

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

JULY 2015

# the **business**VIEW



**FedEx Expands**  
in Mobile County

Tate & Lyle to Ramp Up  
**Splenda Production**

**A Decade Later**

2005 Emerging  
Leaders Reflect

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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

## Young Professionals Key to Mobile

Without question, we are embarking on a new era in the Mobile region. Although we have more than 300 years of proud and exciting history, our great city and our leaders, both young and old, are continuing to embrace our rich cultural heritage. We are looking to future prosperity with a flair unlike any previous time.

With expanding business sectors in maritime, aviation/aerospace, healthcare, chemical, transportation and many others, our young people no longer hope they will be able to capitalize on opportunities close to home, but are making it a reality. What's most encouraging is they're doing so by being an active participant in the process.



Since coming back to the Mobile Area Chamber as president in 2013, I've enjoyed meeting with young emerging leaders to get their valuable feedback and learn about their aspirations for our city. The thing that has struck me most about these 20-somethings is their willingness to grab hold and take on community projects.

Whether it be litter control, adopting schools, initiatives like the Fuse Project or helping craft strategy for a technology corridor in downtown Mobile, these leaders are making a difference and helping create a Mobile they want to live in and raise their families.

In turn, having them coming back home to Mobile makes it possible for us to show local entrepreneurs as well as national companies that Mobile is a place where they will find an educated and highly skilled workforce.

These new leaders will of course face challenges as we head into this exciting phase in our region's transformation. But take it from me, we're in good hands. The encouraging theme that I continually hear from these young professionals is "own it" --- your career, your city, your future. We're entering an exciting era, indeed.

### ON THE COVER

In 2005, the Mobile Area Chamber featured a group of young professionals. Read what they have to say about their personal growth and Mobile's growth over the last decade. Pictured on the cover from left to right are Clif Inge, IPC Capital Partners; Yolanda Richardson-Hunter, Austal USA; Mark Eiland, Regions Bank; Carlos Gant, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Clarissa Hamilton, Genesis Technical Staffing. See story on pages 14-18.

Photo by Jeff Tesney



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# FedEx to Open Distribution Center in Theodore



A major distribution center for FedEx Ground is projected to bring more than 100 full-time jobs to the area at peak operation of its new facility, expected to be complete in early 2016 in the southwest end of Mobile County.

Mobile Industrial Properties LLC will further develop a road and associated infrastructure in a commercial park in Theodore, including constructing a roadway and enhancing drainage in the 158-acre park, located near Exit 13 off Interstate 10. Currently there is one distribution center at the park.

"This is a win-win situation for Mobile County," said **Jerry Carl**, the Mobile County commissioner for the project's

district. "The development of the property will result in significant opportunities for recruitment of commercial and light manufacturing businesses, which in turn will bring more jobs to our area."

"The Chamber worked with the developer and Mobile County, helping facilitate a good solution for both parties," said **Troy Wayman**, the Mobile Area Chamber's vice president of economic development.

FedEx Ground will occupy approximately 193,375 square feet of warehouse and distribution space being built on the property by SAAD Development Corp. 

# Young Entrepreneurs Academy Turning Students Into CEOs

By the end of the coming school year, chances are there will be several new businesses in Mobile, thanks to the Mobile Area Chamber's inaugural Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA) class of 2016.

Fourteen students from the Alabama School of Math and Science were selected to participate in 30 weeks of instruction on starting and running a business for the upcoming school year. Each will pitch his or her concept to a panel of judges for funding. Top student competitors will compete regionally and nationally for scholarships.

The YEA is managed locally by the Mobile Area Chamber, with the University of South Alabama Mitchell College of Business providing instructors and class space. 



*Pictured, standing, left to right, are: Jon Ross Sanders, Alexander City; Messiah Williams, Camp Hill; Ambria Walker, Tuskegee; Anasofia Guajardo, Daphne; Wesley Oliver, Aliceville; Sung-Hoon Park, Mobile; and Eric Lee, Dothan. Bottom, left to right: Dominique Williams, Huntsville; Kylie Pandolfi, Enterprise; Isabella Fank, Prattville; Catherine Minor, Aliceville; Amanda Peterson, Daphne; Shannon Regan, Mobile; and Genevieve Tillman, Mobile.*

# Sweet: Tate & Lyle Plans to Produce Splenda Locally

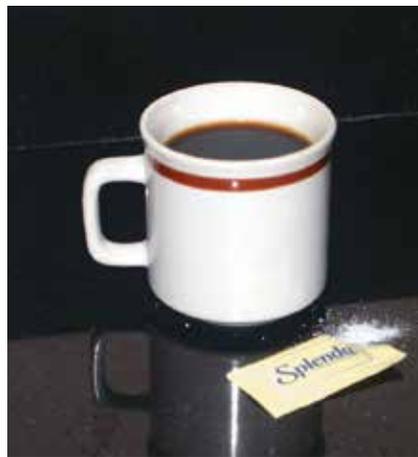
Tate & Lyle sweetened the pot of its investment in its Splenda Sucralose facility in Washington County, with a recent announcement about the company's restructuring plans. During the next 12 months, the company will close its Singapore operation, transfer the equipment to McIntosh and purchase additional equipment, increasing its value by \$25 million and the local workforce by 10.

In 2016, company officials expect to locally produce all of the no-calorie sweetener used in food and beverages as well as marketed under the brand

Splenda. These actions, according to a company statement, "position Splenda Sucralose as a more focused, low-cost and sustainable business."

"These efficiencies are possible because Washington County provides advantages around energy pricing as well as a stable and skilled workforce," says **Chris Olsen**, vice president of community and government affairs for Tate & Lyle. "Additionally, the county and the state of Alabama have done an excellent job in establishing

a supportive environment and infrastructure for doing business." "We're optimistic that Tate & Lyle's additional investment in



Splenda at McIntosh improves our competitiveness for future products," says **Austin Monk**, economic development director for the Washington County Economic Development Initiative.

Earlier this year, the company launched a low-calorie sugar, Dolcia Prima™, Tate & Lyle's name for allulose. The product is described as being able to function like sugar but with significantly fewer calories.

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# Austal Could Reach “Lucky 13” LCS Built in Mobile

The U.S. Navy modified its contract that funds the last two ships of the Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) block buy with Austal USA. In doing so, the Navy established an optional 11<sup>th</sup> ship that could be awarded next year. The option, if exercised, would bring the LCS Austal-built vessels to 13.

Austal, as prime contractor, is teamed with General Dynamics Mission Systems for the Independence-variant LCS

program. As the ship systems integrator, General Dynamics is responsible for the design, integration and testing of the combat management, navigation, C4I and aviation systems.

“The Navy’s confidence in Austal’s ability to continue to produce these incredible ships only serves to increase the level of pride and dedication that Austal USA and our employees exhibit daily while working to meet the needs of our sailors,”

said Austal USA President **Craig Perciavalle**.

Austal’s Independence-variant LCS program has seven ships under various stages of construction, including the USNS Jackson (LCS 6), which started sea trials and is preparing for delivery this summer, and the USNS Montgomery (LCS 8), preparing for sea trials and scheduled for delivery by year’s end.

The Navy also contracted with Austal for 10 Joint High

Speed Vessels (JHSV), four of which have already been delivered. USNS Trenton (JHSV 5) recently completed acceptance trials and is scheduled to be delivered in April 2016. Three additional JHSVs are also under construction at Austal’s shipyard.

Current contracts secure work through 2022. Austal has more than 4,200 employees in Mobile.

