

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

MAY 2014

the businessVIEW



Celebrating
Small Business
Week

Resources, Events,
Success Stories and More

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Gets a Makeover

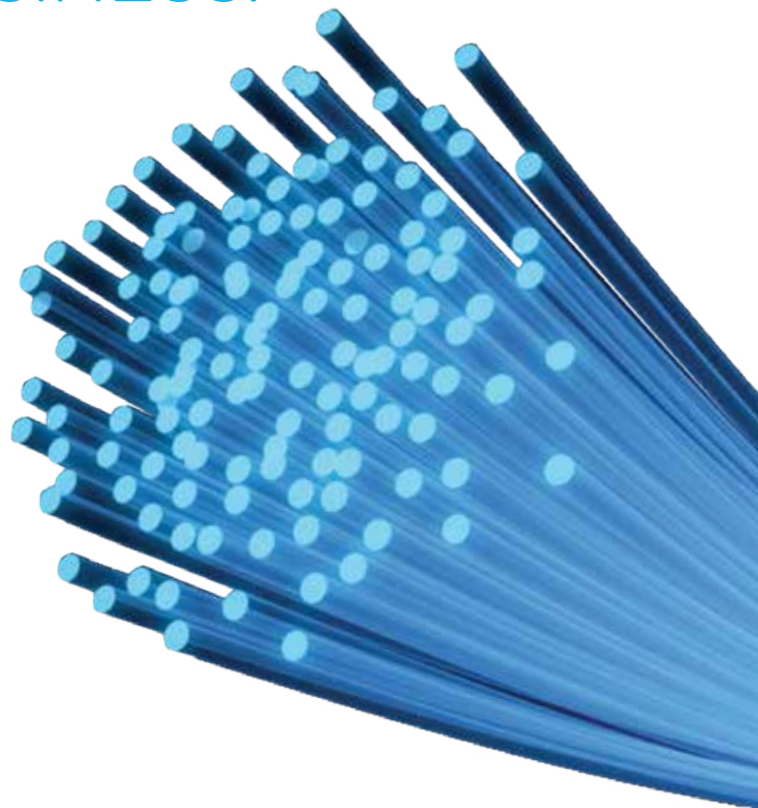
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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

Shining a Light on Small Business

There is no question that the Mobile Bay region has been successful at large-scale economic development. Most communities would be thrilled to have one growing business sector, but ours is blessed with a large number of them, including aviation/aerospace, shipbuilding, oil and gas exploration, advanced manufacturing and healthcare, just to name a few.

But our efforts do not end there. The Mobile Area Chamber advocates for those growing sectors while championing the development of small business and by supporting the start-up of both traditional and leading-edge companies. This year, the Chamber is putting an even greater emphasis on small business, which is also the top priority of our board chairman, Dr. Michael Chambers, with Swift Biotechnology LLC.

The small business community, including minority and women-owned businesses, is a hugely significant part of our economy. Statistics from the Small Business Administration show that small business accounts for more than 99 percent

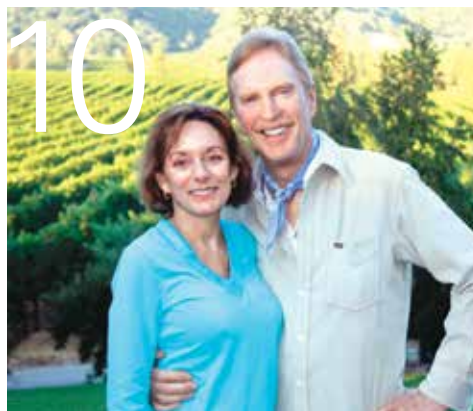


of employers nationally. Mobile is no different, and those small businesses are located in virtually every neighborhood throughout our region. Perhaps even more meaningful to our port city is the fact that small businesses make up to 97 percent of exporters and produce 29 percent of export value.

Your Chamber is an incredible resource, and we want to make sure small businesses and would-

be entrepreneurs know how to fully utilize the programming available. We're proud of our collaborative efforts with our partners related to small- and minority-business training and advocacy, but we want to do more.

From May 12-15, our Small Business Week will shine a spotlight on the importance of small business and recognize our entrepreneur leaders. This year we will present an Outstanding Entrepreneur Award. We look forward to your participation in this new and exciting programming, which will be just one more way your Chamber serves the needs of business.



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ON THE COVER

Chamber Chase kicks off annual resource development campaign. Kenny Crow leads the race with team captains close behind. See page 21 to learn more about Chamber Chase. *Photo by Jeff Tesney*

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Mitternight Recognized for Efforts in Exporting



The Mobile Area Chamber nominated Mitternight Inc., for the Governor's Trade Award. Accepting the award from Gov. Robert Bentley is company board chairman Lance Covan.

Mitternight Inc. was one of eight Alabama companies recognized recently with the Governor's Trade

Excellence Award. The Mobile Area Chamber nominated the Satsuma-based company for its export activity to Fortune 500 companies in Canada, China, Europe, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

"Exporting is a very important factor in contributing to Mitternight's success. Approximately 50 percent of our work is exported to foreign countries," said **Lance Covan**, the company's board chairman, who accepted the award.

In addition, the company sends representatives to foreign markets to meet potential customers, including Chamber-sponsored trade missions.

Mitternight manufactures vessels used in the petrochemical, energy and refining industries, and has 76 employees.

"In 2013, Alabama exports totaled \$19.3 billion, which represents a 57 percent increase since 2009," said **Gov. Robert Bentley**.

Last year, Alabama companies shipped products to nearly 200 countries, with Canada, China, Germany, Mexico and the United Kingdom being the top five export markets.

The ninth annual Governor's Trade Excellence Awards Program, coordinated by the Alabama Department of Commerce and the Export Alabama Alliance, recognized small, medium and large exporters for their contributions to Alabama's economy and success in international sales.

Other award winners were: Aladdin Light Lift Inc., Huntsville; Archangel Systems Inc., Auburn; ES Robbins Corp., Muscle Shoals; Fagerman Technologies Inc., Somerville; Hornsby Steel Inc., Cleveland, Ala.; McWane Inc., Birmingham; and PESA, Huntsville.

Dragon Boat Festival



What can eight busy young professionals do to reach their goal of changing the lives of children in the community?

They can create a nonprofit organization and organize a unique fundraising event that includes Dragon Boats and a festival featuring hot air, balloon rides, inflatables, food trucks, music, air boat rides and an Art Walk-style exhibitor area.

The FUSE Project is hosting Mobile's inaugural Dragon Boat Festival, one of the fastest growing sporting events in the U.S., at Five Rivers on Saturday, June 7. **Brie Zarzour**, one of the group's

organizers, says other communities have been very successful with similar projects, and they are hoping for the same results here.

Monies raised will support a Mobile County Public School System after-school program to improve middle schoolers' graduation rates, lower suspensions and improve school morale, and the Mobile Bay Estuary Corp. program that educates students on the importance of maintaining the marine environment.

The individuals behind The Fuse Project are between the ages of 25 and 35 years old and are doctors, lawyers, realtors, public relations practitioners and nurse practitioners. They have

two previous fundraisers under their belts that drew hundreds of attendees, netting nearly \$15,000 for eight area organizations.

The goal for the Dragon Boat Festival is 50 teams and \$100,000.

Led by the rhythmic beat of a drum, 20 paddlers, one drummer and one person who steers the boat will complete in a 250-meter race up the delta. The registration fee for teams is \$750 for community organizations and \$1,000 for corporate teams. In addition, each team participant is asked to raise \$60.

