

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

APRIL 2018

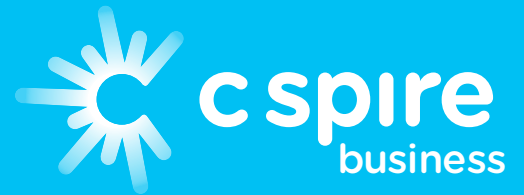
# the businessview

## Apple Partners with Bishop State

Aker Solutions  
Moves Engineering &  
Design Ops to Mobile

New Direct Jet  
Service to Orlando





# Your business comes first.

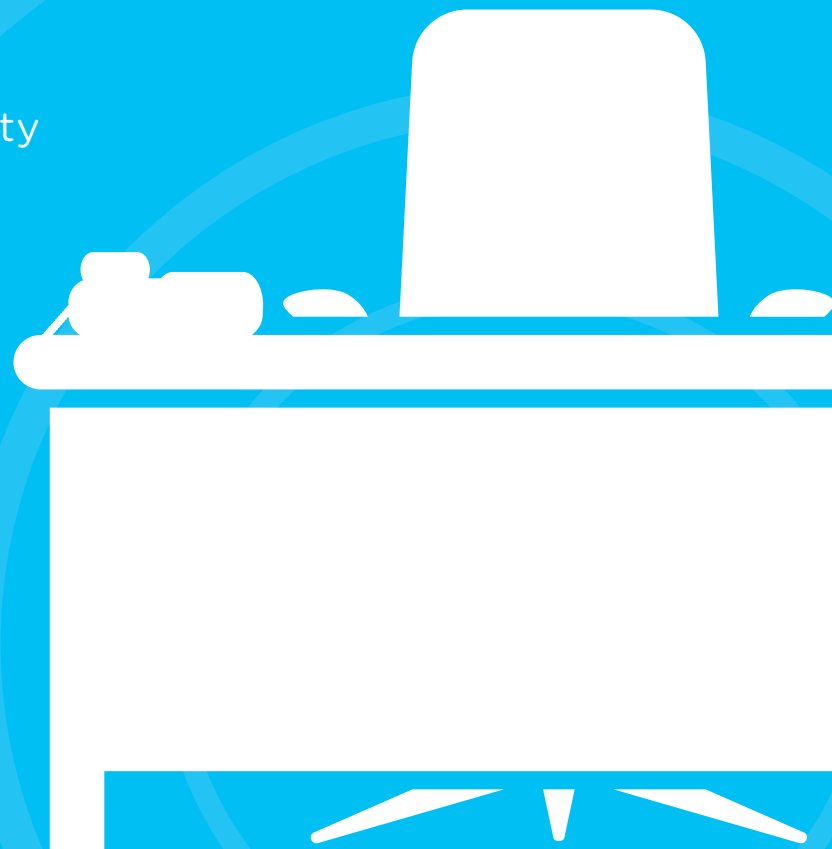
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and safety personnel



## **INDUSTRIAL & TECHNICAL SKILLS**

Welders, pipe fitters, riggers,  
journeyman plumbers & crane  
operators/heavy equipment operators

**ON THE COVER**

Apple selects Bishop State as a site to teach coding and app development to students. Pictured on the cover is instructor Tracy Driscoll with student Kaitlyn Pope. See story on page 7.  
*Photo by Jeff Tesney*



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# Aker Solutions to Move Engineering and Design Operations to Mobile

Aker Solutions has plans underway to relocate up to 75 high-paying engineering, human resources and accounting positions from its facility in Houston to Mobile.

Currently, the company's Middle Bay Port facility only includes umbilicals manufacturing. This project will bring all facets on one site, aside from sales, which according to company officials will remain in Houston.

Aker, headquartered in Oslo, Norway, makes umbilicals for the subsea oil and gas industry. Opened in Mobile in 2003, the company has made multiple investments over the last 15 years. This decision to move certain team members helps Aker increase productivity and value and decrease costs, according to **Marc Quenville**, vice president, products, for Aker Solutions.

"Aker Solutions is increasing our investment in our Mobile manufacturing facility. This allows us to continue strengthening our world-class global manufacturing organization and increase cost efficiency to meet the future demands of our customers globally," said Quenville.

"Aker's Mobile facility has made adjustments in the 15 years they have been here to meet the demands of offshore oil and gas industry," said **David Rodgers**, senior project manager of economic development for the Mobile Area Chamber. "We see the company's increased investment in Mobile as significant," Rodgers said.


Aker's capital investment in this expansion is more than \$13.3 million and includes machinery and equipment as well as materials for an addition to the facility.

"We're delighted to welcome more of Aker's team to Mobile County. It's exciting to have a high-tech company that provides such a unique service to our energy sector," said **Jerry Carl**, Mobile County Commission for District 3 where the company is located.

"We thank Aker Solutions for choosing Mobile for this investment, which expands an already strong partnership between the community and this great company. There is no greater show of confidence than when existing businesses like Aker choose to deepen their roots in our city," said City of Mobile Mayor **Sandy Stimpson**.

Umbilicals link surface and seafloor oil and gas equipment for controls, power or heat. They provide electric and fiber-optic signals, electrical power and hydraulic and chemical injection fluids to the subsea unit.

Aker Solutions has delivered more than 550 umbilicals worldwide, using a wide range of technologies and designs to meet its clients' needs. From facilities in Norway and the United States, Aker has the capacity to engineer and construct umbilicals that meet specific customer requirements. The systems can withstand high pressures and temperatures, ultra-deep waters, harsh environments and long distances. 

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# Apple Picks Bishop State Community College for Coding, App Development Courses

New courses designed and developed by Apple Inc. and available at Bishop State could give business in Mobile's growing information technology industry a steady stream of uniquely skilled applicants.

Bishop State implemented a new app development and coding curriculum, after Apple selected the Alabama Community College System as one of six school systems in the country to teach its Swift coding language last year.

