

the  
**businessVIEW**



Chamber Wins  
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for International Trade

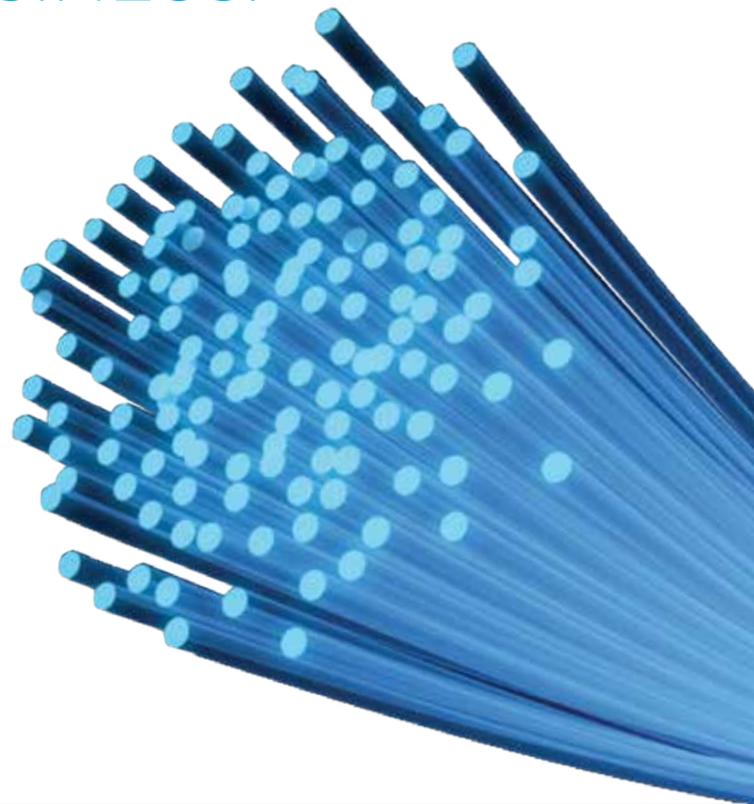
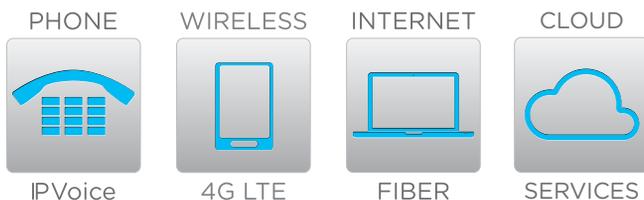
Alabama Exceeds  
Air Quality Standards

Construction  
**Signals Growth**  
in Mobile's Retail Sector

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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

## Why the Retail Market is Heating Up in Mobile

We've all heard the old saying that success breeds success, and it certainly applies to retail development. Nothing ensures retail growth better than economic prosperity.

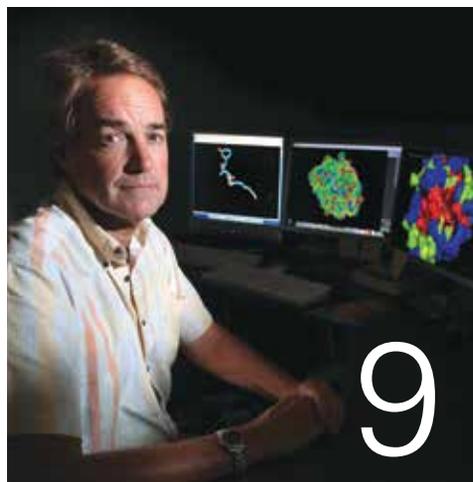
In the field of economic development, it's well known that you cannot trump a retail developer. Retail stores know precisely where they want to be located, down to the specific city, neighborhood and street. A good retailer knows their market, and knows where their potential customers shop and will shop in the future. Mobile is a case in point.

Our region continues to be blessed with an extraordinary amount of success in new and expanding company investments. A number of business sectors are experiencing previously unheard-of growth – and this growth is directly translating to new retail options.



It seems like every day another retail store is being announced for our community, and many of those are new to the area and of an increasingly upscale variety. These businesses are not deciding to locate to our city because it seems like a nice place to them. Rather they are diligently looking at things like average age, income and transportation patterns.

But perhaps most importantly, they are studying employment status of the area, which is a key indicator as to whether the market is growing. If new businesses are locating to the area and existing businesses are hiring, then that means they will have more potential customers coming to the region. Mobile is seeming like a good bet to them – and the reason why certain old sayings ring true.



9



13



22

### ON THE COVER

Mobile's retail industry is undergoing some much needed change. On the cover is Phillip Burton, president and CEO of Burton Property Group, showcasing work being done at Westwood Plaza in west Mobile. See pages 14-16 to learn more about the company.

*Photo by Jeff Tesney.*

- 4 News You Can Use
- 10 Small Business of the Month: McAleer's Office Equipment
- 13 Mobile's Commercial Real Estate Landscape Thriving
- 15 Doing Business Globally
- 23 New Chamber Staff: Jackie Livingston
- 25 CEO Profile: Chris Acosta
- 26 Investor Focus: Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood Inc.
- 27 Board of Advisors: Larry C. Dorsey, Robert S. Frost, Henry O'Connor III
- 28 Business Spotlight: Cintas Corp.
- 28 Ambassador of the Month: Karyl Hanisch
- 29 Calendar
- 30 Member News
- 34 Anniversaries
- 35 New Members

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# Alabama Counties

## Meet National Air Quality Standard

**All 67 Alabama counties are within the current, more stringent national air quality**

standard recently mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Over the last decade, the EPA tightened its National Ambient Air Quality Standard for fine particulate matter – smaller than the width of a human hair – revising it from 15 to 12 micrograms per cubic meter.

According to Alabama Department for Environmental Management (ADEM) officials, “Even though overall air quality in Alabama has constantly improved, the department has been pursuing an ever-changing standard.”

ADEM credits the results to “local, state and federal emissions-limiting laws and regulations covering industry, vehicles and other sources of air pollutants.”

“We have never been in non-attainment in Mobile, but we were in danger several years ago,” says the Mobile Area Chamber’s Vice President of Community and Governmental Affairs **GINNY RUSSELL**.

“This attainment status reflects how much industry has invested in its processes and environmental safety standards,” adds Russell. She emphasizes that the biggest threat to air quality is the number of cars on the road. “That’s another reason a new I-10 bridge over Mobile

River and the Bayway expansion are so important to our community.”

As an example, the existing I-10 tunnel was built to carry 55,000 vehicles a day, according to a study conducted by Volkert Inc. The 2014 estimate is 75,000 cars use the tunnel, peaking to 90,000 on holidays like July 4.

# AM/NS Calvert Owners

## Plan for Future Growth

**After a nearly two-year sales process, the final transaction of the Calvert facility – considered by many in the steel industry to be the most state-of-the-art in the world – secured its future and the jobs of nearly 1,700 people who joined the operation in 2010.**

In February, ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp. (NSSMC), the world’s first- and second-largest steel companies, completed the acquisition of ThyssenKrupp Steel USA for \$1.5 billion. The new company now operates as AM/NS Calvert.

“The successful completion of this transaction is an important milestone for ArcelorMittal,” said **Lakshmi Mittal**, the company’s chairman and chief executive officer.

The facility will help both companies meet the rising demand for steel in the automotive, energy and other markets in the NAFTA region, Mittal added.

At the time of sale, the steel mill was operating at about 75 percent capacity, said **Scott Posey**, director of communications with AM/NS Calvert. The company’s partners have announced intentions to bring it up to full capacity as soon as operationally possible by marketing the mill’s products through its managing partner ArcelorMittal’s extensive sales system in North America. That system already serves large automotive and coated steel markets.

