

the **business**VIEW



Radio Host Tom Joyner

Keynote Speaker
at Eagle Awards

**Continental Motors
Breaks Ground at
Mobile Aeroplex**

Made in Mobile:

Shoe Station

Sells Over 1 Million
Pairs Annually



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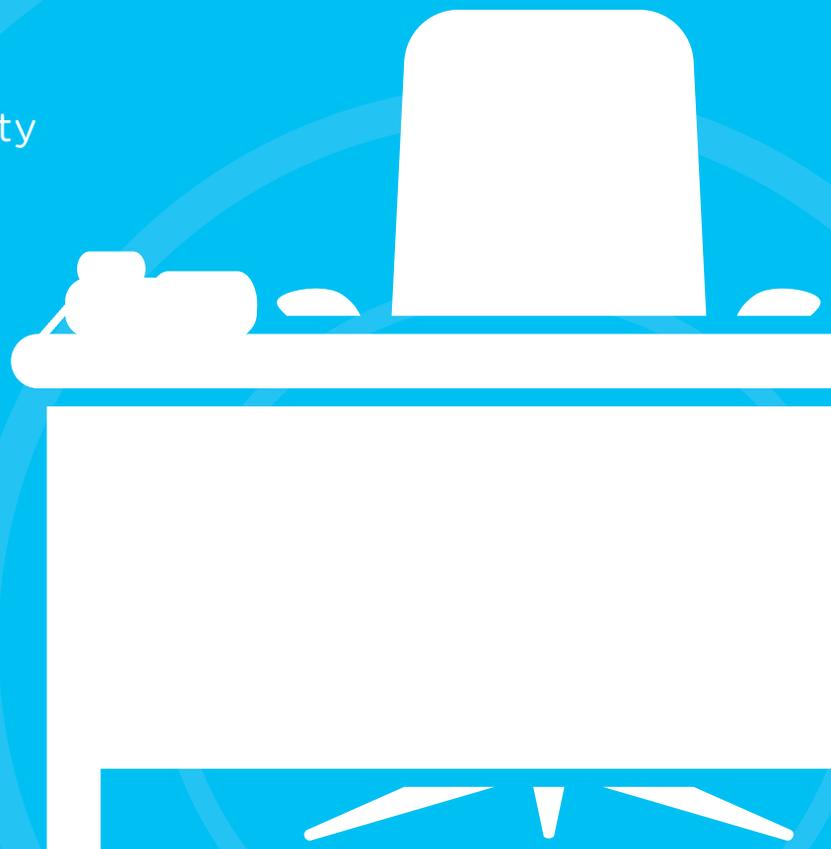
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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

Building a Pipeline of Talent in Mobile

It's not enough to bring in new companies and jobs. When people ask me what the future of economic development holds, I say without hesitation: "talent development." Communities that figure this out will be the ones that continue to prosper and grow.



When I talk with my counterparts across the country, it's evident cities from coast to coast are dealing with challenges in the workforce. For us locally, I'm convinced that if we don't focus on this, our recent banner economic development and the newly created jobs in our community will be at risk of not fulfilling expectations.

And perhaps the saddest part is, if we fail to do this, we'll be driving to visit our kids in communities that nurture talent the best.

That's why the Chamber's Partners for Growth (PFG) economic development strategy now includes a huge initiative focused on talent development, which we will begin introducing over the next few months to our members and investors.

Research on the topic reveals there is a proven process to build strong talent pipelines. The steps in the process include a thorough study of current and future workforce needs and a full assessment of the talent inventory already in the area. After this, developing the talent pool is where the rubber hits the road – and the most important part of the process. This of course includes recruitment and retention of talented professionals in the metropolitan region.

Our strategy will follow this process, and I'm looking forward to working with all of you to ensure we create a talent development system that can serve our business community well into the future. In the great American tradition, business, civic and education leaders can work together to ensure a skilled workforce and a stronger economy. It's important work. Our economic prosperity and the retention of our children are at stake.

ON THE COVER

Each Shoe Station location – there are 21 across five states – has an average of 35,000 pairs of women's, children's and men's shoes, sandals and boots. President and CEO Brent Barkin is a third-generation shoe salesman and took over the family business founded in Mobile. See story on pgs. 12-13. Photo by Jeff Tesney.

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Local Developer to Build Continental Motors HQ

In its first project outside commercial retail development, **Burton Property Group (BPG)** is collaborating with Stonemont Financial Group and Clayco Inc. to construct **Continental Motors'** corporate headquarters and manufacturing facility at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley.

With 275,000 square feet under roof, the state-of-the-art facility will consolidate Continental's current 11 buildings on 45 acres to two buildings on 20 acres, according to **Philip G. Burton**, president and CEO of BPG. The majority of the two facilities will be dedicated to engine and parts manufacturing.

The total project duration is expected to take 11 months, with another year to move in.

Clayco Inc., the design-build firm, will begin construction immediately at Brookley. "Our commitment to Continental Motors is to collaborate closely



with their team to create a manufacturing environment that optimizes their quality, safety and productivity," said Clayco Executive Vice President and Shareholder **Anthony Johnson**.

