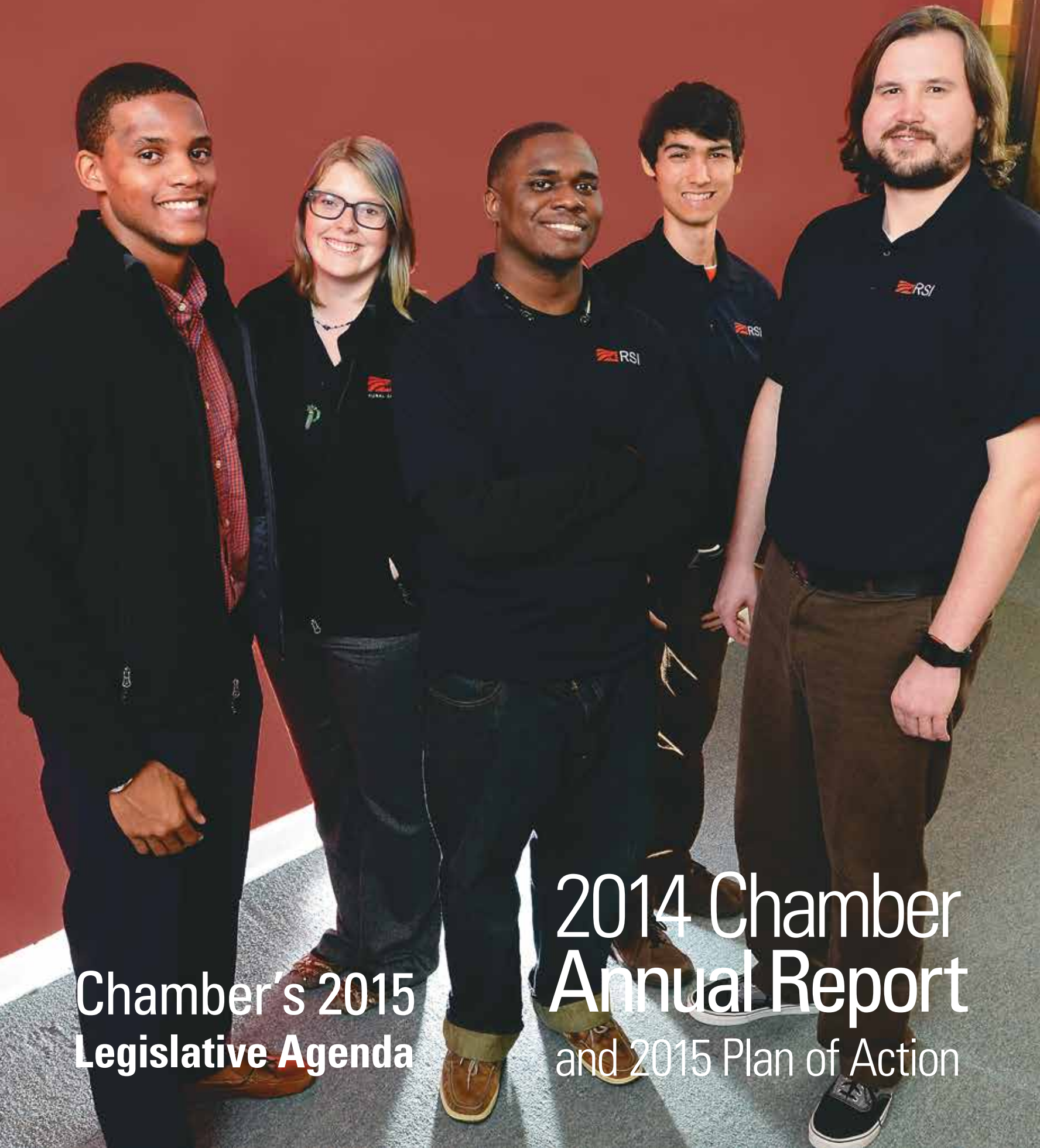


Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

FEBRUARY 2015

the businessview



Chamber's 2015
Legislative Agenda

2014 Chamber
Annual Report
and 2015 Plan of Action



From the Chairman

Whether it's in business, sports or personal relationships, assessing where you've been is a necessary step to move forward. In the following pages of this magazine, you'll see an assessment of the Mobile Area Chamber's top 2014 accomplishments, which ends with an overview of our plan of action for 2015.

It's hard to believe it's been a year since I first walked up the theater steps at the Mobile Civic Center and spoke to well over a thousand of you about the Chamber's and my personal goals for the coming year.

The two things I was most interested in were entrepreneurship training and mentoring – both critical for the success of young companies and small businesses.

When the Chamber hosted a Leaders Exchange trip to St. Louis, Mo., in June, we focused on what St. Louis has done to facilitate the growth of young companies and entrepreneurs. We want to attract more 20- to 30-year-olds to Mobile, as everyone agrees that targeting that demographic is critical for our continued economic growth.

After coming home, participants stepped forward and agreed to serve on a committee focusing on entrepreneurship and innovation. The new group, known as "Innovate Mobile," has a mission to explore a new technology corridor in the downtown area. The initial plan is to

determine the feasibility of a science and technology park in downtown, complementing the one at the University of South Alabama.

We also wanted to create a training and mentoring program to encourage and support these young professionals. The new program is named "1702," after the year our city was founded, and Dean Parker has agreed to step in to create the program and run it for a year. Cash and in-kind services have been pledged so we could apply for grants to get this initiative up and running in 2015.

None of Mobile's successes and failures happen without purpose. I've always loved Mobile, and having watched countless people raise their hands and roll up their sleeves to grow our community leaves me inspired and thankful.

This Chamber is in very capable hands with Frank Lott of Heritage Homes as its 2015 chairman and Mark Nix with Infirmary Health as chair-elect. And I very much look forward to working with them this coming year.

With best regards,

Michael Chambers
Swift Biotechnology LLC
Mobile Area Chamber
2014 Chairman of the Board



the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce **business** VIEW

February 2015 | Also in this issue

ON THE COVER: *RSI, Mobile's newest software development company and the Chamber's first 2014 economic development announcement, is both keeping and drawing young talent in the Port City. Pictured from left to right are Jauan Davis, KD Wilson, Emmanuel Buckley, James Camp and Joshua Mayfield. Photo by Jeff Tesney.*

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In March, the Chamber's Partners for Growth investors celebrated 2,900 new jobs created and \$1 billion in capital investments. The advancements were made at 39 new and existing companies over the previous 18 months. Partners for Growth is led by Mike Saxon of Alabama Power and Brian Willman of Regions Bank.

Leading Economic Development Efforts with New and Existing Companies

Partners for Growth

The Mobile Area Chamber's economic development efforts are funded by the Partners for Growth (PFG) program, a public-private partnership funded by performance contracts with the city of Mobile and Mobile County and pledges from 166 area companies and organizations.



As the lead economic developer for the city and county, the Chamber measures its results against a set of five-year goals to recruit 4,000 jobs with average annual wages of \$40,000 and \$1.5 billion in capital investment from 2013 to 2017.

In the second year of the current effort, the Chamber assisted seven companies in locating and/or expanding in the area, creating 356 new jobs with an average annual salary of \$51,400, which translates to \$175 million in annual payroll. In addition, these companies are bringing \$185.3 million in capital investment.

Included in this count are only those businesses that the staff worked with directly. They are: Alliance International Group*, AM/NS Calvert,

DuPont, Evonik Industries, Inter-Informatics Group*, Myer Marine Services and Rural Sourcing Inc.* (* denotes new project)

MobileConnect, a new PFG program designed to acquaint new-to-Mobile senior-level executives and their partners with the community, began in 2014. In its first year, 10 new executives are participating in the program's first class, along with PFG hosts paired with them.

Member companies' foreign national employees also have a new resource in acclimating to their new home in the United States via a dedicated section on the Chamber's website.

100 New High-Tech Jobs

Rural Sourcing Inc. (RSI), a leading domestic information technology firm, opened a software development center in Mobile with plans to hire 100 people. The Atlanta-based company's client list includes Coca-Cola, Sony and Pfizer. RSI's Mobile operation grew to over 50 employees in 2014, and has expanded once already from its original location at a Chamber-owned building to 1 St. Louis St. The company is in the process of renovating the former Buick car dealership building on St. Louis Street in downtown Mobile for its permanent home.

2014 By the Numbers

New Jobs Recruited: 356

Average Salary of Jobs Recruited: \$51,400

New Projects/Expansions: 7

Capital Investment of Projects: \$185.3

International Appointments Made to Help Local Companies Expand into Foreign Sales: 155

Students Attending Workforce Development Events: 10,380



Economic Development



Austal USA delivered two ships in 2014, the USNS Fall River (JHSV 4) and USNS Millinocket (JHSV 3). To date the company has delivered, as part of its contract with the U.S. Navy, four Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSV) and two Littoral Combat Ships (LCS). Currently, Austal has another nine ships under construction with contracts for 14 more. This is a picture of USNS Fall River as it leaves the Mobile River towards the Gulf of Mexico for sea trials in June.

Local Companies Invest and Expand

The Chamber worked with Myer Marine Services on an expansion project that included a new 43,000-square-foot repair, fabrication and machine shop. The Mobile-based, family owned company announced plans to double its number of employees in the next three years, from 27 to 67.

Evonik announced a multi-phase project for its largest U.S. production site located in Mobile. The latest expansion is an onsite chemical park, encouraging suppliers to co-locate near the facility. The addition is valued at \$113 million and the company will hire 72 additional people.

