

APRIL 2013

the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
business

VIEW

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Airbus Sets
Groundbreaking



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the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
business
VIEW

Cover

Keanecha Dockery, owner of Perfecting That Cleaning Service, is squeezing all the value she can out of her Mobile Area Chamber membership. Her story and three others are first-hand examples of how businesses benefit from joining the Chamber, along with a detailed list of the resources your business has at its fingertips. See story on page 11.

Cover photo by Susan Rak-Blanchard



7

- 4-6 News You Can Use
- 7 Small Business of the Month
- 9-14 Membership 101
- 15 Improving Employee Engagement
- 17 CEO Profile
- 19 Investor Focus
- 20 SCORE
- 22 Business Spotlight of the Month
- 22 Board of Advisors
- 23 Chamber@Work
- 23 Ambassador of the Month
- 24 Economic Indicators
- 27 Calendar
- 28-30 Member News
- 31 New Members
- 31 Anniversaries



22



17

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Airbus Appoints Program Manager for its Mobile Assembly Line

Company Also Sets Date for Official Groundbreaking

In February, Airbus named Hoar Program Management as program manager for its A320 final assembly line (FAL) in Mobile, and set the date for the project's official groundbreaking for Monday, April 8. Construction will be in full swing in the summer.

As program manager, Hoar will be responsible for managing all aspects of the design and construction of the facility, including supporting procurement of design and construction service providers and suppliers. Aircraft assembly is planned to start production in 2015, with first deliveries from the Mobile facility beginning in 2016. Airbus anticipates the facility will produce between 40 and 50 aircraft per year by 2018.

"Hoar is a strong Alabama company who will do good work on this extremely important project," said Troy Wayman, vice president of economic development for the Mobile Area Chamber. Hoar is headquartered in Birmingham, and has offices in Mobile and Huntsville, as well as four additional locations in the Southeast.

"We've reached another major milestone with the appointment of a program manager," said Airbus Americas Chairman Allan McArtor. "Once finished, the new A320 assembly facility will be the most modern and technologically advanced in Airbus' global assembly network."


In July 2012, Airbus announced its intent to establish a manufacturing facility in the United States to assemble and deliver A319, A320 and A321 commercial aircraft. Located at Brookley Aeroplex, it will be the company's first




In anticipation of Airbus opening its final assembly line at Mobile Brookley Aeroplex, a model of an Airbus A320 was hung in the lobby of the Mobile Area Chamber. Chamber members TAG – The Architects Group Inc. worked on proper design and placement of the plane in the lobby, while White-Spinner Construction assembled and hung it.

U.S.-based production facility. According to Airbus officials, the assembly line is part of the company's strategy to enhance Airbus' global competitiveness by meeting the growing needs of its customers in the United States and elsewhere.

Wayman said his team of economic developers have been working behind the scenes for the last seven months

getting ready for the groundbreaking and beyond. "As dirt is moved, activity will increase in Mobile on this project," he said. That will include not only construction on the final assembly line, but also on recruiting key Airbus suppliers here. 

You'll see this symbol  with stories featuring Chamber initiatives.

South Alabama
Regional Planning
Commission to hold

15th Annual
Business Expo
& Jobs Fair

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission will hold its 15th Annual Business Expo & Job Fair on Thursday, April 25, at the Mobile Civic Center Expo Hall from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This event typically draws 90 to 100 vendors and more than 3,500 visitors.

This year the event will provide workshops to assist the job seekers, including resume development, networking skills, interviewing skills and private consulting.

As an added component the commission will promote the Hiring Our Heroes initiative to help veterans and their spouses prepare for and find employment.

There will be a separate registration table for veterans and their spouses – military identification will be required.

The public is encouraged to attend if they are seeking employment or information on training.

This event is free to the public. Businesses interested in exhibiting or sponsorship should contact the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission at 251-652-0585 or visit www.sarpc.org.

Let Your Business Voice be Heard with voterVOICE

FACILITATING THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

A new online bill-tracking tool has been rolled out at www.mobilechamber.com. As part of a year-round advocacy program, the Mobile Area Chamber lobbies for business-friendly government through promotion of the Community Legislative Agenda.

By following and lobbying for bills such as those mandating the repayment of the Alabama Trust Fund and working against bills such as Guns to Work threatening an employer's right to make a choice for their business, the Chamber is continually working to ensure that laws passed are in the best interests of the business community. Local businesses can now follow the process and progress of specific bills and ordinances as they arise by clicking on the VoterVoice link on the Chamber's homepage and choosing from a list of business-impacting legislation.

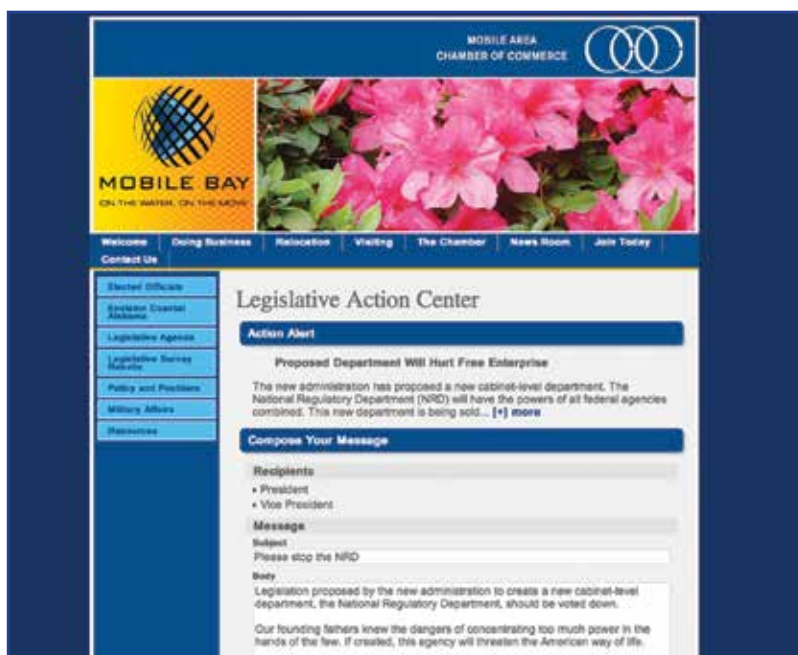
The new web feature will allow businesses to easily:

- Influence decisions on those bills most important to the business community;

- Click through to send issue-specific messages to your state senator or representative; and
- Follow active issues each week in the State Legislature, as well as the U.S. Congress.

"As business owners adapt to doing more with fewer resources, advocacy on their behalf has become more important than ever," said **Patty Howell** of the Chamber's Community and Governmental Affairs staff. Online tools are being used by Chambers across the country to help simplify the process. "The investment of resources into VoterVoice will allow local business to stay engaged without taking on their own expense."

Scott Delaney of Delaney Development Inc. and chairman of the Chamber's state governmental affairs subcommittee shared his thoughts on the new feature. "Small businesses know that new laws and regulations can affect their bottom line directly. This new tool will keep members informed on business-related issues and offer a quick and effective way for members to reach out to their elected officials." ○○



High Schools Preparing Students for Careers

Mobile County's 12 public high schools will each eventually become "signature career academies," designed to help students prepare for careers in growing fields, right in their own back yards.

At the beginning of this academic year, four career-focused academies were introduced at area high schools: Blount's Healthcare Academy; Citronelle's Advanced Manufacturing Academy; Mary G. Montgomery's Teaching and Learning Academy; and B.C. Rain's Aviation and Aerospace Academy.

The academy idea has been around for years, according to **Jennifer Edwards**, program director for the Mobile Area Education Foundation's 80 by 20: Graduating Ready initiative. It's based on Academies of Nashville.

MAEF's role has been to help create partnerships between the academies and the business community, Edwards said. "Each academy is forming a signature advisory council. We're helping identify and recruit business partners to serve in an advisory capacity."