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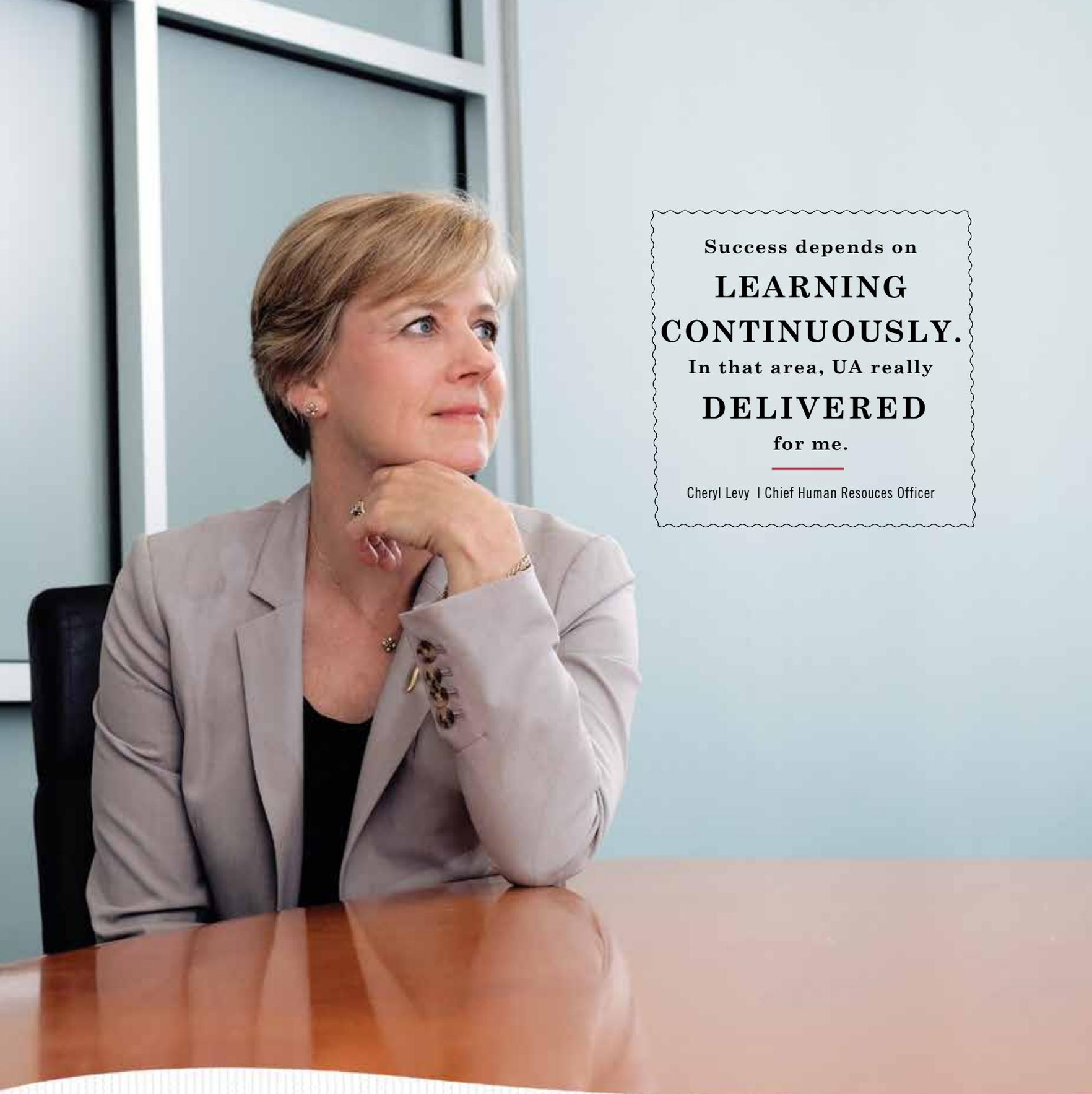
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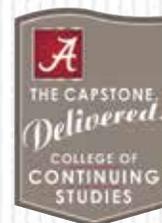


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# USS ALABAMA, Mardi Gras, BayFest & BayBears All Add Awareness of Mobile and Attract Tourists

The Alabama Tourism Department released the latest statistics for the state and each county. And while **Stacy Hamilton**, the Mobile Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau's (MBCVB) vice president of marketing and communications, said she is "satisfied with 2014 results," she wants to see that number increase, and the bureau is working on strategies to make it happen.



**Mobile Mardi Gras**  
2014 attendance:  
**1,034,609**

An estimated 2.958 million people visited Mobile County in 2014, approximately 80,000 more than the previous year. Those travelers spent \$988 million and helped support 15,604 jobs last year in Mobile

County, according to an Auburn University Montgomery report conducted for the Alabama Tourism Department.



**BayFest**  
2014 attendance:  
**150,000**

The local 7.8 percent increase in traveler spending on hotels, restaurants, shopping and transportation outpaces the statewide rise by .5 percent. According to statewide estimates, more than 24 million visitors spent \$11.8 billion last year in Alabama. Rounding out the top five counties with the largest travel-related expenditures are: Baldwin County, \$3.5 billion; Jefferson County, \$1.7 billion; Madison County, \$1.08 billion; and Montgomery County, \$723 million.

The state tourism department also released the top attractions for 2014 based on attendance. Mobile was well represented with the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park coming in fourth place in the paid admission category. In the top events overall, Mardi Gras was listed first and BayFest came in fifth place.



**USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park**  
2014 attendance:  
**381,192**

The Mobile BayBears made the top 10 list of sports destinations, landing in ninth place. Bellingrath Magic Christmas in Lights was highlighted as a top projected event for 2015.



**Mobile BayBears Baseball**  
2014 attendance:  
**106,297**

## MOBILE TOURISM

Mobile County Visitors  
**2,958,008**

Travelers Staying in Mobile County Hotels & Motels  
**1,721,560**

Mobile County Travel-Related Employment  
**15,604**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> largest**  
in Alabama for 2014

Mobile County Travel-Related Earnings  
**\$405,546,709**  
**(10.3% over 2013)**

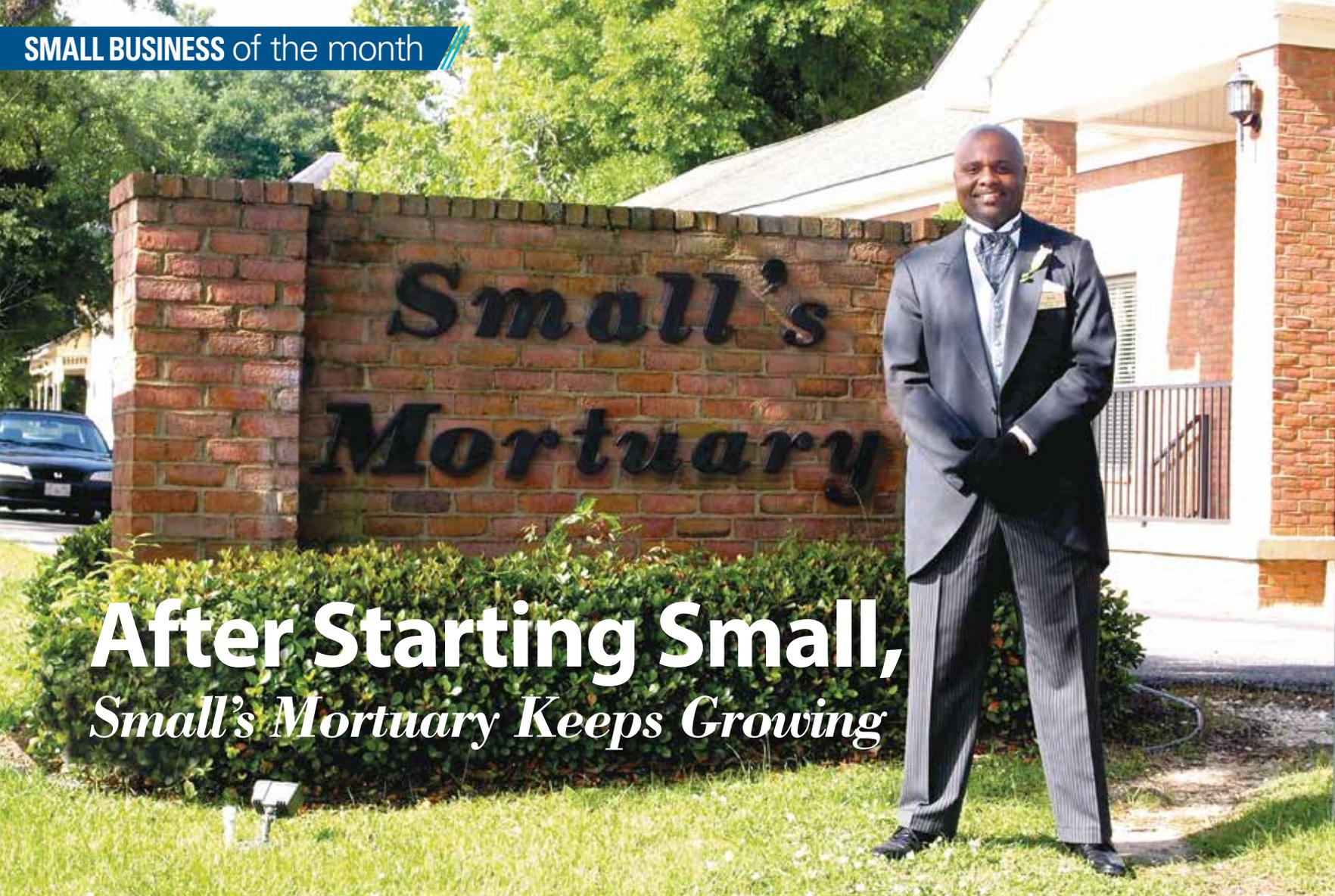
## Regional Website Promotes Tourism in Mobile and Baldwin Counties

A first in promoting tourism and travel in both Mobile and Baldwin counties, a regional website, [www.VisitCoastalAlabama.org](http://www.VisitCoastalAlabama.org), was launched recently. It is a collaborative effort between Coastal Alabama Partnership and the Coastal Alabama Regional Tourism Council.

