

# the **business**VIEW



**Chamber Redefines**  
Minority Business Strategy

**Coast Guard**  
**Celebrates**  
50 Years in Mobile

Program  
Launches  
to **Assist**  
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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

## A Community of the Future

All recent demographic studies point to the fact that communities of the future will be very different than the ones we live in today. As we move well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Mobile faces a new set of socioeconomic, technological and global forces unlike those that brought us to where we are today. We are becoming a more diverse region.



Approximately 18 percent of the businesses in our region are minority-owned, but regrettably less than 10 percent of our Chamber membership reflects those demographics. The good news is the Mobile Area Chamber's board of directors is closer to that 18 percent. We have more work to do to ensure our membership truly reflects

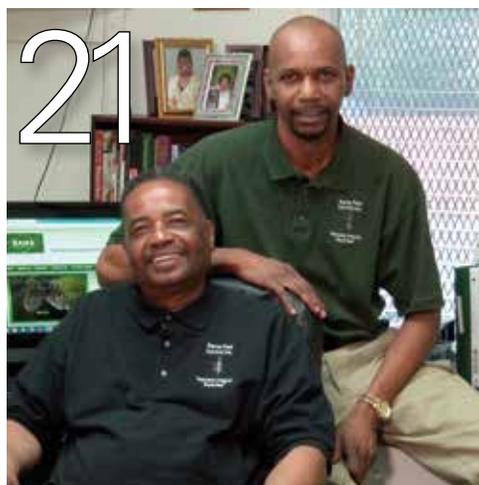
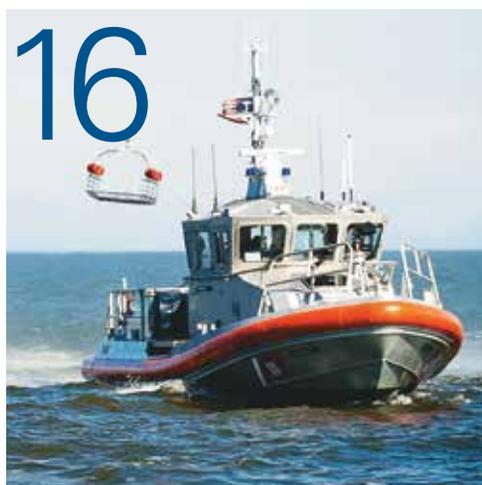
our community, and this pro-business organization is providing the services Mobile's minority business community needs to be successful.

Obviously, diversity means a lot of different things – race, gender, age and country of origin. As the number of international companies grows here, Mobile will continue to diversify its population.

But to reach our full potential, it's imperative that all of our population and, in particular, our business community are fully able to participate in the economic prosperity we continue to experience in the Mobile region.

That's why, over the past year, we have been developing a new plan of action for business diversity within our organization. We want to ensure our minority businesses can thrive and grow here, and this Chamber has a responsibility to make that happen. An innovative regional approach to diverse business development will not only enhance the economic vibrancy of the region, but also strengthen the competitive advantage of all business.

On pages 14 - 15, learn more about our strategy and action plan, and read more about what our department of small business development and a dedicated team of more than 25 members of the Growth Alliance Task Force plan to accomplish over the coming year. Working together is the only way we can secure our position as a community of the future.



### ON THE COVER

This team of volunteers is helping define the Chamber's minority business strategy as committee and subcommittee leaders of the Growth Alliance Task Force. Pictured are: Edward Antone, Principal Financial Group - Edward Antone; Tenaysha Carroll, Patterson Marketing Group; Clarence Johnson Jr., Bama Pest Control; Larry Dorsey, Dorsey & Dorsey Engineering; and Nathaniel Patterson, Patterson Marketing Group. See story on pages 14-15.

*Photo by Jeff Tesney*

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# New Brand, New Name Celebrating Mobile's People, Culture and Beauty

In a two-part repositioning effort, the Mobile Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau (MBCVB) – the official tourism and convention marketing organization for the city, county and the Mobile-area hospitality industry – is now doing business as Visit Mobile. And with the new name also comes a new tagline to market the county: Mobile, Alabama – Born to Celebrate.

“Visit Mobile better defines what the organization’s role and number one responsibility is in the community – attracting visitors to Mobile,” said **Stacy Hamilton**, vice president of marketing for Visit Mobile.

She added people have understandably often confused the MBCVB with the Mobile Convention Center because the CVB offices are physically located in the building. While the CVB markets the building, as they do hotels, attractions and

restaurants throughout the entire destination, it does not manage the actual facility.

Born to Celebrate plays into travelers’ desire to have fun while on vacation. “Born to Celebrate promises emotional well-being. It promises a state of joy, exuberance and vitality,” said Visit Mobile President & CEO **Al Hutchinson**.

This year-long process first involved creating a committee of stakeholder organizations to be involved in every step of the brand discussion and development process, unprecedented for Mobile. Participating were representatives from: Alabama Restaurant Association’s Mobile Chapter, City of Mobile, Downtown Mobile Alliance, Mobile Airport Authority, Mobile Attractions Community, Mobile Area Chamber, Mobile Area Lodging Association, Mobile County



*With the number of visitors and tourists who come to the Mobile Area Chamber, the organization added Visit Mobile’s message to its campus signage.*

Commission and the University of South Alabama.

“Although we have different missions, we’re both charged with recruiting people to Mobile,” said **Bill Sisson**, president and CEO of the Chamber. “We feel as though the new brand works well with our existing Chamber brand.” In support of the new

campaign, the Chamber hung Born to Celebrate banners in the park leading up to its building, and the Mobile Airport Authority placed signage throughout the airport. 

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

## Additional Investment at Brookley to Support Airbus

Broetje Automation’s M-Technologie division announced in February it will open an office in Mobile to provide equipment design and support, and final assembly technologies for the Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility. Locating at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley, the

company specializes in small tools, line side equipment and processes required for the final assembly of aircraft.

“(Our) early commitment to an aerospace incubator at our campus once again proved to be of value to Airbus’s evolving supply chain. Our solution is low-cost

and flexible, and we are prepared to support their growth,” said **Roger Wehner**, executive director of the Mobile Airport Authority.

Broetje Automation is headquartered in Germany. It is the 13<sup>th</sup> company to set up operations in Mobile to work with the Airbus facility.

# Local Hospitals Expand Emergency Rooms

Providence Hospital



Providence Hospital and Springhill Medical Center announce big changes in emergency care.

Providence Hospital renovated its emergency department to include a new triage area, where patients are initially assessed; relocated its minor care operations; created new space for lab tests and electrocardiograms; and added five patient care rooms.