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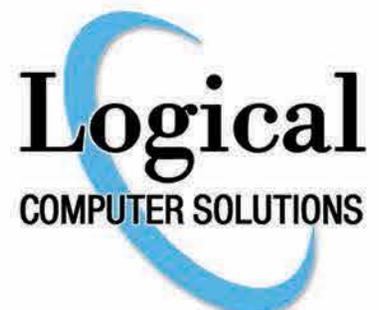
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# Alabama Aerospace Innovation Research Center Offers Student Apprenticeships



In May, **Bishop State Community College and the Mobile Airport Authority** launched a new aviation and aerospace initiative to offer students apprenticeships in drafting and design, graphic communication arts and welding to assist with the redevelopment and marketing of the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley.

Bishop State will also serve as an industry partner in the Alabama Aerospace Innovation Research Center, A2IRC, as the lead post-secondary institution offering business service solutions to businesses in the aeroplex. A2IRC is expected to open in late 2014, according to **Buddy Rice** with the Mobile Airport Authority.

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# Chamber Aggressively Markets Mobile at Farnborough

**This month, economic developers with the Mobile Area Chamber will travel to London to participate in the Farnborough Air Show, and aggressively market Mobile as a location for aerospace suppliers to locate operations in the U.S.**

“Mobile’s been successful at building name recognition from the Airbus project, and now is the time to work on bringing suppliers for Airbus’ final assembly line, ST Aerospace Mobile, Continental Motors and Star Aviation,” said **Troy Wayman**, vice president of economic development for the Chamber.

Farnborough is the world’s largest commercial and military air show, where billions of dollars in

new aircraft contracts are announced by Airbus, Boeing and smaller manufacturers.

The Mobile delegation, including elected officials from the city of Mobile and Mobile County, is part of a larger Alabama team led by the Alabama Department of Commerce that includes Gov. **Robert Bentley**, U.S. Rep. **Bradley Byrne**, and U.S. Sens. **Jeff Sessions** and **Richard Shelby**.

Wayman said the Mobile delegation will play host to a reception for Airbus and its suppliers while there, in addition to the dozens of one-on-one meetings and sales calls during the three-day show.

“Marketing Mobile to an international audience remains a priority of the Chamber,” said Wayman. 

“Marketing Mobile to an international audience remains a priority of the Chamber.”

*Troy Wayman*  
vice president of  
economic development,  
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

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

The PNC Foundation helped fund the Dauphin Island Sea Lab’s BayMobile, a traveling marine science classroom that visits local schools.

for keeping learning on the move in Southern Alabama.



**Your hometown means everything to you. Us, too.**

PNC is here for our corporate clients and community partners alike, and we’re already making a lasting impression with our support of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab through grants from the PNC Foundation. In addition to funding summer program opportunities for underserved kids, we’re the driving force behind the BayMobile — a mobile learning experience that will be traveling to local schools, bringing marine science lessons to classrooms. It’s proof of our commitment to everyone all around Mobile, and all part of a different kind of banking experience. One with a singular focus — You.

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(exclusive local affiliation with a national leader in cancer care)
- ★ **Lowest Readmission Rates in Mobile**  
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**C. A. Bodet, III, M.D.<sup>4</sup>**

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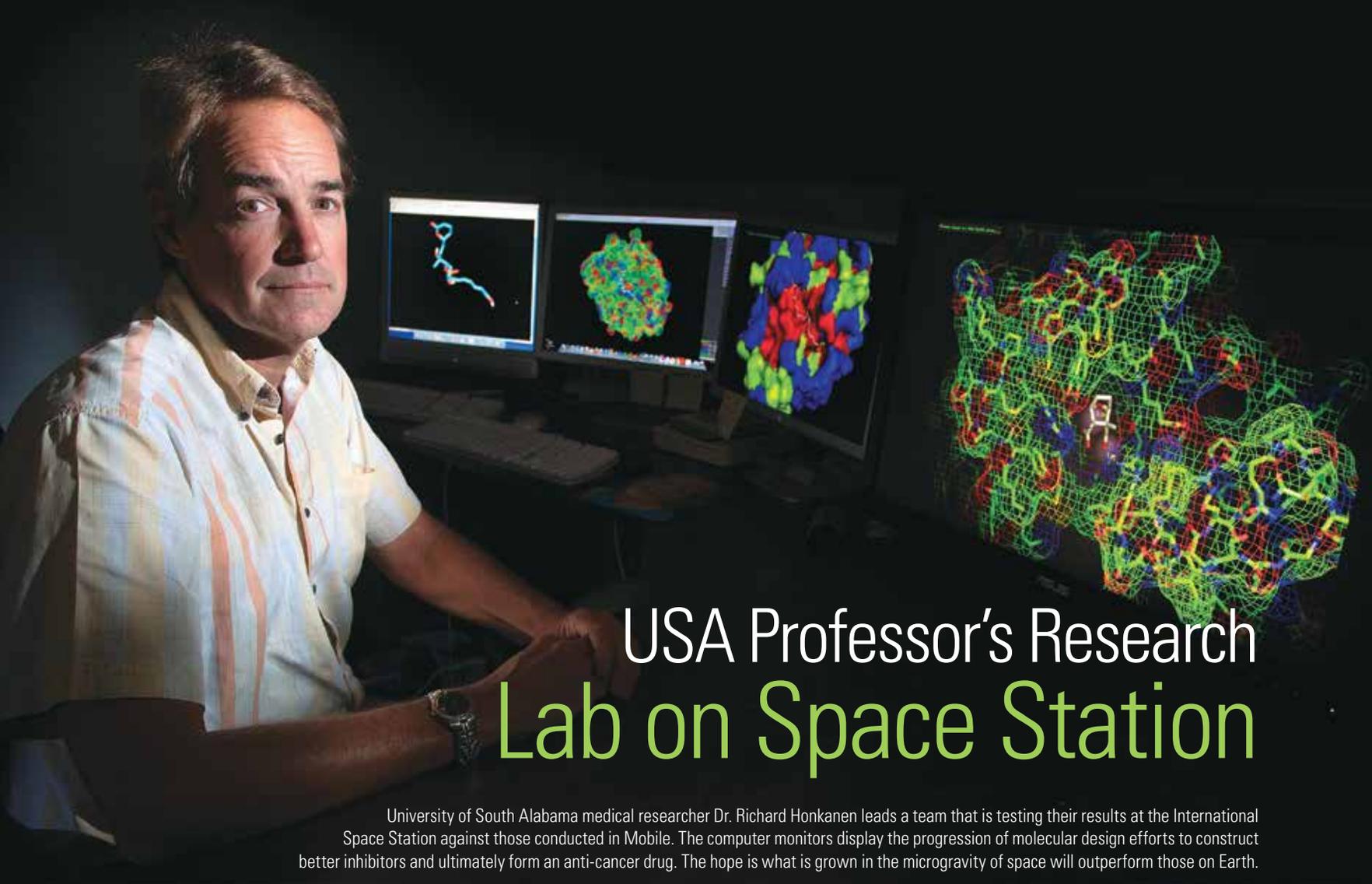
<sup>1</sup> The grades used in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Score<sup>™</sup> program are derived from expert analysis of publicly available data using national evidence-based measures of patient safety. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Score program grades hospitals on their overall performance in keeping patients safe from preventable harm and medical errors. For more information, visit [www.hospitalsafetyscore.org](http://www.hospitalsafetyscore.org).

<sup>2</sup> "You're probably wrong, but just guess where the safest hospital in Alabama is located," [al.com](http://al.com), July 31, 2013

<sup>3</sup> "Consumer Reports rates 41 Alabama hospitals on surgery outcomes. How does yours stack up?" [al.com](http://al.com), August 30, 2013

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Bodet is a specialist in infectious disease and not a participating oncologist in MD Anderson Cancer Network.