The site hosts information on each tourism venue's event calendar, day trip itineraries and current happenings.

"Together we all are stronger as a destination when we work together to deliver one cohesive message to our audiences," says **Al Hutchinson**, president and CEO of Mobile Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau. "The visitor sees no county line or city jurisdiction. They see a place that can deliver an authentic, memorable vacation experience, and it is our job, regionally, to fulfill that desire."





# After Starting Small, *Small's Mortuary Keeps Growing*

*C.J. Small opened Small's Mortuary in 2002 at the age of 23. He has expanded operations to include locations in downtown Mobile, west Mobile and Baldwin County.*

When he was a boy, while his friends were pretending they were race car drivers and famous athletes, **C.J. Small** was placing his He-Man figures in pencil-box coffins and imagining himself a funeral director.

Small's parents were in their 40s when he was born, and along with church, a significant portion of his childhood was spent going to funerals, he said. He became fascinated with them.

"We were going to a church or to a funeral home for a certain reason – because of an object in the middle of the room," he said. "And the object had someone in it. I was just always curious. How long are they going to be there? Are they going to sit up? What's the process? I had all these questions that my parents could not answer. What happened to this person? It just drew my curiosity as to what goes on."

So after some initial reluctance from his parents, Small went to mortuary school in Atlanta and came back to Mobile to open his own funeral home, Small's Mortuary, as a 23-year-old in 2002. Part of his drive to become an entrepreneur was fueled by his desire to be a role model for other young African-American men, but as he opened his business on Broad Street, he found that his youth was an obstacle.

"People looked at a 23-year-old and the first thing that came to their mind was immaturity," he said. "And it was the opposite for me. I wasn't immature. I was pretty much an old man in a young man's body."

Small's Mortuary Inc. and Cremation Services is the Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

"My first priority is trying to make sure customers – my

families – are happy, and doing ministry for them during the worst time of their life," Small said.

The company's attention to customer service has led Small's Mortuary to grow from its initial location on Broad Street and add new locations in Theodore and Fairhope, with another Baldwin County location recently opened. With 10 full-time and another 31 part-time employees, it's a full-service funeral home, with cremation services at the Theodore location.

In addition to the new Baldwin County facility, Small is expanding the original Broad Street location, enlarging the chapel and prep room, and adding more funeral rooms and a reception room.

"The key to the growth of the business is customer service – making sure the employees are treated right, so you know they

will treat the customers right," Small said. "When (employees) are happy, they'll make the customer have a good experience at a difficult time for them."

In addition to continuing to build his business, Small has added a new responsibility, serving on the Mobile City Council. He said he wanted to continue the public service he'd begun with his involvement in several community organizations, including the Oakdale Community Service Club.

"The only difference now... is I'm at the table," Small said. "I'm allowed to make some decisions as to what's going on within our city."

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PROVIDENCE  
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# Summer Scrubs – Then

Each year, dozens of high school students spend one week of their summer shadowing area healthcare professionals. Since Summer Scrubs began in 2004, more than 1,200 students have participated in the Mobile Area Chamber's Bay Area Healthcare Coalition program, giving them a look into the extensive opportunities available in Mobile's second-largest industry.

*The Business View* sought out past participants and asked them what are they doing now, and how their education and/or career is progressing, as a way of showing the true impact of the program. Here's what they had to say:

**Dominique Crain**  
Summer Scrubs 2004  
Baker High School



**2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Medical Student**  
*Undergraduate Degree:* Biology  
University of Alabama

"Summer Scrubs was a program that introduced me to the field of medicine. It provided me with a first-hand experience of physicians in their daily practice. I observed many basic procedures and my very first surgical procedure during the program. In addition, we learned how to perform life-saving procedures such as CPR and utilization of an AED. My experiences in Summer Scrubs provided me with insight into what it was that I wished to do for a career; hence it had a major impact on my decision to become a physician."

**Josephine Baumgarten**  
Summer Scrubs 2007  
Faith Academy



**2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Physician Assistant Program**  
*Undergraduate Degree:* Biomedical Science  
University of South Alabama

"My experience with the Summer Scrubs program was the starting point towards my decision to choose a career in healthcare. After participating in Summer Scrubs, I was motivated to begin volunteering in the Treehouse at USA Children's and Women's hospital. I feel these opportunities not only helped me with future endeavors, but also solidified my passion for the medical field."

**Jaclyn Garner**  
Summer Scrubs 2005  
Mobile Christian



**Speech Therapist at Mobile Infirmary**  
*Master's Degree:* Speech Language Pathology  
University of South Alabama  
*Undergraduate Degree:* Communicative Disorders  
University of Alabama

"Summer Scrubs opened my eyes to the wide variety of potential healthcare careers available to me. The experience taught me that I truly did want a future career in healthcare."

**Cady Beedy**  
Summer Scrubs 2007  
Bayside Academy



**2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Medical Student**  
University of South Alabama  
*Undergraduate Degree:* Biology  
University of Alabama

"Summer Scrubs was my first view of the provider side of healthcare and really sparked my interest in furthering my pursuit of a career in healthcare."

**Kari Rodgers**  
Summer Scrubs 2004  
McGill-Toolen High School



**Cardiovascular Perfusionist**  
Northeast Georgia Health System  
Medical Center  
*Undergraduate Degree:* Cardiopulmonary Science  
University of South Alabama  
Certificate in Perfusion Technology  
Texas Heart Institute

"Summer Scrubs helped me to confirm that I wanted to work in the medical field by introducing me to many positions. I saw how rewarding it can be to have a career that involves helping people. Everyone I worked with during Summer Scrubs was positive and encouraging."

**Bo Brunson**  
Summer Scrubs 2007  
Fairhope High School



**1<sup>st</sup> Year, Medical Student**  
University of South Alabama  
*Undergraduate Degree:* Chemical Engineering  
*Master's Degree:* Chemical Engineering  
University of Alabama

"During that summer, participating in the Summer Scrubs program, I saw what it meant to be a doctor, the challenges they face, and what it takes to really care for patients. I knew then, this was something I wanted to do with my life."

**Blake Tennant**  
Summer Scrubs 2006  
UMS-Wright



**2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Medical Student**  
University of South Alabama  
*Undergraduate Degree:* Biology  
Birmingham-Southern College

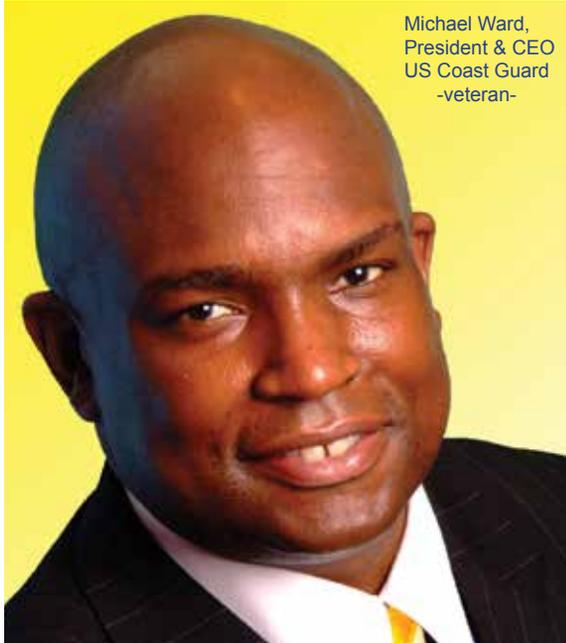
"Summer Scrubs really showed me the excitement that is present in the healthcare field. While in the program I saw a baby being born and I also saw an open heart surgery. Before this program I had shadowed doctors, but I really hadn't witnessed any life-changing or exciting events in healthcare."