The Chamber worked to recruit Alliance International Group. The company purchased 50 acres in Theodore and will invest \$6 million in a tire recycling center and hire 128 people at an average \$47,000 annual salary.

Inter-Informatics Group, an aerospace engineering design company, announced plans to locate staff in Mobile for its work with Airbus Americas Engineering and to tap into other markets.

The Chamber also assisted DuPont with an \$11 million expansion to begin producing a new "green" insecticide called indoxacarb. The project means six new positions with annual salaries of \$80,000.

No. 1 and No. 2 – Good for Mobile

ArcelorMittall and Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp., the world's first- and second-largest steel companies, completed the acquisition of ThyssenKrupp Steel USA in February. The new company operates as AM/NS Calvert and secured the future of more than 1,600 local jobs.

Since then, the company announced plans to add more than 200,000-square-feet of storage for its steel slabs and two additional storage bays. The expansion is driven by the growing automotive and energy sectors and will fill the gap between current storage and the hot strip mill's annual capacity of 4.3 million tons.

1 of 12

Southwest Alabama earned the exclusive Manufacturing Community Designation by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The designation gives Mobile priority access to \$1.3 billion in federal economic development grants to be awarded over the next 18 months.



Hill

The first grant won provides \$100,000 to help implement goals established in the region's initial application for the designation. As a result, the Chamber hired Ramona Hill to coordinate this effort.

The University of South Alabama (USA) submitted the application on behalf of the Chamber's Partners for Growth investors, making the winning case with a focus on Mobile's concentrated shipbuilding industry.

Along with the Chamber and USA, additional partners involved were: AIDT Maritime Training Center, Alabama Technology Network, Alabama State Port Authority, Bishop State Community College, City of Mobile, Gulf State Shipbuilding Consortium, Mobile County, Mobile Works and the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council.

Recession Recovery

Three Mobile County manufacturers have topped the 1,000-employee mark. They are: Austal USA, 4,200 employees; AM/NS Calvert, 1,620; and VT MAE, 1,250. These numbers speak to the diversity of the area's manufacturing sector, representing shipbuilding, steel and aerospace industries.



Uplifting Update

The first building was completed for the Airbus Mobile Assembly Line in the fourth quarter of 2014. The facility is scheduled to open in 2015. Mobile and Alabama companies continued to win the majority of the bid packages for construction.

Working to increase Mobile's aerospace sector, a team of economic developers, including the Chamber, traveled to London's Farnborough Air Show in July. Billions of dollars in new aerospace contracts are announced by Airbus, Boeing and smaller manufacturers during the week-long event, known as one of the world's largest commercial and military air shows.

Business Retention & Expansion

In its 10th year, the Chamber's Business Retention and Expansion program focused on the construction, engineering and real estate sectors in 2014. Visits to 60 companies explored industry trends and are designed to uncover company-related issues the Chamber can help resolve.

Since the program's inception, staff and volunteers made more than 700 visits to 300 area companies, helping resolve hundreds of issues related to expansion needs, attracting workforce and promoting area businesses.

Efforts have contributed to an increase in expansions of existing industries.

In March, the Chamber celebrated the addition of 2,900 new jobs and \$1 billion in capital investment made by new and existing industries over the previous 18 months. Companies already operating in the area represented approximately half of the totals.

Under this division falls the Gulf Coast Technology Council, created to raise the visibility

and support of the local high-tech industry, and OffshoreAlabama.com, a partnership of more than 220 southwest Alabama offshore oil and gas producers, service providers, suppliers and associated companies.

Key to both efforts was exhibiting Mobile's assets in regional, national and international arenas. The Chamber is also a mentor to local companies competing in Alabama Launchpad, a project of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama. The program identifies new, innovative ventures seeking sound business advice and critical start-up and development capital. In 2014, the Chamber's board chairman, Michael Chambers with Swift Biotechnology, was recognized as Alabama Launchpad's Start-Up Executive of the Year.

Manufacturer of the Year

Mitternight Inc. was named the Mobile Area Chamber's Manufacturer of the Year for its growing sales, investment in technology and operational processes. The Satsuma-based company fabricates complex vessels for the chemical, petroleum and other sectors, and has 75 employees.

In addition, Mitternight was one of eight Alabama companies recognized with the Governor's Trade Excellence Award.

GCTC Scholarships

This year's recipients of the annual Gulf Coast Technology Council (GCTC) scholarships were awarded a combined total of \$5,000. The winners attend local colleges and are pursuing technology-related careers. GCTC is a Mobile Area Chamber initiative.



The Gulf Coast Technology Council group has collectively awarded \$45,000 in scholarships over the last seven years. Pictured are the 2014 recipients: Elizabeth Donald (University of Mobile), Phillip Armstrong (USA), Adrian Ramirez (ITT Tech), Sarah Hovell (Spring Hill College), and Malinda Simon (Remington College).



Economic Development

Innovator of the Year

The Coastal Innovation Hub at the University of South Alabama was recognized as the Chamber's Innovator of the Year. The 10,000-square-foot facility is the only high-tech incubator between New Orleans and Jacksonville, Fla., and can house up to 25 start-up companies. In addition to faculty-driven companies, non-university technologies accounted for half of the activity in the first year of existence.

International Trade

The efforts of the Chamber's international trade division include sales, marketing, education, promotion of infrastructure and regional awareness. During 2014, the Chamber hosted a delegation from the Dominican Republic, as well as the Embassy of Belgium, the Canadian Consulate of Atlanta, French Consulates of Atlanta and New Orleans, and the Korean International Trade Association.

Multi-industry missions included trips to Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Peru and Uruguay, and there was a sector-specific mission to Belgium and The Netherlands. In advance, the Chamber helped secure 155 one-on-one business appointments, leading to projected and reported sales of \$16.5 million and the creation of 288 jobs.

The trade division also held 12 seminars, conferences and briefings, offering 987 attendees insight on growing international sales.

Second Time Honor

The Chamber was one of four entities to receive the U.S. Department of Commerce President's "E" Star Award, its second national award for international trade efforts. As the highest recognition any U.S. entity may receive, the award honors significant contributions to the expansion of American exports.

Washington County Economic Development Initiative (EDI)

The Chamber, in its partnership with Washington County economic development efforts, staffs the Washington County EDI. The organization completed a strategic plan in 2014 with the assistance of the Economic and Community Development Institute at Auburn University.

Key outcomes focus on education, training and workforce, retaining and assisting existing companies, recruiting new companies, improving infrastructure, and strengthening city and county leadership cooperation.

EDI also hosted the Delta Regional Authority Workforce Development Summit for Alabama.

Workforce Development

The Chamber is the facilitator of several workforce development initiatives and partners with local organizations, including the Bay Area Healthcare Coalition, Mobile Area Education Foundation, Mobile Works and Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council. In addition, efforts include outreach and assistance to manufacturing and other area businesses and industries.

The Chamber continued to staff two regional healthcare initiatives for high school students in 2014, and coordinated a workforce development career fair for middle school students.

Summer Scrubs is an intensive one-week, on-site job shadowing internship for high school students. Sixteen medical facilities hosted more than 80 Mobile and Baldwin County students.

The Health Occupations Career Fair, where students arrive at the scene of a mock accident and follow the patient's treatment, drew approximately 600 10th grade students from 29 area schools. Fifteen healthcare providers and organizations staffed the event.

The Chamber continued to manage Worlds of Opportunity, a project of the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council. The two-day, hands-on career expo drew 9,700 eighth-graders, representing 85 schools in eight southwest Alabama counties. The event is conducted with the assistance of 165 area companies and 840 volunteers.



More than 600 10th grade students attended the Health Occupations Career Fair coordinated by the Chamber.



The Mobile Area Chamber honored Jim Busby, sitting fourth from left, as its inaugural Outstanding Entrepreneur. More than 30 former QMS employees who worked with Busby at QMS, have launched their own businesses. Pictured here are a few of them who came to support him at the Chamber's Small Business Week luncheon.

Championing Entrepreneurs and Their Efforts to Start, Manage & Grow

New in 2014

In May, the Chamber hosted its inaugural Small Business Week with three days of training opportunities and a luncheon honoring the Outstanding Entrepreneur. More than 350 attendees participated in the week's events. As a note of record, the naming of the Small Business of the Year will coincide with future celebrations.

Highlighting Success

James "Jim" Busby was presented the Chamber's inaugural Outstanding Entrepreneur Award during Mobile's Small Business Week. Busby founded QMS, a laser printer manufacturing company, in 1977, and guided the company to a successful initial public offering. Following his retirement, he founded Centralite Systems Inc., a manufacturer of lighting systems, with his oldest son, James "Jimmy" Busby. Busby was also the keynote speaker at the Chamber's Business Expo kick-off luncheon.



Busby

Featuring Small Businesses

The Chamber stepped up efforts to recruit nominees for its Small Business of the Month award. The winners are profiled in the Chamber's monthly magazine, *The Business View*.