During a series of three courses, students will become proficient in coding and developing apps using Apple's Swift programming language and earn a certificate.

**Kirk Fretty**, an information systems major from Atlanta, is a student currently enrolled in the second Apple Swift programming course. Learning a new coding language has proven both challenging and exciting for Fretty.

"I didn't know anything about programing before I

started. Swift is kind of fun, and I feel like I've learned a lot so far," he said.

To prepare for the program launch, **Tracy Driscoll**, instructor at Bishop State, and **Ronald Davis**, division chair of electronic engineering technologies, both completed extensive training from Apple engineers in Cupertino, Calif., this past summer. At the behest of Apple, Bishop State bought several new MacBook Pros, iPads and even modular furniture to accommodate the curriculum.

The current job market reflects trends in technological job growth. Both Davis and Driscoll are confident the skills their students are learning in class can be used in today's job market.

"When they learn a particular coding language that's specific to that platform, they should be able to move to another platform if necessary once they get all the fundamentals of coding," Davis said.

**Abe Harper**, president of Harper Technologies, has firsthand knowledge of today's technological job market. He believes Mobile, and Alabama in general, will see growth in the IT sector and students enrolled in Apple's Swift programming courses are now at an advantage.

"You're going to see people coming out who can offer a unique skill set to companies that are already using that layer of coding in and around their devices, their applications or

their infrastructure. You'll also see a unique launch pad for individuals who have an aptitude of their own where they can take off from that launch pad and then create their own product out of an abundance of knowledge," he said.

Driscoll is excited to see her students learn and cultivate new skills.

"We're hoping that we have students finish and either develop their own apps or get hired as iOS developers," she said.

## About Apple Swift Coding Classes at Bishop State

**Class I** - Setting the Foundation

**Classes II & III** - Building the Knowledge

*(taught in two mini-terms – over one semester)*

**Cost:** \$444, per course (3 courses offered)

No cost for books, MacBooks and other materials provided with the class

**Info or to Register contact:** Ron Davis, 251-405-7204 or [rdavis@bishop.edu](mailto:rdavis@bishop.edu)

**Of Note:** No requirements, prerequisites or programming experience needed



Via Airlines announced it would begin nonstop service to Orlando four days a week beginning in May. Pictured here at the announcement is City of Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, Matthew Macri with Via and Mobile Airport Authority Executive Director Chris Curry.

# Via Airlines Introduces Nonstop Jet Service to Orlando Sanford

In late February, Via Airlines announced four times a week service from Mobile Regional Airport to Orlando Sanford International (SFB).

Flying Embraer regional nonstop jets, Via Airlines will offer one flight per day on Sundays, Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. The leisure market is a key target for Via Airlines, however, business travelers will be able to take advantage of the international markets served by Orlando's two airports.

"Mobile is an amazing city, and we're excited about the opportunity to serve both business and leisure travelers with jet service from SFB as we

bring the convenience of nonstop flights to this market as part of our 2018 expansion," said **Matthew Macri**, vice president of operations for Via Airlines. "(We) take pride in being the airline of the hospitality industry. Our jet service to Mobile will move travelers to and from Florida far faster and more economical than local airport prop services or traveling by car."

During the announcement, Mobile Airport Authority (MAA) Executive Director **Chris Curry** told reporters his group expects to have a letter of intent mentioning a transition to Brookley in 2018.

MAA is completing a feasibility study on moving some commercial flights from Mobile Regional to Brookley, located near downtown Mobile.

**Patty Howell**, director of regional affairs for the Chamber and staff liaison for the Chamber's air service task force, said: "Connectivity to both national and international markets is a key part of Mobile's economy and vital to the continued growth of our region. Whether at the existing Mobile Regional Airport or a future Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley passenger terminal, the Chamber supports the work of Mobile Airport Authority in

seeking more nonstop destinations and lower prices."

"As we add flights, it's imperative to remember that increased flights and passenger use go hand in hand. It's a use-it-or-lose-it business. We must look to the whole community to use the new service in order for it to succeed and ultimately expand."

Discount flights will be offered when the airlines starts flying out on Mobile in May. Go to [www.flyviaair.com](http://www.flyviaair.com) for more information.





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*G.C. Specialties specializes in construction specialty items including overhead doors, bathroom partitions, accessories and more. The company was founded in 1998 by Steve and Luci Whitworth, and is located on Mauvilla Drive in Mobile. They were named the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.*

# G.C. Specialties Expects Growth as Construction Rebounds

Throughout the 1980s and 90s, **Steve Whitworth** worked for companies that either sold or installed specialty construction products. Then he had a better idea: Why not start a company that does both?

So in 1998, Whitworth founded G.C. Specialties with his wife, Luci, who serves as president. The company, located on Mauvilla Drive in Mobile, specializes in Division 8, 10 and 11 construction specialty items, including overhead doors, bathroom partitions, bathroom accessories, operable room partitions, athletic equipment and much more.

Whitworth, who serves as vice president, says the company stands out by offering its clients "a more complete materials package for their projects so they would only have to deal with

one person, making it easier for the customer."

G.C. Specialties is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month, and a member for the last 10 years.

With 16 employees, the company's mission is to give contractors, architects and business owners peace of mind when facing special construction needs. And Whitworth believes that offering installation as a service, in addition to selling quality products, gives G.C. Specialties a unique ability to ensure that its customers get the right product for each specific application.

The Whitworths believe giving back to the community has helped make their business successful. Steve donates his time to various churches in Mobile and to Hope Outdoors

in Washington County. Luci has volunteered with the Women's Business Enterprise Council as a site inspector. The company contributes to civic and charitable organizations like McKemie Place, UCP of Mobile and Feeding the Gulf Coast, and employees are involved in organizations like the Fuse Project, Young Life of Mobile, the Associated General Contractors of America and UMS-Wright Preparatory School.