According to hospital statistics, Providence serves 55,000 patients per year in its emergency room.

“The opportunities for expediting patient care as well as the improved cosmetic appeal should enhance our patients’ experiences here in our emergency department,” said Providence Hospital President **Todd Kennedy**.

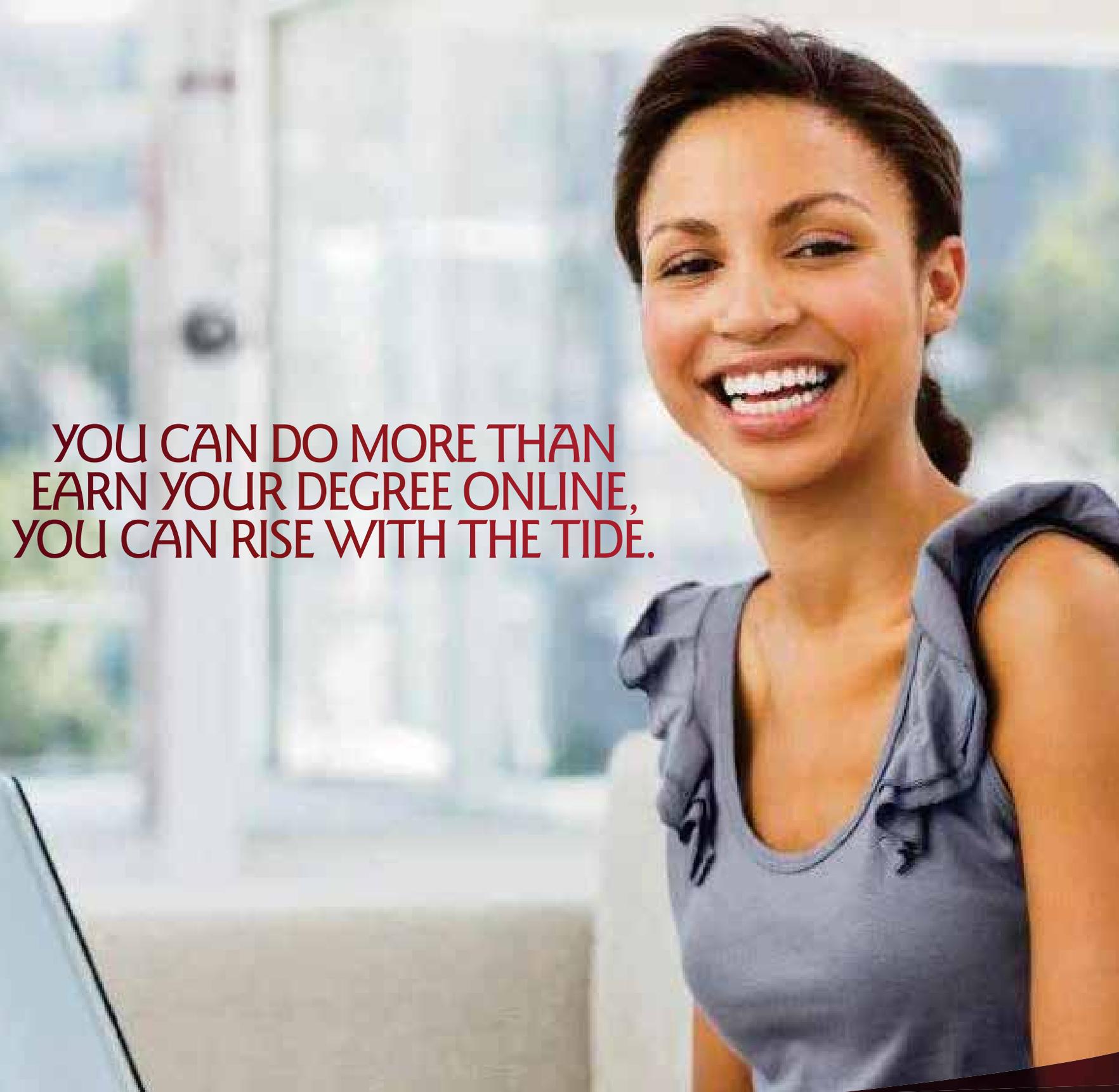
The emergency room at Springhill Medical Center has doubled its size, growing from 7,229 to 18,410 square feet. Hospital officials estimate Springhill sees 50,000 emergency patients per year.

The new facility includes a larger waiting area, additional work space with two nursing stations, and better designed and equipped registration and triage areas, hospital officials said.

“Studies showed that for our volume, the emergency staff was working in a space that was 20 percent of what volume dictated, so expansion was necessary,” said Springhill President and CEO **Jeff St. Clair**.

Springhill Medical Center





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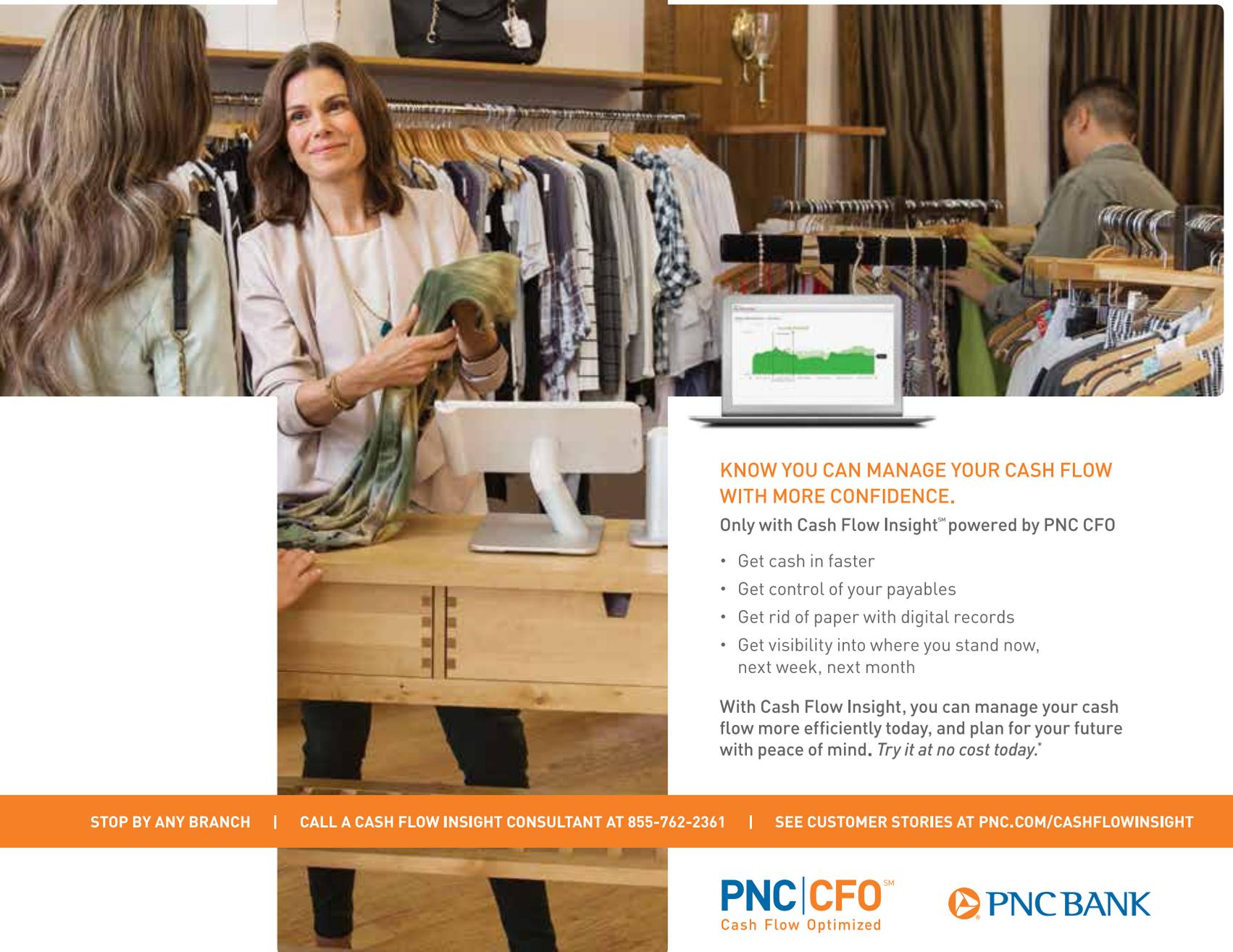
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Entrepreneurs have a new option for networking and training with the launch of Chamber-supported New Business Outreach.