"The 'greenfield' facility will modernize our manufacturing processes into a world-class, high-productivity, vertically integrated center of manufacturing excellence among the aviation cluster in

Mobile," said **Michael Skolnik**, executive vice president of global operations for Continental. 

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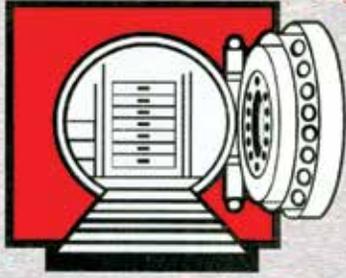


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Mobile's Permitting Process Goes Online

The City of Mobile recently introduced a new online permitting service to give citizens and developers access to managing plans, permits, inspections and code enforcement cases.

According to **Shayla Beaco**, executive director of Build Mobile, Customer Self Service (CSS) brings the development process from the industrial age into the information age. "It is business-friendly, so our applicants can apply for permits, check the status of applications and inspections, stay up-to-date on planning applications, pay permit fees – all from the comfort of their home or office," she said.

Additionally, CSS provides tools to track and manage permits, upload revisions and download approved documents.

Anyone can go online to set up an account. From there, you can:

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- View details on plans, permits and inspections if you are a contact on that record;
- Search for plans, permits, inspections and code cases;
- Pay invoices online if you are a billing contact on that record;
- Request an inspection on active permits if you are a contact on that record; and
- View user profiles.

To learn more about CSS and register for an account, go to urban.cityofmobile.org/portal/.

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Pictured inside the company's store at 6601 Airport Blvd. Suite B, are: (L-R) Melissa Gibbs, Chloe Stokes, Amanda Floyes, Steven Smith, Sedat Kacar and Debra Hulett.

Port City Medical

Specializes in Supplying Health Care Industry

Port City Medical got its start importing hydrophilic urinary catheters from Turkey 12 years ago. Now the company provides a wide range of medical supplies to a host of local doctors, dentists and organizations, including the Mobile County Health Department, Mobile Emergency Management System (EMS) and the City of Mobile.

Port City Medical is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

The company offers a full range of medical supplies, from wheelchairs to surgical instruments to needles and

syringes and everything in between.

"The main thing that sets us apart from other companies is same-day service," said Business Manager **Amanda Floyes**. "If you order something from us in the morning, it will be received by that afternoon. We also strive for outstanding customer service at all times, no matter the situation."

Company representatives are available to go to patient's homes to teach them how to use the equipment and advise them on the best models for their particular situation.

Port City Medical and its seven employees give back to the community through donations to Mobile EMS's breast cancer awareness efforts and other charitable pursuits sponsored by doctors and clients. Recently, the company donated blood pressure cuffs to Victory Health Partners.

"We believe it is important to help your community out when they are in need," Floyes said.

The business is seeing strong growth in supplying durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and the like, and Floyes believes

the future is bright.

"The medical industry will continue to develop and grow with the aging population," she said. "We would like to maintain a stable company and continue to age and grow with it to provide medical supplies and durable medical equipment to doctors' offices, our community and people around the world."

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Doing Business with the State of Alabama

It can be frustrating for a small business trying to land its first sale to a public institution, government agency or major corporation. One of the most helpful steps – meeting personally with the right person – is often the most difficult to take.

If you are looking for new markets, you should consider exploring how to do business with state government. Government agencies continue to look for innovative, reliable and competitive vendors who have know-how and can demonstrate more effective and efficient ways of satisfying the state's buying needs.

According to the Alabama Department of Finance, the purchasing division is charged

with meeting the needs of state agencies while ensuring the fairest and most transparent procurement possible. The website www.purchasing.alabama.gov (VSS or vendor self-service) is the communications platform between the vendor community and the state government entities.

This is the starting point if you are considering doing business with the state. Here you will find business opportunities and register as a state vendor. Once you become a subscribed vendor, you can sign up for notifications, information regarding bids, proposals, notice of awards and financial transactions.



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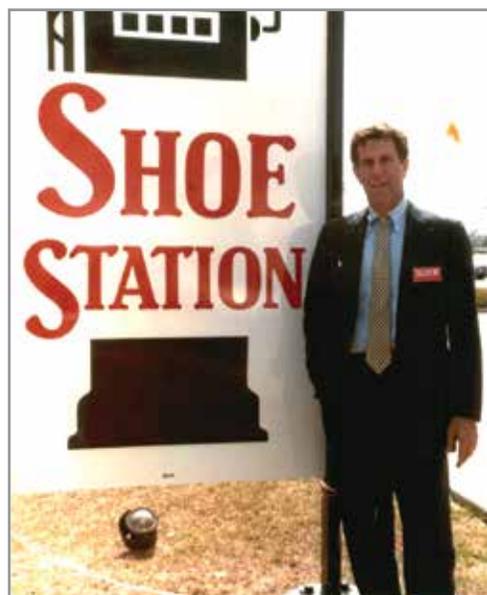
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Shoe Station's Footprint Grows Across the Southeast

In 1984, **Shoe Station** founder **Terry Barkin** had a plan to open a store full of name-brand shoes at value prices in underserved cities across the Southeast.