As the construction industry has rebounded from the housing crash and the BP oil spill, Whitworth expects growth in government and private construction to continue in the foreseeable future. Technology has created new efficiencies. Project documentation such as drawings, request for proposals,

submittals and schedules that can now be accessed online, eliminating a lot of the paperwork once associated with large projects.

G.C. Specialties looks to expand its customer base while continuing to evolve by empowering its employees with ethical principles, expert construction and interpersonal skills to meet the needs of its customers and the community.

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).



# Small Business Forum, April 10-11

Small businesses have needs that often include business planning, access to capital, legal and accounting questions, and professional development training to keep them abreast of the latest trends.

To help with this, the Mobile Area Chamber is hosting a Small Business Forum with training geared toward entrepreneurs, small business owners, managers and employees.

"The two most pressing challenges we hear from our small business owners are: one, they need more customers; and two, they are looking for capital infusion for growth or expansion," says **Danette Richards**, director of small

business development for the Mobile Area Chamber.

The forum addresses both of these issues. Entrepreneurs and business owners can take advantage of two training sessions.

## **April 10** **Where's the Money?** **Alternative and Traditional** **Funding for Your Business** **Lifecycle**

One of the most pressing challenges to managing and expanding a business is having or finding sufficient capital resources and funding.

At Where's the Money? you will find out how to properly prepare before meeting with potential funders and lending

sources that offer traditional and non-traditional lending, equity investment and venture opportunities.

*(Facilitated by the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force)*

## **April 11** **Marketing Tackle Box** **Using the Right Hook**

Most small businesses do not start out with a loaded marketing team. Promoting your small business can require tons of time, research and advertising.

In this workshop you will receive the tools to maximize your online presence including consistent branding, the foundations of websites and how to optimize your social media appearance.

Bring a laptop or tablet for hands-on exercises to learn marketing best practices and tips to put into practice right away.

*(Presented by Blue Fish)* 



## small business forum

### APRIL 10 - 11

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, 451 Government St.

*april 10*

**Where's the Money?**  
**Alternative & Traditional Funding**  
**for your Business Lifecycle**

8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Presented by: Growth Alliance Task Force**

*april 11*

**Marketing Tackle Box**  
**Using the Right Hook**

8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Presented by: Blue Fish**

## register today

Cost is \$10 for members/\$15 for potential members for each class.

Register at [events.mobilechamber.com](http://events.mobilechamber.com) or call 251-431-8607.



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# Become an Entrepreneur in 54 Hours



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The hardest part of starting a business is starting out. Beginning Friday, April 13, aspiring entrepreneurs and others with a passion for small business get another chance to spend a weekend building businesses from concept to completion during Mobile's third Startup Weekend, a Techstars program powered by Google.

**Why Startup Weekend?** Businesses start small, and research shows entrepreneurial training and mentoring is critical for new and emerging companies to succeed. Also, entrepreneurs are the visionaries, risk takers and innovators in the economy.

Startup Weekend will help develop concepts in order to launch a company and get to the marketplace.

## Day 1:

The weekend begins with participants pitching their business concepts. The group as a whole selects the top ideas, then all attendees roll up their sleeves and join one of the advancing teams to create a viable business.

## Days 2-3:

Throughout the weekend, the teams are challenged to validate a business idea and create a prototype that solves the needs of its target customer. Teams receive constant feedback and expert advice from mentors and coaches to learn firsthand what goes into creating a business.



## Day 3:

The weekend concludes with a high-energy pitch competition where the teams present their business ideas to a panel of judges for prizes.

Friends, family, supporters and the media are encouraged to attend the pitch competition and reception.

So who should attend? Entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs with a business idea or a problem to be solved shouldn't miss it. Also, business startup enthusiasts, web and software developers, designers, marketing gurus, business development specialists and anyone interested in launching a startup. ☺☺

## Startup Weekend Mobile

**Where:** The Steeple on St. Francis, 251 St. Francis St.

**When:** Friday from 5 to 10:30 p.m.  
Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.  
Sunday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Cost:** \$75, and you can register at <http://bit.ly/2GZPmUJ>

**Ticket includes:** All meals and snacks throughout the weekend; one-on-one time with mentors; a network of developers, designers and entrepreneurs eager to change the world; and benefits and discounts from Techstars global partners

**Check out the video to preview Startup Weekend Mobile** at <http://bit.ly/2EF7nth> or [projectazalea.com/startup-weekend](http://projectazalea.com/startup-weekend).

**Still have questions?** Contact **Corey James** at [corey@innovation-portal.com](mailto:corey@innovation-portal.com) or 251-333-0963 or **Danette Richards** at [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com) or 251-431-8652.

*Startup Weekend is a partnership of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Innovation Portal.*

**Sponsored by:** BBVA, Hargrove Engineers+Constructors, Heritage Homes, The Steeple on St. Francis and the University of South Alabama

# writing Mobile's story



In February, the Mobile Area Chamber hosted its annual meeting at the Mobile Convention Center. More than 1,000 members joined in the fun evening presented by Trustmark. Highlights included Brian Willman's introduction as 2018 board chair and an after-party featuring four catering stations and a concert by Willie Sugarcapps. The theme Writing Mobile's Story highlights the Chamber's role in Mobile's history as well as its future. Pictured on these two pages are some of the sights from this year's event. To learn how your company can sponsor this fun-filled event, contact Carolyn Golson at [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com) or 251-431-8622.









# An Update on the Chamber's Legislative Agenda

By Kellie Hope, vice president, Community and Governmental Affairs

The Mobile Area Chamber's governmental affairs team works throughout the legislative session to stay in contact with members of the Mobile-Baldwin-Washington County legislative delegation and engage in legislative issues that affect Alabama's business climate.

During this last session of the current quadrennium, here are a few key Chamber issues.

## 1. HB317 (by Rep. Ken Johnson) – Alabama Jobs Enhancement Act:

This act modernizes, clarifies and cleans up various economic development statutes. In particular, it improves transparency and accountability by requiring projects to notify the Alabama Department of Commerce when seeking abatements. It also clarifies the definition of lobbying as it relates to economic development activities.