# & Now

On July 13-16, more than 100 high school seniors from Mobile and Baldwin counties will don scrubs and jump into the fast-paced world of Mobile's healthcare industry, shadowing professionals in hospitals, clinics and other facilities to experience a variety of careers. This year's host locations are: Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic, Diagnostic and Medical Clinic, Mobile County Health Department, Mobile Infirmary, North Baldwin Infirmary, Providence Hospital, South Baldwin Regional Medical Center, Springhill Medical Center, Thomas Hospital, USA Children's & Women's Hospital, USA Medical Center, USA Mitchell Cancer Institute and Victory Health Partners. Pictured are four students participating in this year's program.



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Michael Ward,  
President & CEO  
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The group featured in 2005 have led successful careers, and been involved in many facets of the community. Pictured here, from left to right are: Todd Drummond, The Drummond Group; Dean Brown, Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic; CJ Ezell, Point Clear Networks; Ellen Praytor Faulkner, Lewis Communications; Rob Holbert, Lagniappe; and Allen Ladd, Thames Batre Insurance.

Photo by Jeff Tesney

# A Decade Later – What's Changed?

In August 2005, the Mobile Area Chamber's *The Business View* profiled 40 men and women who were forecast to become leaders in the business community. The magazine noted they were selected by their peers for "outstanding contributions to grow Mobile based on their career path and volunteer service on local boards, civic groups and organizations."

What a difference a decade makes – or does it? In the pages

to follow, you'll be reintroduced to many of this distinguished group and hear what they have to say about Mobile's progress, and their personal growth.

Of the 40 people featured at that time, it's interesting to note a couple things. First, only five people have moved out of Mobile, with two relocating to Birmingham, one to Atlanta and two to Arkansas. Secondly, two of the people featured have gone on to serve as Chamber

chairmen – **Robbie Baker** with Hancock Bank during the Chamber's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, and **Michael Pierce** with MLK Redevelopment Corp.

Also, career changes impacted nearly half the group, with 18 people changing jobs during the course of the past 10 years. Unfortunately, we were not successful in contacting everyone on the original list, but several attempts were made to speak with those still in Mobile.

What did we want to know? We posed a number of questions to the 2005 class, dealing with careers, community service and the advice they'd offer Mobile's up-and-coming community leaders. From their responses that follow, it's pretty easy to see why they were selected a decade ago when they were between ages 28 and 42. Collectively, they continue to lead this community as top executives and volunteers.

# Advising Mobile's Next Leaders

"Giving back" is often an over-used cliché that once noted the end of a career and beginning of retirement. No more, according to many of the people we spoke with. Several shared their thoughts on the value of investing in the community early and the impact it will have throughout their career.

"Find something to be passionate about, and then jump in with both feet and do everything you can to make it the very best," advised **W. Allen Carroll Jr.**, managing partner with Wilkins Miller PC. He found his passion by volunteering at his kids' school – St. Luke's Episcopal – as a chairman of its board of trustees at a time the school planned to expand and open a high school. "I will forever be grateful to have had the experience to participate in something that will make a significant impact on our community for decades."

Also active in her children's school is **April Boudreaux**, a partner at Smith Dukes accounting firm.

She explained that with her boys in middle and high school, she shifted her focus, and, "My volunteer activities were more focused on working with various events at St. Paul's Episcopal School."

**Mark Eiland**, vice president of trust with Regions Bank, agreed with Carroll that finding your passion is a key for young professionals who want to get involved in their community. He said, "Instead of just joining the first opportunity that comes along, seek out groups whose mission you support personally."

**Find something to be passionate about, and then jump in with both feet and do everything you can to make it the very best.**

W. Allen Carroll Jr.

"If I could go back 10 years, I would make every effort possible to be even more involved," admitted **Richard Inge**, president of Inge & Associates Real Estate Inc.

"Investing in my community not only feels good, but building new relationships and networking at community events has been rewarding for my business."

**Jody Dunn**, chief financial officer of Quality Valve Inc., shared a story a former boss told him. "If you have the talent and good fortune to build a great career or a great company, you have a responsibility to stay plugged in, to continue to make sacrificial gifts of time and money, and to make sure that your involvement becomes less and less about you, and all about those you are trying to help."



*Robbie Baker with Hancock Bank, left, and Michael Pierce with MLK Redevelopment Corp., were both featured in the 2005 story, and went on to serve as Board chairmen of the Mobile Area Chamber in 2011 and 2012, respectively.*

## On Changing Career Paths Along the Way

Not everyone who spoke with us in 2005 has continued on the same path. Even so, all agreed they have gained useful experience that has transferred to a new workplace. Many have also continued to volunteer in different capacities in their new positions.

In 2005, **Yolanda Richardson-Hunter** owned Digidraft, an engineering small business. Over the last decade she not only got married, but closed her business and went to work as a fitout engineering manager for Austal. Going from a small company to Mobile's largest

manufacturing employer enabled her to bring new skills to the table. "Small business owners generally see the big picture and all the details at the same time." She said, "I've learned from the best of both worlds."

By contrast, a decade ago **Todd Drummond**, president of The Drummond Group, was working for another commercial property company before branching out on his own eight years ago. That transition, he said – not surprisingly – has been filled with both challenges and rewards. "Uncertainty (from global debt and national

economic struggles) is on everyone's mind today." Yet even so, he's a confident business owner, and said, "(It's) rewarding to create value for our customers and tenants, which helps our business."

And **Carlos Gant**, who a decade ago worked for a local architecture firm, is now an architect for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He said although he's moved from the private sector to public, he's grateful to be able to continue working with nonprofits.

*Continued on page 16*



Photo by Jeff Tesney

Pictured here at 202 Government St., in downtown Mobile are some of the Next Generation of Business Leaders featured in 2005. Pictured from left to right are: Archinique Kidd, Mobile Area Water and Sewer System; Andy Newton, Southern Light LLC; Richard Inge, Inge & Associates Real Estate; Allen Carroll, Wilkins Miller LLC; Ashley Toland-Trice, Lagniappe; and Jody Dunn, Quality Valve.

## So What's Changed in Mobile?

Continued from page 15

"I've been able to be a part of revitalizing an area of Mobile... providing home ownership, economic development and job opportunities to a section of the city that had been in decline."

**Lockett Robinson II**, who now works for Overseas Hardwood Co., had just made partner at a local law firm when the article ran. Today, he works for his family business that requires him to travel a good deal. He said in comparison to where he was 10 years ago, "I have become much more involved in my community. I also see more clearly how critical community involvement is."

Looking at Mobile through 20-something eyes can be much different than in your late 30s and early 40s. But for the most part it was refreshing that everyone remembered Mobile's past economic successes as significantly influencing their businesses today.

"I have witnessed the economic impact that the investment in aerospace over the last 10 years has brought to Mobile and the surrounding area," said **Greg Guzman**, who is managing partner at AeroStar Inc. "I can definitely say that the investment is paying dividends and will continue to do so for many years."

Lagniappe co-publisher **Rob Holbert** agreed Mobile's investment in aerospace has been a turning point. "Building jetliners at Brookley should

have a significant impact on what is to come," he said. He's looking forward to the opening of the Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility to see how it will change the city.

Many of Mobile's economic development wins might not have happened without the community's support of the school tax referendum, according to **Robbie Baker** with Hancock Bank, "Increasing funding for the public school system (in 2001) and then renewing the tax increase (in 2010) was key to Mobile's initial workforce development efforts and later landing ThyssenKrupp and Airbus."

**Archinique Kidd**, underutilized business coordinator for the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System, added, "The recent transition of

city government's focus on our local small businesses and seeing that small business is big business," is also changing attitudes in Mobile.

"Mobile weathered the great recession well," said **Andy Newton**, president of Southern Light. "There are notable 'big wins' but our economy is evolving to provide a wider variety of opportunities as well."

And finally, all of Mobile's economic successes aren't tied around a particular industry, according to **Kinnon Phillips**, owner of The Bellwether Group. He said, "The emergence of a vibrant and economically attractive downtown area is something that has taken years to create." Specifically, he noted the investment now underway along downtown's St. Louis Street corridor.