From humble beginnings in what was originally a J.C. Penney tire and battery center at Bel Air Mall, the company found inspiration for its name and became one of the largest independent shoe retailers in the country, according to the National Retail Shoe Association. Since then, Shoe Station has expanded its footprint throughout five states, with sales reaching nearly 1 million pairs of shoes a year.

Place those shoes, sandals and boots heel-to-toe, and they would stretch 347 miles – enough to practically line I-65 from Mobile to the Alabama-Tennessee state line.



Shoe Station Founder Terry Barkin is pictured above during the store's grand opening in 1984. The first location was at Bel Air Mall in a former J.C. Penney tire and battery center, giving the store inspiration for its name and first logo.

His son, Brent (right), took over the company and is the current president and CEO.



Photo by Jeff Tesney

Following a two-decade career as an executive with Atlanta's Rich's Department Store chain, with shoes and handbags under his supervision, Barkin toured the Southeast to find the right market for his new endeavor.

Because his wife's family was from Mobile, he was familiar with the market. When it opened, Shoe Station was one of the few stores open seven days a week and introduced the open-shelf concept to the region.

With shoes organized by color and style directly on the floor, the store allows customers to shop at their own pace, without pressure. Barkin had seen the concept in other regions but "basically, did it on steroids," says his son **Brent Barkin**, the current president and CEO. Founder Terry Barkin passed away in 2016, following a lengthy illness.

Brent, one of five siblings, began working at the family business as a teenager. While most of the siblings are involved, he is the only full-time employee in the family and a third-generation shoe salesman.

After earning a bachelor's degree in public affairs from Princeton University and teaching for a brief period, Brent returned to Shoe Station in 2002 to assist his father and worked his way through a number of roles.

He is responsible for launching the company's website, www.shoestation.com, in 2004. Thanks to a recent partnership with Amazon.com, the store's merchandise is now available to customers nationwide.

"The internet has been lucrative for Shoe Station, but brick-and-mortar is still valued by many customers, and we anticipate success in the Southeast for decades to come," says Brent.



Today, the Mobile-headquartered company has 21 locations in five states – Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Georgia – and more than 500 employees, with approximately 170 of them in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

Each store has an average of 35,000 pairs of shoes that are "always in style," says Brent. "We love shoes as much as you do."

Next year, Shoe Station will move from its original location across Airport Boulevard to the southwest corner of the former McRae's department

store building at Springdale shopping center. The new facility will be 7,000 square feet bigger than the current Bel Air location and will offer more natural light, higher ceilings and newer finishes.

Over the years, the company expanded its selection to include more than shoes for the entire family through the addition of accessories including handbags, wallets, belts and backpacks. Five years ago, the company

added clothing lines such as Columbia and Guy Harvey.

Coupons, available via text and an app, continue to be a feature customers value, in addition to traditional printed coupons.

Recently, the company added several luxury brands that are coupon-exempt, including Alegria, Birkenstock, Chaco and Dansko, as well as high-end comfort labels like

Brooks and Hoka.

Brent says his father was his mentor and role model, teaching him to "respect the customer, gather data before making a decision and to value growth and adaptation."

Shoe Station is keeping its Southeast focus because Brent says he and his team understand the region and its distinct personality and share a similar customer base and climate. "We don't know how different it would be in Minneapolis," he says.

FAST FACTS:

Grand Opening:

Oct. 3, 1984



Photo courtesy Press-Register

Shoe Volume:

Nearly 1 million pairs sold a year

Number of Stores: 21

Company Footprint:

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Louisiana
- Mississippi

Largest Customer

Base: Women

Number of Brands Sold: 60

Most Popular Brand Right Now:

Birkenstocks



After Shoes, Next Best Seller:

T-shirts

Top Three Sales Days:

- Black Friday;
- Vendor Day; and
- the Saturday before Easter

Favorite Quote About Shoes:

"Shoes are like produce," says Brent Barkin, quoting his dad. "They don't get better with age." That quote also reflects the company's constant coupon and markdown policy.

Blue Fish Named Small Business of the Year

Congratulations to Blue Fish, the Mobile Area Chamber's 2018 Small Business of the Year. You can watch the company's profile video shown at the awards ceremony on Aug. 23 on the Chamber's Facebook page and YouTube channel, as well as the videos for the other finalists – Harper Technologies and Lagniappe – and Outstanding Entrepreneur, Clarence Ball Jr., with Ball HealthCare Services.




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Chamber Chase Exceeds \$1.2 Million Goal

This summer, the Mobile Area Chamber wrapped up its 2018 Chamber Chase campaign, exceeding its \$1.2 million goal. So what's up with the camel? You'll have to wait for the next issue to learn more about Chamber Chase Chairman Abe Harper's #FleaFree challenge to volunteers. The annual drive to increase the number of Chamber members, sell sponsorships and ads and secure in-kind donations would not be possible without dozens of volunteers. You'll also be able to meet them in the November issue of The Business View.