HB317 has passed the House committee on economic development and tourism and is expected to advance to a floor vote.

**2. HB267 (by Rep. James Buskey) – Brunch Bill:** This local bill to authorize the governing body of any municipality within Mobile County, or the county commission in any unincorporated areas of the county, to establish on-premises sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages on Sunday beginning at 10 a.m. HB267 has passed the House and has been sent to the Senate.

**3. HB25 (by Rep. Chris Pringle) - Alabama Department of Transportation Governing Commission:** HB25 calls for creation of a five-member State Transportation Commission to coordinate and develop the activities of the department

of transportation, including the appointment of the director of the department. A standing transportation commission and full-time director will allow for more consistency in the long-term management of projects and priorities, beyond changes in elected administrations. HB25 has passed the House committee on transportation, utilities and infrastructure and is awaiting placement on the House calendar.

*This update was published at press time, March 1. For the latest updates go to the Chamber's blog at [mobilechamber.com/blog](http://mobilechamber.com/blog).*

*Kellie Hope may be reached at 251-431-8618 or [khope@mobilechamber.com](mailto:khope@mobilechamber.com).*



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# Explore *Iceland's* *Magical Northern Lights* with the Chamber in March 2019

Join members and guests of the Mobile Area Chamber as they discover Iceland, a land and culture forged by fire and ice, March 15-21, 2019.

Visit steaming lava fields and massive glaciers which sculpt mountains and valleys, leaving thundering waterfalls and plunging fjords. In this land of many natural wonders, enjoy the rare opportunity to see the aurora borealis – one of nature's most dazzling light displays, also known as the northern lights.

Cost of the trip is \$3,849, based on double occupancy and the single room rate is an

additional \$500. The price includes roundtrip airfare from Mobile, all hotel accommodations, all side and day trips, six breakfasts and four dinners. A deposit of \$250 (with travel insurance, or \$500 without) holds your reservation with final payment due Jan. 14, 2019. To register, or for more information, contact **Leigh Perry-Herndon** at 251-431-8645 or [lherndon@mobilechamber.com](mailto:lherndon@mobilechamber.com).

**March 15 Overnight Flight from Mobile to Reykjavik, Iceland**

## **March 16 Tour Begins**

The tour opens in Reykjavik. Get acquainted with old town Reykjavik on a walking tour featuring Hallgrímskirkja church, city hall, the harbor and Reykjavik's oldest building, now home to the Kraum Icelandic design center. That night, gather with fellow travelers for dinner featuring Icelandic cuisine. Then, take an exhilarating northern lights cruise, leaving behind the bright city lights, and sail into the darkness of Faxaflói Bay in search of the northern lights – one of nature's wonders.

## **March 17 Reykjavik - Golden Circle - Seljalandsfoss Waterfall - Vik**

Travel the incredible Golden Circle, a route encompassing many of Iceland's most renowned natural wonders. Journey to Thingvellir National Park, the nation's most historic area. Icelanders gathered here in A.D. 930 and established one of the world's first parliaments. Stand upon one of the globe's most geologically significant landscapes – Thingvellir's rugged rift valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site marking the point where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates meet. Experience the eruptive energy of the Icelandic landscape with a stop at the geothermal fields of Geysir and Strokkur. Then, marvel at the beauty of the Gullfoss (Golden Falls) waterfall, a stunning 100-foot double cascade. Next, see the beautiful Seljalandsfoss, one of Iceland's most famous and picturesque waterfalls with a walkway behind it. Continue southeast to Vik, the southernmost village in Iceland, surrounded by beautiful valleys, beaches, cliffs and mountains.



**March 18 Eyjafjallajökull  
Volcano Visitor Centre -  
Skogar Museum - Vik**

Drive along the scenic south shore to the Eyjafjallajökull Volcano Visitor Centre. Learn about a family's struggle to live during and following the dramatic 2010 explosion of the infamous Eyjafjallajökull volcano that brought European flights to a halt. Visit Skogar Folk Museum, containing a collection covering all aspects of

Icelandic life including farm and domestic artifacts, as well as turf-built homes. Nearby is the impressive Skógafoss waterfall, one of the largest in Iceland. Later, view Reynisfjara, a black volcanic sand beach surrounded by basalt formations, cliffs scattered with caves and rich bird life including the Fulmar, Black Guillemot, Razorbill, Gannet and various types of seagulls. See the unique natural rock formations at Dyrhólaey.

**March 19 Jökulsárlón  
Glacial Lagoon - Skaftafell  
National Park - Vik**

Travel to Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon, filled with floating icebergs. Explore this extraordinary landscape and perhaps see some seals swimming in Arctic waters. Travel to Skaftafell, gateway to Vatnajökull National Park. The largest national park in Europe, Vatnajökull is known for having Iceland's highest mountains, an Alpine environment and the Vatnajökull glacier, Europe's largest.

**March 20 Vik - Blue Lagoon  
- Reykjavik**

Drive to the Reykjanes Peninsula, known for its rugged landscape, lava fields, numerous hot springs, and home of the Blue Lagoon. Take a dip in the pleasantly warm, mineral-rich waters of the geothermal pool, located in the middle of a dramatic lava field. Return to Reykjavik for your farewell dinner and overnight stay.

**March 21 Tour ends in  
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*Stirling Properties employees are committed to providing the best possible service, offering market knowledge and product diversity to clients. Pictured above (front row from left to right): Jill Meeks, Amanda Goldman, Robin Hayles, Jan Kinard, Donna Allsup, Peggy Fouts, Joyce Ori and Amanda Elders. Back row (from left to right) are: Will Barrois, Rachel Jerkins, Jason Scott, Andrew Dickman, Angie McArthur, Jack Conger, Nathan Handmacher, Jeff Barnes and Justin Toomey. Not pictured are: Kennedy Striplin, Jason Franklin and Bobby Lowman.*

# Stirling Properties LLC

**Company officials:** **Marty Mayer**, president and CEO; **Will Barrois**, vice president and regional manager Alabama and Florida

**Years in business:** 43 years  
**Brief company description:** Stirling Properties is a full-service commercial real estate company specializing in commercial brokerage, development and redevelopment, acquisitions and investments, and asset and property management over a wide array of property types across the Gulf South region of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.