# Need Help Starting a New Business?

Have you recently opened your own company? Are you thinking of starting a business? Know someone who did, or is?

If the answer is yes, there's a new resource designed to help new entrepreneurs and prospective ones tackle the process of starting a business topic by topic.

New Business Outreach is about "learning from other people's mistakes," says J.C. Smith with WebSouthEast. He

founded the program, which is supported by the Mobile Area Chamber.

Each of the ongoing one-hour sessions will feature a specific topic, such as capital formation, recruiting talent, marketing and sales, taxation and more. Participants will walk away with action items and connections to subject matter experts.

Smith will lead from experience. Before WebSouthEast, he

started and sold two businesses and was a member of 1702, another Chamber-supported program with a focus of helping established entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

While at 1702, Smith decided to create something similar for entrepreneurs who were just starting out.

"We think this program will help new businesses overcome common pitfalls and

give them the tools that are critical to achieving success sooner rather than later," says Danette Richards, the Mobile Area Chamber's small business development director.

For more information on meeting dates and joining the group, contact Smith at [smith@newbusinessoutreach.com](mailto:smith@newbusinessoutreach.com) or visit [www.NewBusinessOutreach.com](http://www.NewBusinessOutreach.com). 



# Health Occupations Career Fair

## Addresses Top Demand Occupations in Mobile County



The Mobile Area Chamber, in partnership with the Bay Area Healthcare Coalition, hosted the annual Health Occupations Career Fair in February attended by nearly 700 sophomores in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Pictured here are students from LeFlore High School (top) and Citronelle High School (above) participating in this year's hands-on career fair.

The Bay Area Healthcare Coalition and the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce hosted nearly 700 Mobile and Baldwin County high school sophomores from 20 area schools at the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Health Occupations Career Fair in February at the Mobile Civic Center Expo Hall.

According to the June 2015 *State of the Workforce Report* released by The University of Alabama's Center for Business and Economic Research, registered nurse is No. 1 on the list of top high-demand occupations, with personal care aides at No. 3 and home health aides, No. 5.

Additional highlights from the report include:

- The top five fast-growing occupations include personal care aides, physical therapist assistants and diagnostic medical sonographers, rated as first, second and third, respectively.
- In the top 50 high-earning occupations with average salaries ranging between \$79,194 and \$276,411, eight of the top 10 are health occupations.
- Nurse practitioner is the only occupation to rank in the top 40 high-demand, top 20 fast-growing and top 50 high-earning categories.

"The Health Occupations Career Fair is often a student's first hands-on opportunity in a variety of careers. While the experience is simulated, our exhibitors strive to create excitement about their chosen profession. We know this experience translates into educated decisions about their own career choices," says **Carol Statter**, workforce development coordinator with Infirmiry Health and coalition chairperson.

Students rotated through 15 exhibits and conducted activities such as putting splints on broken thumbs, practicing injections, drilling through bones, learning rehabilitation procedures and more. (OO)

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Company owners, Larry Ezell (left) and Jerry Anderson (right) are pictured in front of their office, located at 4440 McCrary Rd. in Semmes.



# 'Do the Right Thing' is Key to Air Specialty's Success

It might sound simple, but **Jerry Anderson** credits a very straightforward principle with helping the business he launched 23 years ago with partner **Larry Ezell** continue to thrive.

"Do the right thing," said Anderson, co-owner of **Air Specialty of South Alabama Inc.** The company has been named the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

That driving force, he said, helped propel the Semmes business from its modest beginnings out of a mobile home and garage in 1991 to a leading provider of heating and ventilation services for residential, commercial, industrial and maritime clients.

"Anytime you deal with third parties, it would be really easy to turn your back when something goes wrong – say, with a manufacturer's product – and walk away, but that's not how we do business," Anderson said. "If we come to your house or your business and something happens that's not our fault – maybe it's a set warranty expiring on a piece manufactured by somebody else – we try to decipher what's right, what's fair and not run from the problem but deal with it."

Air Specialty now employs 37 people and uses an advanced computerized tracking system to coordinate all projects and work orders across its 20,000-square-foot inventory, operations, logistics, manufacturing and fabrication services footprint.

In addition to the HVAC mechanical installation, project management, mechanical service, metal fabrication, controls and energy management solutions and equipment protective coating, Air Specialty also provides duct cleaning as well as the design of custom air-conditioning and refrigeration systems.

And business has been good, Anderson said, with the company reporting that 2015 revenues were up about 5 percent, despite a substantial downturn in the maritime sector.

"I'd definitely say our commercial side is the strongest right now," he said, crediting inroads made via the Mobile Area Chamber for some of that success.