Featured in 2014 were:

- Cream and Sugar
- Driven Engineering Group
- FusionPoint Media
- Gulf Coast Containers
- Hillcrest Optical
- Hummingbird Ideas
- McAleer's Office Furniture
- Metzger's
- Patterson Marketing Group
- Precision Tool & Grinding
- Zimlich Patio & Garden Center, d/b/a Elizabeth's Garden

2014 By the Numbers

Small Business-Focused Workshops and Seminars: 41

Chamber Professional Development Seminars Attendees: 1,895

Entrepreneurs Receiving Business Counseling and Advice: 205

Employees of Highlighted Small Businesses of the Month: 84

Value of Contracts Won with Help of the MBDA - Mobile: \$608,491,312



Small Business Development

Lynchpin to Success

The Chamber continued its mentoring of small business owners and managers through one-on-one meetings and the monthly Executive Roundtable. In addition, the Growth Alliance Task Force Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Capacity Building subcommittee provided mentoring and training. Other activities included trade shows and matchmaking events and awards recognition programs.

Another 1,700 attendees participated in Chamber-run professional development sessions covering topics such as legal issues, the Affordable Care Act, social media and time management.

SCORE merged its Mobile and Baldwin County offices in 2014, locating in Fairhope. To fill the gap in Mobile, the Alabama Small Business Development Center (SBDC) scheduled regular meetings at the Chamber to counsel new and existing companies.

MBDA Business Center - Mobile

The Minority Business Development Agency Business Center Mobile (MBDA) is a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and operated by the Chamber. Over the past eight years, the center assisted more than 250 minority-owned business clients statewide, helping them secure more than \$1 billion in contracts and financial assistance, and creating more than 400 new jobs.

The MBDA and the Chamber celebrated Minority Business Week with an annual awards luncheon in October. Keynote speaker Michael Baisden, a popular radio personality and author,

returned to Mobile and held a special Business with Baisden session before the awards lunch. The event was attended by more than 300 people.

A joint venture between Mobile Area Water and Sewer System and MBDA, the Gulf Coast Mentor-Protégé program catalogued a broad base of diverse businesses capable of providing high-quality construction, utility contracting and other services and products at competitive prices. The goal is to increase the volume of work awarded to minority-owned businesses.

Eagle Award Winners

The Chamber honored Leaf and Petal Florist and Gift Shop and Ranger Industrial Services, a company providing free training and job placement for skilled tradesmen, with its Eagle Awards in 2014. Both companies were recognized for business operations, revenue and/or employee growth and community involvement.

Minority Business Advocate

The Chamber and the MBDA presented Austal USA with the Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate Award. The award was renamed in 2014 to honor James, who was a mentor and advocate for Mobile's minority-owned businesses.

Austal uses annual purchasing goals as part of its commitment to work with minority companies, and has a small business liaison who reaches out to small, disadvantaged, woman-owned, Native-American, Veteran and service-disabled-owned local businesses.



The Mobile Area Chamber presented its annual Eagle Awards to two local small businesses. Pictured here are the teams from Ranger Industrial Services (left) and Leaf and Petal Florist (right). In the center is Michael Baisden, a former syndicated radio personality and author.



Mobile County members of the Alabama Legislature welcome visiting Sen. Cam Ward at the Chamber's Legislative Lunch. Pictured left to right are Rep. Napoleon Bracy, Rep. David Sessions, Rep. Victor Gaston, Sen. Rusty Glover, Sen. Vivian Davis Figures, Rep. Adline Clarke and Rep. James Buskey.

The Voice of Business

Multi-Faceted Approach

Another strategy impacting the business community is the Chamber's role as the "voice of business." The Chamber works on local-, state- and federal-level issues to promote a business-friendly environment.

The Chamber's Community and Governmental Affairs department oversees programs including government relations and lobbying, military affairs and a number of events and activities providing the business community with opportunities to discuss issues with elected officials and impact public policy.

2014 Legislative Scorecard

The Chamber monitored 1,103 bills introduced in the Alabama Legislature, and 269 were enacted. Key items on the Chamber's agenda included passage of several workforce, education and tax-related initiatives.

Among those are a scholarship program for career-technical dual enrollment, creation of the Alabama Workforce Council, increased funding for pre-K programs, allowance of "crowd funding" loans to raise entrepreneurial capital, creation of the Alabama Tax Tribunal, online tax filing for small businesses, the Small Business Tax Relief Act and enhancements to Quiet Title laws.

In addition, the Chamber partnered with other metro chambers and statewide associations to

protect the Alabama Board of Education's Plan 2020, which includes the Alabama college career ready standards, and opposed legislation that would have allowed a person of any age to have a loaded pistol in a vehicle or business parking lot without a permit.

Home Sweet Home on the Coast

After the Chamber was part of an active coalition of Gulf Coast organizations to fight the rise in National Flood Insurance Program rates in 2013, success came when the federal Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 was signed into law.

Energy Edge

In response to a request for a moratorium on above-ground petroleum storage tanks, the Chamber commissioned the *Economic Impact Study of the Energy Sector on the Mobile Economy*.

Overall, the numbers prove oil and gas remains a critical driver for Mobile's economy when accounting for trade at the Port of Mobile, a designated "energy transfer port," sales and property taxes, and the 1,800-plus people employed in the sector.

As a result, the Chamber formed an Energy Committee to educate and advocate its importance.

2014 By the Numbers

Legislative Bills
Monitored: 1,103

Political Networking
Attendees: 1,700

Build the I-10
Bridge Facebook
Followers: 6,960



Community & Governmental Affairs



In his role as co-chair of the Chamber's Build the I-10 Bridge Coalition, Mike Lee with Page & Jones did dozens of media interviews on the project. He was presented the Delchamps Award at the Chamber's annual meeting in January 2015.

Build It Now

The Chamber's Build the I-10 Bridge Coalition, a grassroots group working to create community support for a new I-10 Mobile River Bridge and the widening of the Bayway, was successful in raising community awareness, support and participation in the project, and garnered much media attention in the process.

In 2014, the Federal Highway Administration released the long-awaited draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and held public hearings. Scores of Chamber members commented at those hearings and submitted more than 400 letters of support to the Alabama Department of Transportation. The community input will be incorporated into the final EIS document, expected to be released in 2015.

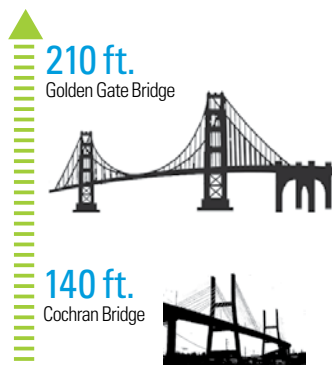
The project drew attention throughout the region, and the Chamber joined the Coastal Alabama Partnership in visiting elected officials who represent Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi in Washington D.C.

Locally, coalition members continue to speak to businesses, civic clubs and other organizations, and work to increase social media support through a Facebook page that has garnered nearly 7,000 followers to date.

Bridge FAST facts

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.



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

Delchamps Award

For his endless support and role as spokesman for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge, the Chamber presented Mike Lee of Pages & Jones with the Delchamps Award.

The award was established in 1990 to honor individuals who carry on the vision and principles of Alfred F. Delchamps Jr., who was a moving force in the community and the Mobile Area Chamber.



Powering Up Dialogue

The Chamber sponsored a first-time event designed to create regional conversation on smart energy policies. Held in Mobile, the forum was presented by the Partnership for Affordable Clean Energy and the Consumer Energy Alliance. Among the 150-plus attendees were leaders in the energy arena, local and regional elected officials, and corporate participants.

Facilitating Change

In June, the Chamber took a group of 70-plus community leaders to St. Louis, Mo., to learn about the city's workforce efforts, quality of place initiatives, the new Mississippi River bridge and entrepreneur recruitment efforts.

Upon returning, Leaders Exchange participants broke into committees to explore the development of a downtown business incubator and community park and trail complex.

Networking At Every Level

The Chamber hosts annual events giving members the opportunity to network with elected officials. A crowd of more than 900 came to the State of the City and County annual luncheon to hear city and county leaders discuss key accomplishments and plans for the coming year. The annual political mixer, Pork and Politics in the Park, drew another large crowd of nearly 400 attendees.

Focusing on U.S. Department of Defense funding for shipbuilding programs at Austal and Ingalls, the energy impact on Mobile and supporting reauthorization of the Ex-Im Bank, the Chamber took an alliance of business leaders to Washington D.C. The annual trip is part of the organization's advocacy role on national issues. While there, the group also expressed concerns on the impact of the amended Clean Water Act definition of "waters of the U.S.," which could require local governments to assume more cost of handling storm water.

In addition, more than 150 business leaders, legislators and state officials attended the Chamber's Montgomery reception to thank the state legislators for their work. And in December, the Chamber held its annual Champagne and Oysters reception honoring newly elected and re-elected officials that was attended by 150 participants.

The Chamber assists the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission with its annual luncheon honoring veterans every year. In 2014, more than 480 people attended.

Corporate Community Service Award

State Farm Makeda Nichols Agency was the 2014 winner of the Corporate Community Service Award. With a staff of eight, it was the first time a small business earned the distinction.

This award recognizes companies for their dedication to the community and is jointly presented by the Junior League of Mobile (JLM) and the Mobile Area Chamber. JLM donated \$500 to Nichols' nonprofit of choice.

Serving the Military

The Chamber's Military Affairs Committee works to connect the business community to active and retired military personnel. In 2014, the Chamber held its annual Military Appreciation Day luncheon, drawing 350 attendees. The lunch featured U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne as the guest speaker and honored Mobile's military men and women, and college and high school ROTC cadets.