**Why are you located in Mobile?**  
 "We have been active in Mobile

and the south Alabama market for more than 16 years," said Barrois. "Mobile's prospect for continued growth and business opportunity is what attracted us to this area. Strategically located along the I-10 corridor, with access to various transportation modes and the port, Mobile is a burgeoning market with significant potential – and the quality of life here helps us to attract and retain the best talent in our industry."

**Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Partners for Growth initiative?** "We want to be involved on the front end regarding the economic growth and business development

planning of our community," said Barrois. "The Chamber's initiatives and activities allow us the opportunity to be informed and proactive in the decision-making process, as well as to meet and network with other companies and business-minded individuals with the same goals. When we all work together, we can accomplish so much more."

**What do you see as Mobile's greatest potential?** "Pro-growth," said Barrois. "Mobile's confluence of a positive business environment with its strategic location, skilled workforce and quality of life make our region extremely attractive. As we continue to grow, we will continue to appeal to new

businesses and industries – huge corporations such as the Amazons, Walmarts and Airbuses of the world are taking notice of our great city and all that it has to offer."

**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).



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# Chris Curry

**Company:** Mobile Airport Authority

**Title:** Executive Director

**Hometown:** Savannah, Ga.

**Education:** Curry earned an associate's degree in airway science from the Community College of the Air Force in Montgomery. He also earned a bachelor's degree in professional aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

**First job:** Clerical assistant at the Chatham County Clerk of Courts

**Previous experience:** Before his move to Mobile, Curry was director of aviation for the city of Tallahassee. Prior to that, he served as executive director of the Collier County Airport Authority, Gary/Chicago International Airport and project manager of airspace and procedure design for the Boeing Co. In addition, he served in the U.S. Air Force as an air traffic controller and retired in 2001. During his military career, he served as manager of air traffic control radar, tower and airfield management.

**Accomplishments:** In Tallahassee, Curry guided the airport's transition from a regional facility to an international one. He was responsible for the \$15 million

modernization project that significantly improved the terminal's aesthetics and wrote legislation that resulted in a \$1 million state contribution toward improving air service to the Capital City. In addition, Curry led the airport's effort to increase the use of green technology by building two solar farms on more than 375 acres of airport property. In 2016, Curry was selected as "Aviation Professional of the Year" by the Florida Department of Transportation.

**Secret to success:** "Treat everybody with respect, regardless of their social status."

**Brief company description:**

Mobile Airport Authority owns and operates 4,500 acres of land and more than 6 million square feet of building space, serving a regional population of 1.9 million. Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley, home to Mobile's downtown airport, has two state-of-the-art runways capable of accommodating any aircraft in the world. It is a center of activity for industrial air traffic on the Gulf Coast and is home to some of Mobile's largest private industry employers, including VT MAE, Airbus, Continental Motors and Federal Express.



**Mobile Airport  
Authority**





# Business Community Honors Local Military at Annual Luncheon

The Mobile Area Chamber will host its 31<sup>st</sup> annual Military Appreciation Luncheon on Monday, April 16, from noon to 1:30 p.m. at USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park.

Outstanding ROTC and JROTC cadets from area schools will be honored and awards will be presented for exceptional service to the community. Also, local military members will be honored for their work serving the nation and the local community.

Awards presented include:

- Teacher 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 U.S. Coast Guard 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.

The keynote speaker for the event is **Jim Lorraine**, president and CEO of America's Warrior




Lorraine

Partnership, a national nonprofit organization empowering communities to empower veterans.

Prior to his current duties, Lorraine served 22 years as a U.S. Air Force officer and flight nurse. His service includes operations in Saudi Arabia, Central America, Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan and Iraq. As a staff officer, Lorraine served as a fellow to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and lastly as the deputy command surgeon for the U.S. Special Operations Command

(USSOCOM). His military awards include the Bronze Star, Secretary of Defense Outstanding Civilian Award, USSOCOM Outstanding Public Service Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Exceptional Civilian Award.

Tickets are available through Monday, April 9, for \$30 per ticket and can be purchased by contacting **Mallory Tyson** at **251-431-8621**, or by registering securely online at **events.mobilechamber.com**. Payment must be made at the time of reservation. 