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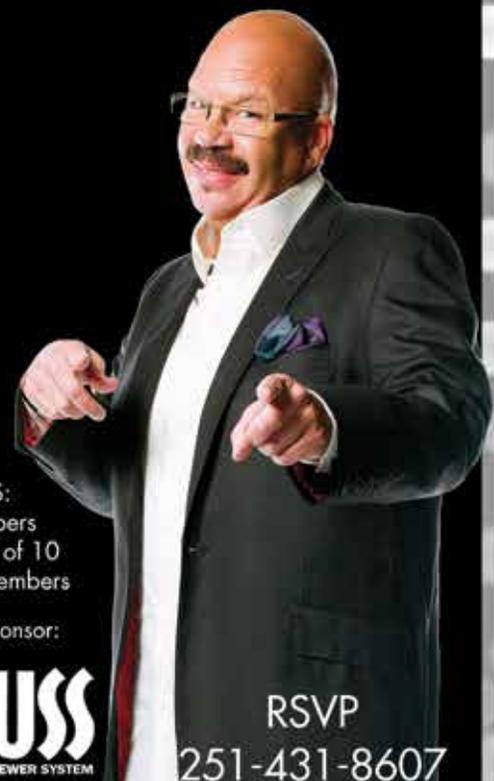
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Exhibitor Forum and **Eagle Awards** Coming Oct. 19

Alabama native **Tom "The Fly Jock" Joyner**, renowned radio and TV host, will be keynote speaker at the Mobile Area Chamber's annual Eagle Awards Luncheon on Friday, Oct. 19, at the Battle House Hotel.

Since 1994, Joyner has hosted *The Tom Joyner Morning Show*, broadcasting on more than 118 radio stations across the country. The show has featured many guests addressing lighthearted and fun topics as well as serious issues affecting the African-American community.

After 25 years, Joyner is retiring to focus on his other endeavors, including The Tom Joyner Foundation, Reach Media and his website, www.blackamericaweb.com.

During the luncheon, the Chamber will present Eagle

Awards to two local companies whose outreach in the minority-business community is significant. In addition, Bama

Pest Control, winning the award for the third time, is being inducted into the Eagle Awards Hall of Fame, and the Chamber will present a posthumous Legacy Award to Alabama native and entrepreneur Al Joyner.

Preceding the luncheon, from 9 to 11 a.m., there will be tabletop displays by businesses committed to supplier diversity and inclusion.

Companies participating in the forum are looking to expand their supplier base; small and minority-owned businesses that serve the community; or corporate and governmental agencies.

Companies participating in the forum are looking to expand their supplier base; small and minority-owned businesses that serve the community; or corporate and governmental agencies.

FAST FACTS

Date: Friday, Oct. 19

Time: 9 to 11 a.m. - Business Exhibitor Forum
 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - 21st Eagle Awards Luncheon

Location: The Battle House Hotel and Spa

Cost: \$60 per person/\$600 Table of 10/\$70 potential members
**includes both the Business Exhibitor Forum and the Eagle Awards Luncheon*

To register: events.mobilechamber.com or contact **Brenda Rembert** at brembert@mobilechamber.com or 251-431-8607.

Reservation deadline is Monday, Oct. 15. Payment must be received at time of registration. No refunds or cancellations after that date.

2018 Eagle Award Winners

Presented by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

Harper Technologies LLC



If the name sounds familiar, it's because Harper Technologies LLC has stood in the Chamber's recognition arena before, most recently as a finalist for the Small Business of the Year award. Company President **Abe Harper** is also a 2017 graduate of the Chamber-hosted U.S. Small Business Administration Emerging Leaders program.

The IT support and consulting firm was founded in 2002 by brothers Abe and **Carl Harper**. Regional clients include individuals, small- to medium-sized businesses, nonprofits and local government entities.

To stay on a growth trajectory, the company's strategies include seeking client evaluations and rolling out new service plans.

One client wrote of Harper Technologies: "For those of us that are not 'technological,' they make it easy to understand."

Years in business: 16
Number of employees: 6
Address: 50 N. Broad St., Mobile

VisionSpot Consulting Group



VisionSpot Consulting Group offers companies optimal efficiency, greater productivity and a pipeline of leaders – what every business needs to maintain its position in the marketplace and plan for future growth. VisionSpot Consulting Group's Dr. Valerie James assists with these core areas and more.

First founded in 1998 in California, the company was relaunched two years ago in Mobile.

What sets VisionSpot apart is its customized programs and the pool of experienced contract professionals who help deliver processes proven to develop people, projects and performance, says James.

Her clients call her "an active and engaged partner" and an "advocate of *Power Your Potential*," which was the name of her book, published in 2008.

Years in business: 2 in Mobile, 20 overall
Number of employees: 1
Address: 11 Water St., Ste. 10290, Mobile

Eagle Awards Hall of Fame 2018 Inductee

Bama Pest Control



No matter what bugs you, Bama Pest Control has a solution. Whether it's insects, termites, rodents or wildlife, the 38-year-old company has the expertise to get rid of them.

Serving Mobile, Baldwin and Washington counties, the family owned business offers both professional and do-it-yourself options to its residential and commercial customers.

And beyond pest removal, the company recently developed Rain Mover, a patent-pending system that keeps gutters clean and prevents mosquitoes and other bugs from breeding there.

As a three-time winner of the Mobile Area Chamber's Eagle Award, Bama Pest Control is now being inducted into the Eagle Hall of Fame. Previously, the company won the award in 1999 and 2012.

