Alabama (BBB) offers services to both businesses and consumers by creating a community of trustworthy businesses through accreditation, setting standards for marketplace trust, encouraging and supporting best practices, celebrating marketplace role models and denouncing substandard marketplace behavior. BBB also offers dispute resolution and referral services.

**Monde Donaldson** spent 30 years in higher education and building relationships, and that's what she says the Better Business Bureau of Central and South Alabama (BBB) is all about – trust.

A national nonprofit organization, the BBB was founded in 1912 after business leaders realized truth in advertising standards needed to be monitored. The Mobile office was established in 1954 with the mission to promote trust in the marketplace. Donaldson says her job is to educate businesses on how to incorporate these practices into the workplace and to protect the public when these ethical business practices are not followed. "Most people have heard about the BBB; my job is to let them know how we can advocate for them," said Donaldson.

She enjoys working at the BBB with small businesses to see them thrive in a supportive environment. "Small businesses have resources like the BBB, Chamber, local governments and professional associations that can help mold a business and support it in this changing and sometimes challenging work environment," she said.

Her one piece of advice that she gives all the time is that in today's marketplace, consumer experience can make or break a business. "My advice is to be honest, transparent, proactive, humble and equitable with your customers and employees," she said.



## Hatch Entrepreneurial Development Center

**Rick Miller, center director**  
36 N. Section St., 2nd Floor, Fairhope  
251.270.2670 | hatchfairhope.com

Hatch Entrepreneurial Development Center is a business resource hub and incubator for startups and technology-based entrepreneurs in Baldwin County. It fosters entrepreneurial culture by developing a resource ecosystem.

**Rick Miller** has been a consultant for small, growth-focused businesses for more than 20 years. Having also worked in the corporate world, he says he turned down a job to start a new incubator facility in another city to move to Fairhope in the early 1990s. "I enjoy change, love ideation and got certified in Gallup's team engagement, so starting a tech incubator in Fairhope was a great fit," said Miller.

"I love connecting entrepreneurs to other people and resources that can move their idea into a viable business," he said.

The advice he gives most to business owners is to get their revenue stream going before seeking seed/growth capital. "Having paying customers lowers your risk and raises your valuation in the eyes of seed/angel investors," he said.

A collage of four images related to industrial and construction work. The top-left image shows a large, modern building with a glass and steel facade under construction. The top-right image shows a construction site with workers in safety gear and a long concrete structure. The bottom-left image shows a person using a surveying instrument. The bottom-right image shows a large industrial structure, possibly a power plant or refinery, with workers nearby.

  
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## Innovation Portal

**Michelle Parvinrouh, executive director**  
358 St. Louis St., Mobile  
251.202.7165 | [innovation-portal.com](http://innovation-portal.com)

Innovation Portal provides a growth-focused space for entrepreneurs to connect with each other and gain access to targeted programming, expertise, resources and funding to encourage successful launch, development and scaling of their ventures.

**Michelle Parvinrouh** says she knew she wanted to help people at an early age because her father, an immigrant, pursued the American dream as an entrepreneur. She had the opportunity to start on her coaching journey while at college, when she worked at the school's entrepreneurship center.

"The center married my desire to coach and my respect and desire to continue providing support for entrepreneurs," she said. "From there, I built a network, and all of my work kept coming back to creating and delivering support to founders and business leaders," she explained.

She gets most excited when the founders she works with achieve their milestones and experience their own "wins." Starting a business is truly challenging and lonely work," she adds. "When an entrepreneur beats the odds and becomes successful, it's hard to not admire that achievement."

Lastly, the one bit of advice she gives to business owners is to keep moving forward, focus and deliver what customers want.



# UPDATE ON INNOVATION PORTAL

Innovation Portal (IP) has been officially in its St. Louis Street facility for one year, and the team has been busy providing mentoring and programming, including Money Fest, Startup Weekend and Pitchers+Pitches.

**Programming:** From idea to scale, Innovation Portal offers demand-driven programs for the diverse entrepreneurial population. IP entrepreneurs get support from a team of subject-matter experts and network to launch and grow local ventures. Portal offers several levels of mentoring, most notably discover consultations and navigate sessions. These programs are free and available to all small and startup businesses, no matter the stage of development.

Discover sessions are an introduction to the founder and Portal team.

Navigate sessions are for those actively working on their venture and are designed to provide accountability and encouragement.

Portal is launching an Expert in Residence (EIR) program for members to access the top subject-matter experts in the region.

In addition, the Portal Mashup Series covers topics such as how to find tech talent, all things legal and the basics of IP. The organization also works with several partners to support and deliver other programming to students, aspiring, early-stage and growing entrepreneurs.

**Coworking:** Portal's coworking facility is a good place for great starts and offers month-to-month 24/7 access to the facility and amenities such as fiber internet, conference rooms, printing, library, snacks and even a shower.

**Funding:** Portal Fund is a pre-seed fund that makes investments in companies based in southwest Alabama and the Gulf Coast region that are in the early stage of developing with high-growth business models.