# On Finding Your Place in Mobile

A good career, a healthy family and a room full of friends is all many need to be happy. And when you can have all that and find a place where you're most needed to make a difference in someone's life, there's not much more you could want, according to several participants.

**Clarissa Hamilton**, president of Genesis Technical Staffing Inc, always enjoyed participating in charitable fundraising events, and was a frequent contributor. From there she created a charitable foundation called The Wish List that raises money for children in foster care at places like St. Mary's Home. "Our business philosophy is to be a blessing in all we do by providing service based on integrity, value and trust," she said.

Well known and respected for his servant leadership, **Allen Ladd** with Thames Batré Insurance has impacted nonprofit agencies from United Way of Southwest Alabama to Goodwill Easter Seals to United Cerebral Palsy. He's most proud of one community project he was involved in to raise money to renovate the Gordon Smith Center serving Goodwill Easter

Seals and the Mobile Association for the Blind. "That facility will serve thousands of individuals in the areas of education and involvement," he said. "Watching it happen was miraculous."

Invested in supporting Mobile's downtown, **Clif Inge**, managing director of IPC Capital Partners LLC, mentioned his involvement with building a new Mobile Rescue Mission away from the central business district. And today, "We recently purchased the St. Francis Street Methodist Church and look forward to bringing the 1890 church back to life."

After taking a tour of the USA Mitchell Cancer Center Institute with Abe Mitchell and Kelly McCarron, **Russ Ford**, regional president/EVP of iBERIABANK, saw first-hand "how important MCI has become in helping those with cancer and discovering ways to find a cure." For that reason his bank has been the premier sponsor for an annual gala where all monies raised go directly into research and development to find cures for cancer.

# Giving Young Professionals a Place to Start

Nonprofit work is important and rewarding, but young professionals often say it doesn't expose them to a larger group of peers and possible mentors. Some of the men and women featured a decade ago found themselves at the Mobile Area Chamber looking to get involved, while others considered leadership training as a good option.

"I would suggest young professionals first get involved in his/her industry-specific trade associations," advised **Bill Goodloe**, vice president of Lyon Fry Cadden Insurance. "Some of these groups will provide real opportunities to be a leader and it's at that point that you need to act on it." In 2003, Goodloe served as chairman of the Chamber's membership campaign, Chamber Chase.

**Ellen Praytor Faulkner**, senior vice president/managing director of Lewis Communications, followed in her mother's footsteps with active Chamber involvement, including serving on the board of advisors. On

Chamber involvement she says, "It's a gateway to countless opportunities in the community, to grow as a professional, for networking and learning about the region." Armed with this knowledge, she says a person can then "create their own personal growth plan based on their passion and strengths mirrored with the needs of our city and region."

"I still have friends from my class that I network with today," **Dean Brown**, CEO of Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic PC, said about participating in Leadership Mobile, a year-long program run by Mobile United. "It is a great way to learn about our community and the resources we have here."

**C.J. Ezell**, president of Point Clear Networks, said civic organizations do positive things in our community, but many are struggling with an aging membership base, and they "need an infusion of youth to insure they continue to fulfill their missions for decades to come."

---

# Preparing for the Next Leaders

Today's young professionals – our next generation of leaders – will have some tough decisions to make along the way: to keep Mobile "as is," or tear up the plan of work and start over. It's the same questions the group faced over the past 10 years. But how they handle it should lay the foundation for a successful future.

**Michael Pierce**, executive director of MLK Redevelopment Corp, was the Chamber's board chairman in 2012. He remembered a challenge at that

time was the city of Mobile's financial crisis and whether a temporary 1-cent sales tax was the answer. "Given the Chamber's longstanding position on sales tax increases, it was refreshing seeing the organization's willingness to temporarily support the increase in light of the threat to Mobile's future." He believes this was a step in the right direction for the city to become fiscally solvent.

Changes in the local media have forced existing business and community leaders to seek

alternatives to traditional media sources for news. **Ashley Toland-Trice**, co-publisher and editor of *Lagniappe*, said over the last decade the paper has gone from a circulation of 5,000 to 25,000 and from a bi-weekly to a weekly. "Our community has supported *Lagniappe* so wholeheartedly," she said. And as a result, she said, the paper will continue to extend its reach to cover more daily news in Mobile, all while "keeping things a little 'funky' around here too."

"The hallmark of Mobile's economic growth over the past 10 years has been diversification (of industry) and foreign direct investment," said **Bill Sisson**, president and CEO of the Chamber. He believes the key to future economic success will be the continued focus on recruiting companies that capitalize on Mobile's strengths. "We are now seen as a hotspot," he said, adding there is no time to sit back and "rest on our laurels."

*Continued on page 18*

# Revisiting 2005 Mobile's Economy Just a Decade Ago

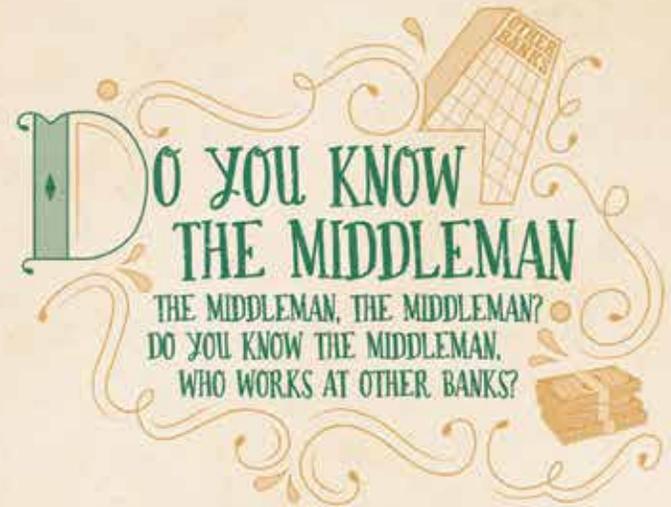
Ten years ago next month, just after *The Business View* featured 40 emerging community leaders, everyone on the Gulf Coast, from Alabama to Mississippi to Louisiana, would be impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Businesses along our coastline were leveled, and thousands of families displaced.

The Mobile Area Chamber's staff set out to call each of its members to get a sense of business impact, and offer up resources for recovery. And community leaders launched a public relations and marketing campaign to announce Mobile was open for business.

But the tragedy of August 2005 would not be the only news in Mobile that year. In fact, the year ended with some notable headlines that included:

- Six new companies and 14 expansion projects announced 1,339 new jobs and \$636.3 million in capital investment;
- The U.S. Navy selected Austal USA to build the prototype for the Littoral Combat Ship (see story on page 6);
- A public/private partnership announced its intent to build the Mobile Container Terminal – a joint venture between the Alabama State Port Authority, APM Terminals North America and Terminal Link, a division of CMA GCM – one of the world's largest container shipping companies;
- EADS named Mobile as the site for the KC-30 assembly line if they won the Department of Defense contract;
- In the same announcement, the company committed to establishing an Airbus Engineering Center to employ 150;
- A \$680 million investment by Alabama Power at Barry Steam Plant was announced that would, over six years, lower emissions from the plant;
- Successfully lobbied for a special \$80 million appropriation for the Alabama State Port Authority so it could begin necessary upgrades;
- The Chamber received the country's highest honor for work in international trade – the Presidential "E" Award; and
- Hosted a three-day Small Business Development loan clinic that, when over, made 70 loans valued at more than \$1 million for local entrepreneurs.