So far, she said, businesses and industries are "excited" and "see the importance of it," which is "very encouraging."

Students, meanwhile, learn career relevance. "They understand why they have to learn these things," she says.

Each school submitted a proposal to determine its focus, and all four existing academies are a natural fit. For instance, B.C. Rain's campus backs up to Brookley Aeroplex; Blount already had a healthcare program in existence; and Citronelle, in north Mobile County, is located near several advanced manufacturers.

Currently, B.C. Rain has about 32 students enrolled in its program. The application process began in March, and each academy is open to any student in the county. Five additional academies will be set up in the next school year, with signatures to be determined, until all 12 high schools have one.

MAEF's goal of achieving an 80 percent graduation rate by 2020 recently came closer to reality, when Mobile County Public School System Superintendent **Martha Peek** announced the rate reached 70 percent. The number increased in 2012 by 16 percent, up from 64 percent in 2011, showing "phenomenal" growth, according to Edwards.

According to MAEF's website, increasing the number of high school graduates is "the single best thing our region can do, not only for our children's future, but for the future of the entire community."

"It is our job as community leaders to see that all students have access to multiple pathways to success," **Joel Daves**, co-chair of the foundation's 80 by 20 initiative, told *al.com* in January. "We want students to come through Mobile County public schools and be prepared for success, be engaged and be equipped with the skills necessary in the 21st century."

Subsequent issues of *The Business View* will take a look at the academies in place in Mobile County and how they're helping keep students engaged and focused on their futures. ○○

City Officials Announce Permitting Ombudsman Program

Those who have tried to get a permit from the city of Mobile know it's not a simple process. To streamline current permitting procedures, Mobile Mayor Sam Jones recently launched the city's first-ever permitting ombudsman program.

The ombudsman program works on behalf of design professionals and citizens who encounter permitting obstacles. It is intended to be an effective system to increase the pace, certainty and predictability of the development review process.

Staffed by Mobile's CitiSmart division, the ombudsman will assist anyone attempting to build or renovate a building. Operating independently of the urban development department and all other city permitting agencies, the ombudsman will be assigned as a single point of contact for all permitting-related issues to help move projects forward.

By serving as a liaison between individuals and city departments, this customer service approach will facilitate lines of communication among all parties involved in the permitting process, explained Jones.



In an effort to better understand the needs of the development community, Jones and his regulatory staff began discussions with the Mobile Area Chamber's permitting task force, comprised of local Realtors, architects, contractors and engineers, to identify ways to enhance the overall development review process. As a result, the task force made a series of recommendations to the city, with the primary goals of enhancing the current process and spurring economic development opportunities.

Following the recommendations of the task force, the ombudsman program is a critical next step in the city's efforts to improve the permitting process, said Ginny Russell, the Chamber's vice president of community and governmental affairs.

For more information, visit www.cityofmobile.org/dev_center_ombud.php, e-mail permitombud@cityofmobile.org, or call 251-208-7026.

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Small Business of the month



A second generation of the family-owned Instrument Technical Services (ITS) continues to provide regional clients with electrical and instrumentation services.

Building on a Father's Work – Lannie Siblings Grow the Family Business

The business **David Lannie** started in 1978 became his legacy to his four children in 2010. What he taught them before he died, in addition to running a business, was relationships matter, quality counts and safety is important.

The family-owned, Irvington-based Instrument Technical Services (ITS) is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month. The 35-year-old company specializes in electrical and instrumentation contracting for commercial and industrial clients, primarily in a 75-mile area.

Lannie's three sons – **David Jr.**, **Scott** and **Heath** – all joined the company while they were still teenagers. His daughter – **Deana**, a little later. They each play a different role: David as chief financial officer; Scott, chief operations officer; Heath, chief marketing officer; and Deana is human resource manager.

On the ITS customer list are a number of recognizable companies

and projects including Shell Chemical, AIDT's Maritime Center at Austal and several area public schools. And the ITS team has the capability and expertise to handle new construction, routine maintenance projects and emergency repairs 24 hours a day.

"We have a lot of repeat customers," said Scott, "and Shell Chemical was one of my father's first clients back when the facility was LL&E (Louisiana Land and Exploration). When a company has an unplanned outage, our job is to get them up and running with the least impact to their bottom line."

Among the 70-plus employees are master electricians and National Center for Construction Education and Research certified personnel. Two employees have worked with ITS for 40 years each.

"That experience and training gives clients confidence in our work," said Heath.

David Sr. started the business focused on instrumentation – testing, calibrating, installing, repairing and inspecting a variety of monitoring devices and controls that run a company's equipment and processes. As bid packages began including more and more electrical projects, ITS expanded services to include that area of expertise in 1984.

Following Hurricane Katrina, as the influx of work tapered off, ITS pursued additional commercial contracts. Today the company has nearly a 50-50 mix of industrial and commercial clients, and is looking to expand in the maritime and aerospace sectors.

Daily safety meetings and job safety analysis are two ways the company emphasizes safety. "We haven't had a lost-time accident since 1997," said Heath. It's this commitment to employees and customers that make ITS stand out as a leader in its field.

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

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Jobs

When moving Krispy Mixes to Theodore in 2011, husband and wife team, **Judy McMillin** and **Norman Tanner** turned to the Mobile Area Chamber. They were in the midst of a move, modernizing equipment, and hiring and training new employees.

“Without the Chamber, I wouldn’t have been able to master being a small business and taking on another major project. But the Mobile Area Chamber shepherded us through various economic development processes at a very critical time,” says Judy.

With 12 employees, the company blends and distributes coatings and breadings for chicken, fish and seafood in the South. Krispy Mixes provides its product to independent restaurants, convenience store kitchens and chains.

Company: Krispy Mixes
Owner: Judy McMillin
Member Since: February 2011

Membership 101

How Chamber Membership Benefits All Businesses

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is more than 2,100 members strong. Our members know their Chamber membership is good for Mobile and good for business.

What does the Mobile Area Chamber do?

Although the organization’s program is always changing to meet the needs of the Mobile area, the foundation upon which the Chamber was built never changes. Its mission is simple and direct: to serve as a progressive advocate for business needs and promote the Mobile area’s economic well-being.

How Membership Makes a Difference

Results from a new national survey conducted by the Atlanta-based Schapiro Group show Chamber involvement can turn into added revenue for your business. Two-thirds of consumers believe Chamber members are reputable, trustworthy companies using good business practices, care about their customers and are involved in the community.

The Big Picture

The Mobile Area Chamber is an independent, nonprofit business organization representing its 2,100 members and their 100,000-plus employees. A staff of approximately 40 professionals with diverse skills and a legion of more than 1,000 volunteers work hard – both in front and behind the scenes – to help area businesses succeed and grow.

Member Value

The Mobile Area Chamber provides member value through networking, publicity, discounts, referrals, learning opportunities, advertising opportunities and credibility.

Economic Development and Job Creation

The Mobile Area Chamber works not only to bring in new business, but also to help existing companies expand. Aggressive economic development marketing programs by the Mobile Area Chamber resulted in 7,997 direct new jobs and

\$2.2 billion in capital investment between 2008-2012. Since 2004, there have been 34 new company announcements and 91 expansions representing \$79 billion and 16,230 jobs.

Small Business Development

The Mobile Area Chamber is a major resource for the development of the area’s new and small businesses, and the Chamber provides vital counseling services and resources to help start, manage and grow your small business.

Governmental Relations

The Mobile Area Chamber lobbies the Alabama Legislature for pro-business legislation impacting the local community. In addition, the organization works with local governments and lobbies for business interests in Washington D.C. Annually, the Chamber develops a community legislative agenda based on member input.

Community Improvement

The Mobile Area Chamber works for strong community infrastructure and quality of life. These efforts help all businesses grow and prosper.