For more information about the organization, to volunteer or learn more about the festival, visit www.theFUSEproject.org.



As Austal Grows, So Does Ayres Composite Panels

As Austal USA ramps up production of U.S. Navy ships, business at

Ayres Composite Panels USA is also increasing. The Mobile-based small business employs nine and makes aluminum composite panels used to create walls and furniture for the maritime industry.

"Austal's going full-force, and there's growth throughout the industry," says Nyron Devenish, president of Ayres.

John Kirkpatrick, operations manager, estimates there are up to 3,000 panels in each Joint High Speed Vessel and 1,500 in each Littoral Combat Ship.

And while Austal is a major customer, Ayres also has clients throughout North and South America.

In March, the company earned ISO 9001 2008, an international quality management standard, that Kirkpatrick says will help the

company pursue additional customers.

Ayres' products are comprised of an aluminum honeycomb core sandwiched between varying thicknesses of aluminum sheets, depending on its intended use, and are a lightweight option to traditional ship construction.

One version of the company's product can withstand fires up to 2,000 degrees for 60 minutes. And the combination of both a lightweight and fire-resistant

material are important factors for high-performing vessels traveling 25 to 30 knots or more, says Devenish.

Ayres buys the majority of its material domestically, and uses the Port of Mobile to ship its product to South American customers.


The U.S. division was established by its Australian parent company and relocated its operations to Mobile in 2008.

New and Expanding Companies Honored



Representatives of 39 new and expanding companies were recognized at the Partners for Growth reception in March, held at Regions Bank's RSA Tower office.

In the past 18 months, 39 new and expanding Mobile Area companies collectively announced more than \$1 billion in capital investment and 2,900 jobs. For their efforts, the Chamber's Partners for Growth investors honored them with a reception in March, sponsored by Alabama Power and Regions Bank. More than 125 people attended the reception. 

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Build the I-10 Bridge

By: Mike Lee, President/CEO, Page & Jones Inc.

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Build the I-10 Bridge Coalition Co-Chair



Editor's note: The Alabama Department of Transportation is expected to hold local hearings in 2014. At press time an exact date for the hearings had not been set.

When I was a kid, like every other kid in Mobile I suspect, I used to try and hold my breath whenever we drove through the old Bankhead Tunnel. I was reminded of that when my own kids started playing the game, not only in the Bankhead, but also in the Wallace tunnel. Now I'm amused to see the same custom has survived when I take my grandkids through the tunnels. And if you think it was hard in my day, imagine the odds now with the congestion we routinely experience today. It's a comical, but interesting gauge of where we are now.

Building an I-10 bridge over the Mobile River and widening the Bayway are important steps to alleviating congestion, improving quality of life and safety, and allowing a greater flow of commerce. As the largest city on the central Gulf Coast between New Orleans and Tampa, Fla., Mobile acts as the economic capital. Now, more than ever, access is essential to our economy and, selfishly, to give my grandkids a fighting chance to make it through in one breath.

According to a study conducted by Volkert Inc., the existing I-10 tunnel was built to carry 55,000 vehicles a day. In 2009, the daily average was 66,000 – 11,000 vehicles beyond its capacity. Today, the number exceeds an estimated 75,000 vehicles a day and 90,000 on holidays such as July 4th.

In fact, our growing region and the popularity of the I-10 corridor led to 154 major delays costing drivers an average of two hours and 53 minutes (statistics from 2009). And as you know, traffic congestion and delays continue to grow.

To address these concerns, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce created the Build the Bridge Coalition to educate and get feedback from the maritime community, elected officials, and local business and industry leaders. Coalition members continue to speak to civic clubs and increase social media support through a well-received Facebook page.

The information obtained from these sources is invaluable and the support, candidly, astonishing. More than 50 organizations from Mobile and Baldwin counties have written

letters of support of the proposed Mobile River Bridge and countless others have passed resolutions.

The results are clear, a bridge is needed and the time is now.

Each and every citizen in our region should join the effort and let their voice be heard. There is much you can do: keep informed with what is going on by visiting and joining our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BuildTheI10Bridge), invite a Coalition member to speak to your organization and attend any public hearings or meetings.

One day soon we will be able to hold our breath, once more, in anticipation of a new landmark and our children will be able to form a new memory to cherish.

FAST facts

Tunnel Capacity

Original capacity

55,000 vehicles/day

2014 estimate

75,000 vehicles/day

2014 Holiday peak estimate

90,000 vehicles/day

Timeline

8 years, consisting of environmental study, public hearings, governmental review period (2 years) plus construction (4 to 6 years)



Who Benefits?



Commuters, industry, residents and visitors who want to shop, work and vacation on both sides of the bay and Mobile's image as a distribution and transportation hub

By the Numbers

The new bridge would be **215 feet tall**,

the tallest bridge over water in the United States. It will be 75 feet taller than the Cochran Bridge and 5 feet taller than the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

210 ft.

Golden Gate Bridge



140 ft.

Cochran Bridge



Commuters

8,675 Mobile

County residents commute to work in Baldwin County and the number nearly doubles with

16,675 Baldwin

County residents commuting to work in Mobile (Source: Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, 2011)

Total Cost

Upon completion, experts predict the total project cost to be approximately

\$850 million



More Information: www.facebook.com/BuildTheI10Bridge

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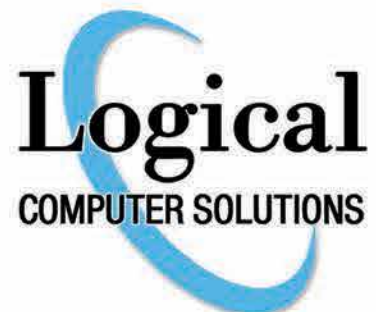
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Small Business is **BIG** Business in Mobile

Chamber Launches Inaugural Small Business Week

This month, the Mobile Area Chamber will launch an exciting new initiative to recognize and celebrate entrepreneurship and small business. During the week of May 12-15, Mobile Area Small Business Week will provide entrepreneurs and small business owners with valuable tools and strategies to help them take their businesses to the next level.

Whether you'd like to learn about access to financing opportunities, finding new customers or utilizing employees as a business development tool, all of the week's activities will give you the tools you need to grow your business.

Monday, May 12

Mobile's Best Resources for Small Business Assistance

If you're looking for answers to your business questions or need advice to manage and grow your business, Mobile's numerous business resources will be available at the Mobile Area Chamber to provide on-site assistance. These organizations have expertise in financial analysis, business planning, marketing and market research, branding your business, social media and more.

Organizations that will be on hand are Alabama Department of Commerce Office of Small Business Advocacy, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Small Business Development Center, City of Mobile - Community Planning and Development Gulf Coast Angel Network, Mobile Works, South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, U.S. Small Business Administration, Women's Business Center of Southern Alabama and others.

When & Where: 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. - Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Cost: Free of charge

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
Registration requested. Free parking.

Tuesday, May 13

Small Business Day

As Small Business Week continues, two unique professional development opportunities are available to help your business grow:

"Your Greatest Business Development Tool – Your Employees" Did you know your employees are your greatest business development tool? Engaging your employees in the vision and strategy of your company encourages greater commitment, motivation and dedication to making your company successful. Learn the management behaviors and actions you can take to develop enthusiastic, empowered and confident employees who will drive your organization to the top. Presented by Dale Carnegie.