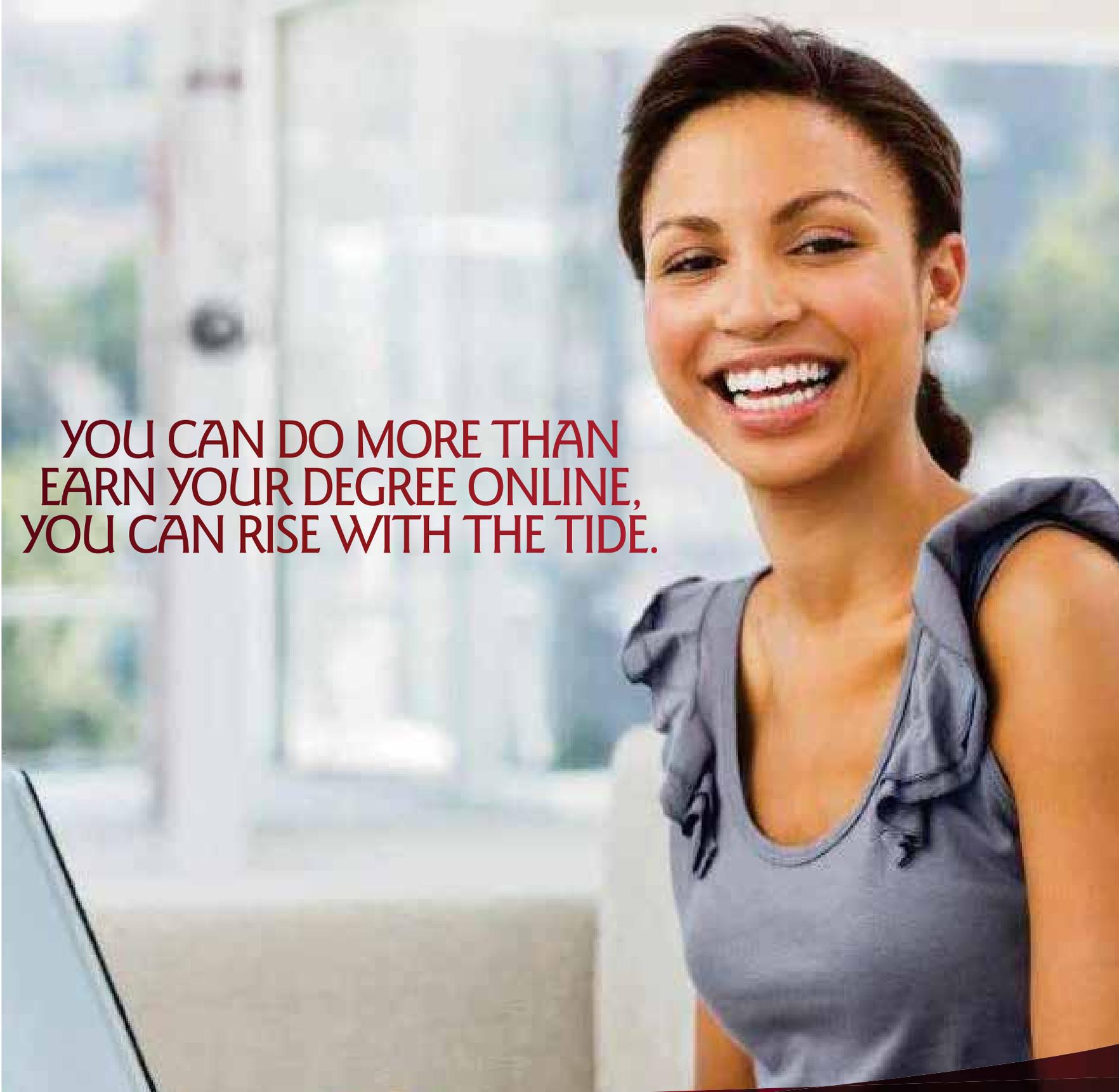
"I personally think the Mobile area is experiencing the kind of growth we've talked about for years," said 2005 Chamber Chairman **Harris Morrisette** at the end of his year as chair. "I'm convinced the best is yet to come."



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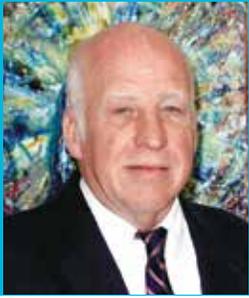
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# Nonprofits Impact Every Facet of Mobile

By: Andy Wynne, Administrator, St. Mary's Home

What would you say if I told you I am announcing a business venture that will bring in more than \$100 million to our economy annually, create 1,765 direct jobs and no pollution, and solves community problems? Would you be excited?

Well, that's what happened last year through the efforts of the members of the South Alabama Coalition of Nonprofits. Using a very conservative economic multiplier, the efforts of this group helped create 706 additional jobs and generated an additional \$89 million for the local economy last year alone.

Nonprofits impact every facet of life in our community. They provide services that range from healthcare to the environment to education to the arts. It is safe to say that every member of our community feels the impact of our nonprofits in their lives, even if they are not aware of it. This is provided through direct services by the agencies, provision of mandated government services, employment in the nonprofit sector, job creation and volunteerism.

In Mobile and Baldwin counties, there are 3,855 nonprofits. The coalition includes nonprofits sharing a common purpose based on increasing effectiveness in their organizations; advocacy for those who receive our services; and public awareness and support within our community.

In the past year alone, these nonprofits:

- Served more than 81,000 people;
- Employed 1,765 people;
- Spent \$108 million;
- Had payrolls in excess of \$60 million;
- Logged 195,000 hours of volunteer service;
- Tapped 638 community leaders as board members;
- Represented 860 years of combined service; and
- Boasted \$65 million in assets.

Imagine if these agencies no longer existed. The unemployment rate for our area would rise to 8.5 percent. Many workers depend on the services of our agencies in order for them to have employment. Subsidies provided for governmental mandated services would no longer be available, and tax rates would have to be raised. The consequence of our agencies not being able to provide services would have a negative economic and human cost to our community.

It's important to be aware of the impact nonprofits have in our community. We know you depend on us, and we will continue to work with the different agencies to strengthen our community partnerships.

*Wynne has worked at St. Mary's Home since 1987. St. Mary's Home has been providing care for children since 1838, serving as the oldest child welfare agency in the state of Alabama and one of the oldest in the country. To contact Wynne, email him at [awynne@stmaryshomemobile.org](mailto:awynne@stmaryshomemobile.org).*



Non-Profit Roundtable, sponsored by Alabama Power, is a group of Chamber members in the non-profit sector who meet bimonthly on timely topics and networking. To learn more about this group, contact Carolyn Golson at 251-431-8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com).

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# The Road to Trademark Protection: Know the Route Before You Start

Do you want to legally protect your business name, catch phrase and/or logo design from being duplicated or misused by competitors? Then consider applying for a trademark from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

A trademark is a word, name, symbol or device used in business to indicate a source of the goods (i.e., your business), and to distinguish those goods from those sold by another business. Its cousin, the service mark, identifies and distinguishes the source of a service rather than a product.

Before making your application, use Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS)

at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov) to determine whether your desired word or design marks have already been registered. The USPTO recommends making sure you have a clear idea of the mark you want to register, the goods and/or services in connection with which you wish to register the mark, and whether you will be filing the application based on actual existing use of the mark or a firm intention to use the mark in the future.

Your next step should be to consult a trademark attorney for legal advice regarding use of your proposed trademark, filing an application and the likelihood of success in the registration process. You will

find a number of Mobile Area Chamber member attorneys in the Chamber's online membership directory, found at [www.mobilechamber.com](http://www.mobilechamber.com).

Although the USPTO allows you to file your application and monitor its progress online, it's still helpful to have an attorney involved to answer questions or address any problems, particularly as the review process usually takes several months. Application fees will not be refunded, even if the USPTO's examining attorney determines that a mark should not be registered. A fee schedule can be found on the USPTO's website.

If the application is approved, and no objections are received after its publication in the USPTO's Official Gazette, a few more steps remain before a trademark certificate is issued. Then, it's up to you to use your trademark in accordance with the law, and file the required documentation and fees as needed to renew it. Otherwise, the registration will be canceled.

The USPTO's website, [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov), offers a host of instructional pages and videos to guide you through the trademark registration process.

*The Mobile Area Chamber's small business development department offers professional development, networking and support for its members.*



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# Ambrecht Jackson LLP



*Pictured above are many of the lawyers with the Ambrecht Jackson firm serving national, regional and local clients in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.*

**Company officials:** Kathy Miller, managing partner, and Duane Graham, co-managing partner

**Years in business:** 118

**Brief company description:**

Ambrecht Jackson is a full-service law firm handling matters in a range of areas including business and commercial litigation; professional liability defense; insurance; corporate transactions; banking and finance; real estate; tax; trust and probate; oil, gas and mineral law; aviation; and maritime law.

**Why are you located in Mobile?**

"The firm was founded in Mobile by William H. Ambrecht in 1897 as a litigation defense firm," said Greg Bru, a partner in the firm's business section. "We have had offices throughout downtown Mobile: first in the GM&O Building in 1897, then the Pollock Building in 1901, and the First National Bank Building from 1927 to 1940. In 1940, the firm moved into the Merchants National Bank Building and remained there for more than 40 years before moving to our current offices on the top floors of the Riverview Plaza in 1984. We have grown as Mobile has grown."