The Chamber continued to assist the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission with its annual luncheon and activities. The commission honored Maj. Gen. Carl McNair Jr. (Ret.), a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran, as Patriot of the Year, along with Veteran of the Year Seymour "Sy" Lichtenfeld, who authored a book on his World War II experiences as a German prisoner of war. The lunch had 485 attendees.





Membership



The Chamber continued its outreach to host new leaders at area companies and organizations in an effort to connect them to the business community. Two receptions were held recognizing a total of 61 new executives at Mobile area companies and organizations. Pictured here is the group honored in the fall along with Chamber and community leaders.

Connecting Local Businesses

Chamber Chase

To raise necessary funding and increase membership, the Chamber holds an annual total resource development campaign. This year's effort, led by Kenny Crow, managing partner of Crow Shields Bailey, a local accounting firm, hit another milestone. The effort raised more than \$1.65 million in memberships, sponsorships, advertising contracts, and donated goods and services, and recruited 76 new members. A team of 70 volunteers, representing 36 organizations, participated in the campaign that gets its name from the goal they chase and strive to exceed.

Honors given out following the campaign were: ServisFirst Bank, Top Overall Team; Regions Bank, Top Cash Producing Team; Sherry Coker, ServisFirst, Top Individual Overall Producer; Terri Oowler, Arkema, Top Individual Cash Producer; Sharon Murrill, Alabama Power, Most New Members; and Nichole Edwards, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, Top Campaign Rookie.

At the Beginning

One of the many ways the Chamber serves its members is through ribbon-cutting and grand opening celebrations. Last year, the organization assisted and participated in 46 such events.

Face-to-Face

Networking remains the top Chamber benefit cited by members. The Chamber hosted 41 networking events including Business After Hours, Networking@Noon, Coffee with the Chamber, Membership 101, Women's Roundtable, Nonprofit Roundtable and the annual golf tournament. More than 1,000 participants used these forums to build and reinforce business relationships.

2014 By the Numbers

Current Chamber
Members: 2,027

People Employed by
Chamber Members:
110,280

Ribbon Cuttings &
Grand Openings Held at
Member Companies: 46

Membership Networking
Events: 41

Membership Networking
Event Attendees: 3,245



Mobile's Largest One-Day Networking Event

Business Expo continues to draw growing crowds. This year's event had more than 230 exhibitors and 2,200 attendees. Among the exhibitors were 20 local, state and federal resource partners to assist small business owners with management, financial, procurement, marketing and technical assistance.

The Chamber again organized a special workshop to help exhibitors maximize their investment in booth space and participation.

Board of Advisors

Representing the organization's largest dues-paying members, the board of advisors meets three times a year with the Chamber's governing board of directors. This year, the groups membership grew to 262, the highest level of membership involvement since the program began in 1997.

Ambassador of the Year

Kathy Williams, a recruiter with the locally owned staffing firm J. W. Legacy Group, was named the 2014 Ambassador of the Year.

Ambassadors are volunteers from member companies who assist the Chamber by visiting with members and attending various Chamber events.



Williams



Dunkin' Donuts was a participant at this year's Business Expo. Mobile's largest one-day networking event drew more than 2,200 attendees.

Recognized as Ambassadors of the Month were:

- Trish Banker, Regions Bank (retired)
- Stephanie Bondora, Admiral Semmes Hotel
- Adriana Bright, Homewood Suites by Hilton
- Karyl Hanisch, Renaissance Hotels of Mobile
- Lisa Kavanagh, Junior League of Mobile
- Mamun, REMAX Partners
- Thao Nguyen, Service Experts Heating & Air Conditioning
- Lillian Stanley, Advantage Staffing
- Mary Dean Wilbur, Lamar Advertising
- Angela Williams, LifeSouth Community Blood Centers
- Kathy Williams, J.W. Legacy Group



Spring Appreciation

Member Appreciation Day took place in April and included an afternoon of networking, food and music on the Chamber's lawn. Drawing more than 300 participants, the event provides Chamber staff with an opportunity to recognize and appreciate its members, volunteers, board members and economic development investors.

It was a picture perfect day in April for the Chamber's annual member appreciation event.



Communications & Marketing

Sharing the News of the Chamber at Work and in the Business Community



Mobile County Commission President Connie Hudson as she prepares for a Skype live interview during the Farnborough Air Show.

Media Resource

The Chamber developed a media plan to promote Mobile and the Chamber at the Farnborough Air Show, sharing a behind-the-scenes look at the economic development team at work through videos and daily blog posts on its website.

Staff also assisted local, regional and national reporters with dozens of stories including business and economic growth, legislative issues, the proposed I-10 Bridge and Bayway expansion, Mobile's manufacturing designation and Chamber events.

Delivering Business Headlines

The Chamber's monthly magazine, *The Business View*, was rated high among members as a credible and important source of business news by both members and potential members, according to a recent survey. The publication is underwritten in great part by member-companies' advertising dollars and was upgraded to an all-glossy format to enhance photo quality.

The department continued to produce the newly retooled *Guide to Mobile*, used as a recruitment tool for local companies.

Branding the Chamber

Believe in Mobile. Belong to the Chamber. The Chamber's marketing message continued to resonate throughout a variety of Chamber publications and event programs. In its third year, the campaign is strengthened with the generous support of area media outlets with billboards placement, print ads and radio commercials.

www.mobilechamber.com

The Chamber launched a redesigned website in 2014. The new site includes social media platforms and is more interactive. It was developed by two local Chamber-member firms.

Managing Logistics

To maximize resources the Chamber managed 37 events in 2014. The largest of these were the organization's annual meeting, State of the City and County, Pork & Politics in the Park and Business Expo.

Beyond the Chamber

In an effort to create more community-wide awareness for the organization, Chamber staff participated in several events, including The FUSE Project's Dragon Boat Festival, Bellingrath Gardens Balloon Glow Festival and United Way of South Alabama's Day of Caring.

To support "buy local" efforts, the Chamber organized and hosted its first Cash MOB event at Downtown Mobile Alliance's Urban Emporium. With 50 attendees, the sold-out event encouraged participants to spend at least \$20 at the local retailer.

Social Media



Making full use of popular social media platforms for news and events, the Chamber continued to reach its audiences through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. Efforts continue to grow, with an average increase of 77 percent in followers and "likes" from 2013 to 2014.

Complementing print communications, several electronic publications also delivered business headlines in the form of *The Business View*, the Chamber's monthly magazine in digital form, *The Business View Weekly* e-newsletter and the bi-monthly *Calendar of Events*.

Promoting Mobile

A core group of public relations professionals, who regularly pitch stories and assist reporters locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, continued to meet to share information and develop strategies to publicize Mobile.

Around the World

The Chamber continues to host groups traveling abroad. In March, 30 participants went to Italy and in September, 36 went to Austria and Germany. These trips provide members and guests networking opportunities and social travel, and are a source of non-dues revenue for the organization.

2014 By the Numbers

Circulation of *The Business View*: 22,100

Electronic Subscribers to *The Business View Weekly*: 8,932

Unique Hits on www.mobilechamber.com: 41,394

Facebook & Twitter Followers: 8,115



Responsible, Effective and Efficient

Fiscally Strong

The Mobile Area Chamber ended 2014 in a strong financial position, with a positive bottom line. In addition to membership and Board of Advisor dues, the Chamber's revenue streams include performance contracts, Partners for Growth pledge investments, advertising sales and Chamber Chase-recruited sponsorships and in-kind contributions.

The Chamber's finance staff manages the organization's human resources, operations and the activities and finances of the Industrial Development Authority of Mobile County, Industrial Development Board of the City of Mobile, Industrial Park Board of Mobile County and the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Five-Star Chamber

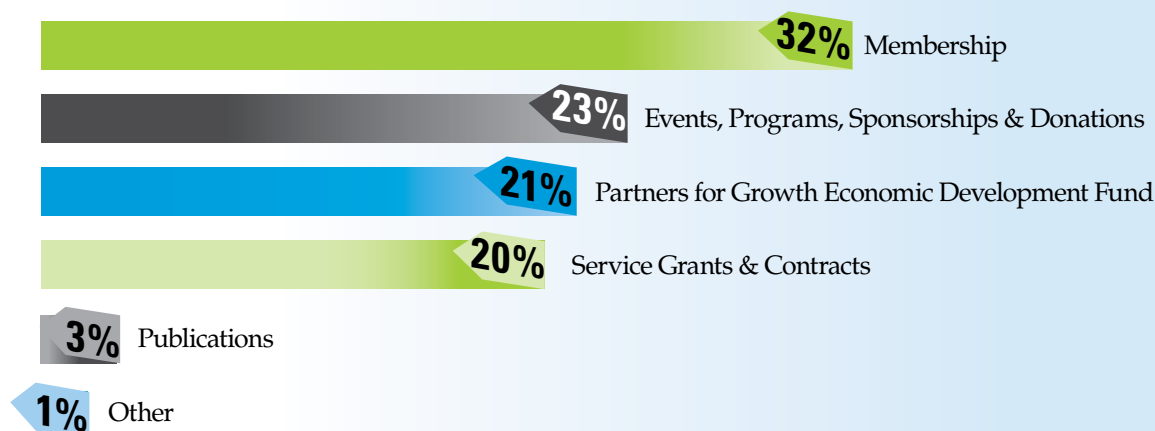
The Mobile Area Chamber remains a five-star accredited Chamber, the highest designation given by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The ranking places the Mobile Area Chamber in the top 1 percent of the country's nearly 7,000 Chambers.