# USA Professor's Research Lab on Space Station

University of South Alabama medical researcher Dr. Richard Honkanen leads a team that is testing their results at the International Space Station against those conducted in Mobile. The computer monitors display the progression of molecular design efforts to construct better inhibitors and ultimately form an anti-cancer drug. The hope is what is grown in the microgravity of space will outperform those on Earth.

**10 - 9 - 8 - 7. It's difficult to resist the excitement of a countdown to blastoff to space. But the Falcon 9,** launched on April 18, has the particular interest of **Dr. Richard Honkanen** and the entire team at the University of South Alabama (USA) College of Medicine.

Honkanen, a biochemistry professor at USA, is the lead researcher on a project that, if successful, could one day become a drug that could stop breast cancer from spreading or even from happening in the first place.

USA's research is one of 92 proteins produced by laboratories in the United States, England and Germany delivered by Falcon 9 to the International Space Station.

The space station is serving as a microgravity research lab, where Honkanen's proteins are being mixed with solutions to see what happens in a weightless, low-oxygen environment. For the three-and-a-half months his proteins circle the Earth, Honkanen is conducting a similar experiment here in Mobile.

"Science says space will be better" for the project's success, says Honkanen.

The ultimate mission is to develop a lead binding compound, enabling a treatment drug to work against cancer in a way comparable to how pharmaceuticals such as Lipitor, Zocor and Crestor help lower cholesterol.

At the end of the journey, the results of each project will be compared and from there it will be decided if the results merit the additional cost of space travel.

The National Institutes of Health has funded Honkanen's work on this project and others for two decades.

But from concept to the marketplace is a long journey. "If we get a lead binding compound, then my part is done," says Honkanen. The most likely next step, he says, would be for the university to patent its discovery and license it to a pharmaceutical company that would have the resources to take it to clinical trials needed to fully develop the drug.

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# McALEER'S OFFICE FURNITURE



## Personalized Service Sets McAleer's Apart

*Front Row (from the left):* Deanna Nezat, Paige Williams, Melissa Cross, Camilla McAleer, Jim McAleer, Rhonda Stevens, Fred Chambers, Bryant Easterling.  
*Back row (from left):* Jerry Hunter, Eric Vaughn, Lesley Shaw, Tom Shaw, Gene Carlisle, Eric Lutin.

While working in the construction industry in the 1970s, **Jim McAleer** noticed a need in the Mobile area for a store that specialized in office furniture, as other retailers at the time featured both furniture and office supplies. He and his wife **Camilla** opened a 3,000-square-foot store on Springhill Avenue in March 1979.

From that beginning, McAleer's has now grown to a 48,000-square-foot showroom, with a 21,000-square-foot store in Pensacola that opened in 1985. McAleer's Office Furniture Co. Inc. is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

Because it focuses solely on office furniture, McAleer's can serve any size client with personalized attention, said McAleer.

"What that means to our customers is that one of our highly

trained designers will be assigned to their project," McAleer said. "And that one person will know the customer's preferences, budget, design goals and expectations, and will personally see the project through to the very end. This one person will go out to the client's office and do on-site measuring, space planning and computer layouts so they can design, manage, procure and oversee your entire project. Having one contact, one person who knows your project better than anyone else, assures our clients that they will have the best overall experience and customer service."

The biggest challenge for any brick-and-mortar store to remain competitive is to integrate into the online marketplace, said McAleer's daughter, **Melissa Cross**, the sales and operations manager. McAleer's has created an online catalog that allows

customers to browse through the selection before coming into the store.

"We make it so easy for them to shop online, then purchase locally, which helps keep our community strong," Cross said. "They receive their furniture faster, at competitive prices, all while being completely secure in the knowledge that they will have local support for their purchases."

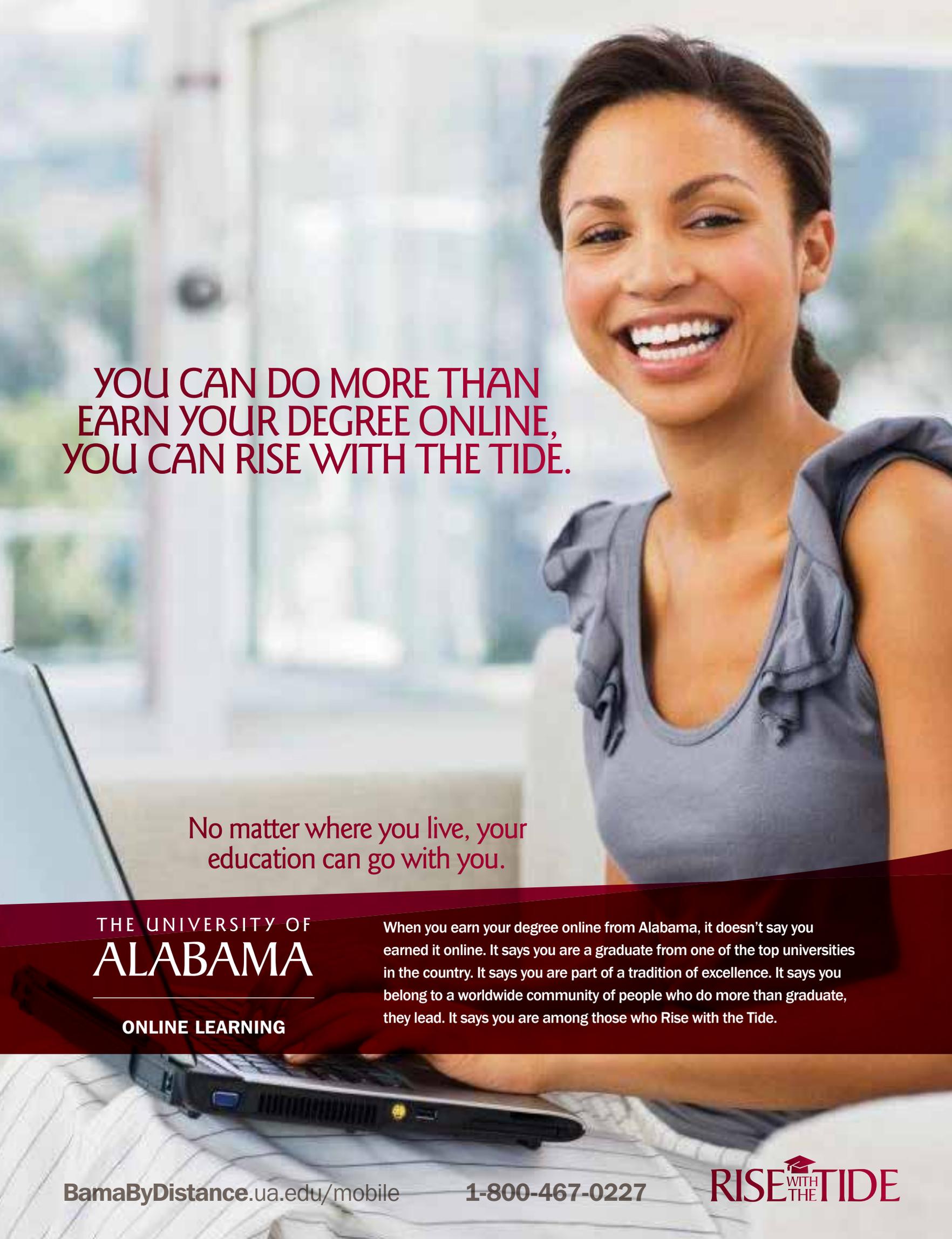
The store keeps more than \$1 million in new and used furniture inventory in stock at any particular time.

As the company has grown, it's been active in community and charity projects, sponsoring youth programs such as Upward Sports and contributing to local events and organizations like the Airbus LPGA Classic, Our Sister's Closet, The Hargrove Foundation, Junior League

of Mobile, the American Cancer Society and Goodwill Easter Seals.