"Semmes is a growing area of Mobile County. Without the (Mobile) Chamber recruiting new businesses in our area, our community and business would not be what it is today," he said.

Want to be featured here? Go to [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) to submit an application, or contact Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com).

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# The Mobile Area Chamber Redefines its Minority Business Strategy

The Mobile Area Chamber is doubling up its efforts to assist underutilized businesses by partnering with the Southern Region Minority Supplier Development Council (SRMSDC), a national organization with a regional office in New Orleans, in applying for the next Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) grant.

Chamber officials are confident SRMSDC will be selected to take the lead in running the Mobile MBDA Business Center (MBC), as their role as operator ended on March 31.

A national organization can provide additional services such as ethnic minority business certifications needed

for priority consideration for certain contracts and business development services. And, maybe most importantly, with many contacts at Fortune 1000 companies SRMSDC can help to open doors to Mobile area entrepreneurs.

**Darrell Randle**, the Chamber's vice president of small business development, highlighted the Chamber's expertise in advising, counseling and mentoring small and minority businesses, helping them compete for large-scale projects.

The Chamber also helps public and private companies develop and implement supplier diversity programs. With these programs come enhanced

opportunities for Mobile's diverse companies, explained Randle.

"Ultimately, what the Chamber brings to the table is the knowledge of and relationships with the local business community," said Randle. "And, through this new partnership with SRMSDC, we have agreed on goals that will guarantee a positive impact on our local minority-owned businesses like never before."

## Why the focus on minority business?

Nationally, the trend of big companies diversifying their supplier base continues. "Mobile's minority businesses should have a chance at those opportunities," Randle said.

But it's more than a trend driving local efforts. "We must increase and sustain the growth of minority-owned firms to reduce unemployment levels, increase dollars flowing into the Mobile region and build wealth throughout our community," he adds.

## A New Initiative

The Chamber turned in some impressive results while operating the MBC over the past decade. Since 2006, the center assisted minority-owned businesses in obtaining more than \$2 billion in contracts and financial assistance and helped create or retain more than 1,111 jobs.

But lofty federal goals with strict requirements limited the Mobile MBC's ability to impact local businesses. As an example, only companies with gross revenues of more than \$1 million were eligible for assistance.

Over the years, the Chamber increased its efforts to assist the underutilized business community. Some of these successes included:

- In 2014, the Chamber's first vice chair of minority business development was added to its governing board of directors.

- The Chamber and its partners offered minority businesses referrals, procurement matchmaker events, networking sessions and training workshops.

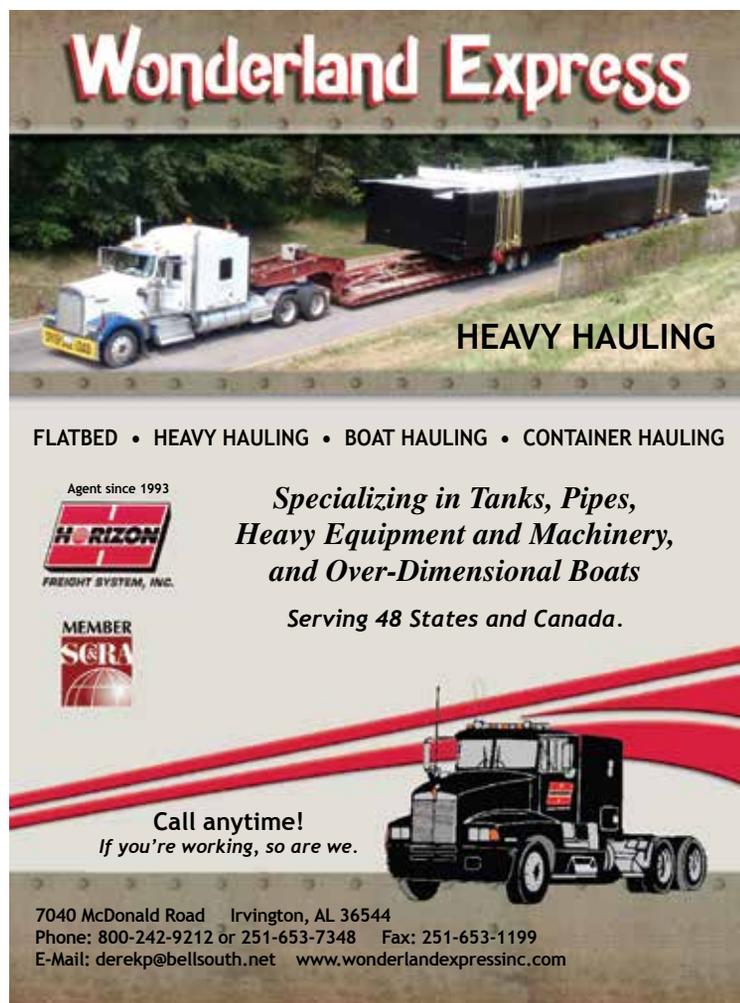
- Since 1998, the Chamber honored more than 200 minority-owned companies through awards and recognition programs, including the annual Eagle Awards, the Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate award, Small Business of the Month, Business Spotlight and more.

"But we knew more was needed to have the impact we wanted," said Randle.

In 2015, the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force took on a new initiative to nurture local entrepreneurs and minority business enterprises.

The task force is asking questions and exchanging ideas on how to get small and disadvantaged businesses to take advantage of existing resources such as: local business resource providers, funding sources, business networks, training sessions, affordable advertising and access to corporate decision-makers and mentors.

By year's end, the group will have a definitive plan on how the Chamber can better serve a diverse segment of the business community. Stay tuned for more. 



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The Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force has established three subcommittees on which to focus its efforts in 2016. Pictured above are subcommittee chairs (from left to right): Edward Antone, financial; Tenaysha Carroll, outreach; Clarence Johnson, chair; Nathaniel Patterson, business development; and Larry Dorsey, outreach.

## Growth Alliance Task Force

In late 2015, the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force (GATF) created three subcommittees to address issues that prevent or impede growth of local minority-owned businesses.

A brief description of each subcommittee and its purpose is shown below:

**Business Development Subcommittee**, Chair, **Nathaniel Patterson**, Patterson Marketing Group.

This subcommittee will utilize one-on-one consulting to strengthen small- and minority-businesses through assessment, education, mentoring and counseling.

**Finance Committee**, Chair, **Edward Antone**, Principal Financial Group – Edward Antone.

This subcommittee will determine the best techniques

in evaluating and improving the finances of small- and minority-owned businesses with the goal of growing their business, overall capacity and creating jobs.

**Outreach Subcommittee**, Co-Chairs, **Larry Dorsey** with Dorsey & Dorsey Engineering, and **Tenaysha Carroll**, Patterson Marketing Group.