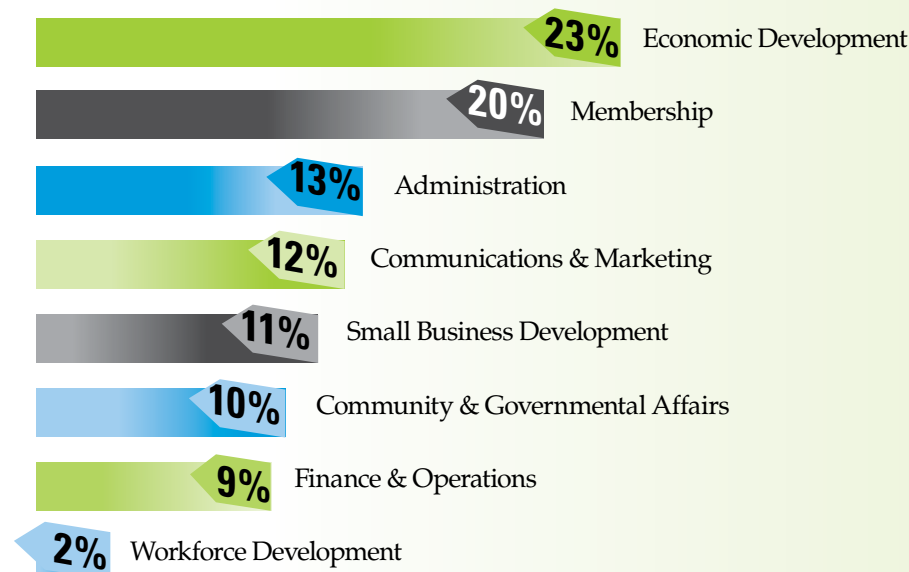
Audits

The Chamber's finances, as well as those of the four boards the organization manages, are audited annually to ensure adherence to accounting standards.

Revenue



Expenses



2014 By the Numbers

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
Established: 1836

Current Employees: 40

Years Accredited: 41
(since the U.S. Chamber of Commerce designation was first instituted)

Boards Managed by the Chamber: 5

Outside Meetings Held at the Chamber Building: 750



Chamber News

Making Headlines

■ Mobile County was recognized as a leader in manufacturing job rebound by the *Wall Street Journal*.

■ Mobile ranked third in economic growth potential in the *Business Facilities* 10th Annual Rankings Report.



■ Mobile was named one of *Global Trade Magazine's* Best Cities for Global Trade for its skilled workforce.

■ *WalletHub*, a financial website, named Mobile 22nd of 150 Best American Cities to Start a Business.

■ *Business Insider Australia* named Mobile one of 15 Hottest American Cities for 2015.

■ In the *Economic Impact of the Energy Sector and Petroleum Tank Storage Industry* study on Mobile County conducted by Auburn University at Montgomery, one of the statements the Chamber was most proud of was that "Mobile County has the most diversified economy in the state of Alabama."

■ *NerdWallet*, a consumer finance website, named Mobile as the 10th Most Affordable Mid-sized Metro for Homeownership.

■ The Mobile Area Chamber was one of the organizations honored at United Way's annual meeting in the Outstanding Mid-Size Business Award category. The Chamber also received an award from United Way of Southwest Alabama for its social media postings during its Day of Caring.

Staff Accolades

Christina Stimpson, the Chamber's international trade director, was named one of *Mobile's 40 Under 40* professionals by *Mobile Bay* magazine. The list was published in the January 2015 edition.



Stimpson

Bridget Wilson, the Chamber's education and workforce development director, was selected as one of 21 inaugural Education Attainment Fellows as part of an initiative led by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE). This fellowship is for chamber executives and senior staff working to improve the birth-to-career education pipeline in their communities.



Wilson

Young Leaders Weigh In

The Chamber conducted a series of focus groups to engage Mobile's young leaders in conversation about Mobile, its economy, quality of place, and what young people hope for the future of their city. Collectively, they expressed interest in improved public safety, infrastructure including roads and bridges, and amenities such as bike paths, walking trails, better parks, soccer fields, additional public transportation and more.



The Chamber was an active participant in The FUSE Project's inaugural dragon boat race. Chamber members and staff fielded the team.

2014 Executive Committee



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Swift Biotechnology LLC
Chair of the Board



Col. Steven D. Carey (Ret.)
CertaPro Painters of Mobile and Baldwin Counties
Vice Chair Military Affairs



W. Lance Covan
Mitternight Inc.
Vice Chair Economic Development



J. Kenny Crow Jr.
Crow Shields Bailey PC
Vice Chair Membership



Daniel A. Dennis IV
Roberts Brothers Inc.
Vice Chair
Governmental Affairs



Larry C. Dorsey
Dorsey & Dorsey Engineering Inc.
Vice Chair Minority Business



Elizabeth D. Freeman
Long's Human Resource Services
Vice Chair Communications & Marketing



Frank Lott III
Heritage Homes
Chair-Elect and Vice Chair
Finance & Operations



Loka Mistretta
Cintas Corp.
Vice Chair Workforce Development



James B. Newman
Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse
Legal Counsel



R. Michael Saxon
Alabama Power Co.
Immediate Past Chair



Travis R. Short
Horizon Shipbuilding Inc.
Vice Chair Small Business Development



William B. Sisson
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
President & CEO

In addition to the Executive Committee, serving on the 2014 Board of Directors were:

Michael Banks
B&C Trucking LLC

James M. Fine
Mobile Gas, a Sempra Co.

Elliot B. Maisel
Gulf Distributing Holdings LLC

Rhett C. Ross
Continental Motors Inc.

Raymond L. Bell Jr.
Bell Law Firm PC

Victor Gaston
Alabama House of Representatives

Latitia D. McCane
Bishop State Community College

Scott Rothermel
Performance Contractors

Leigh Ward Breal
Ward International Trucks LLC

Russell Golson
ExxonMobil

Richard T. McCreary
BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards Alabama

Beth W. Stafford
Stafford & Associates Inc.

Lynne Chronister
University of South Alabama

D. Jason Gregory
Willis of Alabama Inc.

D. Mark Nix
Infirmary Health

Michael Wallis
Outokumpu Stainless USA

C. William Daniels Jr.
Burr & Forman LLP

Perry A. Hand
Volkert Inc.

Laurie Owen
USA Mitchell Cancer Institute

Lee Walters
Goodwyn Mills & Cawood Inc.

Walter S.F. Dickerson
Diversified Emergency Management Associates LLC

Charles E. Hyland Jr.
Mobile Area Water & Sewer System

Craig D. Perciavalle
Austal USA

Donna J. Watts
Belk, Bel Air Mall

Harrietta Eaton
CorroMetrics Services Inc.

Michael L. Lapeyrouse
The American Equity Underwriters Inc., an AmWins Group Co.

Marc Quenneville
Aker Solutions Umbilicals North America

Brian R. Willman
Regions Bank

Mark Fillers
BBVA Compass Bank

James M. Lyons
The SSI Group Inc.

Patrick J. Wilson
Mobile Bar Pilots LLC



2015 Plan of Action Summary

Each year the Mobile Area Chamber staff writes its Plan of Action, a list of tactics to achieve the goals of its strategic plan. The Chamber's an organization working as a progressive advocate for business to promote the Mobile area's economic well-being.

The organization's key areas of focus are:

- Jobs: Recruiting, expanding and retaining local jobs and capital investment.
- Advocacy: Creating an environment that focuses on business and community growth.
- Value: Providing value, services, opportunities and recognition of Chamber members.
- Excellence: Operating with efficiency, excellence and innovation.

Below is a summary of the 2015 Plan of Action.

Communications & Marketing

- Provide a constant, proactive and interactive communications program to Mobile Area Chamber members to encourage and maintain an interest in and support of the Chamber's efforts. *(Supports strategic goal – Value)*
- Improve the Mobile Area Chamber's image in the minds of the public and make them better aware of who we are and our mission. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Promote the Chamber and Mobile area via the Chamber's websites, electronic publications and social media outlets. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Improve dialogue with media outlets and promote Chamber activities and issues more heavily in the local media. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Assist the Economic Development Department with implementing a national marketing campaign. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*

Community and Governmental Affairs

- Develop and obtain passage of the 2015 Chamber Community Legislative Agenda. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Promote a local business-friendly political and legislative climate that encourages economic growth, is responsive to business needs and is supportive of business success. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Convene key groups and organizations to identify and work on vital community issues. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*

- Improve communication with the membership, elected officials and Chamber staff on key community issues. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Implement the Leaders Exchange program with a focus on workable solutions to regional and local issues. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Encourage positive military and civilian relationships. *(Supports strategic goal – Value)*

Watch the Chamber's annual meeting video shown at the Jan. 27 event at www.youtube.com/mobilechamber

Economic Development

- Aggressively market the Mobile region for business locations and expansions based on community strengths, unique strategic advantages and governed by community quality of life objectives. *(Supports strategic goals – Jobs and Advocacy)*
- Support the five-year Partners for Growth goal of creating an average of 800 new jobs per year. *(Supports strategic goal – Jobs and Advocacy)*
- Continue to staff and deliver economic development services for the Washington County Economic Development Initiative. *(Supports strategic goal – Jobs and Advocacy)*
- Provide staff support and expertise to the Industrial Development Board, Industrial Development Authority and the Industrial Park Board. *(Supports strategic goal – Value)*