"Giving back to the community that has supported our business for over 35 years now is very important to us," Cross said. "By providing assistance to local charities, like Our Sister's Closet, and donating to youth groups which encourage community involvement, McAleer's is helping to strengthen the Mobile community."

Go to [mobilechamber.com/award.asp](http://mobilechamber.com/award.asp) to submit a Small Business of the Month application, or contact **Danette Richards** at 251-431-8652 or [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com).



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# Mobile's Commercial Real Estate Landscape in Transition



Photo by Jeff Tesney

*Editor's Note: After this story was written, Bernie Heggeman, president of Heggeman Realty Co., passed away. Heggeman provided the Mobile Area Chamber with a wealth of information and resources, including working with us on this story. His comments appear in the following story on commercial real estate in Mobile.*

**If you build it, they will come. That's the not-so-secret idea many of Mobile's most successful**

commercial real estate developers have employed to bring popular new restaurants, grocery stores and sporting goods retailers to the area. Many of those businesses are opening along the city's busiest thoroughfares – Airport Boulevard and Dauphin Street – because of their proximity to where people live, work and shop.

“There's obviously a lot of transition that's ongoing in the Mobile retail market,” said Philip Burton, president and chief executive officer of

Burton Property Group (BPG). “There are a lot of new and exciting tenants coming to the area. This presents an opportunity for landlords to look at their lineup and capitalize by capturing some of the retailers that are making moves.”

While some of the latest developments were years in the making, their grand openings have come, and likely will continue to come, in short order. Think Gander Mountain and Whole Foods, Publix, Chipotle, Panda Express, Dunkin Donuts, Oysters Rockerfeller Bar & Grill and Sneak-A-Peak Prenatal Imaging, plus established companies with new locations such as Foosackly's, McDonald's and Outback Steakhouse.

“Airport Boulevard has been such a cyclical corridor since it was built in the 1950s,” said **Bestor Ward**, president of Ward

Properties. “It's up and down, because the

economy is up or down. Generally speaking, I think the economy nationwide is picking up. I think we are beginning to pick up a little bit of steam” in Mobile.

In May, the Minnesota-based sporting goods chain Gander Mountain revealed it will open a 50,000-square-foot store to anchor BPG's Westwood Plaza at the southeast corner of Airport Boulevard and Schillinger Road. The \$41 million project, which should be complete by the fall, also will include 21 smaller stores. BPG also is responsible for the redevelopment of Pinebrook Shopping Center on Airport Boulevard at McGregor Avenue, where a new Books-a-Million has opened, and work on a new space for SteinMart has started. It will be followed by a new anchor space for Whole Foods.

*Continued page 14*

**“Generally speaking, I think the economy nationwide is picking up. I think we are beginning to pick up a little bit of steam.”**

*Bestor Ward  
president, Ward Properties*



Photo by Jeff Tesney



Photo by Jeff Tesney

## Mobile's Commercial Real Estate Landscape Thriving

*Continued from page 13*

Gander Mountain will be a turnkey property, Burton said, which means a commitment of capital outlay. "It doesn't come without costs," Burton said. "Landlords and developers have to contend with retailers these days aggressively seeking deals that require a substantial amount of capital."

The changing commercial landscape also includes major facelifts on older retail properties, said Matt White, president of White-Spinner Realty.

"I think you are seeing an effort across the city by local developers to update shopping centers developed in the '70s, '80s and '90s in Mobile, coupled with new retail locating in the market. Retailers want to be visible to the consumer."

White said every anchor tenant looking to locate in Mobile wants to know about Airport Boulevard. "Retail developers and shopping center owners are weighing the effects of Internet retail sales," White said, "and vetting out tenants who are in turn determining how best to serve the consumer. Bricks-and-mortar retail seems to continue to be vital for services and groceries. Mobile is seeing a redevelopment and re-branding of its well-established commercial areas in response to this."

Bernie Heggeman, president of Heggeman Realty Co., pointed to Mobile's burgeoning commercial development scene as proof that the city is indeed open for business.

"I feel that the various departments within the city that are involved on a daily basis with construction, permits, planning, etc., are doing a good job and have certainly improved over the past

years," Heggeman said. "It is critical for city departments to continue improving the timing processes to help both small and large companies open in a faster manner."

Heggeman predicted the Schillinger Road area, which he described as a "power" retail corridor, will also continue at a strong pace. "I can say the city of Mobile has definitely seen a noticeable increase in overall activity during the first half of

2014," he said. "That includes increased demand for office and industrial properties, along with retail."

Burton said his company continues to take a proactive approach to commercial development: "Any new retailer, big or small, is what Mobile needs," he said. "Our community needs selection. We need choices we haven't had."



Photo by Jeff Tesney



# How Exports Could Save Your Business

*Consider the Importance of Doing Business Globally*

**Jobs, investment, faster growth and stability – these are just a few of the benefits of doing business internationally.**

More than half a million jobs in Alabama are supported by international trade, including exports and imports. These jobs can be found at companies of all sizes, large and small, on farms, in factories and at the headquarters of Alabama's globally engaged firms.

According to a study by Business Roundtable, an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. companies, more than one in five Alabama jobs depend on international trade. According to the study, companies engaged in exporting typically increase employment 2 to 4 percent faster and employee wages are on average up to 18 percent higher. These companies are also less likely to go out of business and are more sustainable during times of financial crisis.

"The last statement alone should be enough to prompt every business owner to consider doing business globally," says **Christina Stimpson**, the Chamber's international trade director. "We've just come through a tough recession, and if it fits your company's business model, diversify your client base through international trade."

The latest export statistics show Alabama exports totaled \$19.3 billion, just shy of the state's all-time record of \$19.6 billion in 2012, with products and services shipped to nearly 200 countries. In just five years, Alabama exports increased a whopping 57 percent.

Helping to drive the increase was



The Mobile Area Chamber recently earned its second national award for its international trade efforts. The U.S. Department of Commerce bestowed the Chamber with the President's "E" Award for Export Service, the highest recognition any U.S. entity may receive for making a significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports.

Criteria for the award is based on four years of successive export growth and case studies demonstrating valuable support to exporters resulting in increased exports for the company's clients. The Mobile Area Chamber previously received the award in 2005.

Pictured at the ceremony in Washington D. C. from left to right are the U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker, Troy Wayman, VP of Economic Development and Christina Stimpson, International Trade Director.

transportation equipment, the state's largest export sector, growing 8.64 percent. Other top sectors included chemicals, primary metals, minerals and ores, and forestry products.

The top five export markets for Alabama companies in 2013 were Canada (\$4.3 billion), China (\$2.5 billion), Germany (\$2.2 billion), Mexico (\$2.2 billion) and the United Kingdom (\$693 million).

China moved ahead of Germany as the state's second-largest export destination, mainly due to an increase in exports of vehicles, plastics, chemicals and wood pulp.

## The Role of Small Business

More than 83 percent of the 2,878 Alabama companies that export products are small- and medium-sized companies, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Among companies that do not export, executives blame limited experience and difficulty finding overseas clients for keeping them from doing so. Additional deterrents include a variety of factors from a lack of confidence to the fear of losing intellectual property.

"This is where your Chamber can help," says Stimpson. "(We) work to help mitigate these concerns and have an active international trade program interested in helping you succeed globally."

"If more local small- and medium-sized businesses were able to seize export opportunities, the gains could be immense," says Stimpson. "Outside of the U.S. borders are 95 percent of the consumers, 92 percent of the economic growth and 80 percent of the purchasing power. The possibilities are endless."

*Continued on page 16*

The Mobile Area Chamber's trade division focuses much of its efforts on leading first-class trade missions with the Alabama Department of Commerce and the Export Alabama Alliance.