**Community:** In all that it does, Portal's mission is to build the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem, and connect founders, creatives, developers and leaders to drive innovation. It is considered the hub, accelerating startup growth in southwest Alabama and the central Gulf Coast.

## Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Small Business Development Department

**Darrell Randle, vice president**

**Danette Richards, director**

**Brenda Rembert, administrative assistant**

**451 Government St., Mobile**

**251.431.8607 | [mobilechamber.com/small-business/](http://mobilechamber.com/small-business/)**

The Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business Development Department assists local entrepreneurs starting, managing and growing their businesses by providing small business training seminars, workshops, educational materials and one-on-one consulting, as well as referrals to local resource providers, governmental agencies and other business experts.

**Danette Richards** is the director of the Mobile Area Chamber's small business development department. She joined the Chamber in 2006. Her background is in adult education, and she has been a small business owner. Prior to working with the Chamber, she worked with the Women's Business Center, allowing her to combine her passions – education and business development.

The Chamber provides a variety of in-person and virtual training, and business development programming. The organization maintains relationships with all of Mobile's small business resource partners, and convenes with them quarterly. Capitalizing on those partnerships, the Chamber teams up to offer innovative programming including Emerging Leaders, Money Fest and Startup Weekend.

In addition, the Chamber presents a Small Business of the Year award and recognizes minority-owned company accomplishments with its Eagle awards. Through its diversity, equity and inclusion initiative, the Chamber brings together area CEOs, minority business enterprises and experts to continue to build the local economy, and hosts the Growth Alliance Task Force (minority business outreach).

Richards says when working with local businesses, it's most exciting when a business achieves its goals or benchmarks and sees growth. "That is economic development at the grassroots level," she says. "Every large company started as a small business – it's one step at a time."

Of the advice she gives to businesses, she says to have a support network or advisory board "that you can count on to tell you what you need to know, not what you want to hear." She explains these types of people are critical to helping owners ask the tough questions about their business decisions and direction and ultimately "help you see things that you can't see when you're in your business day-to-day."



## Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE)

**Sydney Raine, president**  
515 Springhill Plaza Cr., Mobile  
251.432.0909 | [swapte.org](http://swapte.org)

Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE) works with local businesses to leverage their training investment through the on-the-job training program and the incumbent worker training program. These initiatives provide wage reimbursement for companies hiring and training eligible new hires and a portion of training costs for existing staff.

**Sydney Raine** says in 1982 Congress passed “The Job Training Partnership Act” with the objective of increasing the employment potential of disadvantaged people and reducing their dependency on welfare. One important element of this act was it required the business community to be involved through a private industry council that would provide oversight and guidance in the development and implementation of the training program to meet the needs of local businesses.

Raine is president of the Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment. He says his greatest joy at work is when businesses recognize that SWAPTE can provide quality people for jobs in their business without cost to them.



The one piece of advice he gives businesses is to remind them that “the people we are required to serve are capable of being outstanding employees if only given a chance and provided a livable wage.”

## U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

**Brent McMahan, senior area manager**  
1141 Montlimar Dr., Ste. 1007, Mobile  
251.544.7401 | [sba.gov](http://sba.gov)

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provides business and financial assistance programs specifically designed to meet key financing needs, including debt financing, surety bonds and equity financing. The SBA does not make direct loans but provides loan guarantees to lenders to reduce risk.

**Brent McMahan** started working at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in 2007 after working in the business community, including a small business startup in Pensacola. He says that experience taught him about startups, raising capital and scaling a business. “Those lessons convinced me I had something of value to share with small business,” he said.

He says he enjoys helping entrepreneurs fight through the really tough parts of starting a business and identifying the “value proposition” for their product or service. “For startups, this is the really critical step: what research can help a new small business owner to demonstrate for customers how his or her product or service can create, deliver and capture value,” he said.

The advice he gives businesses is to figure out how to start small. “Don’t attempt to overdeliver, or over-stretch, or even over-capitalize,” he says. “Focus on one product or service that you can modify (pivot) as your early growth in sales leads you in different directions.”

“An extra delight for SBA and me is the partnership with the Mobile Chamber to offer the annual Emerging Leaders course in our city,” McMahan says.

The SBA identifies, selects and pays the tuition for 20 small business owners in this seven-month, executive-level training program where participants develop three-year strategic plans to scale their business.



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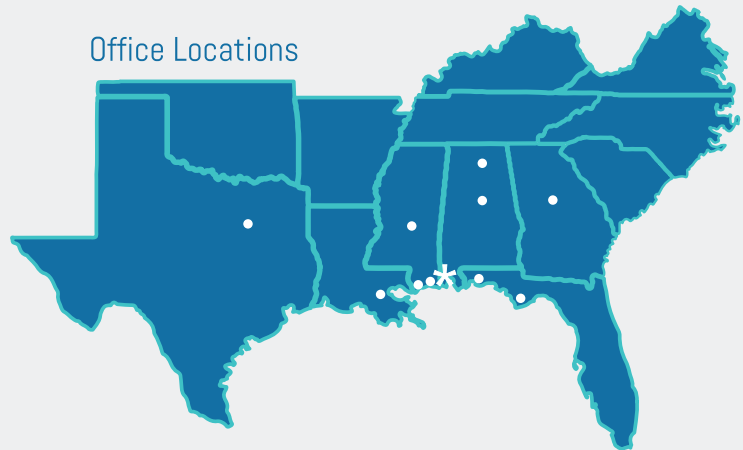
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# CHAMBER HOSTS ITS ANNUAL MEETING