Years in business: 38
Number of employees: 7
Address: 1862 Duval St., Mobile

Chamber Presents Posthumous Soaring Legacy Award

During the Mobile Area Chamber's Eagle Awards luncheon on Friday, Oct. 19, the inaugural Soaring Legacy Award will be presented to the family of **Al Joyner**, the first African-American McDonald's franchise owner in the state of Alabama. He died in 2015.

The award was created by the Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force to recognize individuals whose life work in entrepreneurship, economic empowerment and community involvement have positively influenced lives in the minority community.

In addition to owning McDonald's franchises in Mobile, Birmingham and Jackson, Miss., Joyner developed and opened the first face-to-face drive-thru in the McDonald's system. Joyner was also the first African-American to purchase and develop a major shopping center in the state. "Legacy usually speaks to the end of one's life or career, but this award is more than that," said **Darrell Randle**, vice president of small business development for the Chamber. "It's also about encouraging future leaders to build a lasting legacy that will stimulate, encourage and inspire others to soar for generations to come."

Joyner's widow, **Danita**, and brother **Tom Joyner**, the Eagle Awards keynote speaker, will accept the award on behalf of his family.

5 Advantages of a Diverse Workplace No One is Talking About



By Jim Morris, chief consulting officer, WMFDP

When an organization embraces diversity and inclusion as an integral part of the fabric of the company, incredible cultural transformations take place. People feel a greater sense of belonging, they feel more valued and respected by their team and they are able to perform their job functions better. A diverse workplace isn't just good for people; it's good for business as well, and it is crucial for creating a thriving company culture.

The advantages of a diverse workplace will only become more important as millennials and Gen-Z employees increasingly move into leadership positions and seek out companies that prioritize diversity and inclusion. Here are some key takeaways:

1. Employees learn to use their head and their heart.

Many people experience an unexpected side effect when they embrace the chance to become aware of their unconscious bias: their interpersonal relationships improve. By engaging in conversations around diversity, we tap into an emotional vulnerability that carries over into familial and romantic relationships as well. Becoming aware of what you don't know can be an emotionally freeing experience, both at work and at home.

2. Employee engagement.

After embracing diversity initiatives, one CEO believes his organization "truly learned how to fully engage each individual," while another business leader says a diverse workplace gives his staff the opportunity to "work with others from different organizations and

get to know colleagues in richer, deeper ways." Diverse workplaces necessitate profound and sometimes difficult conversations between employees who are given opportunities to be aware of unconscious biases and actively listen to others.

3. Increased innovation.

Creativity and innovation rely on having an open mind and the ability to approach an issue from different perspectives. So a workplace that encourages diversity – not just of race, gender and culture, but also of thought, will inevitably foster more innovation. When Rockwell Automation realized it had to attract, engage and leverage a wider range of talent, it began looking to improve diversity and inclusion efforts. As a result, the company was able to substantially increase women in leadership roles and involve male employees in playing a key role in redefining the culture.

4. More clearly defining the organization's business goals and values.

Having a diverse workplace helps an organization better define its values and overall role in the community. Business leaders who have integrated and prioritized diversity within their organizations find that diversity helps them to "better define and direct organizational values," and that "having a sound inclusion and diversity foundation has sparked discussions among leaders that are helping shape current and future actionable plans." Diversity in the workplace creates organizations that are adaptable and resilient.

5. Thriving in a global, multicultural business environment. A diverse workforce means people can bring their whole selves to work and better connect with others. We often hear leaders say that diversity initiatives make a huge difference in the way they approach and engage with others, and that being part of a diverse workplace means employees are more comfortable meeting and interacting with people from all over the world. In today's global business

environment, the ability to connect with people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures is a huge advantage.

Jim Morris has 30 years of experience working and leading in purpose-driven consulting organizations. He is the chief consulting officer at WMFDP, a consulting firm that provides organizations and business leaders with the skills they need to establish inclusive work cultures.

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Join the Chamber for a Breathtaking Nine-Day Tour of

Ireland

April 2019

This spring, the Mobile Area Chamber will host a group people to explore Ireland on a nine-day excursion across the countryside. Only eight seats remain for this trip taking place April 10-19, 2019, with flights leaving from Mobile.

Cost of the trip is \$3,599 per person through Oct. 11, when the price increases by \$100 – based on double occupancy. Single-room rates are an additional \$450. The price includes roundtrip airfare from Mobile, all hotel accommodations, many meals, bus accommodations, tour manager, day guides, most tours and more.

Highlights of the trip include: Dublin, Kilkenny, Waterford, Blarney Castle, Killarney, Ring of Kerry, Limerick, the Cliffs of Moher, Galway, and a one-night stay at Cabra Castle.

To learn more about the trip, or to register to join the group, contact **Leigh Perry-Herndon** at 251-431-8645 or lherndon@mobilechamber.com. The deposit is \$500 per person, and full-coverage travel insurance is available for an additional \$315. The trip balance will not be due until Feb. 9, 2019.

Trip Details

April 10: Leave Mobile on an overnight flight to Dublin

April 11: Arrive in Dublin. Tour Begins

Get a tour of Old Dublin. Tonight the group enjoys a traditional Irish evening including a regional dinner cruise.