"We are extremely focused on connecting our local businesses with

foreign partners and buyers. We have found success in taking local companies overseas, and we see results that can benefit the entire community," says Stimpson.

On the state level, the Export Alabama Alliance has developed an aggressive trade mission schedule for

2014. Stimpson adds that when selecting these markets the alliance looked to leverage current free trade agreements and possible future agreements to position Alabama for job growth.

## Mobile Chamber's International Trade Assets

- ▶ Founding member of the Export Alabama Alliance, a program that develops and coordinates programs to facilitate the export of Mobile's goods and services overseas;
- ▶ Provides an annual in-depth educational series based on the foundations of international trade;
- ▶ Conducts market briefings throughout the year to highlight opportunities and challenges when doing business in targeted foreign markets; and
- ▶ Works with federal and state resources to provide customized foreign market research, in-house training, export financing and capital access, and trade leads.

## About the 2014 Trade Mission Markets

**Southeast Asia:** The U.S. and Singapore have enjoyed the benefits of a Free Trade Agreement since 2004, and the U.S. is currently negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership to achieve a comprehensive, high standard, and commercially meaningful trade and investment agreement among 12 Asia-Pacific nations.

Two billion Asians joined the middle class in the last 20 years, and another 1.2 billion are expected to do so by 2020. In March, eight Alabama companies and organizations (four from Mobile) traveled to Southeast Asia and completed more than 70 matchmaking appointments in Jakarta, Indonesia; Bangkok, Thailand; and Singapore.



**South America:** South America: Alabama exports to Peru have increased by 235 percent since the U.S. - Peru Free Trade Agreement took effect in 2009. In June, the Export Alabama Alliance and Alabama's Secretary of Commerce, **Greg Canfield**, led a large delegation to Lima, Peru, and Montevideo, Uruguay. Uruguay is geographically located between Argentina and Brazil, both large markets for Alabama products and services. Given the experience of restrictions and non-tariff barriers, Alabama looks to Uruguay to help Alabama companies take advantage of the exponential growth opportunities in the region.



**Europe:** The U.S. is currently negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the European Union that is being called the biggest trade deal in the world. In order to position Alabama companies for continued trade growth and expand on current export success, the Export Alabama Alliance will coordinate a trade mission to Brussels, Belgium, and Amsterdam, The Netherlands, in October. Because of the opportunity in these advanced markets, the life sciences industry sector will be targeted.



## What's Coming in 2015

The 2015 trade mission schedule is being developed and will include the following markets: Turkey, Bulgaria, Dominican Republic, South Africa and a sub-Saharan African country and Canada. Companies interested in learning more about how to become eligible for a trade mission delegation should contact Stimpson at 251-431-8648 or [cstimpson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cstimpson@mobilechamber.com).

## Fast Facts:

- What:** Gulf States Trade Alliance World Trade Conference
- When:** April 2015
- Where:** Marriott's Grand Hotel, Point Clear, Ala.
- Host:** Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
- Topics:** *South Africa: A Springboard to Sub-Saharan Africa*
- Contact:** Christina Stimpson, director of international trade 251-431-8648 or [cstimpson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cstimpson@mobilechamber.com)

*Sponsors for the event are being recruited. Contact Stimpson for details and benefits.*



# International Etiquette Matters

Thinking of giving a letter opener as a gift in Hong Kong? Not a good idea. Sharp objects, such as letter openers and knives, are associated with severing a relationship.

Going to Japan? If you receive a gift, think twice before tearing off the wrapping paper right away — that would be impolite.

But in Austria, open that gift immediately, or you'll be considered ungrateful and rude.

What is perfectly acceptable in one country, may be totally taboo in another. In Japan, it's not only acceptable to slurp the noodles in your soup, but it's considered good table manners to do so. On the other hand, if you're enjoying a nice bowl of soup in England, slurping is considered rude and would seem rather uncouth.

Oftentimes, travelers assume others around the world act, see and do things just like they're done in Hometown, USA. They automatically try to shake hands with people who bow upon greeting them, and they

try to make direct eye contact with foreign business associates who find it offensive.

As a savvy traveler, how do you successfully navigate cultural pathways? Start by reading. Read up on a country's customs, courtesies, traditions and etiquette. With this knowledge, you'll fit in better and demonstrate respect for the people of the country you will be visiting.

Next, observe every courtesy when you travel abroad on business. Failing to do so could be disastrous. The social blunders you may commit could cost both you and your company business and relationships.

Here are some international business etiquette tips that will make you a savvy and successful traveler:

- **Dress conservatively** when in a foreign land.
- **Use titles and last names** when you first meet people.
- **Brush up on appropriate greeting customs** — kiss, bow or shake hands?

- **Know the protocol** and ritual involved in **presenting and receiving a business card**.
- **Research a country's cuisine** and dining etiquette so you will be ready to eat the local food without embarrassing yourself or causing offense.
- Find out the **appropriate etiquette and protocol involved in business gift-giving** — an integral part of business culture in many countries.
- **Always express interest** in your host country's history, culture and food.
- Decision-making in other countries is often slower than in the U.S. **Don't rush.** Develop your relationships.
- **Don't get frustrated with lack of punctuality.** The American view of time and punctuality is different from other cultures.

- **Express genuine gratitude** for your host's thoughtfulness, kindness and generosity.

Business success abroad is best accomplished by savvy travelers successful at crossing cultures. Some research and study are necessary, but your openness and willingness to learn about others is key. Prosper in the journey.

***Editor's Note:** The author, Shanna Ullmann, is the mentorship program coordinator at the Harbert College of Business at Auburn University. A certified international protocol officer and certified cross-cultural trainer, Ullmann has provided international etiquette and protocol training to national and multi-national corporations, universities, U.S. government agencies and the U.S. military. This story originally ran in Harbert Magazine's Spring 2014 issue. Reprinted with permission.*

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# Small Businesses Can Succeed in International Markets

Where's the next market opportunity for your small business? It may well be overseas. Eighty percent of the world's purchasing power is outside the U.S., along with 95 percent of consumers. Doing business overseas can provide a measure of insulation against fluctuations in domestic markets, and enhance your overall competitiveness.

Many small businesses are so busy running their day-to-day operations that they don't consider their export potential. Oftentimes, companies think exporting is too burdensome, or are not aware of export and financing services offered by the U.S. Government. However small businesses are well-suited to join the global marketplace because they are more flexible to adapt to market demands, and to different regional and cultural needs.

Thousands of U.S. small businesses are already exporting their products and services to other

countries. Your business can too by thinking globally, and doing proper research to make informed decisions.

A good first step is to take the free export readiness self-assessment at [www.export.gov/begin](http://www.export.gov/begin). You'll get a better idea of your current level of preparation, and learn about counseling and training courses to help address specific needs.

There are many ways to become involved in exporting, from filling orders for domestic buyers (such as export trading companies that then export the product) to exporting products yourself. However you choose to export, the development of a detailed and thorough strategy is an important part of the planning process.