- Involve Chamber-volunteer leadership, City and County elected leadership, and local agency allies in current Plan of Action implementation, as well as long-term economic development planning and funding. *(Supports strategic goal – Value)*
- Generate, collect, organize, provide and publish information to support economic development activities that service our members' needs. *(Supports strategic goal – Value)*
- Further develop the Mobile region as a center for international trade and transportation to enhance the foreign sales of area products and services. *(Supports strategic goal – Advocacy)*
- Improve Mobile's ability to respond to workforce needs. *(Supports strategic goal – Jobs)*

Finance & Operations

- Provide and maintain financial control and related services. *(Supports strategic goal – Excellence)*
- Develop and maintain all records, forms and reports relating to human resource management. *(Supports strategic goal – Excellence)*
- Coordinate maintenance of the Chamber building, grounds, fixtures and equipment. *(Supports strategic goal – Excellence)*
- Enhance Chamber and Chamber Foundation operations through improvement of processes and procedures. *(Supports strategic goal – Excellence)*
- Continue to enhance the Chamber's information technology assets. *(Supports strategic goal – Excellence)*

2015 Plan of Action Summary



Membership

- Exceed budgeted goals for dues and non-dues income to support Chamber operations. (*Supports strategic goal – Value*)
- Provide innovative programs and services that our members desire and value. (*Supports strategic goal – Value*)
- Ensure awesome customer service to improve member retention and development. (*Supports strategic goal – Value*)

Small Business Development

- Market and provide technical assistance to area small businesses to help stimulate their development and foster job creation. (*Supports strategic goal – Jobs*)
- Provide business assistance to minority-owned businesses and encourage their participation in all Chamber activities. (*Supports strategic goal – Jobs*)
- Coordinate task force activities of select programs, products and services benefiting small businesses. (*Supports strategic goal – Value*)

- Create a system to share local funding sources with interested businesses. (*Supports strategic goal – Jobs*)
- Provide continuing education, training and business development opportunities for small businesses. (*Supports strategic goal – Value*)
- Serve as an advocate on issues of concern to the small business community. (*Supports strategic goal – Advocacy*)
- Facilitate assistance provided by other small business resources in the Mobile/Baldwin area. (*Supports strategic goal – Advocacy*)

How to Reach Your Chamber Staff



Administration

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Bob Chappelle, Chief Operating Officer: 251-431-8644
Katrina Dewrell, Executive Coordinator: 251-431-8611
Ramona Hill, Special Projects: 251-431-8647

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Susan Rak-Blanchard, Director: 251-431-8641
Marion Warren, Event Manager: 251-431-8640
René Darden Eiland, Account Executive - Advertising: 251-431-8635
Carolyn Wilson, Assistant: 251-431-8606

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Yoko Allen, Director of Local Affairs: 251-431-8628
Patty Howell, Director of Regional Affairs: 251-431-8601
Carolyn Hunt, Assistant: 251-431-8621

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Cesny Soffronoff, Coordinator Administrative Services: 251-431-8636

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Austin Monk, Washington County Economic Developer: 344-332-0565
Emily McGrath, Project Coordinator: 251-431-8651

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Al Ruffin, Research Manager: 251-431-8656

Education and Workforce Development

Bridget Wilson, Director: 251-431-8619

International Trade

Christina Stimpson, Director: 251-431-8651

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Assistant: 251-431-8638
Alison Unger, Member Services Representative: 251-431-8617
Odetta Stutts, Help Desk Receptionist: 251-433-6951

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Brenda Rembert, Assistant: 251-431-8607

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Perfecting That Cleaning Service

Pictured, left to right, Gregory Owens, Tamarian James, Johnnita Williams, Keaneacha Dockery (owner), Preston Dale, Carolyn Fletcher and Tami Corey.

Keaneacha Dockery believes the value of a cleaning service isn't just a clean house – it's the time you saved yourself by hiring someone else to clean it.

That's the idea and mission of Perfecting That Cleaning Service, the business she started by herself in 2002. Its name comes from the Bible in Psalms 138:8, which reads in part: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me."

"It is supposed to help them to be able to do other things they need to be doing," Dockery said of her business. "If they're getting services to help with their home, that should free their time to be able to do other things that will complete their life."

Perfecting That Cleaning Service is the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Small Business of the Month.

Dockery, who began cleaning homes on the side while working at Mobile Infirmary, said she started her business by taking advantage of free networking opportunities, doing all residential work in the beginning.

Since then, Perfecting That Cleaning Service has grown through word of mouth and more networking through Chamber events, and now includes nine employees with offices on Azalea Road and in Clarke County. About 60 percent of its business is now commercial, with clients in

Mobile, Baldwin and Clarke counties and across the state line in Florida.

The company offers one-time or regularly scheduled cleaning appointments, construction clean-up and a wedding concierge service. Dockery said what sets it apart is an emphasis on deep cleaning.

"People love that we do thorough deep cleaning," she says adding that new clients often have gone six months or more without a cleaning.

The business was featured on the cover of a previous issue of *The Business View*, which Dockery said provided invaluable exposure. "That gave me a lot of credibility in the community,"

she said.

While the company has grown steadily since its one-woman beginnings, Dockery has bigger plans for the future.

"My next goal is the Montgomery area, to place an office there," she said, "and definitely more expansion into the construction cleaning industry."

Want to be featured here?
Go to mobilechamber.com to submit an application, or contact Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or drichards@mobilechamber.com.

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce 2015 Legislative Agenda

Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services.

The members of the Mobile Area Chamber and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Economic Development & Tax

- Continue to support efforts to maintain federal military contracts with Mobile area-based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships, Joint High Speed Vessels, and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.
- In order to make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states, support economic development legislation to encourage job creation and the investment of capital by making statutory incentive programs more usable and applicable to new and expanding companies.
- In order to continue the growing investments in the renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, pass Legislation to extend the Alabama Historic Tax Credit beyond the 2015 expiration date. And seek amendments to current incentives to allow for the sale of state tax credits for the preservation and renovation of historic buildings.
- In order to support local small business, and provide a level playing field for all retailers, support the collection of state and local sales tax from all online transactions.
- Support fair trade initiatives and agreements designed to increase access to global markets, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, approval of federal Trade Promotion Authority and the reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
- Support and encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and government procedures that encourage development and growth within the city of Mobile and Mobile County; encourage fair and expeditious permitting practices for both local and out-of-town investors; and support the further analysis of local and regional tax reform.

Education & Workforce Development

- Continue funding increases necessary to enhance k-12 preparedness and

ultimate success of students through the expansion of quality pre-kindergarten educational programs in Alabama.

- Fully fund the FY '16 Education Budget to allow for the full implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, which includes the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, and the Career/Technical Education Initiative dual-enrollment programs.

Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

- Ensure that all projects and initiatives funded by the RESTORE Act provide for long-term environmental restoration and economic recovery to Alabama's coastal region. All approved projects and initiatives should adhere to a sound, scientific framework of analyses, an economic benefit assessment and a method of accountability.

- Support a comprehensive, federal energy policy that increases the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment, promotes comprehensive energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.
- To relieve growing congestion, advocate for final site selection and identify funding of the proposed I-10 Mobile River bridge and Bayway widening project from the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.
- Continue to advocate for adequate federal funding levels for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District to support annual operations and maintenance dredging of Mobile area waterways, including the Port of Mobile, Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels.
- In order to preserve jobs and economic growth, remove barriers that can derail infrastructure projects and reduce overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.

Small Business

- Establish state-guaranteed, zero-interest small business loans available immediately following a federally-declared natural disaster, such as a hurricane, flood or tornado, to bridge the time until insurance claims are paid and other disaster relief funds or financial assistance can be acquired.
- In order to reduce the cost of flood insurance for local business and property owners, encourage reforms in local and state government that will ultimately increase the credits available through National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) and lower the CRS classification in local municipalities.
- In order to protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace, oppose any legislation that would keep an employer from restricting unauthorized firearm possession on company property.

Healthcare

- Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama.
- Support state-level initiatives that will allow local healthcare providers to quickly and effectively implement the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act.

Legislative Directory

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Chamber Names Yoko Allen as Director of Local Governmental Affairs

Yoko Allen was recently named director of local governmental affairs for the Mobile Area Chamber. In this position, Allen will serve as a liaison for Chamber members with local elected officials, and oversee several Chamber committees, including the transportation coalition and the energy committee.

"Yoko's commitment and work in community relations is a big plus," said **Ginny Russell**, vice president of the Chamber's community and governmental affairs department. "She brings a wealth of knowledge that should serve the business community and our team well."

Before joining the Chamber, Allen worked as a navigator lead for the Affordable Care Act, Health Insurance Marketplace at Providence Hospital.



Resume highlights include the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the National Organization for Black County Officials.

"Throughout my upbringing, 'success' was defined as being a good resource for others," she said. "So, by that definition, I wanted to be successful."

Allen earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and occupational therapy from Florida A&M University and a master's degree in public health, health policy from Florida State University. She also graduated from the The Washington Center and the Leadership Academy at Georgetown University.

She can be reached at 251-431-8628 or yallen@mobilechamber.com.



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Regions Bank is pleased to announce that Blake Hendrix has joined the South Alabama team as Vice President and Business Banking Sales Manager. With his leadership abilities and 18 years of banking experience, Blake is an exciting addition to Regions.