What the Mobile Area Chamber Does for Your Business:

Networking

A variety of high-profile networking venues to help members develop new business contacts and connect to potential clients are offered. Events include:

- Business After Hours, hosted monthly at different Mobile Area Chamber member locations;
- Networking@Noon and Speed Networking, where you can introduce your company, product and/or service; and
- New Member Welcome to get acquainted with staff and Mobile Area Chamber activities.

Continued on page 10



Visibility

Get noticed in a wider circle of business owners and decision makers. Mobile Area Chamber members receive:

- A free listing and link to your home page on the Mobile Area Chamber's website, www.mobilechamber.com, averaging more than 210,000 hits a month;
- Listings in the Mobile Area Chamber's alphabetical and categorical membership directories available online;
- New member and anniversary listings in the monthly news magazine, *The Business View*, reaching more than 22,000 businesses. Members may also receive additional coverage by pitching stories or announcing new staff, promotions, business endeavors and accomplishments;
- Complimentary event announcements in the Mobile Area Chamber's electronic newsletter, *The Business View Weekly*, sent to more than 9,000 subscribers;
- Sponsorship and advertising opportunities for a variety of events and publications;
- The exclusive right to host a booth at Mobile's annual premier business-to-business trade show, Business Expo;
- Prominent placement of marketing brochures or flyers in the Mobile Area Chamber's high-traffic lobby; and
- A window decal and e-plaque to show customers you are a valued member of the Mobile Area Chamber.

Referrals

The Mobile Area Chamber fields more than 3,000 calls a month, and the website averages 210,000 unique hits a month.

- Only Chamber members are referred by staff; and
- The Chamber's online Membership Directory and website are used by both members and non-members as resources for business listings.

Discounts

Members have access to discounts that affect their bottom-line.

- Discounts are available for products and services listed on the Mobile Area Chamber's website;
- Discounted rates on Chamber room rentals – new members receive one free room rental (ask for details);
- Member-to-member discounts are listed in the "Members Only" section of the Chamber's website; and

- As a member of the Mobile Area Chamber, businesses are also a member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, making you eligible for additional discounts.

Professional Development

The Mobile Area Chamber is the ultimate business resource center offering information, tips and best practices to help give your company a competitive edge. The Chamber also offers you and your employees:

- Content-rich and affordable seminars;
- Small business presentations and forums;
- A small business toolbox on the Chamber's website;
- Executive, Nonprofit and Women's Roundtables;
- Connections to mentors and experts through the Small Business Administration, SCORE, Mobile MBDA Business Center, Business Innovation Center and others; and
- Access to research including current economic indicators, demographic data, statistics, relocation information and more.

Recognition

Throughout the year, special awards programs acknowledge the business community's best-of-the-best. Awards include:

- Corporate Community Service Award;
- Eagle Awards, recognizing minority business owners;
- Innovator of the Year;
- Manufacturer of the Year;
- Minority Business Advocate;
- Small Business of the Month; and
- Small Business of the Year.

Advocacy

With more than 2,100 members representing approximately 100,000 employees, the Mobile Area Chamber is a strong and credible voice for business and represents you by:

- Lobbying for business-friendly policies;
- Maintaining relationships with elected officials;
- Partnering with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Business Council of Alabama and other Chambers in the region to promote a pro-business agenda;
- Offering members an opportunity to meet elected officials and candidates running for public office at annual political networking events; and
- Providing access and contact information for local, state and federal officials.



Advocacy

After he was recruited to serve on the Mobile Area Chamber's local governmental affairs committee, **Ben Cummings**, owner/president of Cummings Architecture Corp., became more involved at the Chamber as well as the city of Mobile.

Because of his knowledge and experience, Cummings was asked to represent the Chamber and its members on Mobile's Codes Advisory committee.

"Being a Mobile Area Chamber member is the tool that gave me the opportunity to work with the city to make the city's permitting process easier and faster," Cummings said. "Streamlining the process for developers, architects and engineers means projects can happen quicker and without costly delays."

Cummings Architecture's profile projects include both commercial and residential clients.

Company: Cummings Architecture Corp.

Owner: Ben Cummings

Member Since: February 2009

“I know that it does work,” Keaneacha Dockery, owner of Perfecting That Cleaning Service, says of the Mobile Area Chamber’s networking sessions. She or a representative from her company regularly attends Business After Hours, Networking@Noon and Speed Networking.

“My Chamber membership and involvement is key,” Dockery says. She estimates 40 percent of her client list began as contacts at the Chamber’s events.

Her company also benefits from a number of seminars addressing critical business issues, she adds.

Perfecting That Cleaning Service is a commercial cleaning service that also handles construction clean-up projects.

Company: Perfecting That Cleaning Service

Owner: Keaneacha Dockery

Member Since: July 2010



Value



Excellence

When Tad Bristow was starting a new business, Batteries Plus, he decided to do it in Mobile instead of launching his new endeavor in his home state of Illinois.

Being somewhat familiar with the area thanks to numerous golf trips, Bristow says he really didn’t know the “who’s who” or the “ins and outs” of his new home.

Thanks to some one-on-one guidance, Bristow “got things accomplished so fast it was unbelievable,” he says. “And it saved me a ton of time. To any small business, the Chamber can be an invaluable asset.”

Company: Batteries Plus

Owner: Tad Bristow

Member Since: March 2011



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Office Depot - Every Chamber member is entitled to as much as 67 percent in exclusive savings on office supplies at Office Depot. Order by phone, fax or on the company's website – www.officedepot.com and receive next-day delivery. Contact **Erik Heger** at erik.heger@officedepot.com or call 251-597-8331 to register your company for this program.

MobilLogic - This company provides cloud-based solutions, secure mobile access, secure collaboration, an e-mail reminder system and information management all in one tool. Sign up now from the Mobile Area Chamber's home page by clicking on The Chamber, then Member Info and Member Discounts.

Prescription Drug Card - This program is provided to you and your family to help lower your prescription drug costs. Simply create and print your free Prescription Drug Card from the Mobile Area Chamber's home page by clicking on The Chamber then Member Info and Member Discounts and receive up to a 75 percent discount (discounts average roughly 30 percent) at more than 56,000 national and regional pharmacies.

UPS - Save time and money through special services and up to a 32 percent discount on shipping. UPS allows you to focus on your business, not your shipping. Sign up from the Mobile Area Chamber's home page by clicking on The Chamber then Member Info and Member Discounts.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Discounts and Services

Discounts - From shipping to staffing, the Chamber and its partners have the tools to save your business money and the solutions to help you run it more efficiently. Join the U.S. Chamber of Commerce today to start saving.

FedEx Delivers - Save up to 26 percent on select FedEx® shipping.

Sam's Club - Receive a \$10 Gift Card with your new or renewed Sam's Club® Membership.

Services - The Chamber provides its members with enhanced services, such as grassroots activity, and leading publications, such as *Free Enterprise*. Access to the latest news and information is vital to your business' success.

Free Enterprise - This monthly publication keeps you up-to-date on the latest issues.

Free Enterprise Weekly - Free up your time to manage your business. Get the latest small business news delivered to your inbox.

Small Business Nation - E-mail updates on legislation that affects your business.

Have your U.S. Chamber ID ready to gain access to these benefits. To obtain your member ID number, call Member Services at 800-638-6582.