You should map out your exporting strategy much the way you developed your business plan. That means doing research on specific markets, consumer habits, existing competition, regulations

and legal issues (both in the U.S. and the areas you're exploring), distribution channels, etc. Some good information sources include:

- Local trade organizations and exhibitions
- SBA
- U.S. consulates
- U.S. industrial organizations that do international market research

To explore market- or product-specific opportunities, consider these sources:

- **U.S. Department of Commerce Advocacy Center** - helps U.S. companies in various industry sectors win government contracts across the globe.
- **U.S. Trade and Development Agency** - provides the latest information on contracting opportunities with grant recipients in host countries.
- **Trade Mission Online** -

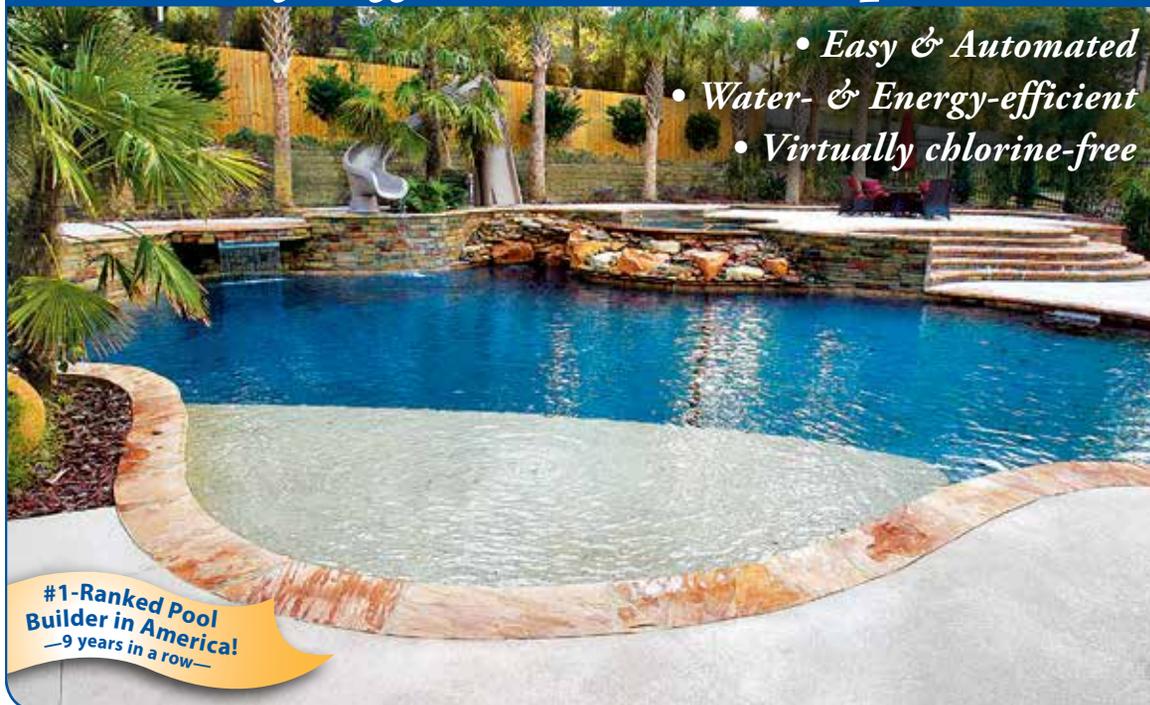
maintains a database of U.S. small businesses that can be searched by foreign firms and U.S. businesses seeking a domestic partner or supplier.

- **EC21** - a business-to-business marketplace that facilitates online trades between exporters and importers from all around the world.
- **Global Sources** - creates, manages, and delivers information that international trading partners need to meet and do business.
- **Tradeeasy** - an international trade enabler that incorporates both on- and off-line marketing solutions to sellers.

As you develop your international business strategy, through market research, you will be able to hone in on markets that have the highest propensity for sales, and therefore get the highest return on your export marketing dollars.

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# Chamber Chase

More than 80 volunteers are spending the summer assisting the Mobile Area Chamber recruiting new members and selling event sponsorships. Each week these volunteers gather for fun "reward sessions." To learn more about Chamber Chase, visit [www.chamberchase.com](http://www.chamberchase.com)

Jason McKenzie with PNC Bank is excited about Chamber Chase 2014. McKenzie is a long-time Mobile Area Chamber volunteer who works to bring in new members, sponsorships and advertising contracts.



Melinda Spille and Doris Gonzales with Newk's Eatery spoke during one of the Mobile Area Chamber's Chamber Chase reward sessions about their catering services. Volunteers meet weekly for a campaign update.

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# Small Business Week

In May, the Mobile Area Chamber hosted its inaugural Small Business Week with four days of training opportunities and a luncheon honoring the Outstanding Entrepreneur. More than 350 attendees participated in the week's workshops and awards luncheon.



Pictured here are Chamber Board Chairman Michael Chambers, Swift Biotechnology; Chamber Outstanding Entrepreneur Jim Busby, Centralite; Bonnie Harvey, co-founder of Barefoot Wines; Mobile County Commission President Connie Hudson; Michael Houlihan, co-founder of Barefoot Wines and Bill Sisson, Chamber president and chief executive officer.



The first event of the Mobile Area Chamber's inaugural Small Business Week was a resource fair for small business owners and budding entrepreneurs to learn about the wealth of resources available in Mobile to assist with starting, managing and growing a small business. More than a dozen state and local business providers participated, including Brent McMahon with the U.S. Small Business Administration, pictured here.



Participating in the Chamber's inaugural Small Business Week were, from left to right, Janice Malone, Willie Malone and Mary Kathryn Starks.

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## Chamber Names New Account Executive

If you are a prospective or existing member, chances are, you may be contacted by Jackie Livingston, the Mobile Area Chamber's membership account executive, who is responsible for recruiting new Chamber member businesses.



University of Southern Mississippi and is a graduate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institutes for Organization Management. She worked in the healthcare industry for several years at Baptist Health Care, South Baldwin

Regional Medical Center and the Blake at Malbis Assisted Living and Memory Care facility.

Livingston started her career as membership and communications director at the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce in Foley. "I always wanted to get back involved with the Chamber," said the Robertsdale native. "It's an opportunity to work with people in different industries and continuously meet new people."

"Livingston is a veteran at consulting with people and helping with decisions that will benefit them and their business, said Carolyn Golson, vice president of membership. "We're very glad to have her."

Livingston earned a bachelor's degree in public relations from the

Livingston can be reached at 251-431-8642 or [jlivingston@mobilechamber.com](mailto:jlivingston@mobilechamber.com).

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E-mail: [alvin@amclink.net](mailto:alvin@amclink.net) or [nicole@fmcinsurance.net](mailto:nicole@fmcinsurance.net)

# Pork & Politics

The Mobile Area Chamber's annual Pork and Politics in the Park was held at USS ALABAMA Battleship Park in May, drawing 425 attendees, including 40 candidates. Pictured at right is Mobile Film Commission Director Eva Golson with Kay Ivey, candidate for Lt. Governor.



Photo by MyShotz.com



Photo by MyShotz.com

Pictured with Tracie Roberson, Mobile County School Board member (center), are Jason Ross (left) and Cindy Lane Ross with Bodies by Cindy (right).



Photo by MyShotz.com

Attending Pork and Politics in the Park were City of Mobile Police Chief James Barber (left) and Bobby Cunningham with the Alabama Department of Agriculture (right).



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A full-page photograph of Chris Acosta, a man with short brown hair, wearing a blue polo shirt and dark trousers, standing in a grocery store's produce aisle. He is smiling slightly and has his hands in his pockets. The background is filled with shelves of fresh produce, including apples, oranges, and lemons, with price tags visible above the shelves. A sign for 'PREMIUM FRUITS' is hanging from the ceiling on the left.

# Chris Acosta

**Company:** Rouses Supermarkets

**Title:** Assistant district manager/cultural ambassador

**Hometown:** Thibodaux, La.

**Education:** Bachelor's degree and master's in business administration from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, La.

**First job:** "I have worked for Rouses my entire career," he said. Acosta started as a service clerk with the company.

**Accomplishments:** Acosta recently assisted the company in its efforts to expand into the Alabama market. He developed and implemented multiple customer service-oriented programs for the new team members working in Alabama stores.

**Secret to success:** "Start each day with a conscientious effort to be super organized and responsible, and plan ahead. Set goals and do not get discouraged with any setbacks you might encounter along the way. Perseverance is key."

**Brief company description:** Founded in 1960, Rouses is one of the largest independent grocers in the United States, with 43 stores in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. The family-owned business employs more than 7,000 team members.

The Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood Inc. firm works in a variety of industries across the U.S. and locally, they have worked on numerous buildings in downtown Mobile, including the RSA Battle House Tower, the RSA Trustmark building and the Van Antwerp building. Pictured from left to right are Jim Walker, Kirk Clayton, Lee Walters and Matt Griffith.

# Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood Inc.

**Company officials**

**Board of directors:** Steve Cawood, David Reed, Bill Wallace, Jeffrey Brewer and Galen Thackston

**Local official:** Lee Walters, regional vice president

**Years in business:** 67

**Brief company description:**

Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood Inc. (GMC) is an integrated architecture, engineering and environmental firm providing a comprehensive menu of professional services. The firm is comprised of more than 300 professionals with offices located throughout the Southeast and projects across the U.S.

**Why are you located in Mobile?**

“When our firm was founded, we made a commitment to Mobile and the surrounding area to provide our local clients with the utmost quality of service by opening our local office,” said Walters. “Proximity allows for more personal service, improved communication and a hands-on approach that is valued by clients and employees alike, and we are proud to have served in this area for more than 50 years.”

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

“We strongly believe supporting one’s community, not only financially but through active involvement, is critical to spurring economic development and growth,” said Walters. “The Mobile Chamber, specifically the Partners for Growth initiative, has been a key component in the recruitment of world-class businesses to our region. GMC understands the importance of these economic development efforts and values the opportunity to be part of this campaign.”



**What do you see as Mobile’s greatest potential?**

“There have been many chapters in the storied history of Mobile and we believe we are on the brink of yet another transformational phase,” said Walters. “Through the hard work of so many individuals and organizations, Mobile has risen to unprecedented heights and is now a city recognized around the world.

Its greatest potential lies in the talented and committed individuals that make up this community. This group, coupled with proper planning, can and will continue to establish Mobile as a prominent hub for international business and a desired destination for people to call home.”

**Length of continuous Chamber membership:** Since 2001



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 **kdeurell@mobilechamber.com**.

## BOARD of advisors



**Larry C. Dorsey**, an Alabama-registered professional engineer, is president and chief executive officer of Dorsey & Dorsey Engineering Inc. He received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from The University of Alabama, and he has spent more than 28 years in the architectural and engineering industries, including more than 13 years with state and federal agencies as a quality control inspector, designer and manager. He entered private practice in 1997, after serving 12½ years in the engineering division of the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District. He is a member of the National Society of Professional Engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers and the Society of American Military Engineers. He is also an ordained minister and serves as pastor of the Jesus the Light of Love Church in Mobile. Dorsey is a member of the Chamber's board of directors and executive committee.



**Robert S. Frost** is chief executive officer for Delaney Development Inc. He earned a degree in business law from The University of Alabama and a master's degree in taxation from New York University. Frost practiced law for 13 years with the Johnstone Adams law firm before moving to his current position in 2003. He is past chairman of the Mobile Planning Commission, on which he served for six years. He is a board member for Infirmary Health System Special Care Facilities Financing Authority of Mobile, the

Infirmary Health System Foundation and the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center. He holds an Alabama real estate license and continues to be a licensed attorney and member of the Alabama Bar Association. Delaney Development is a Partners for Growth Investor.



**Henry O'Connor III** is Mobile president for Trustmark National Bank. A graduate of Dartmouth College, he earned a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law. Before joining Trustmark, O'Connor served as executive vice president and director of corporate strategy for BancTrust Financial Group. He was previously managing director for IPC Industries, and was co-founder and managing member of O'Connor & O'Connor LLC, where he represented developers, owners and operators of commercial real

estate ventures. He is a graduate of Leadership Alabama, former executive committee member of United Way of Southwest Alabama, and a former board member of The Community Foundation of South Alabama. Trustmark National Bank is a Partners for Growth Investor.

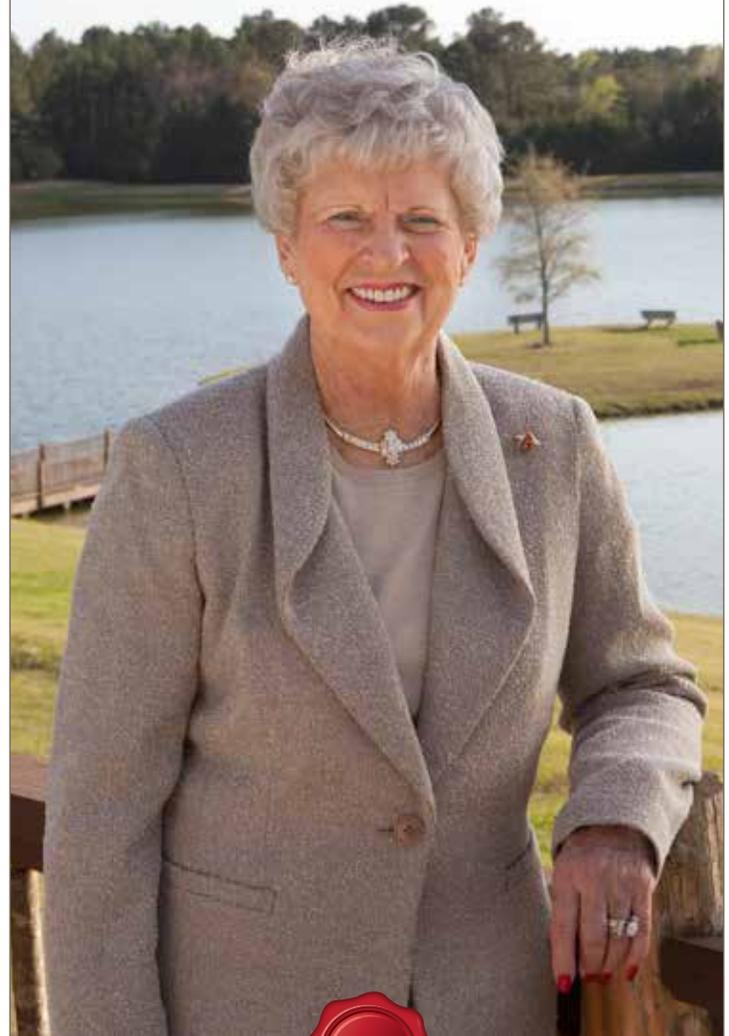
*For more information about the Chamber's board of advisors, contact Katrina Dewrell at 251-431-8611 or [kdewrell@mobilechamber.com](mailto:kdewrell@mobilechamber.com).*

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# Cintas Corp.

Cintas Corp. offers a full-service uniform rental program. In addition to the initial outfitting of a business's entire staff, the company takes care of size changes, repairs and replacements. The Mobile location, which also services Ocean Springs and Biloxi, Miss., is located at 5679 Commerce Blvd. E. The phone number is 251-214-0555.

Pictured at Cintas' 211 Commerce Park location is Stan Gordon, route check-in partner. Behind him are production partners Thelma Thompson (left) and Linda Blue (right).

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



As senior sales manager for The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel and Spa and the Renaissance Mobile, Riverview Plaza Hotel, **Karyl Hanisch** travels the country to tell the story of Mobile at trade shows and conventions, and on sales calls. "I have the best job: selling a city I love and believe in," said Hanisch, the Mobile Area Chamber's Ambassador of the Month. Hanisch joined the ambassador program in 1999 and served as the group's chairman in 2002.