When & Where: 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. - Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Cost: \$25 Chamber and MBDA Business Center members/potential members \$30

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
Reservations required. Free parking.

"Where is the Money?" will address one of the most pressing challenges to managing and growing a small business – having or finding sufficient capital. If you need financing for your business growth – whether it's working capital, purchasing inventory, a line of credit, or first- or second-stage investors, you should attend this seminar.

More than 10 financing organizations providing from \$500 to more than \$2 million will be on hand to work with companies in breakout sessions focused on debt, equity and alternative sources of funding.

Presented by the University of South Alabama Melton Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

When & Where: 1 to 6 p.m. - Regions Bank Building, 56 Saint Joseph St., 29th Floor Conference Room

Cost: \$25

Contact: Rachel Backlin at 251-414-8091 or mcei@southalabama.edu
Registration required.

Continued on page 10



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Wednesday, May 14

"Preparing Your Business to Reach the Next Level"

will enable business owners and managers to quickly develop growth strategies by learning new and useful business practices. Learn to customize your market research to identify market changes, trends, niches and how to make data-driven decisions to develop a plan that adds value to the procurement process for your clients and increases sales. Build an effective company brand by taking an in-depth look at the internal and external perceptions of your company, identifying the positive and unique things and eliminating the things that hold your company back.

When & Where: 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - American Red Cross, 35 N. Sage Ave.

Cost: \$25 Chamber and MBDA Business Center members/potential members \$30

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
Registration required. Free parking.

Thursday, May 15

Mobile Area Small Business Week Luncheon Outstanding Entrepreneur Award

This exciting week culminates with the inaugural Mobile Area Small Business Week Luncheon, where the Mobile Area Chamber will name its outstanding entrepreneur award. This award recognizes and celebrates an individual who represents the characteristics of successful entrepreneurship including creativity, initiative, dynamic growth and sound management.

Keynote speakers will be entrepreneurs **Michael Houlihan** and **Bonnie Harvey**, founders of Barefoot Wine. Find out how the couple founded Barefoot Wine in 1986 with very little money and no wine industry experience and overcame obstacles to create new markets with innovative ideas to become America's No.1 Wine Brand. Their story also became a New York Times Bestselling Business Paperback,



The Barefoot Spirit: How Hardship, Hustle and Heart Build America's #1 Wine Brand. Luncheon guests will receive a copy of the book and have the opportunity to meet the authors and have the book autographed.

When & Where: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - The Mobile Marriott, 3101 Airport Blvd.

Cost: \$35 Chamber and MBDA Business Center members/\$45 potential members/Table of 10 \$400 (members only)

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com
Reservations required by Friday, May 9 and payment is due at time of registration. No refunds after that date.



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Blooming Success

Zimlich Patio & Garden Center d/b/a Elizabeth's Garden

The Zimlich name is synonymous with flowers in the Mobile area. The first flower business started by siblings **Carol Reeves, Donald and Tommy Zimlich** was run out of the dollhouse their grandfather built for Carol in their backyard. Prophetic? Somewhat, but it's important to note the family has a horticultural history dating back to 1927, when the first Zimlich the Florist opened.

By the time the trio went to college, though their mother encouraged them to explore careers outside the family business, Carol graduated in accounting, while twin brothers Donald and Tommy pursued horticulture degrees. All three could not escape the desire to stick to their roots, and with the help of their father, opened Zimlich Patio & Garden Center in 1981.

Today the company, in addition to the retail garden center on Dauphin Street, owns and operates Elizabeth's Garden Shop on McGregor Avenue, employing the owners and nine others.

Serving both local and regional customers, the siblings pride themselves in customer service, citing valued employees who remember every detail of their customers' preferences without hesitation. The company can also create the most intricate designs for special events and weddings. No task is too unique for this staff, from original, hand-constructed, elegant arbors to elaborate pieces from Mardi Gras floats entwined with more than 10,000 carnations, the Zimlich team seeks to present a distinct experience for every event.

The company offers complimentary consultations to customers who drop-off or email photos of an area needing

design, and the garden center's specialty blend of potting soil is famous for its ability to revive even dying plants.

Success did not come without challenges. The Zimlich siblings created their niche when big box stores entered the gardening industry – quickly understanding the need to adapt to market changes and customer needs, which led them to move into specialized events.

"Growing up in the industry, you inevitably work through every level of skill, from packing boxes to designing arrangements," says Donald.

According to the siblings, landscape and floral design, unlike other design fields, have no rules, and the customer should always focus on what they like best. They all agree and teach their customers, "Life is short; enjoy your garden."

Ever wondered if your business qualified to be featured here?

Check out the guidelines below and apply today.

Contact Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or email drichards@mobilechamber.com.

- Must be a Mobile Area Chamber member for one year
- Have 100 or fewer employees
- In business at least two years
- Apparent solid financial base
- Considered successful by peers
- Sales growth/ profit growth/ expanding number of employees
- Outstanding public service contribution
- Must be a "for profit" company
- Locally-owned franchises are eligible
- Headquartered in Mobile, Baldwin or Washington counties.



Jim Busby Named Outstanding Entrepreneur

To celebrate entrepreneurship in the Mobile area, the Mobile Area Chamber is proud to present its inaugural Outstanding Entrepreneur Award to **James L. "Jim" Busby**.

Entrepreneurs play a key role in any economy. "These are the risk takers and innovators – generators of new ideas and business processes who have the skills and initiative necessary to take good new ideas to market and make the right decisions to make them profitable. They have leadership, management skills, creativity, initiative and strong team-building abilities – essential qualities of successful entrepreneurs," says **Dr. Michael Chambers**, with Swift Biotechnology LLC and Chamber board chairman.

In selecting the outstanding entrepreneur, a committee of business leaders used guiding criteria, including: a substantiated history as an established entrepreneur, the impact of the business on the job market, and the innovativeness of a product or service.

"Our committee received a number of outstanding nominations. As we deliberated, however, we consistently came back to Jim Busby. He started QMS and guided that company to a successful IPO. He built a great team there with individuals



who went on to found their own companies. And he's doing it again with CentraLite," says Chambers.

"Mobile's high-tech history and family of entrepreneurs in one sense started with Jim Busby. He epitomizes the drive, the team-building and the ability to evolve the business as the market changes, with the never-say-die spirit so typical of serial entrepreneurs. Jim was our unanimous choice," Chambers adds.

After founding QMS, a laser printer manufacturing company, in 1977, with a \$10,000 bank loan,

Busby took QMS to a public offering on the NASDAQ national market in 1983. He then led the company to a New York Stock Exchange listing in 1986. At its peak, QMS employed 1,500 people. After retiring from QMS in 1997, he and his oldest son, **James B. "Jimmy" Busby**, founded CentraLite Systems Inc., a manufacturer of lighting controls.

A graduate of Murphy High School, Busby holds a bachelor's in electrical engineering from The University of Alabama and a master's in business administration from the University of South Alabama. Busby served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam war and returned to private business in 1972.

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Offer is only available for new Home EquityLine accounts. Offer is not available in the state of Texas.

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Mobile's Small Business Resources

Numerous free or low-cost resources, materials, workshops and seminars are available for area small businesses.

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Small Business Development Department

451 Government St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-431-8607
www.mobilechamber.com

Assists local entrepreneurs starting, managing or growing their businesses by providing workshops, educational materials, one-on-one consulting as well as referrals to local resource providers and other business experts.