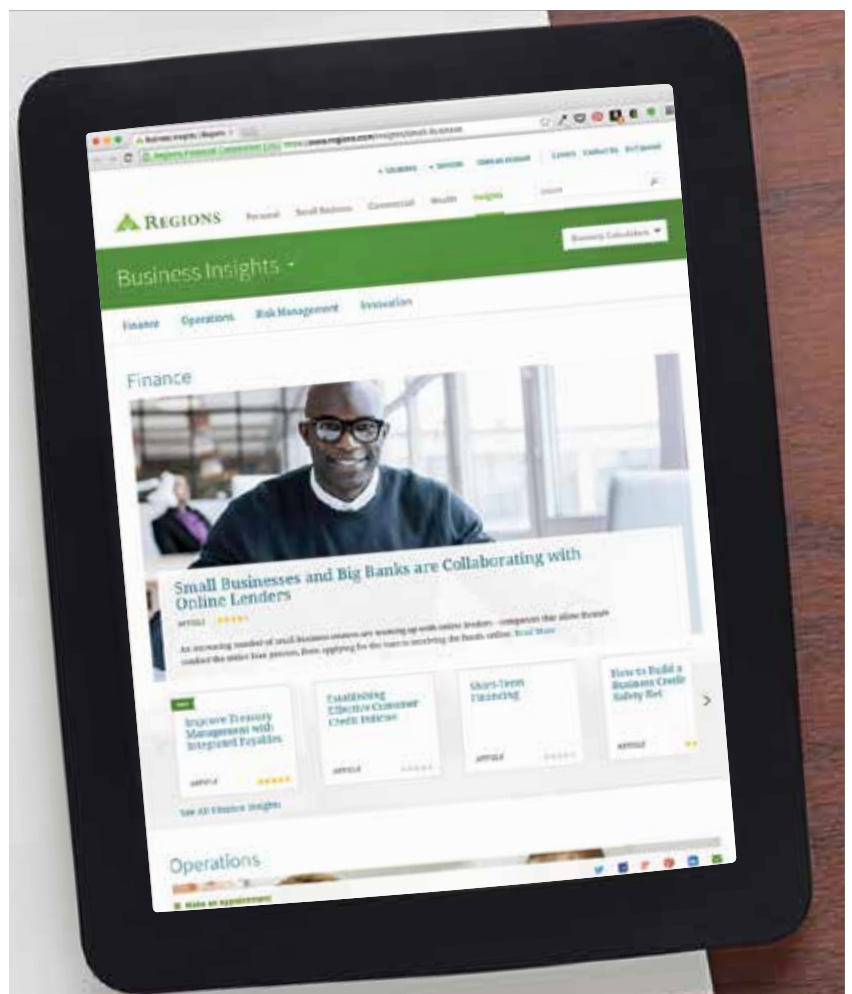
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## Staff Attends Advanced Course on Trade

Christina Stimpson, the Chamber's director of the trade division, attended the International Economic Development Council's advanced course, Foreign Direct Investment & Exporting, covering core components to bring the world economy to the local community, with sessions focused on attracting foreign investors, identifying targeted sectors to engage new business and facilitating exports.



## What Does the Chamber Do?

This spring, the Chamber launched a social media campaign featuring ambassadors and staff members asking and answering general information about the Chamber's work in a variety of areas, including industry recruiting, marketing tips, new member benefits and small

business counseling. The department's fall intern, **Tom Bercham**, who graduates from Spring Hill College next month, produced the campaign.

## Chamber Hosts Local Executives to Timely Topic Roundtables

More than 120 Chamber business owners and managers have attended recent Executive Roundtable sessions hosted by the small business development department. Chamber President and CEO Bill Sisson spoke to a group on the Gulf Coast's changing economic landscape, and representatives from Wilkins Miller spoke on how tax reform affects businesses.

## Blue Fish Assists Chamber

The Chamber's communications and marketing team worked with Marcus Neto, owner of Blue Fish, to update its e-newsletter, *The Business View Weekly*, and biweekly upcoming events to a more mobile-friendly design. Neto consulted on the

project to help the department enhance its communications platform.

## Updates in the Chamber's Lobby

The Chamber has been working on several projects to modernize common spaces in the building at 451 Government St. Projects include a new mural, video monitors, Board of Advisors promotion and Chamber logo. Also, the atrium meeting room received an update, including new paint and furniture.

## Growth Alliance Task Force Meets

Recently, the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force, a committee to support minority-owned business needs, held several meetings. Greg Morris, owner of Greg's Professional Barber and Beauty Salon Inc., spoke on the haircare industry, business trends and barriers to growth. Felicia Thomas, supplier diversity program manager

with Mobile Area Water and Sewer System, spoke about a new mentoring program, offered. It includes a year of coaching and technical assistance provided by regional experts at no charge to qualified participants.

## Ashley Horn Receives Accreditation

Ashley Horn APR, director of digital media and design in the Chamber's communications and marketing department, successfully completed the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, entitling her to use the APR professional designation. The Universal Accreditation Board, a consortium of nine professional communication organizations, directs this competency certification program.



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### Staff Tours Dora Franklin Finley African-American Heritage Trail

In February, Chamber staff had an opportunity to tour the Dora Franklin Finley African-American Heritage Trail. The trail was created to highlight Mobile's culturally diverse heritage by linking historic contributions and events with significant locations. Forgotten chapters of history are remembered through the stories of courage and contributions from Mobile's ethnically diverse past. To learn more about it, go to [www.dffaaht.org](http://www.dffaaht.org).



### Trade Department Travels to South America For Trade and Investment Mission

The Chamber's trade division, in partnership with the Alabama Department of Commerce, is leading a trade and investment mission to South America this month. It will focus on one-on-one business matchmaking for Alabama exporters and inward investment into Alabama. The delegation will visit Quito, Ecuador, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. The networking reception in Argentina was co-sponsored by Outokumpu.

### Chamber Names New Ambassadors

Frank Bates, American National Worksites; Sandy Caruso, Hilton Garden Inn Mobile Downtown; Yannick Guillou, Roberts Brothers; Colleen Harrison, Parkside at Cottage Hill; and Jourdan Henderson, Somerby at Stone Ridge were named new Chamber ambassadors. Ambassadors are a group of volunteer members who assist the Chamber with a variety of projects, including event registration, member visits and attending ribbon cuttings. To learn more about this group,

contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or [drencher@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drencher@mobilechamber.com).

### Economic Development Team Tours Alabama Power Facility

Several members of the Chamber's economic development team attended Alabama Power's Existing Industry Forum at its Technology Applications Center (TAC) in Calera. The forum was designed to show economic developers in the region how Alabama Power can help current and potential customers streamline their utility needs at the TAC.

### Member Ribbon Cuttings and Grand Openings

Chamber staff and ambassadors helped cut ribbons and celebrate grand openings at Alabama Credit Union – West Mobile, Burger King – Government Street and KidsStreet Urgent Care.

### Chamber Hosts French Aerospace Companies

In partnership with Business France, the national agency supporting the international development of the French economy, the Chamber hosted a delegation of French aerospace

companies in Mobile. Staff discussed Mobile's economy and current business climate; met with the Mobile Airport Authority staff, who offered a presentation and tour of the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley;

and toured and met with representatives of the Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility. The delegation also had private one-on-one business meetings with interested partners.