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2013 Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Committees and Task Forces

COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Air Service Task Force: Brings together public and private interests from across the community with officials from Mobile Airport Authority to pinpoint the travel demands of the area; seeks innovative ways to further expand the frequency of flights, level of service and more competitive fares at Mobile Regional; and effectively communicate community support to airlines. (Meets quarterly or as needed)

Transportation Coalition: Operates to improve the working relationship between Alabama Department of Transportation and key Mobile entities; builds awareness of ALDOT projects among key Mobile associations and encourages their participation in the community input phase; and recommends projects needing the support of member organizations. (Meets as needed)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Retention & Expansion Committee: BRE was organized as a community outreach activity. The focus is to meet with key business executives and conduct assessment interviews to assist companies with resolution of problems and help them successfully do business in our area. (Meets bi-monthly)

Gulf Coast Technology Council: Works to increase the visibility of local technology companies; helps develop a highly skilled workforce to accommodate growth in the high-tech arena; and markets the Gulf Coast as a center for technology development. (Meets bi-monthly)

Maritime Affairs Task Force: Made up of a cross section of the local port community, including but not limited to shipping agents, freight forwarders, stevedores, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, waterway associations, towing companies, Port Authority staff and terminal operators. Topics of interest include port security, harbor dredging and funding from Congress, navigational issues, and cargo and commerce in the Port of Mobile. (Meets as needed)

International Trade Database: A database for area exporters and individuals interested in doing business in the international market. Sign up to receive information on upcoming trade missions, trade workshops, and trade meetings and seminars along the Gulf Coast.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Awards and Recognition Task Force: Coordinates the activities and events associated with Small Business of the Month and Small Business of the Year Awards. (Meets quarterly or as needed)

Executive Roundtable: Forum for small business owners and/or managers to hear presentations by a featured speaker and share information to help each other manage and grow their own businesses. (Meets monthly)

Growth Alliance Task Force: Promotes the growth and enhances community awareness of minority business through increased minority membership and participation in all Chamber programs. The task force also coordinates the annual Eagle Awards and Minority Business Advocate Award. (Meets monthly)

MEMBERSHIP

Chamber Chase 2013: Teams of volunteers work to bring in new members, enlist sponsors for Chamber events, acquire donations and more. This annual total resource development campaign helps to provide additional funds for the Chamber to make it better able to serve the region. The campaign kicks-off at the first of May and runs through August. (Meets weekly for reward sessions)

Ambassadors: Volunteers who serve as ambassadors for the Chamber and work to enhance member relations. (Meets bi-monthly)

Nonprofit Roundtable: A forum for members to build relationships and promote networking with other members inside and outside of the nonprofit circle. Promotes growth and enhances community awareness of area nonprofit organizations. (Meets bi-monthly)

Women's Roundtable: Forum for women business owners and/or managers to hear presentations by a featured speaker, network and share information to help each other manage and grow their businesses. (Meets bi-monthly)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Industry Workforce Coalition and **Cluster Sector Meetings:** Provide a forum for business and industry involvement in developing a workforce that meets their needs. Each coalition represents a specific sector and is an active, working partnership with education focused on preparing students and adults to enter the Mobile area workforce. Provide direction to the Chamber on strategies to meet training and workforce development needs.

Coalitions & Work Groups

- Bay Area Healthcare
- Maritime
- Aerospace
- Manufacturing
- Construction

Special Events & Initiatives

- Health Occupations Career Fair
- Summer Scrubs
- Worlds of Opportunity

**Chamber Committees and Task Forces are available to employees of Chamber member companies only.*

CRAWFISH BOIL
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Thursday, April 11
4 to 6 p.m.
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Improving Employee Engagement

for Organizational Success: 5 Tips to Help You Get Started



Alice Grey Harrison, APR leads internal communications for Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP, a U.S. top 15 accounting firm with more than 1,700 people. Have a question for Alice Grey? E-mail: alicegrey.harrison@dbgllp.com Twitter: #alicegrey

Today's business climate calls for communications professionals who can lead and counsel to build strong employee engagement. For many organizations the challenging economy has led to a reduced workforce, increased work load and greater responsibilities without commensurate salaries. As the economy continues to recover and jobs are added, loyalty will wane for employees pushed to their limits and the fight for talent will intensify.

According to Kenexa research, 72 percent of American workers are not fully

engaged, meaning these employees are not aligned with organizational goals, their productivity is lower and attrition is more likely. These employees may jump ship as soon as an opportunity presents itself, taking with them valuable skills and knowledge.

Regarding performance of engaged employees, Kenexa reported that they offer:

71 percent less voluntary turnover, 60 percent higher

quality, 29 percent higher in productivity. And, organizations with a highly engaged workforce are 6 times more profitable and bring over 16 times more value to their shareholders. Organizations cannot afford to stand by while our talent runs out the door.

I dare say that there has been a greater time for communications professionals to deservedly earn a coveted "seat at the table" by truly influencing the strategic direction of our organizations. As communicators, we innately understand how to influence perceptions and move

people to action. We are the uniting force behind the marriage of brand positioning and core values to our business proposition. Who better to connect the dots for our employees? This is our golden opportunity to show the c-suite the value of our skill set.

Here are five tips to help you get started:

Evaluate your current tools

Do you have the right people on your team and the right resources in your

artillery to be a change force in your organization? Sometimes we must ask ourselves very difficult questions in order to move forward. According to corporate communications thought leader **David Grossman**, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA, author of *You Can't Not Communicate*, "Communicators should take inventory of their resources.

Recognize the gaps. If you are not prepared with the right business case, a strong depth of understanding, current research, the right team of professionals and the necessary communications tools, you cannot influence change. Be prepared to advise and counsel in a meaningful way." If there are tools that you need to move forward, develop a business case and show the value to management. What a great opportunity to showcase your ability to strategically think of solutions to move your organization forward.

Connect employees to values

Values are more than what is printed on a poster in the break room. Values must be lived every day – they must be authentic to what is said and done in an organization both externally and internally. Clear organizational values help employees develop an emotional connection to the greater cause. At the moment of truth, employees must be prepared to not only understand the values, but live them. Earlier this year, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. saw a \$2.15 billion market value decrease after **Greg Smith**, a former employee, authored a scathing op-ed piece in the *New York Times* about the company's management and treatment of clients. He exposed a very real disconnect between what was touted externally and what was actually practiced internally. This example clearly illustrates a valid connection between business results and corporate values. At the end of the day, people need to feel good about where they work in order to be fully engaged.

Open lines of communication

Challenge the way you think and open the lines of communication. We live in a 2.0 world and how we interact in the workplace is not different. Don't be fearful for what you might hear. Sometimes the most challenging information to hear is necessary to evoke real change. "There is too much talk and not enough listening occurring in today's work. Listen to what employees have to say and act on feedback provided. Always close the loop so that employees feel that they not only have a voice but that their voice is heard by leadership," asserted Grossman.

Live the brand

Organizations spend a great deal of time, money and resources on external branding. But what about the people who make up the brand? Employees are, without a doubt, our greatest brand ambassadors. Southwest Airlines founder and former CEO **Herb Kelleher** routinely touted that Southwest Airlines' success was based on the concept of treating employees the same way they treat customers. He recognized that employees were the driving force behind their success. Remember, organizations don't deliver results, people do. Begin your branding efforts internally and you will surely reap the rewards externally.

Your message matters

In an age of information overload, what you say matters a great deal more than where you say it. "Communicators often put far too much emphasis on platforms. Get into the mind of the employee. Focus on things that matter to them. Once the desired message is clearly articulated, then select the platform(s)," commented **Jason Frank**, a director with UK-based SAS, an agency that focuses primarily on talent and corporate communications. After the content is carefully considered, then determine the most appropriate and relevant medium for reaching employees. Communications should occur over multiple platforms to ensure that the audience is reached. To add impact to your message, follow up with face-to-face meetings which incorporate two-way dialogue. According to Frank, studies have shown that employee engagement increases when communications are coupled with interactive meetings.

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Because of your efforts we were able to achieve a 4.1% increase in our annual campaign. Your investments will help us continue to foster positive impacts through the building blocks for a better life: Education, Financial Stability, Health and Essentials.