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Michael Brown

Company: American Red Cross, South Alabama Chapter

Title: Executive Director

Hometown: Mobile

Education: Bachelor's degree in economics with minors in management and marketing from Auburn University

First job: Busboy at the Stirrup Cup Lounge at the Marriott Perimeter Center in Atlanta.

Previous experience: Brown started his fundraising career with the Boy Scouts of America in Atlanta, where he worked for almost nine years. In 2001, he joined the American Red Cross as a disaster fundraising officer in Mobile and spearheaded the fundraising effort following Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Katrina. After almost three years with the United Service Organizations Inc. (USO), he returned to the Red Cross as senior development officer in Atlanta before accepting his current position.

Accomplishments: Brown worked 32 disaster relief operations in 17 states over a period of six years with the national headquarters of American Red Cross. Brown was the top fundraiser in the Red Cross Southeast and Caribbean division for 2013, which includes six states and Puerto Rico. He also coached his son in football and baseball and his daughter in softball. He is an assistant Scoutmaster in Troop 47 in Fairhope.

Secret to success: "Success in family and faith leads to professional success."

Brief company description: The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergency by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. The South Alabama Chapter of the Red Cross accomplishes its mission with hundreds of volunteers and only seven staff members.



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These winners were randomly selected at the October and November Business After Hours events.



Newk's Eatery

Newk's Eatery offers deli sandwiches, fresh-tossed salads and desserts for dine-in, to-go or catering. The restaurant chain was founded in 2004 by the group of restaurateurs who previously started McAlister's Deli. Newk's Eatery is located at 252 Azalea Rd. in Mobile, and is open seven days a week. Call 251-341-3533 or go to www.newks.com for details. Pictured is Hali Key who works in catering for Newk's.



BugMaster Exterminators Inc.

BugMaster Exterminators Inc. is a locally owned, full-service pest control treatment service established in 1975, serving residences and businesses in Mobile and Baldwin counties. BugMaster is located at 619 Azalea Rd. in Mobile. To learn more about the company's services call 251-666-4402 or visit their website at www.bugmaster.com. Pictured are members of the BugMaster team.



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Photo by Jeff Tesney

Adriana Bright is director of sales for Homewood Suites by Hilton. She assists clients from booking events to the actual stay, making sure the process is a good experience. Bright, a native of Stafford, Va., joined the Ambassador Program last year. "Mobile has a wonderful tapestry of people with unique insights and it is wonderful to be able to get to know them on many different levels," she said. "I also love being able to see new businesses grow and develop in our community."



Photo by Jeff Tesney

"I like learning about new and existing businesses in our area and connecting with other professionals," said **Stephanie Bondora**, who has been an Ambassador since Fall 2014. Bondora is the director of sales/assistant general manager for the Admiral Semmes Hotel in downtown Mobile, where she develops and executes sales strategies for conferences, leisure and corporate travelers to optimize business opportunities while maximizing hotel revenues.

*Since the December/January issue of **The Business View** is a combined one, two ambassadors are featured here. Ambassadors are volunteers who support the Mobile Area Chamber by visiting members, assisting with events and ribbon-cuttings. To learn more, contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.*



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FEBRUARY 2015

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

11 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

Start your day with the Chamber and network with other business professionals.

When: 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Where: Habitat for Humanity of Southwest Alabama, 3712 Airport Blvd.

Contact: Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or aunger@mobilechamber.com
No charge. Reservations are not needed.
Coffee/pastries provided by:



11 GCTC LUNCH

A bi-monthly lunch hosted by the Gulf Coast Technology Council.

When: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: David Powell, Teklinks

Topic: "Journey to the Cloud"

Cost: \$20 for Chamber members and \$25 for potential members; includes lunch

Contact: Emily McGrath at 251-431-8651 or emcgrath@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required. Cancellations after Feb. 6 not reimbursed to cover lunch cost.

Sponsor:



16-17 CHAMBER CLOSED - MARDI GRAS

24 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE *Members Only

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

When: 8 to 9 a.m.

Where: Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: Jaime W. Betbeze, Maynard, Cooper & Gale PC and Barton Academy Foundation President

Topic: Barton Academy for Advanced World Studies and its economic impact for the business community

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

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

Sponsor:



25 WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE *Members Only

A bi-monthly forum for Chamber member women business owners and managers.

When: 8 to 9 a.m.

Where: Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: Glenda Snodgrass, The Net Effect

Topic: "Protecting Personal Information in the Digital Age"

Contact: Carolyn Golson at 251-431-8622 or cgolson@mobilechamber.com

No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested.

Sponsor:



26 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

When: 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Where: Holiday Inn Mobile – Downtown Historic District, 301 Government St.

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

Contact: Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or aunger@mobilechamber.com

Reservations are not needed.

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Longest Drive - Mississippi Export Railroad
Breakfast Sponsor - Dick Russell's Bar-B-Que

Who's New



Tolbert



Howell



Coggin



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Porterfield



Coburn

Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Cooper & Co. Inc. REALTORS hired new associates: Jada Tolbert, Lucy Howell,



Rucker



Hunts

Gerald Coggin, Matt Herbert, Ba Porterfield, Shannon Coburn, David Rucker and Steven and Alexandra Hunt.



First Community Bank (FCB) announced several staff changes:

Heather Fell is a human resources generalist, with a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama and is PHR-certified (professional in human resources).

Chris Gray is a commercial lender with more than 20 years of banking experience and a bachelor's degree in education from the University of South Alabama.

Tara Hickey brings 12 years of industry experience to her

new position as the mortgage lending manager.

Karen Morris, a graduate of Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in finance, joined the bank's commercial team.



Fell



Gray



Hickey



Morris



Paul



Sullivan

Cindy Paul is a retail analyst. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration degree/marketing from Auburn University and a master's in business administration from Columbia Southern University.

Paula Sullivan was promoted to senior branch manager. She has more than 20 years of banking experience and a bachelor's degree in organizational management from the University of Mobile.

Justin Jennings was promoted to chief banking and information officer and has a bachelor's degree in finance from Auburn University.

In addition, **Jennings** FCB welcomed two new members to its board of directors: **Paul E. Bullington**, chief financial officer for **Southern Light**, and **Marietta M. Urquhart**, a licensed realtor with **Heggenman Realty Co. Inc.** in Mobile.

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Bullington



Urquhart



Hart

Christine Harding Hart rejoined **Hand Arendall LLC** as an associate in the firm's litigation

section after

completing a one-year clerkship. Hart earned a juris doctorate degree at the University of Southern California's Gould School of Law and a bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University.

Stirling Properties welcomed **Angela McArthur** as sales and leasing executive. McArthur brings more than 25 years experience in commercial real estate.



Mothershed



Ramer

Wind Creek Hospitality (WCH) welcomed **Chef Peter D'Andrea** as the new corporate executive chef. He has more than 30 years of experience in the food and beverage industry.

WCH also promoted **Arthur Mothershed** to vice president of business development, and **Tim Ramer**, property manager. Mothershed holds a master's degree in business administration from The University of Alabama. Ramer earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at Faulkner University.

Southern Earth Sciences Inc. (SESI) promoted **R.J. Gonzales III PE** to manager of the construction materials testing department. Gonzales

holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of South Alabama and is a licensed professional engineer in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Harbor Financial Services LLC hired **Alexis Maloy** as an investment advisor for the company's new office in Brewton. Maloy has more than 26 years experience. She earned the designations of Certified Retirement Services Professional and Certified IRA Services Professional.

G.A. West & Co. promoted **J. Randall Bevis** to chief financial officer; **Robert Echols** vice president of structural steel services; and **Terry Swayne**, to vice president of concrete construction services.

Business Information Solutions Designs (BIS)

announced **Jenny Lines** as project manager for **BIS Designs**. Lines

graduated from the University of West Florida with a bachelor's degree in elementary education.

In addition, **Sean Williams** was selected as search engine optimization administrator and **Faye Conner** will serve as a senior account executive. Conner has an associate's degree in computer science and forensics from ITT Tech.

Hampton Inn and Suites in downtown Mobile added **Kelsey Sunderman** to its sales team. Sunderman earned a bachelor's degree in hotel restaurant and tourism management from the University of Southern Mississippi.



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Business Endeavors

TAG/The Architects Group Inc. designed the new Citronelle High School for the Mobile County Public School System. TAG is the architect of record, and **Hoar Program Management** is the project manager. The \$19.7 million, 96,000-square-foot high school will be built just north of the current campus, and the existing school facilities will be renovated for vocational studies.

Berg Pipe Corp. secured another contract for 600-plus miles of pipe for a new natural gas infrastructure that will serve the Southeastern U.S. The project will be divided between the German company's Mobile and Panama City, Fla., locations.

The **Mobile County Recycling Center** is now open at 7450 Hitt Rd. Goodwill Easter Seals will operate the facility, open seven days a week.

Title Guaranty LLC partners **Lister Crosby, John Stimpson, Mac Taul** and **Christopher Watkins** added forestry services to the company's residential and commercial real estate transactions.

Harbor Financial Services LLC recently opened an office in Brewton. The new office offers IRAs, retirement plans, trust services and custodial accounts.

Almon Associates of Tuscaloosa is joining forces with **Neel-Schaffer Inc.** to form a larger engineering and planning firm to serve its Alabama clients. The Jackson-based firm has 37 offices in nine states, employs 450 and now has four locations in Alabama with a total of 60 employees.