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## 5 Rivers — Alabama's Delta Resource Center

Where the Mobile, Spanish, Tensaw, Apalachee and Blakeley rivers flow into Mobile Bay stands 5 Rivers — Alabama's Delta Resource Center. The center offers more than 250,000 acres of scenic waterways, woods and wetlands, as well as numerous activities and sights. Located at 309450 Five Rivers Blvd. in Spanish Fort, the facility is open every day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with free admission. For more information, visit [www.outdooralabama.com/5-rivers-alabamas-delta-resource-center](http://www.outdooralabama.com/5-rivers-alabamas-delta-resource-center). Pictured are 5 Rivers Delta, The Cypress Gift Shop & Welcome Center employees Mark Wetzel, Ben Bloom and Alison Unger.

## AMBASSADOR of the month



Photo by Jeff Testey

As a Mobile Area Chamber ambassador, **Lisa Phillips** finds the networking opportunities to be invaluable. "I get to meet and build business relationships with so many genuinely fascinating people," she said. Phillips, the executive vice president of HeroMan Services Plant Co., is the Chamber's Ambassador of the Month. She has been an ambassador for a year. "It's exciting to be able to represent both the Chamber and HeroMan Services in such a thriving entrepreneurial environment," 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).

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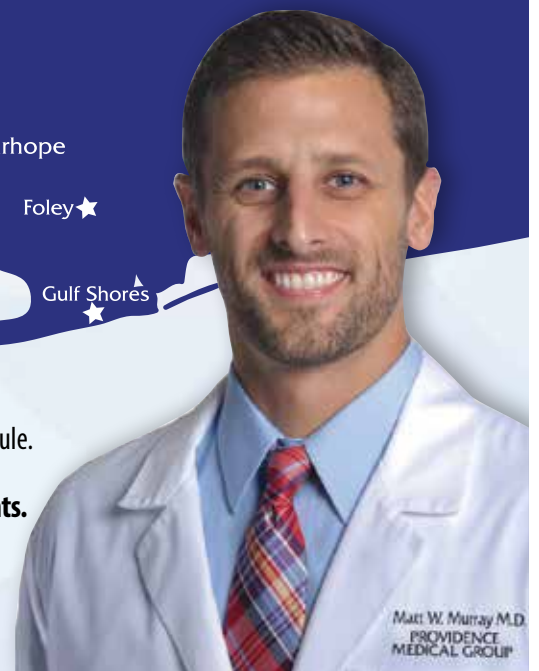
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**Christina Edgerton** is area vice president for Airgas for the south region. Most recently she was regional sales manager for Air Liquide, with responsibility over bulk gases, and manager of operations control and strategic objectives for Air Liquide in the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico. She also held finance positions at both Cameron International and Hewlett-Packard prior to joining Air Liquide in 2011. Edgerton holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Houston's Honors College and a master's in finance from Tulane University. Airgas supports several local nonprofit organizations including Mobile's Magic Moments.



**E. Taylor Engerson** is president and general manager for Safety Plus Inc. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and management from Auburn University. Engerson worked for two healthcare software startup companies before joining Safety Plus in 2014 to create and manage its newly formed software division, and was named president and general manager in 2016. Safety Plus offers safety management, loss control services, site safety personnel and Department of Transportation services.



**Robert "Allan" Gustin Jr.** is vice president and Gulf Coast area manager for Dunn Building Co. LLC. He previously served as vice president for White-Spinner Construction and for Coastal Builders. Gustin earned a bachelor's degree in construction engineering technologies from the University of Southern Mississippi. He has served in board leadership positions with Partners for Environmental Progress, Historic Mobile Preservation Society, Associated Builders and Contractors - Mobile Section, Associated Builders & Contractors - Midgulf Chapter and the Barton Academy Foundation.



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).



# CHAMBER GOLF CLASSIC

## Friday, April 6

The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail/  
Magnolia Grove

7:30 a.m.

Registration & Breakfast

8:30 a.m.

Shotgun Start

**INDIVIDUAL TICKETS: \$150**

**HOLE SPONSORSHIPS: \$850**

Register online at [www.mobilechamber.com](http://www.mobilechamber.com)  
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Breakfast Sponsor - Dick Russell's Bar-B-Que

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## CHAMBER GOLF CLASSIC

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

**When:** 7:30 a.m. registration and breakfast/  
8:30 a.m. shotgun start

**Where:** Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail/Magnolia Grove

**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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**Dick Russell's**  
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## SMALL BUSINESS FORUM

## 10 WHERE'S THE MONEY? ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL FUNDING FOR YOUR BUSINESS LIFE CYCLE

Entrepreneurs and small business owners will learn about the various finance sources available to your small business. Meet experts that can help identify the right options for your business. See page 10 for more information and reservations.

## 11 MARKETING TACKLE-BOX – USING THE RIGHT HOOK

Bring your laptop to work hands-on with tools to maximize your online presence, including consistent branding, the foundations of websites and ways to optimize your social media appearance.

**When:** 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. (both days)

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

**Cost:** \$10 for members/\$15 for potential members for each workshop

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

Reservations requested by April 8. Free parking.