April 12: Dublin

Ride with a local guide to see St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Stephen's Green, Grafton Street and the historic Phoenix Park, or take a walking tour of the city's historic center, exploring O'Connell Street, the General Post Office and the River Liffey. In the afternoon, discover Dublin's charms on your own. *(Breakfast included)*

April 13: Dublin - Kilkenny

Begin the day in the medieval splendor of 12th Century Kilkenny on the River Nore. Then, in ancient Waterford, embark on a leisurely paced walking tour of Ireland's oldest city, and tour the Waterford Crystal

factory or visit the Medieval Museum for a guided tour and glass of wine in the 15th Century Mayor's Wine Vault. *(Breakfast and dinner included)*

April 14: Waterford - Blarney Stone - Killarney

Live the legend. The story goes that those who kiss the Blarney Stone gain the gift of eloquence. This morning, give it a shot at historic Blarney Castle. Cross into County Kerry and continue on to charming Killarney. In Killarney's stunning national park, board a traditional boat and sail through the breathtaking lakes in the company of an expert boatman. *(Breakfast and dinner included)*



April 14: Killarney - Ring of Kerry - Killarney

Take in the rugged coastline around the picturesque Ring of Kerry, past pristine beaches, quaint villages and majestic landscapes. At the Gap of Dunloe, shop for local artisan-made crafts. See border collies in action during a traditional sheepdog demonstration at a family-run farm. *(Breakfast included)*



April 16: Killarney – Adare – Limerick

Start with a traditional jaunting car ride through Killarney National Park to Adare, Ireland’s prettiest village, for some time at leisure. Continue to Limerick, where a panoramic city tour showcases King John’s Castle and the Treaty Stone. Delve into the fascinating history of the “city of the violated treaty.” *(Breakfast included)*



April 17: Limerick – Cliffs of Moher – Galway – Limerick

Enjoy cinematic views of the mighty Atlantic from the 700-foot-high Cliffs of Moher. Pass through the windswept, limestone landscape of the Burren, known for its stark beauty and Neolithic tombs. Continue on to Galway where a brief tour showcases “The City of Tribes.” *(Breakfast and lunch included)*

April 17: Limerick – Tullamore/ Killbeggan – Kingscourt

You don’t have to be a connoisseur to appreciate the old-world heritage of Ireland’s whiskey territory. Your journey brings you to Tullamore and Killbeggan in the heart of Ireland, where a distillery brings whiskey craftsmanship to life and gives you a taste of the final product. End your trip with an overnight stay on the regal grounds of Cabra Castle. *(Breakfast and dinner included)*

April 19: Return home to Mobile

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Gulf States Engineering is a multidisciplinary engineering firm with a wide variety of experience in heavy industrial, commercial and government projects. The firm is located at 600 Azalea Rd. in Mobile.

Gulf States Engineering

Company officials: Timothy G. Morris, president and CEO; John T. Wade, vice president; Karen L. Brown, vice president; S. Lane Sesi, vice president; Matthew C. Roberts, vice president

Years in business: 20 years

Brief company description: Gulf States Engineering (GSE) is a multi-discipline engineering firm with a wide variety of experience in heavy industrial, commercial and government projects. The employee-owned firm founded in 1998, has 60-plus employees including planners, multi-disciplinary

engineers (structural, civil, mechanical, chemical, electrical and fire protection), surveyors, and program/construction managers. With its headquarters in Mobile, GSE also has offices in Gulfport, Miss., and Nashville, Tenn.

Why are you located in Mobile? “Our Mobile office, located at 600 Azalea Rd., is a regional base for our engineering business and also serves as our headquarters,” said Morris. “It is a great central location for us to expand our services, to current and future clients along I-10 and I-65.”

Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce’s Partners for Growth initiative? “Partners for Growth has been very successful for Mobile, as they strive to make our businesses stronger and our communities closer,” said Morris. “GSE is proud to support that effort in new success for this city.”

What do you see as Mobile’s greatest potential? “Mobile’s potential can be measured by its many assets, including the close, yet diverse, community along with its natural geographical location,” said Morris. “This stimulates

tourism, transportation, education, and entertainment throughout the city.”

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 **Natalie Franklin**, the Chamber’s investor relations manager, at **251-431-8636** or nfranklin@mobilechamber.com.

Nick Sellers

Company: Alabama Power Co.

Title: Vice president, Mobile division

Hometown: Birmingham

Education: Sellers earned a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Calif., and a juris doctorate from the Birmingham School of Law.

First job: At age 15, Sellers was a dishwasher and cook at Pizzeria Classico in Folsom, Calif.

Previous experience: He began his career with Alabama Power in 2003 as the federal legislative relations director responsible for pricing, rate design, policy and planning, federal affairs and corporate relations. He also led federal and community relations, workforce development and volunteer services. Prior to being named vice president of the Mobile division, he was senior vice president of business origination at Southern Company. In Mobile, he is responsible for generation development, siting, construction and state and local affairs.

Prior to his work with Alabama Power and Southern Company, he worked for the Business Council of Alabama and as a policy advisor and special assistant for economic development for the state of Alabama in the governor's office.