MBDA Business Center Mobile

450-A Government St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-433-2250
www.mobilembdacenter.com

Provides consulting services to minority business enterprises, including a business needs analysis, mentoring, capacity building, contracting assistance, bonding, capital access and business to business marketing and matchmaking. The center is operated by the Chamber and funded by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency.

Alabama Department of Commerce Office of Small Business Advocacy

401 Adams Ave.
Montgomery, AL 36130
(800) 248-0033
www.alabamausa.org

Provides small businesses with the knowledge and resources to succeed, including services from financial assistance to regulatory issues, through the Alabama Small Business Development Network, ADECA's Office of Minority Business Enterprise, as well as other resources focused on the development of small businesses.

Business Innovation Center

1301 Azalea Rd.
Mobile, AL 36693
251-660-7002
www.cebic.org

An incubator for small businesses offering office space, equipment and office services, business counseling and entrepreneur development training.

Community Planning and Development Department - City of Mobile

205 Government St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-208-6292
www.cityofmobile.org

Provides economic development, funding and entrepreneur development training for entrepreneurs and start-up companies.

Downtown Mobile Alliance

261 Dauphin St.
Mobile, AL 36601
251-434-8498
www.downtownmobile.org

Operates a retail incubator to help ensure the success of new or expanding retailers in Downtown Mobile and offers training in all aspects of retailing, from loss prevention to inventory control, in addition to regular meetings with an experienced retail consultant.

Greater Mobile Development Corp.

1301 Azalea Rd.
Mobile, AL 36693
251-650-0826
www.greatermobile.org

Provides SBA 504 financing to small- and mid-sized companies for long-term commercial real estate financing with fixed, below-market interest rates and low down payments.

Internal Revenue Service – Stakeholder Liason

1110 Montlimar Dr., Suite 300
Mobile, AL 36609
251-341-5937
www.irs.gov

Provides information and assistance about IRS policies, practices and procedures to business owners and tax practitioners to ensure compliance with tax laws.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

451 Government St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-431-8614
www.mobile.scorechapter.org

Provides free and confidential small business assistance and counseling to entrepreneurs, start-up companies and existing small businesses in areas including business plan writing, funding and marketing assistance.

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission

110 Beauregard St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-433-6541
www.sarpc.org/rlf.asp

The commission manages a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) used to finance small business start-up and expansion projects to help create permanent jobs. By combining RLF and bank financing, the borrower can realize below market rates.

U.S. Small Business Administration

Southern Alabama Office
1141 Montlimar Dr., Suite 1007
Mobile, AL 36609
251-544-7401
www.sba.gov

Provides a number of financial assistance programs for small businesses that have been specifically designed to meet key financing needs, including debt financing, surety bonds and equity financing. The SBA does not make direct loans, but it does provide loan guarantees to lenders to reduce risk.

University of South Alabama Small Business Development Center

Mitchell College of Business, Room 118
307 University Blvd., Mobile, AL 36688
251-460-6004
www.southalabama.edu/sbdc

Provides business counseling, loan packaging assistance, international trade and procurement and technical assistance for businesses wanting to do business with the government.

Women's Business Center Inc.

413 Azalea Rd., Suite F
Mobile, AL 36609
251-660-2725
www.womenbiz.biz

Provides assistance and training in business planning and development, marketing, market research, access to capital, lending preparation and networking for seasoned and start-up businesses.



For Those Thinking About Starting A Business

When operating a business in the Mobile area, city, county and state business licenses and certain

privilege licenses are necessary and should be researched by contacting the appropriate agencies.

Mobile Business Center

Mobile created the Mobile Business Center within the revenue department as a one-stop resource center for business owners to obtain assistance for licenses, zoning, signs, tree and landscaping regulations, health department certification, liquor licenses and police clearance, if necessary.

Business License and Certifications

Businesses operating in the city of Mobile, Mobile County, the state of Alabama or other municipalities may need to acquire business licenses and other approvals to legally operate. Inquiries can be directed to:

City of Mobile - Mobile Business Center

www.cityofmobile.org - 251-208-7462

Urban Development Department

www.urban.cityofmobile.org - 251-208-7091

Mobile County - License Commissioner

www.mobilecountyal.gov - 251-574-4800

City of Mobile Police Records Department

www.mobilepd.org - 251-208-7211

Mobile County Health Department

www.mobilecountyhealth.org - 251-690-8158

Taxes Sales Tax

In general, the total sales tax for businesses located in the city of Mobile is 10 percent. The breakdown is as follows:

City of Mobile – 5 percent, Mobile County – 1 percent and the state – 4 percent. All city and county taxes may be filed via mail or electronically through eMobile, the city's online

tax filing system. For more information, contact 251-208-7462. The state of Alabama sales tax is paid through the Alabama Revenue Department. For more information call 251-344-4737.

Another option for businesses filing in multiple taxing jurisdictions is Alabama's online portal, ONE SPOT (Optional Network Election for Single Point Online Transactions).

Here businesses can file tax returns and pay city, county and state sales, lease and use taxes at one electronic location rather than submitting multiple tax reports. It is a free resource. To sign up for the ONE SPOT system, visit: <https://myalabamataxes.alabama.gov>. Businesses may also continue to file tax returns and pay taxes as they have in the past.

Personal Property Tax

Business owners are required to pay taxes on inventory of personal property (i.e. office equipment, office supplies, furniture, etc.). For more information on the personal property tax, contact: Personal Property Department at 251-574-4714.

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and potential. But in devoting so much attention to processes and people, small business owners often neglect to optimize their most important asset: themselves.

Whether you're an experienced or novice entrepreneur, every day offers the opportunity to learn something that can be applied to improving the profitability and quality of your business – perhaps right away, or maybe sometime in the future. It's simply a matter of being aware of what's going on outside the walls of your store, factory or office.

Being a business owner doesn't mean your career as a student is over. There are always new skills to learn, new technologies to master, and new ways to do things. Colleges and

professional associations offer continuing education courses for even more educational opportunities. Not only do you gain tools to manage and grow your business, but you double your time investment by both learning and networking.

To help with professional development, the Mobile Area Chamber also offers a variety of workshops throughout the year. In 2014, the Chamber is launching a new small business initiative to increase its offerings.

During the Mobile Area Small Business Week, May 12-15, a variety of relevant seminars and workshops will help take your business to the next level (see pages 9 and 10). The Chamber is offering opportunities to meet and talk with numerous local business resources. Among the events planned are timely training

workshops and seminars for business owners, managers and even those considering starting a business.

Consider staying abreast of business-related news via systems such as Google Alerts or RSS feeds. These are customizable venues that notify you when relevant content appears on the web as well as news headlines, blogs and podcasts.

Don't omit "traditional" news sources such as trade journals, national news publications or your local paper. While it's great to get web news tailored to your needs, you may spot something in a story on a seemingly unrelated topic that could benefit your business or, perhaps more importantly, influence your customers and their needs.

Of course, we have to plug ourselves sometimes. SCORE, or

Service Corps of Retired Executives, provides free and confidential business advice and counseling tailored to meet the needs of individual small business owners and their personal objectives. It also offers workshops, for a modest fee, for both start-up and in-business entrepreneurs.

SCORE volunteers are real-world professionals with time-tested knowledge who donate thousands of hours to help small businesses succeed. Mobile SCORE counselors are experts in such areas as accounting, finance, marketing, management and business plan preparation.

For more information, or to schedule an appointment, call 251-431-8614.