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Inc. • Buffalo Rock-Pepsi Cola • Burns Middle School • Burr & Forman LLP • Burroughs Elementary • Cabanis, Johnston, Gardner, Dumas & O'Neal • Calcedaveer Elementary • Calloway Smith Middle • Capstone Bank • Cardiology Associates • Castlen Elementary • Catholic Social Services • Causey Middle School • Ceridian • Charlie's Furniture • Chastang Middle School • Chatom Elementary • Chatom Motor Company • ChevronTexaco Corporation • Child Day Care Association • China Doll Rice & Beans, Inc. • Citronelle High School • City of Chickasaw • City of Jackson • City of Mobile • City of Saraland • City of Satsuma • City of Thomasville • City Performance Contract - UWSWA • Clark Geer Latham & Associates, Inc • Clarke County ARC, Inc. • Clarke County Board of Education • Clarke County Commission • Clarke County Democrat • Clarke County High School • Clarke County People First • Clarke Mobile Gas District • Clarke Washington Electric Membership Corp. • Coastal Bank & Trust • Coca Cola Bottling Co. of Mobile • Collier Elementary • Collins-Rhodes Elementary School • Colonial Properties Trust • Combined Federal Campaign • Comcast Communication • Commonwealth National Bank • Communication Workers of America #3907 • Community Action Agency of South AL • Community Foundation of South Alabama • Continuous Learning Center • Cooper/T. 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Every effort was made by United Way of Southwest Alabama to ensure the listings were accurate at press time. We apologize for any omissions or errors.



Brian Willman



Company: Regions Bank

Title: Area president, South Alabama/Florida Panhandle

Hometown: Charlotte, N.C.

Education: Willman earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

First job: As a youngster, Willman worked in the meat department at a local grocery store and delivered newspapers door-to-door.

Previous experience: He has 20 years in the areas of investment banking, corporate banking and business & community banking.

Accomplishments: For Willman, the most important accomplishments begin with home and family: the blessing of a supportive wife and two boys. Before he began his career in banking, Willman won the 1995 Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Scholar Athlete award in baseball for the University of North Carolina and was drafted in the 31st round of the Amateur Draft by the Cincinnati Reds Major League Baseball Club.

Secret to success: "Success is a team effort. I'm grateful to be surrounded by talented, motivated employees within Regions that strive to make the lives of our customers better every day," said Willman. He believes in giving people the tools to be successful, and recognizing their accomplishments, as well as accountability and keeping score. "Success is attributable to our culture, which strives to make life better for our customers and our associates," he added. "And most importantly, I attribute my personal success to my Christian beliefs and my faith."

Brief company description: A leading national financial institution, Regions Bank is a full-service bank providing personal and commercial banking solutions through products and services for customers in 16 states, with approximately 1,700 offices and 2,100 ATMs. With \$121 billion in assets, Region's mission is to make life better.

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BMW of Mobile



BMW of Mobile serves the Gulf Coast with new and pre-owned automotive sales and a state-of-the-art repair facility. Pictured above are members of the Mobile sales, service, parts and collision staff.

Company officials: Earl J. Hesterberg, president and chief executive officer; John C. Rickel, senior vice president, chief financial officer; Darryl M. Burman, vice president, general counsel; Peter C. DeLongchamps, vice president, financial services and manufacturer relations; J. Brooks O'Hara, vice president, human resources

Years in business: Since November 2009 as BMW of Mobile

Brief company description: BMW of Mobile serves Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and the Florida panhandle with BMW vehicles and the latest models, like the 328i, X3, 535i and 740i. The company carries a variety of new and pre-owned vehicles and prides itself on an expert service staff providing exemplary service to its customers.

BMW of Mobile is owned by Houston-based Group 1 Automotive Inc., a Fortune

500 automotive retailer. Since Group 1's initial public offering in October 1997, the company has grown to become the fourth largest dealership group in the U.S. Group 1 owns and operates 121 automotive dealerships, 157 franchises and 31 collision centers in the U.S. and the United Kingdom, offering 31 brands of automobiles.

Why are you located in Mobile? "First, Mobile is a growing market," said Hesterberg. "We like having a market area where we can compete on service and professionalism. In a market like Mobile, word of mouth is vital to your success and we are committed to delivering a superior sales and service experience to our customers."

Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Partners for Growth initiative? "By supporting efforts such as Partners For Growth and the Mobile Area Chamber, we

believe giving to the community and its people who support us and buy our quality products is important," said Bill Robins, general manager. "It's being a part of the community and giving back to the customers who support our business."

What do you see as Mobile's greatest potential? "There is a stable employment base in the area and we believe we can compete in our industry and be successful by delivering a world-class customer experience," said Robins. "As the Mobile/Pensacola market grows, there will be more growth opportunities for automotive retailers."

Length of continuous Chamber membership: Since 1968



Partners for Growth (PFG) is the Mobile Area Chamber's long-term economic and community development program. For more information, contact **Shelly Mattingly**, the Chamber's investor relations coordinator, at 431-8655 or smattingly@mobilechamber.com.

Make Sure Your Credit Measures Up

Good credit has always been important for entrepreneurs. But in today's economy, building and maintaining a strong business credit score is essential for accessing both startup and growth capital.

What should an aspiring entrepreneur do to establish small business credit during the planning and start-up process? **Adam Fingersh**, senior vice president of marketing for Experian, one of the world's leading consumer and business credit reporting services, offers these tips:

- Make sure you can meet your current credit obligations prior to taking on more debt. "One of the biggest factors in maintaining a healthy credit profile is paying bills on time," Fingersh says.
- Maintain low balances on personal credit cards and other revolving

credit programs, particularly if your proposed business will be a sole proprietorship.

- Look for small-business lenders or vendors that report small-business payment history information to the major business credit reporting agencies.

Because personal credit history will figure prominently in the loan evaluation process, it's important to first know your credit score. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, you can request a free copy of your credit report from the nationwide consumer reporting companies (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) once a year. The website is www.annualcreditreport.com.

"Review your personal credit report and score to ensure you are in good credit standing," Fingersh says. "Until a solid

business credit profile is established, lenders may ask you to provide a personal guarantee on the loan."

And just because you've had credit problems in the past doesn't mean your small business loan is doomed. Veteran entrepreneur and SCORE counselor **Steve Bloom** recommends explaining the problem and how you resolved it in your business plan, then being prepared to answer any questions the lender may have. Your banker should be a trusted business partner and should be kept informed.

"Working to correct the problem may well work in your favor," Bloom adds.

It's also important to remember while an existing small business may have a good history of paying its bills, the owner must still present a solid case when applying for a new loan or line of credit to support

growth or expansion. Potential "red flags" that might influence how a loan application is evaluated include:

- The presence of derogatory public records, such as collections, liens, judgments and bankruptcies;
- An increased trend in slow payment of obligations; and
- An increase in the number of business credit inquiries or applications generated by the business or the owner.

Need more help about credit and other small business finance issues? Then contact the Mobile SCORE chapter, housed at the Mobile Area Chamber, at 251-431-8614, or visit online at www.mobile.score.org.



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Business Spotlight of the Month: Synergy Yoga and Pilates



Synergy Yoga and Pilates is a fully equipped fitness studio dedicated to whole body health and movement education, infusing classical and contemporary Pilates techniques. Synergy offers a wide range of services for every individual, regardless of age or physical ability, all taught by qualified Pilates practitioners. For more information, visit www.synergyyoga.net or call 251-473-1104. Pictured above, owners Dana and Chris Garrett demonstrate exercises on a Pilates machine in their studio at 3152 Old Shell Rd. *The Business Spotlight of the Month is selected at random from a business card drawing at the Chamber's monthly Business After Hours event.*

BOARD OF ADVISORS



Kelly

Clark Kelly is president of L & M Welding Supply Inc., a distributor of welding, cutting and safety products, as well as abrasives and tools, to industrial, manufacturing, shipbuilding and military clientele. Prior to joining the company in 1995, Kelly was an F-16 pilot in the U.S. Air Force during a 10-year stint including combat missions in the first Gulf War. Before joining the USAF, Clark was a certified public accountant with Arthur Andersen in Washington D.C. He graduated from Loyola University in New Orleans in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in accounting. Clark has served as treasurer of All Saints Episcopal Church and is a member of the American Welding Society.