Accomplishments: Sellers was quarterback and co-captain for the 1995 University of the Pacific Tigers football team. In 2014, he was named a Henry Crown Fellow at Aspen Institute. He says his most important accomplishment is being husband to Julie and father to Annie, Maria and Nicholas.

Secret to success: Work hard, and treat everyone with respect.

Brief company description:

Alabama Power is headquartered in Birmingham, providing electric service to 1.4 million customers in the southern two-thirds of Alabama, and is the second-largest electric utility within Southern Company. More than 84,000 miles of power lines carry electricity to customers throughout the company's 44,500-square-mile service territory. It also operates appliance stores.



Understanding Alabama's Infrastructure Needs

The community and governmental affairs department hosted The Alliance for Alabama's Infrastructure and the Alabama Transportation Institute's presentation and policy discussion on infrastructure enhancements as top policy issues across the state. More than 40 Chamber members and representatives from the Mobile-Baldwin legislative delegation attended.

Katrina Dewrell Retires from Chamber



After more than 30 years at the Chamber, Katrina Dewrell retired on June 30. For most of her

Chamber career, she worked as assistant to former Chamber President Win Hallett. Over the past five years, she worked as a liaison for the Chamber's Partners for Growth investors and Board of Advisors members and spearheaded the Chamber's reaccreditation process with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, annual State of the Economy events and MobileConnect – a short-term immersion program for newcomers to Mobile.

Meeting with Counterparts to Discuss Workforce

Chamber President & CEO Bill Sisson and Cheryl Nicholls, the Chamber's director of workforce development, met with members of the North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce to discuss mutual collaboration efforts on workforce development. A reception will be held later this month. Call Nicholls at 251-431-8641 for more information.

Member Ribbon Cuttings and Grand Openings

Chamber staff and ambassadors helped cut ribbons and celebrate grand openings at Airport 1 Self Storage, Ascension Medical Group at Providence Park, Humana, Murphy USA, Raceway, The Ruby Slipper Café and Walk-On's Bistreaux & Bar. For information on Chamber assistance with your similar event, contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649.

Interns Spend Summer Touring the State

The Chamber's economic development department hosted a group of college interns working with the Economic Development Alliance of Alabama this summer. Interns spent a full day in Mobile touring APM Terminals, Airbus and the Alabama State Port Authority.

Chamber Elects New Board of Director



Jennie Campbell
Stewart Lodges at Steelwood

Jennie Campbell is a graduate of Tulane University, Michigan State University, George Washington University and Babson College. She is the CEO/president of Stewart Steelwood Investments LLC. She currently or has recently served on several executive boards, boards and committees such as the World Trade Center of New Orleans, Junior Achievement, Meeting Professional International, Better Business Bureau, Rotary, Vistage, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, Leaders' Council, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance, Mobile Area Chamber Board of Advisors, Small Business Administration Emerging Leaders and Goldman Sachs 10KSB National Cohort 9 Program.



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AMBASSADOR of the month



A Mobile Area Chamber ambassador since January, **Colleen Harrison** says she loves being involved in the process of creating a more vibrant Mobile. She is the Ambassador of the Month. She says her volunteer work with the Chamber gives her access to people positively impacting the area and lets her promote Parkside at Cottage Hill, the upscale apartment complex where she is the community director.

Ambassadors are volunteers who support the Mobile Area Chamber by visiting members and assisting with events and ribbon-cuttings. To learn more, contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.



Oak Hollow Farm

Oak Hollow Farm is a family-owned and operated banquet/rental facility located on more than 300 acres of beautiful countryside at 14210 Greeno Rd. in Fairhope. With 10 full-time employees and several part-time employees, Oak Hollow Farm offers both

indoor and outdoor accommodations for any event, from weddings to retreats and other activities.

For more information, contact them at 251-928-4840 or visit www.oakhollowfarm.net.



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BOARD of advisors

Mike Brown is executive director of the Red Cross of South Alabama. He began his fundraising career with the Boy Scouts of America in Atlanta. In 2001, he joined the American Red Cross as a disaster fundraising officer, working more than 36 disaster relief operations in 17 states, and serving as head fundraising officer for hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Katrina. After almost three years with the United Service Organizations (USO), he returned to the Red Cross as senior development officer in Atlanta before taking his current post in 2014. Brown attended Auburn University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics with minors in management and marketing.



Jason Slinkard is site director for BASF in McIntosh. Prior to coming to Mobile, he served in management positions for BASF in Italy, Germany and Hannibal, Mo. He graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering. BASF is a Partners for Growth investor.



Dr. John Valentine serves as executive director of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), and previously served as chair of the organization's university programs. Since joining the DISL, he has written or co-authored more than 95 grant proposals for research and was lead or second author on more than 70 scientific articles. He also serves as an academic editor for the scientific journals *Marine Ecology Progress Series* and *PLoSOne*. Valentine serves on the boards of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and Alabama's Forever Wild Program. He earned a doctorate from The University of Alabama and is a graduate of Leadership Alabama.



For more information about the Chamber's board of advisors, contact Shelly Mattingly at 251-431-8655 or smattingly@mobilechamber.com.