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Chamber to Launch Redesigned Website

Clean, lean and easy to navigate

On May 1, the Mobile Area Chamber will unveil a fresh new look for its website. "When we started the process, our overall goal was to keep the site simple," says redesign team leader **Ashley Horn**, the Chamber's Director of Digital Media and Design. "We wanted a new look and color scheme, but we also wanted a website that is clean, lean and easy to navigate."

In addition to Horn and others in the Chamber's communications and marketing department, the team includes Chamber members Webjed, who handled design and construction, and Tom Mason Communications, who worked on content.

Businesses always strive for lean content and easy navigation when

building a website. The goal is to place the basics out front and prevent the visitor from getting lost in a labyrinth of menus and sub pages while they search. As the Chamber's website grew over the years, so did a complicated tangle of information hidden underneath many menu buttons, explained Horn.

To reach their clean and easy-to-navigate goal, Horn and her team began by stripping the site to the basics. "We examined analytical data on site visits for the past year to determine what visitors looked for most often, and built our main menu items from there," she said.

J. Arendall with Webjed took these in-demand areas and developed a design that keeps all essentials visible at a glance and collapses long

lists of details to prevent tiresome scrolling. The result is a clean design without a maze of sub pages hiding important information.

Reducing content for a leaner site is a bigger challenge — particularly with a chamber of commerce site, Horn points out. "We're charged with a mission to provide comprehensive

facts and figures about Mobile, its business climate and quality of life, plus resources for new and growing businesses," Horn says. "That's a

mountain of information, but we've condensed and reorganized vital data or linked visitors directly to the source in many cases."

The new site also incorporates easy-to-find digital versions of Chamber publications for details on a variety of topics. Clickable publication covers are positioned on many pages, giving visitors

downloadable and printable references and boosting exposure for the advertisers who make these publications possible.

"We're charged with a mission to provide comprehensive facts and figures about Mobile, its business climate and quality of life, plus resources for new and growing businesses."

Ashley Horn

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Chamber Launch

Economic Development

The Chamber coordinates a broad team of community partners to recruit domestic and international investment and assist business expansions. Formerly promoted through its own website, this central Chamber function will be fully integrated into the main site when the redesign is complete.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | S

Small Business

Starting, operating and growing a business can involve a maze of licenses, permits, zoning certifications, compliance with codes and submitting taxes with local, state and federal governments. Improved navigation clears a path through this mountain of information to help you succeed.

In The News

Stay informed on important business news affecting Mobile and be among the first to learn about new industry announcements bringing jobs to the area. Discover what publications around the world are saying about Mobile. Skim a quick synopsis or click on links for full stories.

Calendar of Events

This interactive calendar helps you keep up with Chamber events, networking opportunities and professional development to grow your business and stay abreast of important issues. Easily add selected events to your own calendar and confirm your attendance. Links connect to a full calendar of other events throughout the area.

Welcome to the Mobile Area Cham

Known for our streets lined with massive live oaks, Mobile, AL is located at Mobile Bay, leading to the Gulf of Mexico. More than 600 square miles.

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is charged with promoting commerce. Our mission statement says it best "to serve as the catalyst for Mobile area's economic well-being."

In The News

Calendar of Events

es New Website



About Us

Learn about the Chamber – its mission and goals. Connect with Chamber staff through a department directory. Learn what each department does and how they can assist you.

Membership

Join the Chamber or learn how to get the most from your Chamber membership. Membership menus are arranged to let you zero in on the benefits best suited to helping your business grow. Streamlined logins provide smooth access to “members only” information areas.

Community & Government Affairs

The Chamber is your business advocate with local, state and national governments. Stay informed on the Chamber’s legislative agenda and how members set priorities. An easy-to-navigate government directory helps you connect with lawmakers.

Work and Live

Resources for new neighbors or natives are easily accessible in categories ranging from education and healthcare to real estate and economic outlook. An easy-to-navigate directory of local government offices and requirements allows newcomers to cut through the confusion of licenses, tags and taxes.

Visiting Mobile

You’ll find a comprehensive list of museums, attractions, parks, recreational activities, sports and more. Click directly to connect with websites, or click on the cover icon of the Chamber’s digital Guide to Mobile for more information and a printable pdf.



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- ★ **Safest Hospital in Mobile²**
(according to a major consumer ratings firm)
- ★ **Best Rating for Surgery Outcomes in Mobile³**
(according to a major consumer ratings firm)
- ★ **Certified Member of MD Anderson Cancer NetworkTM**
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- ★ **Lowest Readmission Rates in Mobile**
(according to Medicare)
- ★ **Rated Above National Quality Targets**
(according to The Joint Commission)
- ★ **"Gold-Plus" Rating for Heart Failure Care**
(American Heart Association "Get With the Guidelines")

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Ijaz Iqbal, M.D.⁴
Internal Medicine
Medical Director, Providence Hospitalist Services

¹ The grades used in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety ScoreTM program are derived from expert analysis of publicly available data using national evidence-based measures of patient safety. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Score program grades hospitals on their overall performance in keeping patients safe from preventable harm and medical errors. For more information, visit www.hospital.safetyscore.org.

² "You're probably wrong, but just guess where the safest hospital in Alabama is located," *al.com*, July 31, 2013

³ "Consumer Reports rates 41 Alabama hospitals on surgery outcomes. How does yours stack up?" *al.com*, August 30, 2013

⁴ Dr. Iqbal is a specialist in internal medicine and not a participating oncologist in MD Anderson Cancer Network.



Crow Set to Lead Chamber's Annual Total Resource Development Campaign



"I belong to the Chamber because it's good for my business and good for Mobile," said **Kenny Crow**, managing partner of Crow Shields Bailey, a local accounting firm.

Crow is serving as chairman for Chamber Chase 2014, the Mobile Area Chamber's annual total resource development campaign, and he is encouraging prospective members to join with the Chamber's 2,100 members, representing 110,000 employees, to continue making the Mobile Bay area strong. Each year, volunteers and employees recruit new members, sell sponsorships and more to help the Chamber continue its mission of being a progressive business advocate.

"Your participation is critical for our Chamber to continue to grow the business community and to move our progressive city forward," said Crow. "The success of our past brings an even larger challenge for

the future. We must all seize this opportunity to continue the momentum and help our community reach its potential."

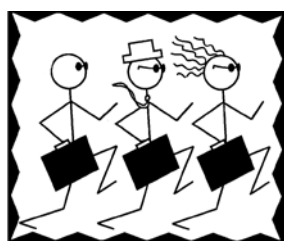
"Volunteers interact with the business community by contacting their clients and customers," said **Carolyn Golson**, the Chamber's vice president of membership. "Teams benefit from the exposure and networking with other volunteers, and it's a link to developing stronger relationships with customers," she said. "The volunteers can let their customers know about opportunities available at the Chamber and can also use their involvement with the campaign to open doors with potential customers."

Crow Shields Bailey had a team in Chamber Chase for the first time last year. "We received untold benefits

we didn't even imagine," Crow said. "Our team was motivated to get from behind their desks and develop their sales skills. The weekly reward sessions gave them the opportunity to network with other businesses and meet new people."

With its official

kickoff held on April 29, the Chamber Chase campaign's goal is \$1.6 million in memberships, sponsorships, advertisements and donated goods and services. To volunteer, participate with a company team, donate a door prize for the volunteers or get involved, contact Golson at **251-431-8622** or cgolson@mobilechamber.com.