This subcommittee will utilize social media, technology and relationships to connect minority businesses with Chamber mentors and local contracting opportunities. Members will also identify stakeholders who will act as advocates for the minority business community.

If you are interested in serving on the GATF or want to learn more, contact **Brenda Rembert** at 251-431-8607, or [brembert@mobilechamber.com](mailto:brembert@mobilechamber.com).

## Members of the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force

The Mobile Area Chamber committee of volunteers is charged with helping increase minority-owned business participation and membership. Currently, committee members are helping define the Chamber's minority-business development strategies.

**Clarence Johnson Jr.**  
Bama Pest Control  
Chair



**Edward Antone**  
Principal Financial Group -  
Edward Antone

**Brandon Bell**  
BellCor Logistics

**Raymond Bell**  
Bell Law Firm

**Tenaysha Carroll**  
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**Cathy Clark**  
C Spire

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**Larry Dorsey**  
Dorsey & Dorsey Engineering

**Gerald Dunlop**  
Alabama SBDC Network

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**Jacquitta Powell-Green**  
Commonwealth National Bank

**Chanté Hendrix**  
University of South Alabama

**Ken Holmes**  
HHL Technical Solutions

**Al Johnson**  
Strategic Wealth Specialists

**Ruthie Johnson**  
Bama Pest Control

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Alabama SBDC Network

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**Nathaniel Patterson**  
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**Michael Pierce**  
MLK Avenue Redevelopment  
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**Terri Pringle**  
South Alabama Regional  
Planning Commission

**Pam Ramos**  
Mobile MBDA Center

**Deveina Reynolds**  
Reynolds Enterprises  
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**Shirley Sessions**  
Regions Bank

**Mike Ward**  
Project Management Solutions  
Group

**Eric Walker**  
Paychex Payroll Services

**Melvin Washington**  
Alabama SBDC Network



# Chamber Hosts Military Appreciation Luncheon

The Mobile Area Chamber will host its 29<sup>th</sup> annual Military Appreciation Luncheon on Wednesday, April 20, from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park.

The event offers the business community an opportunity to show its appreciation for active

duty members of the U.S. armed forces. In addition, outstanding ROTC and JROTC cadets from area schools will be honored, and awards will be presented for exceptional service to the community.

Awards presented include Baldwin County Teachers of

the Year presented by the Air Force Association; Emergency Responder of the Year presented by the Army Corps of Engineers; Casteix & Abbot Awards presented by the Navy League; Spouse of the Year presented by the USGC

Aviation Training Center of Mobile; Above & Beyond Business of the Year presented by Employer Support Guard & Reserve; and South Alabama Marine of the Year presented by the Marine Corps League.

Tickets are \$25 each and are available until April 15 and can be purchased by contacting **Carolyn Hunt** at 251-431-8621, or registering online at [www.events.mobilechamber.com](http://www.events.mobilechamber.com).



## Coast Guard Celebrates 50 Years in Mobile

Celebrating 50 years, the U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Training Center (ATC) is home to the Gulf Strike Team and the Law Enforcement Detachment and coordinates the movement of several hundred pilots in and out of Mobile each year.

The facilities were first commissioned on Dec. 17, 1966, as a training station for Coast Guard pilots. It grew to become headquarters of the Eighth Coast Guard Division, and

is the Coast Guard's largest training center. It was renamed ATC Mobile in July 1969.

ATC Mobile is one of the largest units in the Coast Guard with facilities consisting of 230 acres and 46 buildings, including two aircraft hangars. It is one of the largest non-industrial employers in Mobile County with employment of 586, generating nearly \$98 million in payroll.

ATC Mobile plays a key role in homeland security and environmental protection by responding to natural disasters,

tragedies and incidents such as the BP oil spill. In 2015, ATC Mobile recorded 169 Search and Rescue missions in which 10 lives were saved.



Photo by Jeff Tesney



Guest speaker Capt. Thomas MacDonald, Commander of the US Coast Guard's Aviation Training Center (ATC) (center) addressed JROTC STEM program students in 2015.

# Academy Helps Develop Future STEM Leaders

This summer, selected Mobile County Public School System JROTC students will participate in several activities including engineering-based design challenges and field trips to area industries that employ a STEM-savvy workforce.

STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) Leadership Academy is a residential educational experience aimed at engaging a unique population of students in grades 9-10 in STEM content, skills and fields of study needed by

today's business and industry.

For the second year the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation has served as the academy's fiscal agent.

The academy addresses the important issue of preparing Mobile's youth for the workforce

as a step toward ensuring their economic prosperity. The program was launched in 2015 with the financial support of area industries and community organizations that raised more than \$120,000.

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# I Owe, I Owe, It's Off to Work I Go

By: Karen C. Simmons

It's hard to be in business. It seems like a tax has to be paid every time we turn around. Whether it's sales tax, payroll tax, self-employment tax, privilege tax, excise tax, personal property tax or federal and state income tax, all taxes must be paid.

Now don't get me wrong, taxes aren't the worst thing in the world. Myself, I very much appreciate when the firemen and policemen come to my aid when I need them. Their salaries come from taxpayers. The question is: How do I plan so I don't pay too much?

It's never too early to start thinking about taxes. Having your information organized and ready throughout the year gives your accountant the time to plan and review possible tax credits and deductions. A tax credit is very different than a tax deduction. A deduction reduces your taxable income so you save the tax, which is a relatively small percentage. A tax credit offsets tax. It is dollar for dollar.

## Do You Qualify?

Utilizing tax credits can be a very effective tax-saving method. One example in which a small business may qualify is the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit. If a business has fewer than 25 full-time equivalent employees, pays an average wage of less than \$50,000 a year and pays at least half of employee health insurance premiums, then it may qualify, but you'll want to contact your tax advisor for details.

Another common tax credit is the Credit for Employer Taxes Paid on Tips. We have many fantastic locally owned restaurants in our area and this credit may allow them to claim a credit for Social Security and Medicare taxes paid or incurred by the employer on certain employees' tips. Two conditions must be met: employees received tips from customers for service, and you incurred employer Social Security and Medicare taxes on those tips. These are just two examples of the most common credits available. Your tax advisor will know if you're eligible for others.

We all want to deduct as much as we can to reduce our taxable income. What is a deduction, and what makes it deductible? Many times this depends on the activity of your business. Farmers, artists, truck drivers or physicians all spend money in order to make money. These monies, as a rule of thumb, are deductible if not for personal use.

A great tax-planning tool for everyone is retirement planning. Many different vehicles exist now to ease the pain for business owners. Whether it is a simple IRA or 401(K), they all have their separate rules. The great fun in planning is finding the best fit for you, your business and your cash flow.