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

"The Chamber and its leadership have played a significant role in attracting new business to Mobile," said Bru. "By partnering with the Chamber, the firm can support the Chamber's continued business development efforts."

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

"No place can match Mobile's supportive business environment and transportation infrastructure, coupled with the quality of life we enjoy here," said Bru.

**Length of continuous Chamber membership:**  
Since 1913



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 **kdwrell@mobilechamber.com**.

**MobileConnect  
Completes Second  
Session**

The spring series of MobileConnect kicked off in February and wrapped up in June. More than 30 new Mobilians participated in this program open to Partners for Growth investor companies. Sponsors of the program are Alabama Power Co., Continental Motors, Global Resettlement Services, Gwin's Commercial Printing, Hand Arendall, Helmsing Leach Herlong Newman & Rouse, Roberts Brothers, Regions Bank, Thames Batré Insurance and Willis of Alabama.

**Sisson Travels to New  
York to Meet Writers**

In May, Chamber President and CEO Bill Sisson traveled with Al Hutchinson and Stacy Hamilton with the Mobile Bay

Convention and Visitors Bureau and Wiley Blankenship with Coastal Alabama Partnership to New York, to participate in the American Journalist and Authors Association Conference. The team met with writers covering travel, transportation, business, environment, science and technology. The group pitched writers on a variety of stories including economic development, business and tourism/leisure/recreation.

**PFG Investors Tour  
Austral**

In April, members of the Partners for Growth steering committee and the Chamber's board of directors' executive committee were invited to tour Austral USA. Chamber board member and Austral President Craig Perciavalle led the tour.



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# Pork & Politics



In May, the Mobile Area Chamber hosted the annual Pork and Politics in the Park event, held in the aircraft pavilion at USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park. This event offered elected officials a chance to network with Chamber members.

Attending Pork and Politics in the Park are (above, from left to right): Della Wade, WalMart; Theresa Orrell, Polysurveying & Engineering; Sharon Murrill, Alabama Power; Alesia Davis, New Horizons Credit Union; Donna Abercrombie, Century Bank; and Pete Riehm, NAI Mobile.

Also attending were (at right, from left to right): Mamun, Mamun Real Estate; Ritchie Hurt, Thompson Engineering; and Ashley Rich, Mobile County District Attorney.



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Sherry Coker with ServisFirst Bank, left, and Nichole Edwards with Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Alabama, two of 60-plus volunteers, are participating in the 2015 Chamber Chase campaign.



Throughout the Chamber Chase campaign, volunteers are recognized for their progress toward the \$1.625 million goal – consisting of advertising, sponsorships and new members. In May, the group met at The Melting Pot. Chamber Chase continues through August 6. To learn more about Chamber Chase, and how your company can get involved, contact Carolyn Golson at 251-431-8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com).

## Chamber Chase

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## YMCA of South Alabama

The YMCA's mission is to strengthen communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA of South Alabama has five branches – three in Mobile County (Hearin-Chandler Family YMCA in West Mobile, Moorer YMCA in Downtown Mobile and North Mobile Family YMCA in Saraland) and two in Baldwin County (Bounds Family YMCA in Daphne and John McClure Snook Family YMCA in Foley). For more information, visit [www.ysal.org](http://www.ysal.org). Pictured at the Moorer Branch (left to right), are Ashlee Douglas, Kim Early, branch executive director, and LaJuan Black.

## AMBASSADOR of the month



Photo by Jeff Testney

**Stephanie Bondora**, director of sales/assistant general manager for the Admiral Semmes Hotel at 251 Government St, is the Chamber's Ambassador of the Month. Bondora executes sales strategies for conferences, leisure and corporate travel to the property, which recently underwent extensive renovations. She joined the Chamber's ambassador program last fall.

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

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## BOARD of advisors



**Tyrone Fenderson Jr.** is president, CEO and a member of the board of directors of Commonwealth National Bank. He is chairman of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's community bank advisory council, and serves on the American Bankers Association community bankers' council. Fenderson serves on the boards of the Downtown Mobile Alliance, Mobile Museum of Art, Alabama School of Math and Science

Foundation, Leadership Alabama and the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. He previously served on the board of trustees for the graduate school of banking at Louisiana State University. He is a graduate of Leadership Shelby County (Ala.), Leadership Birmingham, Leadership Montgomery, Leadership Mobile and Leadership Alabama. He earned a master's of business administration from Troy University, a bachelor's degree in business administration from Faulkner University, and is a graduate of the Alabama Banking School, the graduate school of banking at Louisiana State University and the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at the University of Pennsylvania.



**Al Hutchinson** is president and CEO of the Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau. He has worked in the tourism industry for more than 22 years and is the recipient of the 2014 Pioneer Award presented by the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners. He serves on the Gulf Coast Exploreum board, and is a member of the Mobile Area Lodging Association, the Alabama Travel Council, the Coastal Alabama

Partnership, 100 Black Men of Greater Mobile, the Religious Conference Management Association Advisory Committee, and the American Society of Association Executives, where he served as 2012 chair of the association's Industry Partner Alliance. Hutchinson served on the board of the Destination Marketing Association International, and as a committee member of the Meeting Planners International, Multicultural Initiative Committee. He received a bachelor's degree in marketing from The University of Alabama.



**Brian R. Willman** is executive vice president and south Alabama area president for Regions Financial Corp. Throughout his 20-plus-year career, he has held various management positions in the financial services industry. Prior to assuming his current position, Willman served as community banking executive for the Georgia and South Carolina markets for Regions Bank. Prior to joining Regions in 2009, he served as

market president for the northeast Georgia region for Wachovia Bank. Willman received a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Regions Bank is a Partners for Growth (PFG) Investor, and Willman is co-chair of the PFG initiative.

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

**3 CHAMBER CLOSED - INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**8 NETWORKING@NOON** \*Members Only

Make 40-plus business contacts in 90 minutes over lunch. One representative per company

**When:** Noon to 1:30 p.m.

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

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

**Contact:** Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or [aunger@mobilechamber.com](mailto:aunger@mobilechamber.com)

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**15 NONPROFIT ROUNDTABLE** \*Members Only

A bimonthly forum for Chamber member nonprofit executives and managers.

**When:** 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

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

**Speaker:** Phillip McKibbin, senior sales executive for C Spire

**Topics include:** the evolution of IT, the emergence of the Cloud, practical applications and cost-saving tips

**Contact:** Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or [aunger@mobilechamber.com](mailto:aunger@mobilechamber.com)

No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested.

**Sponsor:**



**17 FORUM ALABAMA WITH CONGRESSMAN BRADLEY BYRNE**

**When:** 7:30 to 9 a.m.

**Where:** The Battle House Hotel & Spa, Moonlight Ballroom

**Cost:** \$30 for Chamber members/\$35 for potential members

**Contact:** Carolyn Hunt at 251-431-8621 or [chunt@mobilechamber.com](mailto:chunt@mobilechamber.com)

Reservations and payment required by July 14.

**Sponsor:**



**17 INTERNATIONAL FINANCE & EXPORT INSURANCE - INTERNATIONAL TRADE LEADERSHIP SERIES**

The Mobile Area Chamber, in coordination with the Alabama District Export Council, the Alabama International Trade Center and the U.S. Commercial Service, presents this in-depth certification program to advance international business skills for Alabama companies.

**When:** 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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

**Cost:** \$35 includes lunch

**Contact:** Christina Stimpson at 251-431-8648 or [cstimpson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cstimpson@mobilechamber.com)

Reservations required. Free parking.

**21 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE** \*Members Only

A monthly forum for Chamber member business owners and managers.

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

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

**Speaker:** Ronnie Adair, Mobile County Emergency Management

**Topic:** "Beyond Duct Tape & Batteries: Decoding the Mysteries of Preparedness"

**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:**



**22 NETWORKING FOR EXPO EXHIBITORS** \*Members Only

Prepare your booth and your staff to get the most out of your Expo experience.

**When:** 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. or 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

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

**Speaker:** Meaghan Chitwood, executive director, BNI Alabama

**Topic:** "Reach Your Marketing Goals Through the Business Expo"

**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.

**23 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**

**When:** 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Homewood Suites by Hilton, 530 Providence Park Dr. E.

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

**Contact:** Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or [aunger@mobilechamber.com](mailto:aunger@mobilechamber.com)

Reservations are not needed.