**CHAMBER
CHASE '14**

»»» Teams Participating as of April 2014

Alabama Power Co.	iBERIABANK
Arkema	International Shipholding Corp.
BancorpSouth	Jeff Tesney Photography
BB&T	LLB&B Inc. Real Estate
BBVA Compass Bank	Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama	Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Board
Burr & Forman LLC	Mobile Gas, a Sempra Co.
Century Bank	PNC Bank
Community Bank	Regions Bank
CorroMetrics Services	Roberts Brothers
Crow Shields Bailey	ServisFirst Bank
Evonik Industries	Trustmark Bank
First Community Bank	Wells Fargo
Hancock Bank	

How to Get Involved

Visit the campaign website, www.chamberchase.com, for ideas.

- Join the Chamber
- Raise your visibility by joining the Chamber's Board of Advisors
- Gain exposure for your company by sponsoring an event
- Promote your business with an advertisement in a Chamber publication
- Contact Carolyn Golson at 251-431-8622 for details



Remington College

Remington College offers diploma, associates and bachelor's degree programs taught by instructors with real-world industry experience. Some of its offerings include nursing, criminal justice, cosmetology and healthcare. Shown are students in the process technology program from left to right are Instructor Mike Gelsie, John Lender, Sherman Richardson, Maria Nichols, Markeelin Cargill and Paige Reed.

Campus president:

Stephen M. Backman

Years in business: Remington College and its predecessor companies have been in business for 28 years in Mobile.

Brief company description:

Remington College is a nonprofit career college offering career-focused diplomas and associate degree programs in a variety of career fields, such as healthcare, cosmetology and process technology.

Why are you located in Mobile?

"We choose to open our campuses based on the needs of the

local community," said Backman. "While no reputable college can guarantee employment upon graduation, we do speak with employers to find out where the job openings will be and work with them to help fill that need through career training."

Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Partners for Growth initiative?

"We feel the Chamber's Partners for Growth initiative is an integral part of Mobile expansion," said Backman. "We want to be on the front lines of this growth and the Partners for Growth initiative is the

place to be if you want to make that difference."

What do you see as Mobile's greatest potential?

"Mobile's greatest potential is its people," said Backman. "The people of Mobile are resilient and they seek opportunity. The Chamber has created opportunity by bringing in many new companies to make use of our well-prepared workers. Well-educated and trained workers are our capital."

Length of continuous Chamber membership: Since 1997.



Partners for Growth (PFG) is the Mobile Area Chamber's long-term economic and community development program.

For more information, contact

Katrina Dewrell,

the Chamber's investor relations coordinator, at 251-431-8611 or kdewrell@mobilechamber.com.



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Legislative Reception Held in Montgomery



In March, more than 100 people attended a reception to honor state elected officials and promote the Chamber's 2014 legislative agenda. Held at the RSA Dexter Building in Montgomery, the event was sponsored by AT&T, ExxonMobil and Information Transport Solutions LLC.




Chamber Hosts Airbus Supplier Meetings

In February and March, the Chamber hosted the first of several Airbus pre-bid meetings. Participants were pre-screened and invited by Airbus in the following industries:

aviation fuel, HVAC, building maintenance, production consumables (tools, supplies, PPEs, etc.) and quality services (lab testing). Participants received an update on the Airbus project, an overview of the company's procurement process and industry-

specific details on upcoming bid opportunities. Airbus will continue to hold additional industry-specific pre-bid meetings in the months ahead. All potential Airbus suppliers must register on the eProc website, <https://eprocourcing.eads.net>.



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Date Set for 2014 Worlds of Opportunity

The Chamber, in partnership with the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council, announced the fifth annual Worlds of Opportunity will be held Sept. 24-25. More than 10,000 eighth-grade students from across southwest Alabama typically attend the hands-on training career fair. Co-chairs for this year's event are Lawrence Wilson with Goodwin, Mills and Cawood, and Lesleigh Smith with Performance Contractors.

Legal Seminar Held for Small Businesses

Following a survey of Chamber-member businesses on the most critical issues facing them, the Chamber held its annual seminar sponsored by Maynard Cooper and Gale PC. Leading local attorneys and legal experts discussed those topics that were most important, which included business ethics and avoiding entanglements, the Affordable Care Act, current employment law issues, business insurance and economic development.

South American Trade Mission Briefing

The Chamber's trade division held a briefing on doing business in Peru and Uruguay, presented by Ashley Rosen with the U.S. Department of Commerce. The briefing was held in advance of a June trade mission to Lima, Peru, and Montevideo, Uruguay.

Chamber Investors Tour Aker Solutions

The Mobile Area Chamber arranged an industry tour at Aker Solutions' Middle Bay Port facility where participants observed the manufacturing process of an umbilical – a highly advanced cable for supplying power and controls to subsea processing and boosting systems. Participants in the tour included the Chamber's Partners for Growth investors, board members and staff.

BOA Increases Membership

New board of advisors members represent Inchcape Shipping Services, Rouses Markets, Rural Sourcing Inc. and The Stewart/Perry Co., bringing the total number to 250.



The French Ambassador to the United States visited Mobile in late March to speak to the Chamber's spring meeting of the Board of Directors and Board of Advisors. During his time in Mobile, he also visited the Airbus FAL construction site, Airbus Americas Engineering Center and Spring Hill College. Introduced by U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, the Ambassador's breakfast keynote addressed the importance of trans-Atlantic economic development, private sector job growth in France and the improving relationship between France and America as both countries battle terrorism on a variety of fronts. Pictured from left to right are: French Consul General Denis Barbet of Atlanta, Chamber President/CEO Bill Sisson, Chamber Chairman Dr. Michael Chambers, His Excellency François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States President/CEO, SNCF (Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français) America Alain Leray, Mobile Airport Authority Executive Director Roger Wehner, U.S. Congressman Bradley Byrne, Synchrony CEO Jerry Ray

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TAG - The Architect Group

The Architects Group is pictured here at USA's Children's and Women's Hospital's new wing, one of the 43-year-old company's many design projects. Beyond architecture and interior design, TAG offers construction management services and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) consulting.

Pictured in the front, (l-r) are: Mary Ellen Zoghby, Cindy Klotz and Alice Cutright. Standing (l-r) are Brad Davis, Ronnie Taylor, Robert Krchak, David Barr, Matt Wheeler, Edward Struthers, Dan Borcicky and Tom Kelly.

The Business Spotlight of the Month is selected from a random business card drawing at the Chamber's monthly Business After Hours.



AMBASSADOR of the month //



Ambassador of the Month **Mamun** works as a local RE/MAX realtor providing Mobile clients with full-service real estate needs. Since joining the Mobile Area Chamber's ambassador program in 2009, Mamun has earned Ambassador of the Month twice and was awarded Ambassador of the Year in 2010.

Ambassadors are volunteers working for Mobile Area Chamber member businesses. They support the Chamber by visiting members, assisting with event registrations and attending ribbon-cuttings. To learn more about this program, contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.

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Gavin Bender Sr. is president of Bender Real Estate Group. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of South Alabama (USA). Bender is a member of the Mobile Association of Realtors, the Mobile Commercial Real Estate Exchange Club, the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors-Office Specialist and currently serves on the USA Mitchell College of Business advisory board. He is past president of Catholic Social Services' board. He has served on the boards of St. Ignatius Catholic School, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School and Foundation,

Providence Hospital Foundation, YMCA Chandler Branch, Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama and the City of Mobile Planning Commission. Bender Real Estate Group manages, leases, develops and brokers all types of commercial real estate properties, specializing in office properties. Bender Real Estate Group is a Partners for Growth Investor.