*Simmons is president of Karen C. Simmons PC and Payroll Vault. To learn more, contact her at 251-662-1235 or visit [www.karensimmonscca.com](http://www.karensimmonscca.com).*



# Thank You for Your Membership

Investing in the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce enables the pro-business organization to fulfill its mission to “serve as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the Mobile area’s economic well-being.”

Join staff, volunteers and sponsors for a fish fry at the seventh annual Member Appreciation Day event on Tuesday, April 12, starting at 4 p.m. The event, held at the Chamber, 451 Government St., features seafood catered by Alec Naman Catering and live music by the Tommy Morse Band.

“We thank our members all year long, but this is an event designed to show our appreciation in person,” said **Carolyn Golson**, the Chamber’s vice president of membership.

Plan to drop by the Chamber, and meet staff from economic development, communications and marketing, community and governmental affairs, membership, small business development, international trade and workforce development.

Learn more about how the Chamber works for area businesses and the region to recruit jobs and advocate for business-friendly legislation on local, state and federal levels.

## FAST facts

**What:** Member Appreciation Day

**When:** Tuesday, April 12, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**Where:** Chamber Lawn and Atrium, 451 Government St.

**For more information:** contact **Carolyn Golson** at 251-431-8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com)

**Why attend?** Drop by to meet Chamber staff and allow them to say thank you for being a member.

**Fish Fry:** Catered by Alec Naman Catering

**Music:** The Tommy Morse Band

**Sponsors:** Ashton and Co., BlueCross/BlueShield of Alabama, C Spire, Quality Valve Inc. and Roberts Brothers



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# 12 Members Give 12 Reasons the Chamber Works for Them



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is moving Mobile forward one business at a time."*

**Michael Berson**, Adams & Reese  
Community & Governmental Affairs Committee Member



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is moving my education forward."*

**Sarah Eiland**, Murphy High School student  
Former Summer Scrubs Intern



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce helped us expand our business."*

**Andy Walter**, Blastech Mobile  
Worked with the Chamber on Blastech's 2015 expansion



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is helping Mobile take flight."*

**Oscar Caicedo**, Airbus Defense & Space Military Aircraft



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is our voice for legislative action."*

**Elizabeth Damson Freeman**, Long's Human Resource Services  
Mobile Area Chamber Board Chair-Elect & 2015  
Vice Chair of Community & Governmental Affairs



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce promotes business and community growth."*

**Todd Hassel**, Prism Systems  
Worked with the Chamber on Prism Systems' 2015 expansion

The Mobile Area Chamber staff can easily tell the story of how we work to bring members value, but that wouldn't be fun. So instead, here's what 12 members had to say when they were asked, "What is the most important work the Chamber is doing?" Their comments were featured during the Mobile Area Chamber's annual meeting.



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce highlights its members' successes."*

**Bernadette Jenkins**, New Life Housing  
2015 Eagle Award Winner



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce fosters innovation, collaboration and mentorship."*

**Brian Harold**, APM Terminals Mobile  
Worked with the Chamber on APM Terminal's 2015 expansion



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce gave us new channels for business."*

**Thao Nguyen**, Service Experts Heating and Air Conditioning  
Mobile Area Chamber volunteer ambassador



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is growing technology jobs in Mobile."*

**Amber Parker**, University of South Alabama  
2015 Gulf Coast Technology Council scholarship recipient



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is connecting Mobile to world markets."*

**Deb Domke**, Domke Market  
2015 Small Business of the Month and host of a Chamber-sponsored Cash Mob.



*"The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce is building our next generation of entrepreneurs."*

**Clarence Johnson Jr.**, Bama Pest Control  
Growth Alliance Task Force chairman and committee member, pictured with his son, Clarence Johnson III.



# ASF Logistics

*With offices in New Orleans and Savannah, Ga., ASF Logistics is headquartered in Mobile and employs experienced workers who assist clients in all aspects of logistics and supply chain solutions. In 2012 the company was recognized as one of the 2012 "Best Companies to Work for in Alabama" in the small business category by Business Alabama magazine.*

**Company officials:** Samford Myers, chairman, ASF Group; Steven Chard, president & CEO; and Jeff Schock, CFO

**Years in business:** 40 years

**Brief company description:** ASF was established in 1976 and acquired by its current owners in 2000. It is a non-vessel operating common carrier (NVOCC)/freight forwarder and customs broker. The company is headquartered in Mobile, with regional offices in New Orleans and Savannah, Ga. It serves all major U.S. ports and provides logistic services for customers throughout the U.S. Other companies within the

ASF Group include ASF Intermodal, also based in Mobile, and ASF Global based in Charleston, S.C.

**Why are you located in Mobile?** "The company was originally founded in Mobile and two of the three current owners were born and raised in Mobile," said Chard. "All three owners recognize and believe in Mobile's future as a regional center for international trade."

**Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Partners for Growth initiative?** "As a local company founded in the area, the management and staff have

a vested interest in the region's economic development, which will contribute to job growth and a superior quality of living," said Chard.

**What do you see as Mobile's greatest potential?** "The current leadership in the City of Mobile and the Mobile Area Chamber's Partners for Growth Initiative has placed Mobile on the threshold of an opportunity for sustained growth and development attracting new industries, jobs and visitors to the area to the benefit of all citizens," said Chard.

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



Partners for Growth (PFG) is the Mobile Area Chamber's long-term economic and community development program. For more information, contact **Katrina Dewrell**, the Chamber's investor relations coordinator, at **251-431-8611** or [kdewrell@mobilechamber.com](mailto:kdewrell@mobilechamber.com).



In February, Sen. Richard Shelby spoke to Chamber members at Forum Alabama. He provided an update on federal legislative activities in Washington D.C. Pictured from left to right are: Liz Freeman, Long's Human Resource Services; Jimmy Lyons, Alabama State Port Authority; Shelby; and Mark Nix, Chamber board chairman and president/CEO of Infirmary Health.

## Sen. Shelby Speaks to Business Executives at Forum Alabama



Topics Sen. Richard Shelby discussed at the Chamber's Forum Alabama event included Iran and Iraq, international trade, China's economy, the Presidential election and growing Mobile's manufacturing industry.



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## Chamber Leaders Tour Calvert Steel Facilities

In February AM/NS Calvert and Outokumpu Stainless USA hosted a group of Mobile Area Chamber board members and staff to tour the steel manufacturing facilities in the north part of Mobile County. The facilities formerly operated under ThyssenKrupp, and are recognized as two of the most advanced manufacturing facilities in the world.