## Sponsors:



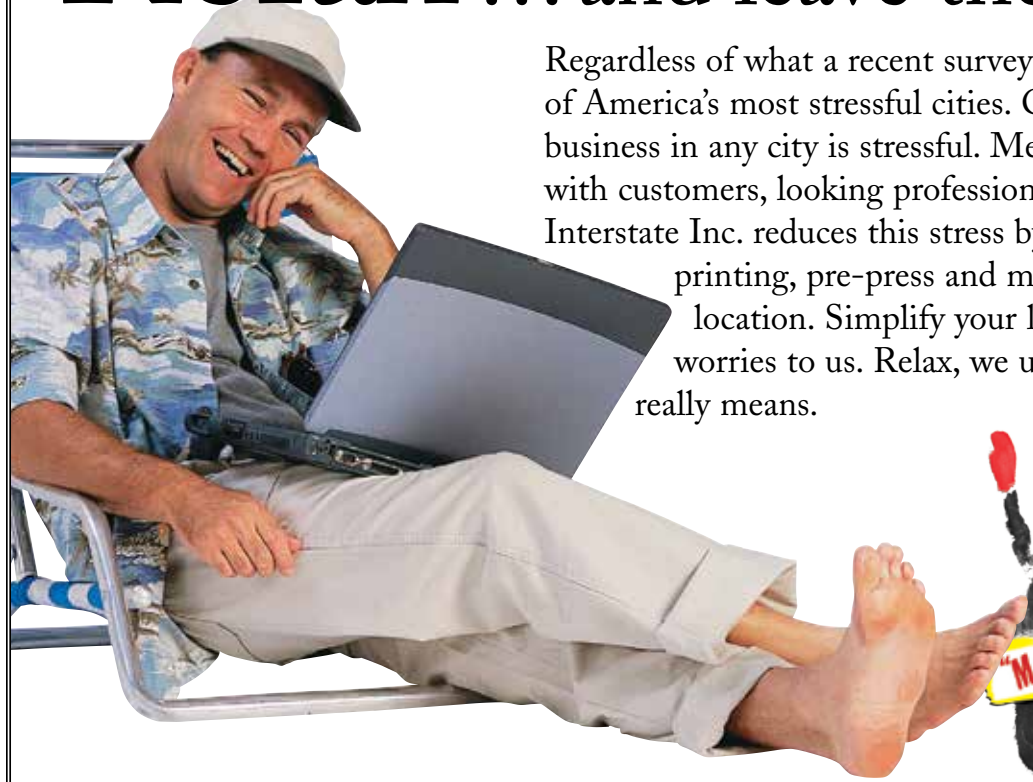
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## 16 MILITARY APPRECIATION LUNCH

See page 25 for details.

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

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

**Cost:** \$30 per person or \$240 for table of eight

**Contact:** Mallory Tyson at 251-431-8621 or

mtyson@mobilechamber.com

Seating is limited. Reservations required by April 13 and payment due at time of reservation.

**Sponsors:**



**Venue:**



**Photography:**



## 17 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE *\*Members Only*

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

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

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

**Speaker:** J. Day Peake, Phelps Dunbar LLP

**Topic:** "Recent Developments in Employment Law and How It Impacts Your Business"

**Contact:** Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607

or brembert@mobilechamber.com

No charge, but RSVP requested. Free parking.

**Sponsor:**



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

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

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

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

**Speaker:** Darrelyn J. Dunmore, directing manager/financial advisor, Strategic Wealth Specialists

**Topic:** "Super Women: Efficient, Effective and (at times) Frazzled"

**Contact:** Carolyn Golson at 251-431-8622 or

cgolson@mobilechamber.com

No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested.

**Sponsor:**



## 26 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

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

**Where:** The Grounds, 1035 N. Cody Rd.

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

**Contact:** Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or

drencher@mobilechamber.com

Reservations are not needed.

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## Who's New



Chestang

**Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Cooper & Co. Inc., Realtors** added new associates **Heather Chestang, Haley Fuqua and Brenda Lucy.**



Fuqua



Lucy

**LandrumHR**, a human resources outsourcing firm based in Pensacola, added two new members to its management team. **Kara Bloomberg** was appointed vice president of operations and **J. Martin (Marty) Stubblefield** is the client relations manager.

In addition, the company promoted **David McCullough** to chief administrative officer. The expanded role will include oversight of the IT, marketing and client relations functions.

\*

**Kelly McCarron** of the **University of South Alabama's Mitchell Cancer**

**Institute** was promoted to associate vice president for medical affairs, health development for USA Health.

McCarron has a bachelor's degree in public relations from Spring Hill College.



## Business Endeavors

The **City of Mobile** held its kickoff meeting for the YES Summer Employment program. The effort encourages businesses to hire young people

this summer with the city providing payroll and liability services for up to 120 hours at minimum wage. To learn how to involve your business go to [www.yes251.org](http://www.yes251.org).

\*

**ExxonMobil** announced plans to invest more than \$50 billion over the next five years in the United States, in addition to current build-out operations plans along the Gulf Coast expected to generate new high-paying jobs.

## Well Done



**Miller** Institute Certified Exit Planner designation.

**Rick Miller**, CEO of **Pro356 Consulting**, recently earned the Business Enterprise

**Ronnie Bloodworth**, the marketing president of **iHeart Media**, joined the board of directors of **Ozanam Charitable Pharmacy**, a provider of prescription medications at no cost to the working poor, homeless or indigent patients in Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia counties.

\*



**Carroll** was selected as a University of South Alabama (USA) Mitchell College of Business IMPACT member. IMPACT is a group of 50 influential individuals and their families who have made great contributions to USA. Carroll graduated from USA with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a concentration in accounting.

**Wilkins Miller LLC**, an accounting and advisory firm, announced **W. Allen Carroll Jr.**, a partner with the firm,

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**Victory Health Partners** welcomed **Scott Tindle** to its board of directors. Tindle serves as co-owner of "Think Bigger," a holding company whose attractions and divisions include Gulf Coast Ducks and The Fort of Colonial Mobile.



**University of Mobile** head baseball coach **Mike Jacobs** was inducted into the Alabama Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in recognition of a lifetime of outstanding achievement in the game of baseball.



Jacobs

through donations, school supplies/food drives and volunteer work. FCS announced that its recent "Giving Back" campaign raised more than \$4,100 through company-matched employee donations. Little Sisters of the Poor, Boys and Girls Club, Wilmer Hall and Feeding the Gulf Coast are Chamber members among the chosen charities for 2017.

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).

## Community News

Each year **FCS**, a full-service facility maintenance and repair company, selects local nonprofit organizations to help support

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