**Sponsor:**



## Who's New



Carr



Lowe

Professional engineers **Johnny Carr**, **Greg Lowe** and **Matt Chelette** joined **Thompson Engineering**.

Carr and Lowe both earned bachelor's degrees in civil engineering from Mississippi State University. Chelette earned a bachelor's degree also in civil engineering from Auburn University.

\*

**Mitchell McLeod Pugh & Williams** investment advisory firm announced **Bragg Van Antwerp** is

now a shareholder and managing director of the firm. Van Antwerp is a graduate of the University of Virginia.

\*



White



Parker

**Sirius Technical Services Inc.** promoted **Rhonda White** and **Lisa Parker**. White, who has 10 years of experience in professional staffing, is now business development manager in the information technology division. Parker, who has 18 years of experience in the staffing industry, is now an account manager/business development.

\*

**Cabaniss, Johnston, Gardner, Dumas & O'Neal** welcomed **W. Kyle Morris** to an "of counsel" position in the

firm's Mobile office. Morris graduated from The University of Alabama School of Law and has practiced general litigation for more than 25 years.

\*



Moses



Dees

**Exit Realty Lyon** recently welcomed agents **Chanda Moses** and **Vivian Dees** to its team of real estate professionals.

\*

**Providence Health System** appointed several new managers.

**Marie House, RN, BSN** (Bachelor of Science Nursing), is nurse manager of the coronary care and telemetry units. She received a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Mobile. **April Murray** is director of finance. She holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama and a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Mobile.

**Terry Ray RN** is nurse manager of the emergency department. He received a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Mobile. **Brian Swaim RN, MSN** (Master's of Science Nursing) is nurse manager of the intensive care units. A graduate of Bishop State Community College of Nursing and the University of South Alabama, Swaim is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

\*

The **University of South Alabama** named **Dr. Michael Finan**

director of the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute. Finan received a medical degree from the Louisiana State University Medical Center School of Medicine in Shreveport, La. He is the first gynecologist in Mobile to perform robotic surgery with the da Vinci Surgery System.



Finan



Johnson



Harle

**White-Spunner Realty** hired **Michelle Johnson** as a controller. Johnson earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's of business administration from the University of South Alabama. The company also added **Christopher Harle** to its commercial real estate division team. Harle has a bachelor's degree in business administration and aviation management from Auburn University.

\*

**Wilkins Miller LLC** accounting and advisory firm announced **Scott L. Browning**

**CPA** became a partner. Browning graduated from The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in commerce and business administration and accounting and a Master of Taxation (MTA) from The University of Alabama. He has more than 17 years of experience.

\*

**SP Engineering Inc.** hired



Miller

**Elizabeth O. Miller**. Miller received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Auburn University and has worked in consulting engineering for nearly 12 years.

\*

**Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Cooper & Co. Inc. REALTORS** welcomed

**Dawn Gaston**, who will be working in the West Mobile office.



Gaston



Kirkland

**FastSigns of Mobile** hired **Jessika Kirkland** as visual communications expert.

## Business Endeavors

**Phelps Dunbar** law firm relocated to the top 2½ floors of the RSA Van Antwerp building, 101 Dauphin St., Suite 1000. The firm, along with **BBVA/Compass Bank**, is an anchor tenant of the newly restored property.

\*

The **SSI Group Inc. (SSI)**, a provider of healthcare revenue cycle solutions, entered into a definitive agreement to acquire **Provider Advantage NW Inc.**, a market leading provider of patient access management software.

\*

**BIS Office Systems**, a Mobile-based office equipment dealer, announced it will construct a new facility at 3690 Carlyle Close, combining its warehouse and administrative operations. The new office will serve the Mississippi, Alabama and Florida Gulf Coast areas.

\*

**Airbus** announced **Page & Jones** will handle its import clearance and export services.

## Well Done

**Coastal Alabama Partnership (CAP)** added **Frank Lott III** and **Kerry O'Connor** to its board of directors. Lott, president of **Heritage Homes**, will represent the Mobile Area Chamber, and O'Connor, president of **BancorpSouth** Baldwin County, will represent the Eastern Shore Chamber. Both Chambers are among the nine founding entities of CAP, which promotes unified regional strategic efforts in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

**Mobile Technical Institute/ MTI Business Solutions** was named a Society for Human Resource Management Preferred Provider. The firm is now able to award professional development credits.



**Dr. William E. Barrick**, executive director of **Bellingrath Gardens and Home**, received the American Horticultural Society's 2015 Liberty Hyde Bailey Award. The award recognizes an individual who has made significant lifetime contributions to at least three of the following horticultural fields: teaching, research, communications, plant exploration, administration, art, business and leadership.



The NFL's first full-time female game official is a former **University of Mobile** women's basketball player **Sarah Thomas**. Thomas will be a line judge for the 2015 season.

**Chris and Angela Ashcraft**, owners of **Express Employment Professionals** in Mobile and Summerdale, were named the company's Franchisees of the Year for their achievements and excellence in sales, recruitment and placement.

In addition, **Danna Jones**, the Mobile office's business development manager, was recognized as top sales representative in the country of almost 700 sales reps, based on the number of new clients acquired in 2014.



**Randall Olson** of **MTI Business Solutions** was named an Everything DiSC® Certified

Olson

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full suite of Everything DiSC tools, including management, leadership, workplace and sales.

**Dr. Matthew L. Downs**, **University of Mobile** assistant professor of history, received the 2015 James F. Sulzby Book



Downs

Award presented by the Alabama Historical Association. Downs was recognized for his published work contributing to the knowledge and appreciation of Alabama history, "Transforming the South: Federal Development in the Tennessee Valley" 1915 - 1960 (LSU Press, 2014).



The **Mobile Area Council of Engineers (MACE)** presented awards to three **Hargrove Engineers + Constructors** employees: **Alex Bell PE** was awarded Chemical Engineer of the Year; **Jake Parker PE, LEED AP**, received the Electrical Engineer of the Year; and **Carl Powell PE** took

home Mechanical Engineer of the Year. MACE awards recognize individuals who have significantly contributed to the engineering profession and to technological and economic development locally and globally.



**The University of Alabama** Culverhouse College of Commerce's online bachelor of business program was recognized by *BestColleges.com* as one of the top nonprofit online programs in the country. The website places Culverhouse at No. 3 in its 2015 Top 25 Best Online Bachelor of Business Programs. The rankings are based upon acceptance, retention, graduation and enrollment rates.



The **Mobile County Commission and Goodwill Easter Seals** were joint recipients of the Community Partner Award by **Partners for Environmental Progress (PEP)**. **Driven Engineering** was

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awarded an Environmental Stewardship Award. All three were recognized for their roles in the newly opened Mobile County Recycling Center at 7450 Hitt Rd.

In other PEP news, **Thompson Engineering** received the 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award for its environmental compliance work on the Birmingham Northern Beltline project.

Thompson Engineering also was named a 2015 Eagle Award winner for safety by the **Associated Builders and Contractors of Alabama** for outstanding corporate safety programs.

The Insurance Professionals of Mobile awarded the 2015 Anna S. Loding Insurance Professional of the Year Award to **Allen Chapman**, executive vice president with **HUB International Gulf South Limited (HUB)**, a leading

insurance brokerage firm. The award recognized Chapman's dedication to serving the needs of his clients and his service to the community; especially his involvement on the boards of St. Luke's Episcopal School, Christ United Methodist Church, Ladd-Peebles Stadium and the Reese's Senior Bowl.

Mobile-based **Volkert Inc.** engineering design firm was recognized by Engineering News Record (ENR) as the 98<sup>th</sup> largest engineering firm and the 71<sup>st</sup> largest pure design firm in the country. The 2015 list marks 50 consecutive years Volkert has ranked among the nation's top firms. Volkert is the only Alabama-headquartered engineering design firm to achieve this 50-year distinction.

## Community News

**SSAB** presented the **University of South Alabama** College of Engineering with a commitment of \$110,000 for the Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative. With matching funds, the donation will create a \$220,000 impact on the scholarship endowment. **Matt Hancock** is the first SSAB scholarship recipient.

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](mailto:news@mobilechamber.com).



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

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