# BEACON on the BAY

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# Clifford Grimes



**Company:** United Way of Southwest Alabama Inc.

**Title:** President/CEO

**Hometown:** Born in Texas; raised in Fort Wayne, Ind.

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in sociology with a minor in economics at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Ind.; United Way Worldwide and Annie E. Casey Foundation Fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government

**First job:** Usher/restaurant cook for the Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne, Ind.

**Previous experience:** Having served several United Ways in communities throughout the United States for more than 30 years, Grimes has held senior-level positions from fund distribution and community initiatives to resource development, agency relations and community planning.

**Accomplishments:** Grimes worked at the United Way of the National Capital Area in Washington, D.C., when the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, took place. He and his staff implemented their own in-house emergency protocols, focusing on the immediate needs of the families of individuals who lost their lives, as well as first responders. Within in a matter of hours, United Way and its partners had convened nonprofit organizations and response experts; created the local September 11<sup>th</sup> fund; raised \$6.2 million; established a Governance Committee to provide oversight; and formed a Fund Distribution Committee to provide comprehensive review and recommendation of proposals to be funded. Within 90 days of the attack, United Way distributed grants to local nonprofits that provided more than 81 programs to help primary and secondary victims.

**Secret to success:** "Six words: total commitment, utter dependability, flawless execution," he said.

**Brief company description:** Created in 1926 as a Community Chest, United Way of Southwest Alabama's (UWSWA) mission is to improve the quality of life in the community. Its vision is to strengthen communities by focusing on uniting and mobilizing resources in support of the building blocks for a better life: education, financial stability, health, and essentials. The UWSWA serves Choctaw, Clarke, Mobile and Washington counties. For more information, visit [www.uwswa.org](http://www.uwswa.org).

## Pork & Politics in the Park



More than 300 people attended the Mobile Area Chamber's political mixer, *Pork & Politics in the Park*. The event, held in February at the USS Alabama Battleship Park, drew a number of candidates for local, state and federal office and their supporters. Pictured here are (from left to right): Jerry Carl, James Patterson, Young Boozer, Rep. Bradley Byrne, Jackie Ziegler, Fred Richardson and John McMillan.



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**AMBASSADOR** of the month



Photo by Jeff Tesney

During her 28 years as a volunteer with the Mobile Area Chamber, **Trish Banker** was named Ambassador of the Year in 1994, and served as the program's chair. This month she is the Chamber's Ambassador of the Month. Though retired, Banker also continues to represent her former employer as a member of the Regions Bank team during Chamber Chase. "I love the business connections, and I have made so many good friends. I am so proud of what our Chamber does to grow our community," she said.

*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).*



*ASM Recycling Inc., located at 2751 McKinney Ave. in Mobile, offers a free pickup service to commercial accounts to accommodate for most, if not all, recycling needs. ASM's mission is to reduce, reuse or recycle waste products for a more efficient use of energy and other resources. The company recycles aluminum, copper, brass, stainless steel and zinc. Pictured left to right are: Walter Petersen; Jacqueline Sullivan, account administrator; and Bonner Williams, account executive. For more information, call 251-470-0765, or visit [www.asmrecycling.com](http://www.asmrecycling.com).*

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Dominic Gable, Jaye B. Patterson, Mike Johnson, and Lyn Peterson



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## BOARD of advisors

**Gregory P. Bru** is a partner in Armbrecht Jackson LLP, where his practice areas include admiralty and maritime law, business and finance, corporate and securities, intellectual property, real estate, construction and development. Bru earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Duke University in Durham, N.C., and a law degree from the University of Florida in Gainesville, and is admitted to practice law in Alabama and Florida. Armbrecht Jackson is a Partners for Growth Investor.



**Thomas B. Clement Sr.** is president of Southern Home, a furniture manufacturer. He is a graduate of The University of Alabama. Clement is past director of St. Paul's Episcopal School and has held board positions for Regions Bank, the American Heart Association, Distinguished Young Women (DYW), the DYW Foundation Board, The Salvation Army of Coastal Alabama, Dauphin Way United Methodist Church and the Gulf Coast Exploreum.



**David S. Marks III** is founder and president of Marks Furniture Co. Inc. Marks Furniture operates as La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries of the Gulf Coast, and has stores in Mobile, Spanish Fort and Pensacola. Marks is a member of the Alabama Retail Association's board of directors and the National Home Furnishings Association. Formerly, Marks was an owner and vice president of Marks Fitzgerald Furniture Co. in Mobile.



**Clinton D. McFerrin** is general manager for Cintas Corp. A Tuscaloosa native, he graduated from The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in finance. He served in various management roles with Sears Holdings, culminating in general manager. McFerrin joined Cintas in 2008, also serving in various management positions before assuming his current role in Mobile. Cintas is a Partners for Growth Investor.



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

## Emily Hatcher Joins Chamber Staff

**Emily Hatcher** joined the Mobile Area Chamber's membership department as an account executive responsible for recruiting businesses to become Chamber members.



workforce. "I'm glad to be back involved in the business community," she said. "I can't think of a better place to get involved than through the Chamber. It's a great place to work and with a great group

Hatcher graduated from the University of Mobile with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in history. She started her career in the banking industry, working for BB&T Bank as a regional bank specialist in various departments and locations.

After staying at home with her two sons for six years, Hatcher is returning to the

Hatcher of people." "Emily has already grown our membership and is doing a fantastic job sharing the message about the benefits of membership," said **Carolyn Golson**, the Chamber's vice president of membership.

Hatcher can be reached at 251-431-8619 or [ehatcher@mobilechamber.com](mailto:ehatcher@mobilechamber.com).

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# APRIL 2016

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

## 1 CHAMBER CLASSIC TOURNAMENT

Make plans to bring your customers for a day of fun and networking on the golf course.

**When:** 7:30 a.m. registration/8:30 a.m. shotgun start  
**Where:** TimberCreek Golf Course, 9650 TimberCreek Blvd.  
**Cost:** \$150 for individual players or \$850 for hole sponsors (teams of four)  
**Contact:** Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or [drencher@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drencher@mobilechamber.com)  
 Reservations are required.  
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## 12 MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

Let the Chamber staff show its appreciation to those who support this organization and make possible the work we do to improve our region. Enjoy a fish fry and live music.

**When:** 4 to 6 p.m.  
**Where:** Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.  
**Contact:** Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or [aunger@mobilechamber.com](mailto:aunger@mobilechamber.com)  
 No charge. Free parking. See page 19 for more details.