C. Robert Ridgway V is director of business development for the southeastern United States for Yates Construction/JESCO Inc., overseeing the company's work acquisition efforts. He previously served the company as project manager in the Destin and Miami markets, assisting in the oversight of more than three million square feet of construction, including 1,100 condominium units. He obtained the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Accredited Professional Building Design and Construction accreditation,

relating to green building design practices as well as a Florida certified general contractor's license. Ridgway graduated from Mississippi State University with a bachelor's degree in management of construction and land development. He is actively involved in United Way, the American Heart Association, Leadership Gulf Coast, Mississippi Young Professionals, Society of American Military Engineers and Pathways 2 Possibilities.



Jarrod J. White is a partner in the Mobile office of Cabaniss Johnston Gardner Dumas & O'Neal LLP. He earned a bachelor's degree in corporate finance from John B. Stetson University and a law degree from The University of Alabama School of Law. His practice includes personal injury and consumer fraud actions, commercial and business litigation, representation of manufacturers and others in product liability litigation, representation of insurers and insurance agencies, defense of employers against worker's compensation and retaliatory discharge claims,

oil and gas issues, and condominium law. White is a member of the Alabama, Mississippi and Mobile Bar Associations. He is also a member of the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association, Defense Research Institute and the ABA Construction Section. He is active in the community, including Kiwanis, Restore Mobile and Leadership Mobile. Cabaniss Johnston is a Partners for Growth Investor.

For more information about the Chamber's board of advisors, contact Katrina Dewrell at 251-431-8611 or kdewrell@mobilechamber.com.

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

9 TRADE WORKSHOP: INTERNATIONAL LEGAL BUSINESS ASPECTS

This workshop is designed for new and established companies looking to advance their international business.

When & Where: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speakers: Local and statewide industry experts

Topic: International Legal Business Aspects

Cost: \$35 per person

Contact: Christina Stimpson at 251-431-8648 or cstimpson@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required. Free parking.

12-15 SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

For more information about the events, see pages 9-10.

13 PORK & POLITICS IN THE PARK

"Ham it up" with local, state and federal officials. Meet the candidates on the June 3 ballot.

When & Where: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. – USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park

Cost: \$20

Contact: Carolyn Hunt at 251-431-8621 or chunt@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required by Friday, May 9 and payment is due at time of registration. No refunds after that date.

14 NETWORKING@NOON **Members Only*

Make 40-plus business contacts in 90 minutes over lunch.

When & Where: Noon to 1:30 p.m. – Portier Place, 4363 Old Shell Rd.

Cost: \$10 and must be paid with reservation

Contact: Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or knavarro@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required.

Sponsor:



20 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE **Members Only*

A monthly forum exclusively for Chamber-member small business owners and managers.

When & Where: 8 to 9 a.m. – Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: Tom Bramlett, President, OEC

Topic: "The Upside of a Down Economy" (Think Local...Local First Mobile)

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com

No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested. Free parking.

Sponsor:



21 NONPROFIT ROUNDTABLE **Members Only*

A bi-monthly forum for Chamber-member nonprofit executives and managers.

When & Where: 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. – Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: Mobile Area Chamber President and Chief Executive Officer Bill Sisson

Topic: Update on Chamber programs and initiatives and how business recruitment and expansions impact the region

Contact: Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638

or knavarro@mobilechamber.com

No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested.

Free parking.

22 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Join fellow Mobile Area Chamber members for this After Hours event.

When & Where: 5:30 to 7 p.m. – Community Bank, 111 W. I-65 Service Rd. N.

Cost: \$5 for members and \$10 for potential members

Contact: Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638

or knavarro@mobilechamber.com

Reservations are not needed.

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22 WORLD TRADE WEEK RECEPTION

Join us in celebrating Alabama's international business community.

When & Where: 5:30 to 7 p.m. – The Battle House, 26 N. Royal St.

Contact: Emily McGrath at 251-431-8651

or emcgrath@mobilechamber.com

No charge, but reservations are required.

23 WORLD TRADE WEEK SYMPOSIUM

The symposium will highlight the current state of world trade, intellectual property rights, the transpacific partnership and other free trade agreements being negotiated.

When & Where: 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. – The Battle House, 26 N. Royal St.

Cost: \$65

Contact: Emily McGrath at 251-431-8651

or emcgrath@mobilechamber.com

Reservations are required.

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Small Business Week

May 12-15

The Mobile Area Chamber will launch an exciting new initiative to recognize and celebrate entrepreneurship and small business. Mobile Area Small Business Week will provide entrepreneurs and small business owners with valuable tools and strategies to help them take their businesses to the next level.

See pages 9-10 for more details.

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Who's New

Red Square hired Paris native **Cyril Guichard** as creative director for Red Square Gaming. Prior to joining the company, Guichard was creative director for BFG Communications in Hilton Head, S.C., and co-founded indie game design studio Garage Collective LLC.



Guichard

Dawn Hebert and **Alicen Fowler** recently joined the team at **Bellator Real Estate & Development**.

Keyser graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor's degree in business administration and has more than 25 years of experience. Fowler has an extensive background in real estate spanning more than 35 years.



Keyser



Allman



Brand



Mazzarella

ServisFirst Bank welcomed new employees **Russell E. "Rusty" Allman**, **Walter Brand** and **Anna Maria Mazzarella**.

Allman is executive vice president. He has a bachelor's degree in finance from Auburn University and is a graduate of the Louisiana State University School of Banking. He most recently served as executive vice president for Regions Bank.

Brand is vice president, commercial banking officer. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi with a bachelor's degree in banking and finance, and graduated from the Alabama Banking School.

Mazzarella is vice president, mortgage loan originator. She received a bachelor's degree in business technology from Alabama Southern University and an associate's degree in liberal arts from Samford University.



Pittman

United named **Katherine Pittman** as its new executive director. Pittman was formerly the administrator of the organization's Leadership Mobile program for 13 years.

Prudential Cooper & Co. Inc. hired a new associate, **Kelsea Haas**, in the main office.



Haas



Pate



Linton



Harris



Weatherby



Golden

Steve Pate, **James Linton** and **Russell Harris** recently joined **Strategic Wealth Specialists** as financial representatives serving both

Mobile and Baldwin counties. The company also named **Jason Weatherby** as the guardian life disability income specialist, and **Carey Baumhauer Golden** as the firm's new recruiting director.

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Neiman



Thames

Maynard Cooper & Gale PC announced the addition of **John Neiman** and **Bryan A. Thames**. Neiman is a shareholder and the leader of appellate and post-verdict practice. He most recently served as the Solicitor General of Alabama and previously was a clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy. Neiman graduated from Harvard Law School, after earning a bachelor's degree at University of North Carolina.

Thames, also a shareholder, graduated from The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in accounting and The University of Alabama School of Law. He will practice in the firm's general corporate and merger and acquisitions practices.

Steven C. Pearson recently became a partner with **Armbrecht Jackson LLP**, and **S. Gaillard Ladd**

and **Lindsay Schafer Hurt** became attorneys with the firm.

Pearson received a bachelor's degree in taxation from Emory University, a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Missouri and a law degree from Cumberland School of Law, Samford University. Ladd received a bachelor's degree in history from Birmingham-Southern College and a law degree from Cumberland School of Law, Samford University. Hurt earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and a law degree from Mercer University School of Law.