Well Done

Armbrecht Jackson LLP announced 15 of its attorneys were named to the 2015 edition of Best Lawyers: **Conrad P.**

Armbrecht, Gregory P. Bru, Tamela E. Esham, Richard W. Franklin, Duane A. Graham, Broox G. Holmes, Kathleen Miller, Thomas P. Oldweiler and **W. Boyd Reeves**. In addition five were honored as 2015 Lawyer of the Year: **Scott G. Brown, Edward A. Dean, E. B. Peebles, Kirk C. Shaw** and **Norman E. Waldrop Jr.**

Harrietta Eaton, chief executive officer of CorroMetrics Services, was recently elected to the National Association of Corrosion Engineers Foundation board, which supports education and research projects relating to the science of corrosion. She was also named to the Alabama School of Math and Science Foundation and the Boys and Girls Clubs of South Alabama boards.



Eaton

Standard & Poor's affirmed its "A-" rating for the **Alabama State Port Authority's** outstanding dock facilities revenue bonds. The rating agency's endorsement recognized the Port Authority's diversification of revenue sources in recent years, increasing cargo trends and strong financial margins.

Commonwealth National Bank Chief Executive Officer **Tyrone Fenderson Jr.** was appointed chairman of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's (CFPB) Community Bank Advisory Council. The council advises the Bureau's regulation of consumer financial products, services and other items assigned by the director.



Fenderson

According to the Alabama Department of Higher Education, **University of South Alabama** had the third largest enrollment increase from fall 2013 to fall 2014 among the 14 universities in Alabama. Preliminary numbers had USA enrollment moving from 15,311 to 16,055, an increase of 4.9 percent.

L. Page Stalcup III, a partner with **Wilkins Miller LLC**, was awarded the Chartered Global Management Accountant designation from the American Institute of CPAs and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. This designation recognizes professionals who have expanded their business skills through experience as management accountants.



Jones

In other news, **Erin S. Jones**, a manager with Wilkins Miller, was selected as one of *CPA Practice Advisor's* "Forty Under 40." Jones is a certified public accountant with more than 10 years' experience.

Burr & Forman LLP was recognized in the 2015 edition of *U.S. News' "Best Law Firms"* list. The firm earned the highest "Tier 1" metropolitan ranking in over 40 practice areas in markets throughout its Southeastern footprint, and is recognized with 10 national honors.

The list is based on client feedback and fellow lawyers from other firms in the same practice area.

Community News

The **Mobile Symphony** received a \$52,300 grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts to offset costs of producing the symphony's 18 regular season concerts, holiday concerts in Monroeville and Thomasville, Young People's Concerts for elementary school children and Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra concerts.

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1. Your favorite football team's game.
2. Your favorite TV show.
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SOMETHING EXTRA FOR MOBILE

Ann Bedsole was honored with the Marine Environmental Award for her work as founding former president of the Alabama Forest Resources Center.

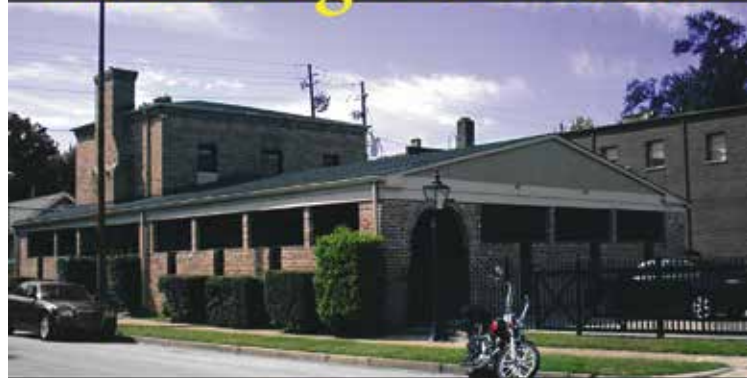
Through the center's efforts, endless acres of forest lands along the waterways and miles of the rivers flowing into the Mobile Bay were saved. The award was presented at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation's 2014 Marine Environmental Awards Luncheon.

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.

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251-341-0486
www.interfacefinancial.com/muller
Financial Services

LBM Consulting + Outsourcing

Brent McClure
P.O. Box 81114
Mobile, AL 36689
205-613-9708
www.lbmoutsource.com
Accountants-Certified Public

Marks Furniture Co.

David S. Marks III
34000 Bass Pro Dr.
Spanish Fort, AL 36527
251-341-1036
Furniture Stores

MHWirth Inc.

April McCants
7611 Lake Rd. S., Bldg. 303
Mobile, AL 36605
251-443-1795
www.mhwirth.com
Oil & Gas Exploration/Development

Motel 6, Mobile North

Kellie Shifflet
400 W. I-65 Service Rd. S.
Mobile, AL 36608
251-343-8448
www.motel6.com
Motels

Muscular Dystrophy Association

Emilee Long
7011 Fulton Ct.
Montgomery, AL 36117
334-396-4534
www.mda.org
Nonprofit Organization

PesTech Pest Control

Joseph Brakefield
P.O. Box 81301
Mobile, AL 36689
251-401-1159
Pest Control and Termite Services

Regus

Christy Brush
11 N. Water St., Ste. 10290
Mobile, AL 36602
251-321-4138
www.regus.com
Real Estate-Leasing

Ramsay Farms

Kelley C. James
5435 Business Pkwy.
Theodore, AL 36582
251-459-7430
Christmas Lights & Decorations

School Aids

Bill Firnberg
9335 Interline Ave.
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
251-272-3713
www.schoolaids.com
School Supplies

Smart Home America Inc.

Julie Shiyon-Woodard
P.O. Box 9098
Mobile, AL 36691
855-742-7233
www.smarthomeamerica.org
Nonprofit Organization

South Mobile County Tourism Authority

Lynne Brown
P.O. Box 12
Dauphin Island, AL 36528
251-861-8747
Tourism

Southern Sounds Productions & Event Design LLC

Kim Dale
P.O. Box 100
Daphne, AL 36526
251-219-4665
www.southernsounds.org
Event Planning/Management

Take 5 Oil Change - Airport Blvd.

Crystal Bell
3949 Airport Blvd.
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www.take5oilchangeairportblvd.com
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TapSnap

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1970 Sky Vista Drive W.
Semmes, AL 36575
251-554-6944
www.tapsnap1130.com
Entertainment

The Glass Guru

Alicia Barnett
5821 Rangeline Rd., Ste. 211
Theodore, AL 36582
251-287-1562
www.theglassguruofmobile.com
Glass-Contractors-Glazing

Affinity24

Jimmy Lyons
828 Country Club Ct.
Mobile, AL 36609
251-366-5966
Affinity24.com
Marketing

As of 12/31/14

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Mobile Area Chamber

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.

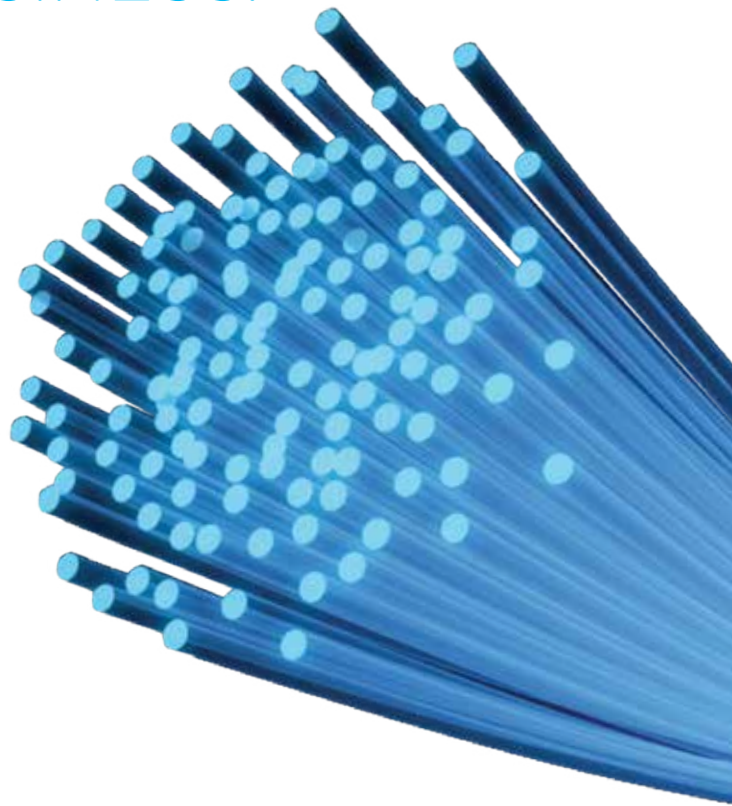
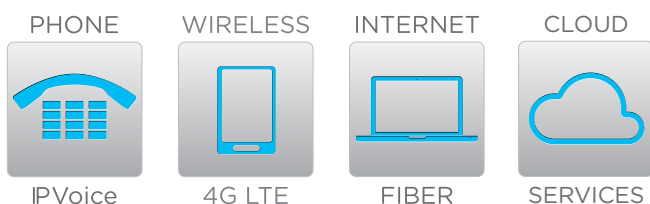


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believe in **mobile** belong to the **chamber**

connect ... succeed ... grow

At the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, our goal is simple – to help your business grow. Membership links you with resources and contacts for success during challenging times. Join us. Get involved in the Gulf Coast's most dynamic business community. Connect to our more than 2,200 members – network, ask questions, learn, share insights and form important business relationships. Believe in a strong future for Mobile. Belong to the Chamber – because it's good for business and good for Mobile.