The Mobile Area Chamber held its annual meeting on May 27, after a delay due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions. Attendees enjoyed food, music and networking. Thanks to our presenting sponsor Trustmark and our program sponsors AM/NS Calvert, Austal USA, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, Burr & Forman LLP, Crow Shields Bailey PC, C Spire Business, Ingalls Shipbuilding, Lenzing Fibers Inc., Mobile Airport Authority, Nudraulix Inc., Outokumpu Stainless USA and the University of South Alabama. *Photos by Jeff Tesney Photography*





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# Business EXPO

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2021**

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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\$5 admission (with business card)

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The Mobile Area Chamber has implemented safety precautions for all our staff and guests at this year's Business Expo including sanitizing stations, optional masks and social distancing guidelines.

# Business EXPO

## EXHIBITORS LIST

(as of June 30 2021)

### **Alabama Dept. of Commerce, Office of Small Business Advocacy**

#### **All In Credit Union**

Allie's Twisted Ice  
American WeatherStar  
Anytime Storage  
APCO Employees Credit Union  
ATSS Group  
Bay Area Printing & Graphics Solutions Inc.  
BCM Moring Co. Inc.  
Bellator Real Estate and Development  
Bienville Bites Food Tour  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Alabama

#### **Bishop State Community College**

Blue Fish  
Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama  
Byrd Safety and Maintenance  
Professionals LLC

#### **C Spire**

#### **Calagaz Printing**

Chicken Salad Chick  
Chris & Carla's Heavenly Ribs and Catering  
City of Daphne-Daphne Civic Center  
Coast Diagnostics  
Coastal Alabama Community College  
Crowne Health Care of Springhill  
Cuttin Up Barbershop  
Cypress Employment Services LLC  
Dauphin's / Las Floriditas  
DiRecManagement Inc.  
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GulfQuest  
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Junior League of Mobile  
Keep Mobile Beautiful Inc.

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KidsStreet Urgent Care  
Landshark Promotions  
Long's Human Resources  
McAleer's Office Furniture  
Mediacom Business  
Meridian at The Port  
Mobile County License Commission  
Mobile Area Council Boy Scouts of America  
Mobile Area Interfaith Conference Inc.

#### **Mobile Area Water and Sewer System**

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Mobile County Department of  
Human Resources  
Mobile Mask  
Mobile Society for the Prevention of  
Cruelty of Animals (SPCA)  
Mount Man of Mobile LLC  
Morale Resource LLC  
New Horizons Credit Union  
Oak Hollow Farm

Occupational Health Center  
Omega Properties Inc./Mobile's Best Storage  
Onin Staffing  
Optimum Home and Healthcare Solutions LLC  
Orangetheory Fitness  
Parker Human Resource Services LLC  
PASSAGE USA  
PMI Emerald Coast  
Portofino Apartments  
Profile By Sanford  
Safety Plus  
Scott Strategic Solutions  
Shields Insurance Agency

**Shoe Station**  
Snelling Staffing Services  
Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q  
**Southern View Media**  
**Springhill Medical Center**  
Start Living LLC  
Stone Ridge at Somerby Park  
Telamon Corp.  
Tennessee Valley Training Center  
The Grounds  
The Maids  
TipTop  
**Titanium Wireless**  
**Troy University**  
Tyndall Federal Credit Union  
Uniti Fiber  
University of Mobile  
University of South Alabama - Adult Learner  
Services  
University of South Alabama - Mitchell  
College of Business  
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# ECOSOUTH SERVICES CO.



**Company officials:** **Jeff Claunch**, president and CEO; **Joe Burkel**, chief operating officer; **Amy deGruy**, chief financial officer; and **Chris Wilkinson**, market development

**Address:** 12945 Hwy. U.S. 43 N., Axis

**Phone:** 251.675.9800

**Website:** [ecosouthservices.net](http://ecosouthservices.net)

**Number of Employees:** 50 local; 90 company-wide

**Years in business:** 10

**Brief company description:** Headquartered in Axis, EcoSouth Services is a leading regional provider of non-hazardous waste hauling and disposal services for commercial and industrial waste generators. EcoSouth specializes in managing hard-to-process, non-hazardous liquid and solid waste from industrial waste generators. The company owns and operates a fleet of collection vehicles as well as a non-hazardous landfill that accepts industrial and construction and demolition wastes. EcoSouth operates in the Gulf Coast regions of Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, as well as Birmingham and Hattiesburg, Miss. The company's mission is to provide an economical and environmentally sound local alternative with an "easy-to-do-business-with" culture. EcoSouth leaders take pride in being a good corporate citizen and support the local community through various charitable organizations.

**Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Partners for Growth Initiative?** "We support the Chamber and its Partners for Growth Initiative because we recognize that our schools, infrastructure and overall quality of life are dependent upon a healthy and growing local economy," Claunch says. "We are grateful for the Chamber's diligence in

not only promoting and looking out for the best interests of the area's existing businesses but also working tirelessly to secure new business and industry. We firmly believe that the future of the Mobile area economy is bright, and we are excited to be a part of the growth."

**How long have you been a continuous Mobile Area Chamber Member?** 10 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**.

## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

# KARI WILKINSON

INGALLS SHIPBUILDING



**TITLE:** President

**HOMETOWN:** Jenison, Mich.

**EDUCATION:** Wilkinson earned a bachelor's degree in naval architecture and marine engineering from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in business administration from Temple University.

**WHO/WHAT INSPIRES YOU?** People pulling together to accomplish something that seems impossible.

**WHAT WORD WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF?** Grateful.

**SECRET TO SUCCESS:** Working hard and not paying attention to it.

**DO YOU BELIEVE IN LUCK OR DESTINY?** Neither and both. I believe in God and the human spirit.

**YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY:** Christmas is magic – not only for what the holiday truly represents, but because it tends to bring out the best in people.

**WHAT COULD YOU TALK ABOUT ALL DAY LONG?** Shipbuilders.

**OUTSIDE OF WORK, WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX?** I really don't.

**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?** Based on some of the things I did as a kid, surviving to age 46.

**WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU MOST LIKE IN PEOPLE?** Humility and strength of character.

**BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** Having a front-row seat to national security.

**BRIEF COMPANY DESCRIPTION:** Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) is America's largest military shipbuilding company and a provider of professional services to partners in government and industry. For more than a century, HII's Newport News and Ingalls shipbuilding divisions in Virginia and Mississippi have built more ships in more ship classes than any other U.S. naval shipbuilder. Headquartered in Newport News, HII employs more than 41,000 people operating both domestically and internationally.



## TYRONE FENDERSON JR.

### SYNOVUS BANK

**Fenderson** is currently market president for Synovus Bank with responsibility for Mobile and Baldwin counties. Fenderson has been active in shaping policy in the banking industry to ensure regulatory burdens do not have a negative impact on economies and business growth in local communities. Fenderson serves on the boards of Alabama School of Math and Science Foundation, Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) and he is the immediate past chairman of Leadership Alabama. He is also a commissioner with the Mobile Housing Board. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Faulkner University and a master's degree in business administration from Troy University. He is a graduate of the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University and the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at the University of Pennsylvania.

## COREY HANSON

### WALA-TV

**Hanson** is vice president/general manager of WALA-TV. She oversees the FOX affiliate in Mobile owned by Meredith Corp. Hanson has more than 20 years' experience in the broadcast industry. Most recently, she served as station manager at Meredith's duopoly in Portland, Ore., Hanson has worked for Meredith since 2004, starting as an executive producer at KPTV/KPDX in Portland, then moving steadily up the ranks, serving as creative services director and executive news director. She is a graduate of Willamette University in Salem, Ore., with a bachelor's degree in rhetoric and media studies and has continued her education at the UNC Kenan-Flagler School of Business.



## FRANK MCFADDEN

### MCFADDEN ENGINEERING INC. AND WATER RECLAMATION SOLUTIONS LLC

**McFadden** has nearly four decades of environmental and civil engineering experience as the co-founding principal (with his wife, Hope) of McFadden Engineering Inc. and Water Reclamation Solutions LLC, an environmental/civil engineering firm and wastewater process manufacturing company, respectively. While continuing his role as president of McFadden Engineering, he has developed a patent-pending wastewater treatment process focused on advanced biological treatment for domestic and industrial wastewater and water reuse. McFadden earned a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Asbury University in Wilmore, Ky., and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and master's degree in civil engineering with environmental specialty from Auburn University.



# CHAMBER AT WORK



Photo by Jeff Tesney Photography



Photo by Jeff Tesney Photography



**1 & 2 CELEBRATING THE MILITARY** The Chamber held its annual Military Appreciation Luncheon earlier this year at the USS ALABAMA Battleship Aircraft Pavilion. With many COVID protocols still in place, the event returned to an in-person experience and more than 200 people attended. Awards were presented by the Chamber and military organizations in recognition of distinguished JROTC cadets. The Chamber presented the Gen. Gary Cooper Outstanding Service Award to U.S. Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sergeant Cynthia House (Ret.).

**3 MONEY FEST** Innovation Portal, the Chamber and Hatch Entrepreneurial Center teamed up to hold an all-day funding and capital summit for entrepreneurs and small businesses seeking growth. The day featured breakout sessions with experts in traditional and non-traditional financing options, debt, equity, the basics of lending/borrowing, financial analysis and other technical assistance topics. The event was held at the Innovation Portal offices with more than 100 small business owners and managers in attendance.





**4 & 5 RIBBON CUTTINGS/GRAND OPENINGS**

Chamber staff and Ambassadors celebrated a number of grand openings and ribbon cuttings at various member businesses, including A & O Health Career, Bryant Bank, KedPlasma, Profile by Sanford and Sunrise Network Solutions. For more information on how the Chamber can help your business with a similar event, contact Mallory Tyson at 251.431.8621.