Fisher

Leevones G. Fisher is chairman of the board of Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (MAWSS). Fisher is founder, chief executive officer and housing coordinator for the Bay Area Women's Coalition Inc., and is a community activist for the Trinity Gardens area. A former resource teacher for the Mobile County Public School System, she holds a master's degree in science and a certification in administration from the University of South Alabama. Fisher has more than 30 years of teaching experience spanning three states. MAWSS is a Partners for Growth investor.



Liederman

Eric Liederman is co-owner and general manager of ABS Business Systems of Mobile Inc., one of the largest locally owned imaging systems products company in the industry. In business in Mobile for nine years, ABS supports numerous causes in the Mobile area such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Alabama, the Heart Walk and Junior League of Mobile. Liederman received a bachelor's degree from the University of Hartford. He is also on the board of the Mobile Area Jewish Federation and supports the Jewish Film Festival and the International Festival. Liederman and his family recently relocated to Mobile from Atlanta.

For more information about the Chamber's board of advisors, contact Katrina Dewrell at 431-8611 or kdewrell@mobilechamber.com.




16th Annual State of the City & County Lunch

Wednesday, April 3

Noon to 1:30 p.m.
Arthur R. Outlaw
Mobile Convention Center

**Join Mobile County Commission President Merceria Ludgood
and City of Mobile Mayor Sam Jones as they discuss
the state of the city and county at this annual Chamber luncheon.**

**Tickets are \$20 per person or \$190 for a table of 10
(Chamber members only)
or \$30 per person for nonmembers.**

**Reservations and advanced payment are required.
Call 431-8621 or email chunt@mobilechamber.com**



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Economic Developer in Hamburg

Troy Wayman, the Chamber's vice president of economic development, attended the Hamburg Aviation Forum in Germany to meet with potential suppliers currently doing business with Airbus in Germany, as well as those looking to do business with the aerospace company. There was a significant focus on Mobile. The Aerospace Alliance, consisting of economic development entities in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana, held a reception at the event to showcase the Gulf Coast's I-10 aerospace corridor.

New Guide Spotlights Mobile's Assets

Production of the 2013 edition of the *Guide to Mobile* is complete. This publication is provided to new members, newcomers to Mobile, economic development prospects and used as a recruiting tool for law firms and doctor's offices. A complimentary copy was mailed to all members in February, along with the Chamber's 2013 membership decal.

New SCORE Chair Named



Bayer

During the first quarter of the year, SCORE counseled more than 45 small business owners and/or budding entrepreneurs on a wide variety of business issues

including business plans, marketing and financial options.

Art Bayer PhD, a former chemist with Syngenta and Ciba-Geigy, was named SCORE chairman. Bayer's background is in technology, product management and research and development. The Mobile Chapter of SCORE, operated out of the Chamber, is looking for new volunteers. To learn more about this program, call 251-431-8614.

Weinacker's Montessori School Named U.S. Chamber Blue Ribbon Winner

Mobile's Weinacker's Montessori School is one of 100 companies receiving the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Blue Ribbon Small Business award. Winners are recognized for business practices including strategy, employee development, community involvement and customer service. The Mobile Area Chamber nominated Weinacker's after the company was named its Small Business of the Year. It is the second Mobile area-nominated business recognized since

the program began eight years ago.

"The Blue Ribbon Award winners show that, even facing uncertainty and economic challenges, small businesses can grow and succeed," said Thomas Donohue, U.S. Chamber president and CEO. "They are America's economic engine, driving growth and job creation all across this country."

Trade Division Briefing on Norway

The Chamber's international trade division held a market briefing on the Nordic Region hosted by Marianne Ruud, commercial trade specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Oslo, Norway. She gave insight in doing business in the region in advance of a trade mission to Norway and Sweden that took place in March. More than 87 people attended the briefing.

Sister City Representatives Visit Mobile

The Chamber hosted Stephen Cain, CEO of the city of Cockburn and Tony Romano, president of the Melville Cockburn Chamber of Commerce, both from one of Mobile's sister cities — Cockburn, Australia. Mobile's recent economic developments were discussed, along with trade opportunities between Alabama and Australia.

BRE Turns Attention to Aerospace in 2013

The Chamber's business retention and expansion committee, chaired by Sumner Adams with Norton Lilly International, outlined its 2013 goals, which include a focus on the aviation and maritime industry sectors. A better understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the industry enables the BRE committee to provide assistance that has a broader reach and impact. During its first 2013 meeting, Bill Sisson, executive director of the Mobile Airport Authority, presented an update on current events at Mobile Regional Airport and addressed Brookley Aeroplex's potential growth as Airbus invests there.

OffshoreAlabama.com Reps Return to Houston

In May representatives from OffshoreAlabama.com, the Chamber's effort to promote the oil and gas industry sector, will return to Houston for the Offshore Technology Conference. The group is partnering with 10 Mobile area companies on what is the largest industry trade show in the world, attracting more than 80,000 attendees from 110 countries. This will mark the second time OffshoreAlabama.com participated in this conference.

Chamber Names New Board of Advisors

New Board of Advisor members are Big Communications, Columbia Southern University, Ervin & Associates, Gulf Equipment Corp., Interiors Now, a division of The Finch Cos., and Mediterranean Shipping, bringing the total number of member advisors to 236. During 2012, 24 members upgraded to this level.

Member Grand Openings and Ribbon Cuttings

Chamber staff and ambassadors helped cut ribbons and celebrate grand openings at four Direct Auto Insurance locations — Cottage Hill, Pleasant Valley, Old Shell Road and Springhill Avenue; and IHOP. If your member business would like assistance with planning a grand opening or ribbon cutting event, contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.

Ambassador of the Month



Photo by J. Tenney Photography

Washam

When it comes to visiting fellow Chamber members, welcoming new members and networking with fellow professionals, Marcia Washam is a natural. She is the Mobile Area Chamber's Ambassador of the Month.

A realtor with Roberts Brothers Inc., Washam helps clients buy and sell residential and commercial property. She is also vice president of corporate housing and sales for Interiors Now, where she helps clients who are relocating to the area find temporary housing accommodations and permanent residences.

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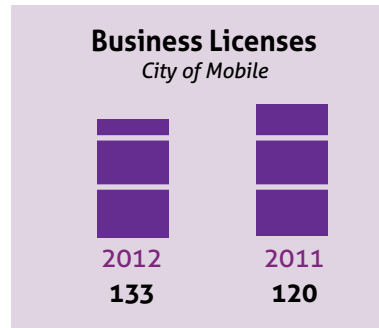
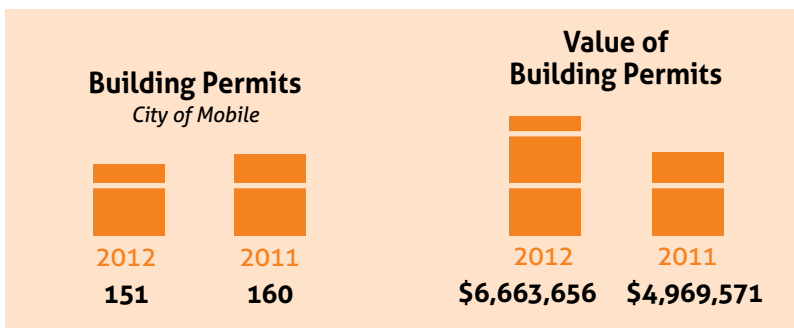
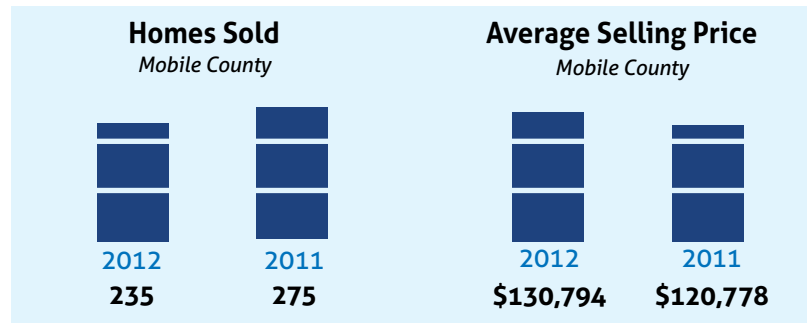
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Comparative Economic Indicators

The Mobile Area Chamber's research division collects a variety of statistics each month.