### Sponsors



**Catering:** Alec Naman Catering  
**Music:** The Tommy Morse Band

## 13 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

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

**When:** 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.  
**Where:** Exchange 202, 202 Government St.  
**Contact:** Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or [aunger@mobilechamber.com](mailto:aunger@mobilechamber.com)  
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## 19 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE *\*Members Only*

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

**When:** 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. (Note earlier time)

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

**Speaker:** City of Mobile Mayor **Sandy Stimpson**

**Topic:** State of the City Update

**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:**  **BancorpSouth**

## 20 WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE *\*Members Only*

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

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

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

**Speaker:** **Michelle Crowe Ritter**, founder of e-worc web and new media

**Topic:** "Building & Managing Your Online Reputation"

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

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

**Sponsor:**  **SPRINGHILL MEDICAL CENTER**

## 20 MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY LUNCHEON

The event includes awards presented by the Navy League, Marine Corps. League, Air Force Association, ESGR, USCG and National Guard & Reserve and recognition of distinguished JROTC & ROTC Cadets.

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

**Where:** USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park, Aircraft Pavilion

**Cost:** \$25 per person or \$200 for table of eight

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

*Reservations required by April 15 and payment due at time of reservation. See page 16 for more details.*

**Sponsors:**



**Venue Sponsor:** USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

**Photography Sponsor:** The Jim Owen Studios

## Who's New

**Wilkins Miller LLC** announced **Kristian Reeves** earned the uniform certified public accountant (CPA) distinction and was promoted to senior accountant. Reeves graduated from Spring Hill College with a bachelor's degree in accounting and received a master's of accounting from the University of South Alabama.



Reeves



**Business Information Solutions**, an IT security company, hired **Lila Adams** as client concierge. She brings more than 14 years of experience in customer service and conflict resolution.

\* **Business Information Solutions**, an IT security company, hired **Lila Adams** as client concierge.



Ladner



Wolf



Zoghby



Masters

**Smith Dukes** announced four of its CPAs were promoted. **Leah Ladner**, who has been with the firm for seven years, is now senior manager. She received a bachelor's degree in accounting from Louisiana State University, and a master's in business administration (MBA) from the University of Texas at Tyler.

**Zachary D. Wolf** was promoted to manager. He received a bachelor's degree from The University of Alabama and a master's degree in accounting from Vanderbilt University.

**Melissa A. Zoghby** was promoted to assurance supervisor. Zoghby received a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Alabama and a master's of accountancy from the University of South Alabama.

**Jeremy W. Masters** was promoted to assurance senior. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Mobile.



Druhan



LaCour

**Tommy Druhan** and **Todd LaCour** joined **Willis of Alabama**. Druhan is a graduate of Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in business management. LaCour, who also graduated from Auburn University, holds a bachelor's degree in finance with a minor in marketing.



**Mobile Area Water & Sewer System** named **Billy Joe "Bud" McCrory** assistant

**McCrory** director of administration. McCrory earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Faulkner University and a master's of business administration from the University of South Alabama.

\* **AT&T** announced **Glyn Agnew** accepted the position of regional director for legislative and

external affairs for south Alabama. Agnew earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mississippi State University. He has more than 30 years of experience with AT&T.



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**Brigitte D. Moten** joined **Terracon**, an employee-owned engineering consulting firm, as a client development manager. Moten earned a bachelor's degree in business management from Georgia State University. She also holds a design and construction industry certification from Georgia Institute of Technology and Turner's Emerging Leaders Program.

\*  
**S. S. Nesbitt** welcomed new associates **Mary Hancock** and **Greta Maxime** to its Mobile office. Hancock is a small business account manager and Maxime is a personal lines account manager.

specialist, earned a bachelor's degree in social science from Florida State University in Tallahassee, Fla., and is a Leadership Mobile graduate. Guy is a CPA with more than 20 years of accounting and finance experience.

\*  
**Acquisition Logistics Engineering (ALE)** announced a transfer of ownership. **Renee Coogan** recently acquired controlling interest in the Ohio-based life cycle engineering services company after founder Charles Coogan retired.

**Business Endeavors**

**United Way of Southwest Alabama** and **Airbus Americas Engineering Mobile**, in partnership with the **Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center**, **Mobile Area Education Foundation** and **Mobile County Public Schools**, launched a mentoring program at Palmer Pillans Middle School. The Flying Challenge program is

focused on character development and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities.

\*  
**Dickey's Barbecue Pit** launched a new delivery service for group orders. For additional details, call 251-471-1050.

\*  
**Wintzell's Oyster House** owner/operator **Bob Omainsky** was selected to serve on the National Restaurant Association's board of directors. The board works on initiatives that strengthen the restaurant and food service industry and

**Well Done**

\*  
**FCS**, formerly known as **Fremm's Contractor Services LLC**, named **Tia Austin** secretary to the corporation's board.



**Robert W. Sobol PhD** was named vice president-elect of the National Environmental Mutagenesis and Genomics Society (EMGS). EMGS provides a forum for the establishment and support of scientists in the field of environmental mutagenesis.

\*  
**Altaworx LLC** received the Bronze Solution Provider Status for going above and beyond to serve customers based on overall performance among AT&T Alliance Channel's 2016 Solution Provider Champions.



**Harbor Financial** hired **Dee Ann Rutens** and **Christy Guy**. Rutens, the new operations



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The **Alabama Coastal Foundation** presented **Dr. George Crozier**, who was the executive director of the **Dauphin Island Sea Lab** for 33 years, the Lifetime of Conservation Achievement Award. Crozier was honored for his long commitment to improving coastal Alabama. He previously received NOAA's Coastal Steward Award and was honored by the state of Alabama for his work as a science educator.



**City of Mobile** engineer **Nick Amberger** was named Engineering Manager of the Year by the Mobile Area Council of Engineers (MACE). MACE honors engineers who advance the engineering profession through their contributions to industry, education and the community.

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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## GREAT THINGS THAT COME ONCE A WEEK:

1. Your favorite football team's game.
2. Your favorite TV show.
3. 5 p.m. Friday.

## AND NOW LAGNIAPPE!

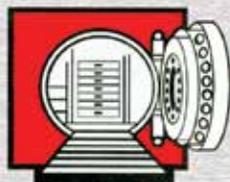
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Quick Delivery Service Inc.  
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### 25 years

Adams and Reese LLP  
Praxair Inc.

### 15 years

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Gulfbelt Properties Inc.  
Inge & Associates Inc.  
Women's Business Alliance

### 10 years

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### 1-4 years

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Know a company interested in benefiting from Chamber membership? Contact Emily Hatcher at 251-431-8619 or ehatcher@mobilechamber.com. Also, you'll find the membership directory at www.mobilechamber.com.

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