WALA FOX10 and **WFNA CW55** hired **Scott Flannigan** as news director for FOX10 News. Previously he was with WCBD-TV in Charleston, S.C., where he served as the director of digital journalism.



Flannigan

Prudential Cooper & Co. Inc., realtors welcomed new associate, **Karen Frye** to the company's **Robertsdale** office.



Frye



Mach

Kandice Woodruff is the new general manager for **Vapor Time LLC**.



Woodruff

Business Endeavors

Bikram Hot Yoga Mobile is now **Sterling Hot Yoga Works**. The company announced a new class schedule at www.bikramhotyoga.com. For more information, call **251-471-5775**.

Aker Solutions won a contract to supply umbilicals and subsea equipment for Houston-based **Noble Energy** projects in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore Israel. Aker's projects are scheduled to be completed in 2014 and 2015.

BIS Office Systems, a multi-line office equipment dealer, announced its expansion into the Mississippi Gulf Coast region, including Harrison, Green and Jackson counties.

Burton Property Group of Mobile purchased eight acres in **Foley** on U.S. Hwy. 59 to construct its newest shopping center development, **McKenzie Village**. Construction of the 85,000-square-foot shopping center anchored by **Hobby Lobby** is expected to be completed this summer.



McKemie Place is the *only* shelter for single homeless women in all of Mobile, Baldwin, and Washington counties.

Each night almost 70 women call McKemie Place their home because they have nowhere else to go for food or shelter. McKemie Place offers hope and a new beginning for every woman that walks through those blue doors. However, safe and adequate shelter does not come without a cost.

It is because of so many caring and generous people that we can offer this service to so many women in need. We consider all of these caring donors our PARTNERS in providing a place of hope and encouragement for women in need and we want YOU to be our PARTNER too!

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First Community Bank

BBB of Central and South Alabama and the Wiregrass recently merged with the Better Business Bureau of South Alabama, based in Mobile. The consolidated BBB serving central and south Alabama will maintain offices in Birmingham, Mobile and Dothan. More information about BBB and services that it offers are available at www.bbb.org.

Goodwill Easter Seals announced plans to build a new 26,420-square-foot facility in Spanish Fort. The new facility will house a donation center, retail store and community center, and will be located in the Eastern Shore Center across from Publix Super Market.

Nelco Commercial Maintenance relocated to a new 4,000-square-foot facility in west Mobile, located just off Schillinger Road near Howells Ferry Road. The new building will accommodate office and warehouse space and provide room for growth.

Inkworks Screen Printing and Embroidery moved to 2207 Dauphin Island Pkwy. The phone number is 251-438-2103.

The **ThyssenKrupp Steel USA** rolling and coating plant in Calvert was sold to a consortium of **ArcelorMittal** and **Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp.** The company will be called AM/NS Calvert. ThyssenKrupp received a purchase price of \$1.55 billion and a long-term slab supply contract for 2 million tons annually that is expected by TK officials to provide a sustainable solution for the company's steel mill in Brazil.

Alabama-based **Brasfield & Gorrie** was awarded the first of four general contractor packages for the **Airbus Assembly Line** project by **Hoar Program Management**. Brasfield & Gorrie will be responsible for the outfitting and completion of the final assembly line hangar and the construction of the service building and logistics center.

Well Done

Fitch Ratings affirmed its 'BBB+' rating for the **Alabama State Port Authority's** outstanding dock facilities revenue bonds, and revised its rating outlook to positive for the Port Authority's bonds.

Maynard Odom was elected chair of the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (MAWSS) and **Barbara Drummond** was



appointed to the board. Odom is the enrollment manager and international student advisor at Bishop State Community College and Drummond previously served on former Mayor Sam Jones' administration.

Numerous **Prudential Cooper & Co. Inc.** agents received awards from Prudential National for their hard work and dedication. **Sheree Dees** and **Don and Maria Foster** received the chairman's circle-gold award. **Doug Adams**, **Jeff Dees** and **David Cooper** received the president's circle award. **Chuck Guy**, **Rosemary Williams**, **Angela McArthur**, **Tim Pope**, **Devin Watson** and **Mike Wiley** received the Leading Edge Society award. **Dana Rouse**, **Marie Dickinson**, **Ryan Morrow**, **Angela Locklier**, **Gary Woodward**, **Tammy** and **Roger Nichols** and **Cheryl Russell** received the Honor Society award.

Hand Arendall LLC announced **Michael C. Niemeyer** was elected president of the Baldwin County Bar Association.



Niemeyer received a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University, and obtained a law degree from The University of Alabama School of Law. He is a member of the Baldwin County, Mobile County and Alabama state bar associations.

Blake Ethredge, a senior accountant with **Wilkins Miller Hieronymus**, has



Ethredge

successfully completed the certification process with the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts to earn his designation of Certified Valuation Analyst.



BB&T elected **James W. Hartman III** chairman of its local advisory board and added **April Boudreaux** as a member. Hartman is the chief executive officer of Premier Medical Management Inc. Boudreaux is a CPA and partner with Smith, Dukes & Buckalew with more than 20 years of experience.



Statter

Carol Statter of **Infirmity Health System** received the Advocate of the Year award, presented by Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley.

Statter was nominated for her work with disabled people that included years of service on the Mobile Advisory Council for the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, assisting with the implementation of the Project SEARCH Program at Mobile Infirmity and Thomas Hospital, and serving as the Infirmity liaison for the program.



The Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) announced **The SSI Group Inc.** (SSI) again achieved the "Peer Reviewed by HFMA®" standard for its SSI Billing product. SSI Billing is a comprehensive claims management solution that facilitates the electronic editing, validation and transmission of institutional and professional healthcare claims.



Roberts Brothers Inc. Real Estate was recently honored with two awards at the annual American Advertising Awards. The firm won Silver ADDY Awards for both its sales presentation and its television commercial, "Finding Your Dreams a Home."

Express Employment

Professionals of Mobile earned top honors at the staffing firm's 31st annual International Leadership Conference. The Mobile office received the 100 Hit Club, Century Club and Silver Circle of Excellence awards for achievements in sales, recruitment and placement.

In addition, sales representative **Danna Jones**, was the No. 2 sales representative in the company of more than 600 offices worldwide.



Mobile Area Water & Sewer System inducted five retirees into the Employee Hall of Fame for their dedicated service. The 2014 inductees were **Mary Ruth Gunter**, **Timothy M. Reece**, **James H. Doyle Jr.**, **Carolyn G. Butler** and **Sandra W. Sumner**.



Mobile Area Council of Engineers (MACE) presented **Brian Breland** of **Hargrove Engineers + Constructors** with the 2014 MACE Electrical Engineer of the Year award. The award recognizes those who have significantly contributed to the engineering profession and the technological and economic development in the Mobile area, as well as regionally, nationally and internationally. Breland holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in electrical engineering from the University of South Alabama.

Community News

Abigail Lindsay Blankenship and **Danielle Williamson**, graduating seniors at **St. Paul's Episcopal School**, are two of more than 3,000 candidates named in the 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Scholars are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities.

In addition, Blankenship and Williamson, along with **Holly Friedlander**, **Andie Goodwin**, **Baylor Jeffries** and **Jessica Knezha**, were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corp. as National Merit Finalists. They are among 15,000 students who remain in the running for 8,000 scholarship offerings.

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, tiff 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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