December 2012 vs December 2011



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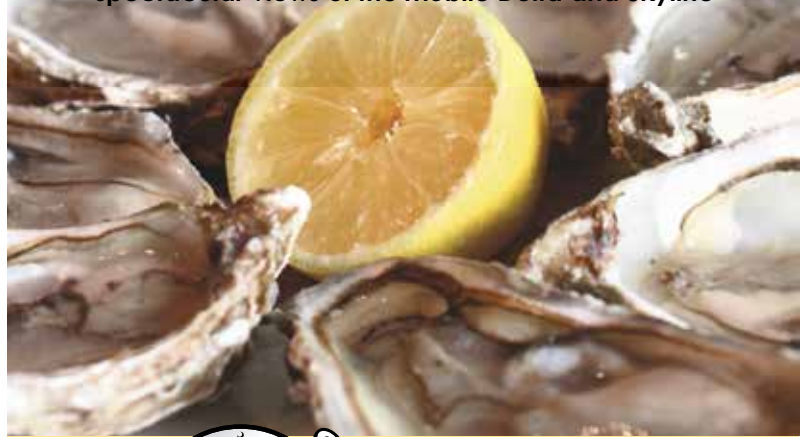


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Although the official merger took place on February 15, 2013, there will be no changes to your current accounts until the data systems of the two banks are integrated over the weekend of March 22, 2013. For now, simply continue to bank at your usual BankTrust location.

If you have any questions, visit your nearest BankTrust branch. We look forward to serving you and personally welcoming you to Trustmark soon.



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For information on Chamber events, visit events.mobilechamber.com.



3 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER *Members Only
 Enjoy coffee and light breakfast while networking with other Chamber member business professionals.
When & Where: 7:30 to 9 a.m. - Panera Bread, 750 Schillinger Rd. S.
Contact: Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or knavarro@mobilechamber.com.
 Reservations not needed. No charge.

3 STATE OF THE CITY COUNTY LUNCH
When & Where: Noon - Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center
Speakers: City of Mobile Mayor Sam Jones and Mobile County Commission President Merceria Ludgood
Cost: \$25/Chamber members or \$250/table of 10 \$35/potential members or \$300/table of 10
Contact: Carolyn Hunt at 251-431-8621 or chunt@mobilechamber.com
 Reservations and advanced payment required.

Sponsors:



9 WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE *Members Only
 A bi-monthly forum exclusively for Chamber member women business owners and managers.
When & Where: 8 to 9 a.m. - Chamber, 451 Government St.
Contact: Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or knavarro@mobilechamber.com.
 No charge, but limited seating.

11 MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY
 Enjoy crawfish and live music
When & Where: 4 to 6 p.m. - Chamber, 451 Government St.
Contact: Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or knavarro@mobilechamber.com.
Sponsors:



16 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE *Members Only
 A monthly forum for Chamber member small business owners and managers.
When & Where: 8 to 9 a.m. - Chamber, 451 Government St.
Speaker: Stephen Schlautman, vice president of business banking, Regions Bank
Topic: Credit Reporting for Your Business
Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
 Reservations required.

17 GCTC LUNCH
 A bi-monthly luncheon hosted by the Gulf Coast Technology Council.
When & Where: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Original Oyster House, causeway
Speaker: Sam St. John, president of Logical Computer Solutions
Topic: Making Sense of Cloud Storage Options
Cost: \$15/Chamber members, \$20/potential members, and \$5/ students. Lunch is included.
Contact: Cesny Soffronoff at 251-431-8636 or csoffronoff@mobilechamber.com
 Reservations required, cancellations after April 12 not reimbursed to cover lunch cost.
Sponsor: ITT Technical Institute

18 SURVIVING DISASTER AND CRISIS
When & Where: 7:30 to 9 a.m. - Chamber, 451 Government St.
Cost: \$10/members and \$15/potential members.
Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
 Reservations required and payment requested by April 15.
Speaker: Walt Dickerson, president, Diversified Emergency Management Associates LLC

25 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS *Members Only
When & Where: 5:30 to 7 p.m. - WALA FOX10/The CW, 1501 Satchel Paige Dr.
Cost: \$5 members and \$10/potential members.
Contact: Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or knavarro@mobilechamber.com.
 Reservations not needed.



Member News

WHO'S NEW



Amsberry

Driven Engineering hired Jon Amsberry as a senior civil design engineer in its Semmes office. Amsberry, who has more than 20 years experience in design and project management, holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the Citadel Military College in South Carolina.



Gayle

Scott Gayle of American WeatherStar (AWS) was promoted to national sales manager for the company's roof coatings, spray foam and single-ply roofing materials divisions. The company is headquartered in Mobile.

Mobile native Paula Waldo was named partner with Zevac & Lindsey LLC accounting and consulting firm. Waldo graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting, and also holds a master's degree in accounting.



Browning



Creswell

Burr & Forman named attorneys John Browning and Bess Parrish Creswell as partners in the firm. Browning has extensive trial experience in a wide variety of areas. Creswell is part of the firm's Creditors' Rights and Bankruptcy practice group.



Waldo

Mobile native Paula Waldo was named partner with Zevac & Lindsey LLC accounting and consulting firm. Waldo graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting, and also holds a master's degree in accounting.



Brister



Wishon

Smith, Dukes and Buckalew LLP hired Chambliss Brister as marketing director, and promoted James Wishon III to tax senior in the Mobile office. Brister graduated from Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in corporate journalism. Wishon earned a bachelor's degree and a master's of tax accounting from The University of Alabama.



Cagle

Headquartered in Knoxville, Tenn., Civis Capital is a small business lender.

SH Enterprises' CENTURY 21 Meyer Real Estate welcomed Jeff McLaurin as sales manager. McLaurin earned a bachelor's degree in communications from The University of Alabama.



McLaurin

World Omni Financial Corp. promoted Brick Toifel of its Mobile office to vice president of Southeast Toyota Finance Sales and Dealer Services.



Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown Historic District hired Stephanie Ward as sales manager and Cindy Kittrell as sales administrator/manager. Ward has 13 years of industry experience and will assist corporate clients. Kittrell earned a bachelor's degree in resort management at the University of South Alabama and has worked in the hospitality industry for almost 15 years.



Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown Historic District hired Stephanie Ward as sales manager and Cindy Kittrell as sales administrator/manager. Ward has 13 years of industry experience and will assist corporate clients. Kittrell earned a bachelor's degree in resort management at the University of South Alabama and has worked in the hospitality industry for almost 15 years.

Dauphin Island Sea Lab

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BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

Sam Winter and Co. Real Estate opened at 15 Upham St., Suite A. The company specializes in residential real estate.

Comcast launched Business VoiceEdge, a cloud-based business telephone service enabling employees to manage and access a business's entire phone system from remote locations. For more information, visit www.business.comcast.com.

The Alabama State Port Authority's board of directors approved two measures that will bring the port's new intermodal rail facility closer to reality including expenditures to build, inspect and test a rail access bridge that will connect five Class I railroads and the authority's terminal railway to an Intermodal Container Transfer Facility. It is the second leg of the Choctaw Point intermodal program. The second measure extended Moffatt & Nichols' engineering and program management through 2013 for key components within the authority's Choctaw Point project.