**6 CHAMBER HOSTS SUMMER INTERNS** The Chamber’s economic development department hosted the Economic Development Association of Alabama’s summer interns to highlight economic growth and logistical advantages in Mobile. Interns were placed with Spire, Alabama Power, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama and PowerSouth.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES** In June, the Chamber’s small business development department held the second in a series of small business workshops – Preparing for Business Growth, Part 2: The Knowledge and Tools for Progress – a virtual workshop to help small businesses strengthen the position of their companies through improved and effective negotiation skills. A Business-to-Business Procurement Matchmaker event followed later that month. The matchmaker event was designed to help small business owners meet purchasing agents and decision makers from the private and public sectors.

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# CHAMBER REORGANIZES ITS GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS



Hewston

The Mobile Area Chamber combined the community and governmental affairs and the communications and marketing departments to form the communications and advocacy department.

**Nancy Hewston** was named vice president of communications and advocacy for the new department, and **Maggie Oliver** was named senior director of government affairs.

“Nancy is a seasoned communicator with extensive experience in both politics and communications,” said **Bill Sisson**, the Chamber’s president and CEO. “Her network of connections both across the state and in Washington, D.C., as well as her ability to build coalitions and drive consensus, position her to continue to be a valuable asset to Mobile’s business community and the Mobile Chamber.”

Hewston joined the Chamber in January 2020 as the vice president of community and governmental affairs. Previously, she was senior vice president of communications, strategic information and federal affairs for the Business Council of Alabama. There she was responsible for the development and implementation of the BCA’s federal legislative agenda as well as a broad range of public relations activities relative to the strategic direction and position of the organization and its members. Prior to the BCA, Hewston spent nearly a decade on Capitol Hill. She worked in both chambers of Congress, as press secretary to former U.S. Rep. Jo Bonner and as deputy press secretary to former U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions. She holds master’s and bachelor’s degrees from The University of Alabama and is a member of Leadership Mobile Class of 2020-2021.



Oliver

Oliver joined the Chamber in 2018 as director of community and governmental affairs. Oliver holds a master’s degree in public relations and corporate communications from Georgetown and a bachelor’s degree in public policy leadership from the University of Mississippi’s Trent Lott Leadership Institute. Following graduation, Oliver moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked both on and off Capitol Hill in public policy and political communications.

JOIN US FOR THE MOBILE AREA CHAMBER'S ANNUAL

# STATE OF THE CITY & COUNTY

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

8 A.M. | MOBILE CONVENTION CENTER BALLROOM

DOORS OPEN AT 7:30 A.M.



FEATURING A CONVERSATION WITH CITY OF MOBILE MAYOR SANDY STIMPSON AND MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MERCERIA LUDGOOD, CONNIE HUDSON AND RANDALL DUEITT.

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# AUGUST 2021

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

## 3 MEMBERSHIP 101

*\*Members only.*

Meet other members and Chamber staff to learn more ways to benefit from your membership.

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

**Where:** Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

**Contact:** Carolyn Golson at 251-431-8622 or [cgpdon@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgpdon@mobilechamber.com)

*No charge to attend. Registration requested for limited seating. Free parking.*

## 5 PREPARING FOR BUSINESS GROWTH, PART 3: CLOSING THE DEAL

*Third in a series of training events to help business owners develop and improve the strength and position of their companies.*

*Building on the previous seminars, this virtual seminar gets more detailed in the areas of developing a capability statement, pricing/estimating processes, cash flow, overhead and burden*

**When:** 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

**Speaker:** Tom Quinn, Construction Estimating Institute (CEI)

**Where:** Virtual via ZOOM

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

*No charge. Registration required for ZOOM meeting code.*

**Sponsor:** BBVA

## 11 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

*Start your day with the Chamber and network with other business attendees.*

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

**Where:** Keller Williams Realty Mobile, 1210 Hillcrest Rd., Ste. 200

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

*No charge.*

**Sponsor:** S&S Sprinkler

**Hosted by:** Keller Williams Realty Mobile

## 17 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE

*\*Members only.*

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

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

**Where:** Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

**Speaker:** John Driscoll, director and CEO, Alabama State Port Authority

**Topic:** Port Update

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

*Registration requested for limited seating.*

**Sponsor:** BancorpSouth

## 19 BUSINESS EXPO

*Mobile's premier business-to-business trade show featuring local companies showcasing the latest products and services, along with business resources, giveaways, food and beverage samples and more.*

**When:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Speaker:** Mobile Convention Center – Exhibit Hall

**Cost:** \$5 admission at the door (with business card)

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

**Sponsors:** Alabama Dept. of Commerce, Office of Small Business Advocacy, All In Credit Union, Bishop State Community College, C Spire, Express Employment Professionals, Harper Technologies, Keesler Federal Credit Union, Mobile Area Water and Sewer System, Shoe Station, Springhill Medical Center, Titanium Wireless, Troy University, University of South Alabama Alumni/Athletics

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(See list of exhibitors on page 35.)

## THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF OUR AUGUST EVENTS





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## WHO'S NEW

### USA Health Promotes White to Assistant Administrator



White



Merritt

**Rosemary R. White** was named assistant administrator for **USA Health**.

She most recently was director of environmental services. She will oversee finance and operations for environmental services, telecommunications and security, and provide oversight for food and nutrition services for the health system. She holds a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from The University of Alabama and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Mobile.

In other news, **Philip Merritt** was named nurse manager of USA Health's freestanding emergency department (FED) in west Mobile. Merritt has worked in the emergency department at USA Health University Hospital for the past 18 years.

**Dr. Edward Panacek**, professor and chair of emergency medicine, will serve as the initial medical director of the freestanding emergency department.

### Bellator Adds Six New Agents



Childress



Ezell



Flynn



Goroza



Keener

**Bellator Real Estate & Development** named six new Realtors:

**Chris Burgess, Kristina Childress, Daniel Ezell, Michael Flynn, Chris Goroza and Lisa Keener.**

### Maynard Cooper & Gale Hires Veteran Employment Attorney



McClurkin

**Anne Laurie McClurkin** joined **Maynard Cooper & Gale** in the firm's labor and employment practice. She was recently listed among *Mobile Bay Magazine's* "Top 40 Under Forty," and named one of the Girl Scouts of America

Southern Alabama's Leading Ladies honorees. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science and earned a law degree, both from The University of Alabama.

### Hapworth Appointed CEO



Hapworth



Lapeyrouse



Thurber

The **American Equity Underwriters Inc.**, a provider of workers' compensation insurance for waterfront employers and program administrator for American Longshore Mutual Association Ltd. (ALMA), announced **Adele S. Hapworth** will succeed **Michael L. Lapeyrouse** as the company's CEO. Lapeyrouse will assume the role of chairman. Hapworth previously served as executive vice president and chief operating officer.

In addition, **Winchester Thurber IV** will join the executive leadership in the newly created role of chief commercial officer. Thurber brings decades of leadership experience in the maritime industry to this new role.

### McLaughlin Joins Hub



McLaughlin

**Angel McLaughlin** joined **Hub International's** Gulf South office as Alabama personal lines supervisor.

### JJPR Agency Adds Senior Account Manager



Fuller

**JJPR Agency**, a boutique public relations, marketing and events firm, hired **Kathryn Fuller** as senior account manager. With nearly eight years of experience in facilitating communications regarding overall strategic branding, creative concepting, digital and social content creation, video production and media placement, Fuller will be responsible for launching brand campaigns, as well as managing projects and timelines throughout the agency.

After earning a bachelor's degree in mass communications from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Fuller began her career at Lewis Communications.

### 22nd State Bank Hires Mizukami



Mizukami

**Jeff Mizukami** is executive vice president/government guaranteed lending (GGL) at **22nd State Bank**. For the past 22 years of his 32-year banking career, Mizukami has specialized in building GGL platforms for community banks in three different states. He obtained a bachelor's degree in finance and economics from California State University in Sacramento.

### WKRG News 5 Names News Director



Kirkconnell

**Gene Kirkconnell** was hired as news director of **WKRG News 5**. Kirkconnell was most recently the news director for WRBL-TV in Columbus, Ga. He has received several of the industry's highest awards, including three Emmy Awards, a George Foster Peabody Award and an Edward R. Murrow Award.

### EXIT Realty Welcomes New Team Members

EXIT Realty-affiliated offices added **Wendy Carter-Sweat, Danielle Coleman, Shetera Dunigan, Sabrina Edwards, Theresa Houston-Mosley, Whitney Toole and Arron Washington.**

### Merrill P. Thomas Co. Inc. Expands Team



Reid

**Mike Reid** joined the **Merrill P. Thomas Co. Inc.** team as an associate broker and is one of *Lagniappe's* 2021 Nappies Finalists in the Best Commercial Real Estate Agent category. He has 25 years of experience as a

real estate agent, broker and managing broker. Reid is a graduate of The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in communications and holds real estate licenses in Alabama and Mississippi.

### River Bank & Trust Announces New Hires, Promotion



Barlow



Morris

**Camille Brewster** joined **River Bank & Trust** as assistant vice president

and mortgage loan originator. Brewster earned a degree in communications from the University of South Alabama.

**Maggie Barlow** was hired as treasury management sales officer. She earned a bachelor's degree in advertising and public relations from The University of Alabama.

In addition, vice president/relationship manager **Karen Turner Morris** was promoted to senior vice president. She has a bachelor's degree in finance from Auburn University and 26 years of real estate, mortgage and construction lending experience.

## Transworld Business Advisors Hires Cantey Team



M. Cantey



J. Cantey

**Transworld Business Advisors of the Gulf Coast**

welcomed the husband-and-

wife team of **Mark Cantey** and **Jody Cantey**. The duo brings 25-plus years of entrepreneurship, senior-level consulting and advisory, transaction and underwriting experience to the table. Jody Cantey recently completed and passed the International Franchise Professionals Group's (IFPG) franchise consultant training, earning a new certification as certified franchise consultant (CFC).