*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](mailto:drencher@mobilechamber.com).*



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# JULY

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

## 4 CHAMBER CLOSED

## 9 NETWORKING@NOON *\*Members Only*

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

**When & Where:** Noon to 1 p.m. – Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

**Cost:** \$10 and must be paid with reservation

**Contact:** Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or [knavarro@mobilechamber.com](mailto:knavarro@mobilechamber.com)

*Reservations required. Free parking.*

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## 15 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:** Lindsey C. Boney III, CPA, CFE, CVA, Principal, Smith Dukes & Buckalew

**Topic:** "Emerging Businesses: Avoiding the Pitfalls"

**Contact:** Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or [brembert@mobilechamber.com](mailto:brembert@mobilechamber.com)

*No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested.*

*Free parking.*

**Sponsor:**



## 16 NONPROFIT ROUNDTABLE *\*Members Only*

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

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

**Speaker:** Skip Brown, managing partner, Russell Thompson Butler & Houston LLP

**Topic:** "Nonprofit Internal Control and Fraud Deterrence"

**Contact:** Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or [knavarro@mobilechamber.com](mailto:knavarro@mobilechamber.com)

*No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested.*

*Free parking.*

## 23 HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EXPO EXPERIENCE

*Be prepared to work your booth before the Chamber's Business Expo.*

**When & Where:** 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. or 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. – Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

**Speaker:** Janice Malone, executive director, BNI Business Resource Print & Ship Center

**Contact:** Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or [brembert@mobilechamber.com](mailto:brembert@mobilechamber.com)

*No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP required. Free parking.*

## 24 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

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

**When & Where:** 5:30 to 7 p.m. – Blue Rents, 1601 E. Interstate 65 Service Rd.

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

**Contact:** Kelly Navarro at 251-431-8638 or [knavarro@mobilechamber.com](mailto:knavarro@mobilechamber.com)

*Reservations are not needed.*

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## Who's New



Garrard

McCarron

White-Spinner Realty hired Matthew Garrard as property manager and Meredith L. McCarron joined the residential sales team. Garrard earned a bachelor's degree in finance with a concentration in investments from The University of Alabama. He is a certified property manager and is certified with the Institute of Real Estate Management. McCarron's focus will be in Mobile and the Saraland area.

\*

Mobile-based Sam Winter and Co. Real Estate hired Elisabeth Ruscin Dindo as a realtor.



Dindo



Brown

Sesi

Karen L. Brown PE and Seranus L. Sesi PE were named principals of Gulf States Engineering Inc. Brown, the director of operations, earned bachelor's degrees in aerospace and mechanical engineering from Mississippi State University. Sesi, director of project management, holds bachelor's degrees in construction sciences from the University of Southern Mississippi and civil engineering from the University of South Alabama. Brown and Sesi have worked for the company for eight years.

\*

Mike Joyce joined Mobile Lumber & Millwork as division manager. Joyce has an extensive background in millwork sales



Joyce

and operations spanning more than 18 years.

## Business Endeavors

Mobile Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau selected PMT Publishing to produce its 2014-15 *Mobile Bay Visitors Guide*. The publication will include travel articles, tips, hotel, restaurant and attraction information, calendars of events, maps and more.

\*

The Orthopaedic Group is now performing in-office hand surgeries for such conditions as trigger finger and carpal tunnel syndrome. These surgeries are performed using only local anesthesia.

## Well Done

Neel-Schaffer Inc., a multi-disciplined engineering and planning firm, is ranked among the nation's "Top 500 Design Firms" by *Engineering News-Record*, coming in at 199<sup>th</sup> on ENR's list for 2014. According to the firm, this marks the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year Neel-Schaffer has been recognized.

Commonwealth National Bank appointed Ret. Major Gen. J. Gary Cooper as chairman of the board and Jacquitta Green as vice-chair.

\*

Hargrove Engineers + Constructors received the 2014 Environmental Stewardship Award from Partners for Environmental Progress (PEP) for its economic, environmental and social contribution to the Gulf Coast region. Hargrove was recognized for its work with the Enterprise Water Department's publicly-owned treatment works to study low-level mercury in the treated wastewater discharge.

\*



Bolus

Attorney John Bolus of Maynard Cooper & Gale PC was elected to a four-year term on the board of governors of the Association of Life Insurance Counsel. Bolus is a shareholder and co-chairs the firm's general litigation practice. He earned a law degree from Vanderbilt University.

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The developer of Candlewood Suites Mobile/Downtown and the Hampton Inn & Suites Mobile Downtown/Historic District, Cowart Hospitality Services, announced plans to build a six-story, 93-room Hilton Garden Inn Hotel at the northwest corner of Bienville Square.

**Dr. Lonnie A. Burnett**, assistant vice president for academic affairs and professor of history at the University of Mobile, was elected to serve as president of the Alabama Historical Association for 2014-15. Burnett received a doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi.



Burnett

**Thompson Engineering** received a 2013 Eagle Award for safety from Associated Builders and Contractors of Alabama and the 2013 Construction Safety Excellence Award for Engineering and Construction Management from the Mobile Section of the Alabama

Associated General Contractors. The company also received a Partners for Environmental Progress Environmental Stewardship Award for the design and construction of a project to manage stormwater and erosion problems and restore a stream in Spanish Fort.

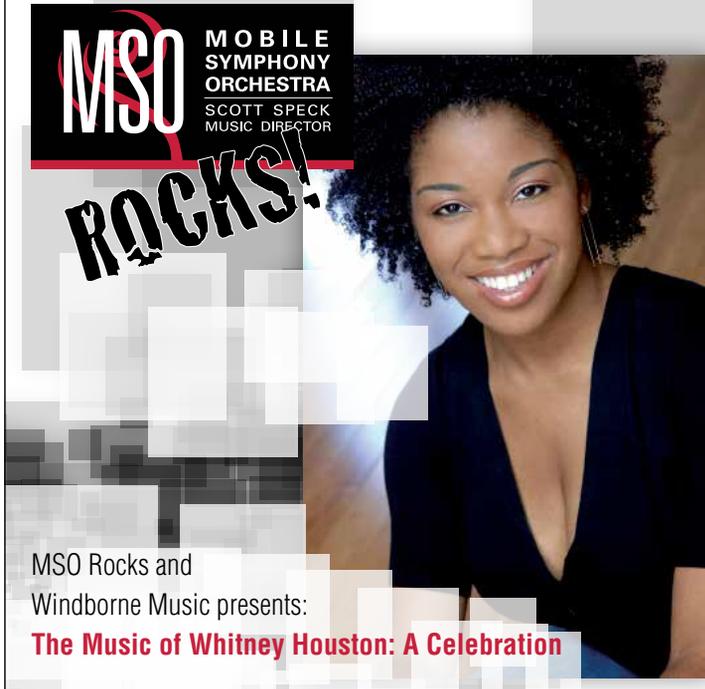
**Forrest S. Latta** of Burr & Forman LLP was named a member of the Claims and Litigation Management Alliance of insurers, corporations and their attorneys. Latta has practiced law for more than 30 years.



Latta

The Mobile County Public School System (MCPSS) honored Roberts Brothers as the "Partner of the Year" at its first annual "It Starts With Us" campaign awards.

**Infirmiry Health** was awarded the "The Future Starts With Us" award, for serving as the host site for Project Search, a business-led, one-year school-to-work high school



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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

803 Government St. LLC .....	23	McKemie Place .....	28
Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic PC.....	29	Mobile Symphony Orchestra.....	32
BayFest.....	14	PNC Bank.....	7
Blue Haven Pools & Spas.....	19	Premier Medical .....	6
C Spire.....	2	Providence Hospital .....	8
Coast Safe and Lock.....	9	Regions Bank .....	18
Community Bank.....	21	S.S. Nesbitt and Co.....	20
Downtown Mobile Alliance.....	35	Thames Batré Insurance.....	27
First Community Bank.....	23	The University of Alabama.....	11
Grand Hotel Point Clear Resort & Spa ...	24	Trustmark Bank.....	31
Gwin's Commercial Printing.....	33	University of South Alabama.....	12
Interstate Printing & Graphics Inc. ....	34	Volunteers of America .....	22
Lagniappe.....	34	Walks and Wags.....	33
Logical Computer Solutions .....	5	Wonderland Express .....	32

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