Virginia-based NSC Technologies opened an office in Mobile at 1540-A West I-65 Service Rd. S. The company plans to help its industrial clients hire more than 500 contractors in Mobile and other Gulf states this year.

Home Place Furniture's parent company announced changes for the store chain, including new merchandise, displays, price points and a new name. The Mobile store, along with others, will close for a few weeks and is expected to re-open as Hank's Fine Furniture in mid-April.

Advantage Staffing relocated its offices to 1500 Government St., Suite G.

Professional Equity Management added The Village at Midtown apartment community to its portfolio.

WELL DONE

White-Spinner Construction Inc. was recognized as one of Alabama's "2013 Top-Rank General Contractors" by *Business Alabama*. The value of contracts awarded in 2011 was the criteria for companies to achieve the top rank in the statewide category of "Largest General Contractor." The company was ranked ninth in the category of "Largest General Contractors."



Sorensen



Gibson

Two Long's Human Resource Services employees, Renee Sorensen and Evelyn Gibson were elected to the 2013 Southern Human Resource Management (SHRM) boards for Mobile County and Baldwin County respectively. Sorensen will serve on the board as director of workforce development, and Gibson will serve as program chair.

Jennifer Givens of Watermark Design Group architectural and interior design firm recently passed the architectural registration exam and is now licensed as a registered architect in Alabama.



Givens

Hargrove Engineers + Constructors was named to ZweigWhite's 2012 "Best Firms to Work For" among multi-discipline firms. Top companies were chosen based on survey

data collected from their employees about companies' culture, policies, procedures, benefits, ethics, technology, training, operations and work environment. This is the fourth year the firm was recognized.

Mobile Area Water & Sewer System (MAWSS) received a certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report. The award is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Sally H. Berry is the comptroller for the utility.



Berry

The Anniston Star named Carolyn Akers, chief executive officer of the Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF), the 2012 Alabamian of the Year. MAEF is a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that Mobile County's 60,000-plus students receive a top-notch education.



Akers

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Michael Chambers, president and chief executive officer of Swift Biotechnology, was one of five new board members elected by the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama Foundation.



Chambers

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Alabama received a \$40,000 grant from the Community Foundation of South Alabama to support the organization's Great Expectations Mentoring Initiative. The organization currently provides one-on-one services to approximately 600 children ages six to 18 each year.

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 last name, and must be 300 dpi at full size and saved in an eps, tif or jpg format. Send your information to news@mobilechamber.com.



The Mobile Area Chamber was awarded a five-star rating by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the highest designation given. Of the 6,936 chambers in the U.S., only 301 are accredited, and of those only 43 have achieved five-star distinction. The Mobile Area Chamber has been accredited by the U.S. Chamber since the designation's inception more than 40 years ago.

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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic PC.....	23
Alabama Power Co.....	29
Blue Haven Pools.....	25
Coast Safe & Lock Co. Inc.	28
Community Bank.....	6
C Spire Business Solutions.....	2
Dauphin Island Sea Lab.....	28
Georgia Roussos Catering.....	15
Gwin's Commercial Printing	26
Hancock Bank.....	20
Infirmiry Health.....	24
Interstate Printing & Graphics Inc.	30
Lagniappe.....	30
Logical Computer Solutions	8
Original Oyster House.....	26
PNC Bank.....	25
Premier Medical Management.....	13
Regions Bank.....	18
RE/MAX Partners.....	18
Russell Thompson Butler & Houston LLP	21
The University of Alabama	12
Trustmark National Bank.....	26
United Way of Southwest Alabama.....	16
Wonderland Express	25

COMMUNITY NEWS

Ingalls Shipbuilding awarded \$109,271 in grants to 26 schools and educational organizations in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana, for projects associated with science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



The Mobile Arts Council recently received a \$30,000 arts grant from the PNC Foundation to help support the nonprofit's arts education programs. ChARTing New Directions is a systemic program of dance, theater and visual art instruction that will operate weekly in seven facilities operated by the Boys & Girls Club of South Alabama.

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READERSHIP
Lagniappe has 48,801 print readers each issue, and 95,226 print readers over 6 months, representing a readership gain of 22% over last year.

AGE OF READERS
Lagniappe's average reader is 46 years old, with 74.7% of our readers' aged 35 or older.

INCOME
Our readers have an average household income of \$75,451, more than \$17,000 above the market average of Mobile and Baldwin counties. 24.5% of Lagniappe households earn \$100,000 or more annually.

GENDER
56.1% of Lagniappe's readers are women, 43.9% are men.

AUTOMOTIVE
16.9% of our readers plan to buy a new vehicle in the next year, more than 5% over the market average. 23.5% plan on buying a used car in the next 12 months, over 7% more than the market average.

EDUCATION
68.5% of Lagniappe's readers have some college education or above. 21.4% have college degrees and 13.2% have post-graduate degrees as well, nearly double the market average.

OCCUPATION
Lagniappe readers' occupations are 55.5% white collar, 28.1% blue collar.

HOME OWNERSHIP
73.8% of Lagniappe's readers own their own homes, and 24.7% rent their residence. Our readers' average home value is \$241,630, more than \$55,000 above market average.

DINING
Lagniappe's readers love restaurants. 96.5% went to a restaurant in the last month. 89.1% have been to a sit down restaurant in the last 30 days, and are 25% more likely than the average resident to eat at a fine dining restaurant.

CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS
Lagniappe's readers are well connected. 95.9% own mobile phones, with 61.4% owning smart phones, nearly 15% over the average Mobile/Baldwin resident. 77.4% of our readers own home computers, 7% above the market average.

LAGNIAPPE READERS ALSO:

- Spend an average of \$141 per week on groceries • Are 50% more likely to eat seafood
- Represent 88% of the micro-brew buyers in the area • Are 44% more likely to purchase liquor and wine
- Spend over \$3,000 per year on home improvements • Are 80% more likely to have a 401K plan
- Are 150% more likely to have an IRA • Are 78% more likely to own stocks or stock options

(*Scarborough Research, CSA, Release 2, Oct. 2011 – Sept. 2012)

New Members

If you know a company interested in benefitting from Chamber membership, contact

Tricia Bradley at 431-8642 or Rebecca Milam at 431-8647.

View the complete membership directory at www.mobilechamber.com.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Alabama Inc.

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Portsmouth, VA 23707-2019
757-399-1738
www.nsc-tech.com
Temporary Labor/Skilled Labor

Pelican Coast Conservancy/ Atlantic Coast Conservancy

Robert Keller PhD
One St. Louis Centre, Ste. 1000
Mobile, AL 36602
251-455-2449
www.atlanticcoastconservancy.org
Nonprofit Organization

M T Rice Construction

Marcus Rice
6740 Spring St.
Eight Mile, AL 36695
571-528-6697
Contractors-Commercial

Sims Metal Management

Brian Souza
1360 Conception St. Rd.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-605-6655
www.simsmm.com
Metal Recycling Yard

Slipstream World Trade

Brad Banks
207 Manor Blvd.
Fairhope, AL 36532
251-367-4738
www.slipstreamworldtrade.com
International Trade & Transportation

Southern Art & Framing

Jennifer Smith
4693 Airport Blvd., Ste. 140
Mobile, AL 36608-3125
251-460-2539
Picture Frames-Dealers

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Darrell M. Butler
5551 Raybon Rd.
Theodore, AL 36582-9793
251-973-2601
www.thrivent.com
Financial Advisors

Ultra Car Wash

Chad Simmons
1862 Government St.
Mobile, AL 36606
251-408-3350
www.ultracarwash.com
Car Washing & Polishing

Verizon Wireless Cellular Sales

David Trevino
6353 Cottage Hill Rd.
Mobile, AL 36609
251-338-9253
www.cellularsales.com
Cellular Telephone Sales & Service

As of 1/31/13

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Cypress Cove Apartments
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Global Security International (GSI)
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JMF Solutions Inc.
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Lincoln Pharmacy
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