## White-Spinner Construction Welcomes New Hires



Smith



Thorpe



Maines



Fuller



Barton

**White-Spinner Construction LLC** recently added **D'Andre Smith**, project engineer; **Justin Thorpe**, senior project manager; and **Marsha Maines**, assistant project manager. Thorpe earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Iowa State University. Smith earned a bachelor's degree in construction science and management at Tuskegee University. Maines has a bachelor's degree in finance and economics from Florida State University and a master's degree in project management from Florida Institute of Technology. The company also expanded its marketing and communications department with the addition of **Judith Fuller** and **Cynthia Barton**. Fuller is the new marketing coordinator and lead graphic designer. She is a graduate of Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in graphic industrial and environment design. Barton will lead the team as director of marketing and communication. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Arizona.

## Roberts Brothers Adds New Agents



Aultman



Campbell



Chamblin



Crawley



Ghasemi



Miller



Johnson



VanCleave



Wolfe

**Brooke Aultman**, **Annabelle Campbell**, **Cherokee Chamblin**, **Sophia Crawley**, **Bahnaz Ghasemi**, **Haley Miller**, **Casady Johnson**, **Nicole VanCleave** and **Kalyn Wolfe** now work for **Roberts Brothers**.

## New Hires for Wilkins Miller

The accounting and advisory firm of **Wilkins Miller** hired **Mallory Byrne**, **Jake Chandler** and **Heather Hudson**. Byrne, who earned a master's degree in accountancy from Auburn University, is a staff accountant. Chandler joined the firm as a staff accountant after graduating with an integrated bachelor's degree in accounting and master's degree in business administration from the University of Mobile. Hudson earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in accounting from the University of South Alabama.

## Continental Aerospace Technologies Names New CCO, EVP



Kumar

**Sanjib Kumar** is the new chief commercial officer and executive vice president at **Continental Aerospace Technologies**. Sanjib was formerly the senior director of business development, strategy and program management for business/general aviation and OEM Services business unit in the Boeing Global Services division of The Boeing Co. before joining Continental.

## Realtors Join Realty Executives Bay Group



Lanier

**Realty Executives Bay Group** added **Janie R. Lanier** and **Stacy Reeves Cole** to its team of agents.

## BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

### NAWBO Expands to Alabama

The **National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO)** announced its expansion with the addition of the Alabama NAWBO Chapter. NAWBO National represents millions of women business owners across the nation working to rebuild their businesses in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each NAWBO chapter brings an opportunity for local business owners to connect, learn and grow their businesses. The inaugural Alabama president is **Dr. Valerie D. W. James** of Mobile-based **VisionSpot Consultant Group LLC**.

### Quincy Compressor Acquires MidState Air Compressor

**Quincy Compressor** acquired the operating assets of **MidState Air Compressor** based in Berlin, Conn., with sales and service covering Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The acquired company has been in business more than 11 years. This acquisition allows Quincy Compressor to focus on growing the business and strengthen its market presence in the region. Quincy has more than 450 employees worldwide.

### New Prediction Model Reduces Hospital Readmission Rate

**Dr. Amod Amritphale**, the director of cardiovascular research and an interventional cardiologist at **USA Health**, launched a new research study on strokes using artificial intelligence. Amritphale hopes artificial intelligence tools will help diagnose patients, which could make a difference in healthcare.

### USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital Gets \$1 Million Expansion

As part of the 2021 legislative session, the state of Alabama committed \$500,000 to the renovation and expansion of the pediatric emergency center at **USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital**. This brings to \$1 million the state's investment in the project.

This Pediatric Emergency Center at USA is the only healthcare facility in the region offering specialized care 24 hours a day, seven days a week, staffed with pediatric emergency medicine physicians to best meet the needs of sick and injured children.

### Wright Transportation Launches New Website

**Wright Transportation Inc.** launched a new website, [wrighttransportation.com](http://wrighttransportation.com). The new site details the three divisions of the company (transportation, logistics and drayage) and provides an easy online application form for interested drivers.

## WELL DONE

**MCPSS Educators Earn Accolades**

Two **Mobile County Public School System** administrators and a teacher recently earned national, statewide accolades. **LTC Robert F. Barrow**, MCPSS Director of Army Instruction, was named the JROTC Director of Army Instruction of the Year. **Michele McClung**, Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, was honored with the Alabama ASCD Outstanding Curriculum Leader Lifetime Achievement Award for 2021. And **Julie Neidhardt** of Hutchens Elementary was named the Alabama State Board of Education's District I Elementary Teacher of the Year and is among four finalists for the Alabama Teacher of the Year Award.

**JLM Names New Board of Directors**

The **Junior League of Mobile (JLM)** announced its 2021-22 board of directors. Leading the organization this year are: **Sarah Bumgarner**, president; **Amy Groves**, president-elect; **Tara McCook**, planning director; **Ashley McKeithan**, nominating director; **Shellie Teague**, public relations director; **Sasha Thatcher**, treasurer, **Catherine Wynn**, recording secretary; **Bridget Archer**, governance director; and **Andrea Moore**, sustaining advisor.

**Spring Hill College Professor Awarded German Academic Exchange Fellowship**

**Dr. Alexandria Ruble**, assistant professor of history at **Spring Hill College**, was awarded a summer fellowship from the German Academic Exchange Service, one of the foremost international funding organizations for German and global studies.

**WSC Oversees Tower Cab Lift**

Mobile-based general contractor **White-Spinner Construction's** project construction and erection teams recently oversaw the "cab lift" which was placed atop the newly constructed air traffic control tower now located at Jack Edwards National Airport at Gulf Shores. The cab is 75 percent complete and weighs just under 90,000 pounds. It was hoisted to its position atop the tower by a 450-ton crane.

**Austal USA Recognized for Safety**

**Austal USA** earned an Excellence in Safety award for its strong commitment to safety in the workplace from **American Equity Underwriters (AEU)**, the leading provider of workers' compensation for waterfront employers. The AEU Safety Awards program recognizes the strongest safety programs in the maritime industry nationwide. This is the sixth AEU award the company has received, and the 20<sup>th</sup> industry safety award earned overall.

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## UM Offers Nurse Anesthesia Practice Program

The new fully accredited Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (DNAP) program at the **University of Mobile** is the first in a four-state region that includes Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Georgia. Classes begin in August. **Dr. Todd Hicks** will lead the program as professor of nurse anesthesia and director of the new school of nurse anesthesia, along with **Dr. Matthew Hunter Speeg** as assistant professor and associate program director of the school of nurse anesthesia.

## 56 Burr & Forman Attorneys Ranked in 2021 Chambers USA

**Burr & Forman LLP** announced 56 of its attorneys were ranked in the 2021 edition of Chambers USA, a directory featuring client-led intelligence on America's leading lawyers for business. Additionally, three attorneys were ranked in multiple tables for the 2021 guide. Ten attorneys earned new individual rankings this year, five of whom were female.

In addition, Mobile partner **John Kavanagh**, received a new nationwide ranking in banking and finance while maintaining nationwide ranking in the area of transportation: maritime litigation.

## Health Officer Receives Honors



Eichold

**Mobile County Commission** honored **Dr. Bernard (Bert)**

**Eichold** with a commendation of professional achievement on his extraordinary professional achievements on his 31<sup>st</sup>

anniversary as health officer for the Mobile County Health Department. Eichold served in the U.S. Navy, retiring with the rank of Captain, F.S., M.C. The Cottage Hill Civitan Club named him the 2012 Mobilian of the Year.

## Palmer Whiting Makes Forbes Best List



Whiting

**Merrill Lynch** announced wealth management advisor **Palmer G. Whiting** was recognized in the 2021 *Forbes* "Best-in-State Wealth Advisors" list as well as *Barron's* 2021 "Top 1,200 Financial Advisors" list. The *Forbes* ranking was developed by SHOOK Research. The *Barron's* ranking considers advisors with a minimum of seven years financial services experience who have been employed at their current firm for at least one year.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Baker Wins National Hi-Q Competition

**Baker High School** defeated teams from Pennsylvania and Washington recently to win the 2021 national Hi-Q competition. Baker's team is comprised of **Mark Bolton, Brenna Cagle, Brandt Cannon, Cade Jordan, Will McCurley** and **Will Simm** and is led by sponsors **Tonya Parker** and **Joseph Lee**. The team won the Mobile County Hi-Q championship for the second straight year.

### Girl Scouts Show Appreciation for Hometown Heroes

**Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama (GSSA)** created "Moments of Joy by Donating Girl Scout Cookies" to active military, local food banks, nonprofits, teachers, healthcare workers and first responders. With the help of the community, GSSA donated more than 11,160 boxes of cookies in Mobile and surrounding areas. GSSA also made a special delivery of 42,432 packages to Soldiers' Angels, which will go to troops overseas.

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)

## BOARD OF ADVISORS CORRECTION



Allan Crow

*Robert J. Baggett Inc.* ★

Allan Crow, with Robert J. Baggett Inc. was incorrectly identified as "not pictured" in the June/July issue of the *Business View* featuring the Board of Advisors. Robert J. Baggett Inc. is a Partners for Growth investor.

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## ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER

L.A. ALSTON  
L.A. FOTOGRAFHEE

Lemaris “L.A.” Alston is a husband, dad and photographer who specializes in capturing happiness for clients on location and in his studio in Mobile. Since he began his photography business in 2011, Alston has completed more than 2,500 photo shoots and has photographed some of his clients’ most important life moments, from awards and graduations to engagements and weddings to newborns and families. Alston says photography is his passion, job and creative outlet. He has a bachelor’s degree from Alabama State University and a master’s degree and a doctorate from the University of Phoenix in computer information systems. He and his wife, Jamelah, live with their three children in Mobile. In this issue, Alston’s work can be seen on the cover as well as feature stories on the Small Business of the Year finalists and the Small Business of the Month. To see more of his portfolio, visit [lafotografhee.com](http://lafotografhee.com).



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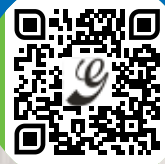
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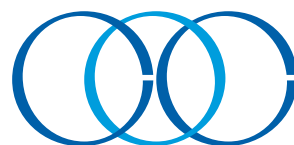


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