OCTOBER

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

16 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: Glenda Snodgrass, president, The Net Effect

Topic: "Digital Immortality: When Your Online Persona Outlives You"

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

No charge, but RSVP requested. Free parking.

Sponsor:



23-24 AIDT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING LSII

AIDT Leadership Development training programs introduce team leaders, supervisors and managers to effective leadership responsibilities, communication skills, team work and motivation techniques.

When: Oct. 23 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Oct. 24 from 8 a.m. to noon

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Cost: \$50 per person for members/\$60 for nonmembers, includes course materials, lunch and snacks

Contact: Natalie Franklin at 251-431-8636 or nfranklin@mobilechamber.com

Reservations are required and no cancellations after Oct. 16.

Participation in LSI is recommended, but not required for an LSII course. Class size is limited to 25.

19 EAGLE AWARDS LUNCHEON

The annual awards luncheon, recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of outstanding minority-owned businesses. Tom "The Fly Jock" Joyner will be the keynote speaker. Joyner is a renowned radio and TV host of the nationally syndicated "The Tom Joyner Morning Show" and founder of Reach Media Inc., the Tom Joyner Foundation and BlackAmericaWeb.com.

When: Business Exhibitor Forum 9 to 11 a.m.

Eagle Awards Luncheon 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Where: The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel and Spa

Speaker: Tom Joyner, "The Tom Joyner Morning Show"

Cost: \$60 members and \$70 potential members (registration includes access to both the Business Exhibitor Forum and Eagle Awards Luncheon)

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

RSVP requested by Oct. 15. Payment must be received at registration.

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25 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

When: 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Where: Ruth's Chris Steak House, 2058 Airport Blvd. at Glenwood Street

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

Contact: Elizabeth Nelson at 251-431-8617 or enelson@mobilechamber.com

Reservations are not needed.

Sponsor: COMCAST BUSINESS

31 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: Marcy Zambo, registered dietitian

Topic: "How to Eat Healthy Through the Holidays"

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

No charge, but RSVP requested.

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Who's New



Guy



Croom

Dr. Lori Guy was named a visiting assistant professor of music at the **University of Mobile**. Guy has served as an adjunct professor of music since 2015. She has a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Indianapolis, and a master's degree in voice performance and doctorate of musical arts in vocal performance and pedagogy, both from the University of Southern Mississippi.

In other news, **Rita Croom** joined the university as dean of the College of Health Professions and assistant vice president for academic partnerships. She leads the university's expanding healthcare program, including the new doctor of nursing

practice and a state-of-the-art Center for Excellence in Healthcare Practice.

*



Tate



Lewis



White



Miller

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Cooper & Co. Inc. REALTORS welcomed four new associates, **Frances Tate, Aundretta Lewis, Delpha White and Chris Miller**.

*

Wilkins Miller LLC announced **Rylee Ardis, Nikeith Guillory-Mukura, Drew Kitchens and Avril McRae**

joined the professional staff. **Shannon Phillips and Amanda Vaughn** joined the administrative staff.

Ardis earned a bachelor's degree of business administration from the University of South Alabama and works with the tax and audit teams. **Guillory-Mukura** received a bachelor's in business administration from the University of South Alabama and focuses on outsourced accounting services. **Kitchens** graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business administration and works with the tax and audit teams. **McRae** received a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama and focuses on tax and consulting work. **Vaughn** joined the administrative team to provide support to a variety of the professional staff. **Phillips** handles administrative duties and customer service.

Hallie Hollingsworth Croom was named director of development for **University of South Alabama**



Croom

Mitchell Cancer Institute (MCI). **Croom**, a cancer survivor, will be responsible for directing all aspects of fundraising activities at MCI. She earned a bachelor's degree in English and journalism from the University of Mississippi.

*

Bank of America-Merrill Lynch announced **S. Wesley Carpenter**



Carpenter

was promoted to senior vice president. **Carpenter** joined Merrill Lynch in 2007. He received a bachelor's degree in finance from The University of Alabama.

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The Orthopaedic Group PC announced Ryan Beale as the organization's new CEO.



Beale

Beale, who recently served as the chief operating officer at Cardiology Associates, has a bachelor's degree in healthcare management from The University of Alabama, and a master's degree in health administration and master's degree in decision analytics from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

*

Deanna Murphy was named executive director of Via Health, Fitness and Enrichment Center. Murphy previously served as executive manager, director of membership and



Murphy

center director. She has been the interim executive director since April 2017.

*



Zoghby



Sanders

Adams and Reese named Garrett Zoghby and Bradley Sanders to the firm's Mobile office. Zoghby is an associate in the firm's litigation practice. A former judicial law clerk to the Honorable Ben H. Brooks, 13th Judicial Circuit Court, Zoghby received a bachelor's degree in management marketing from the University of South Alabama and a juris doctorate from the Birmingham School of Law. Sanders is serving as special counsel. He received a bachelor's degree from Millsaps College and juris doctorate from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Willis Towers Watson hired Sloan Sandefur as client advocate/producer.



Sandefur

Previously, he worked as a placement broker for the last five years. Sandefur received a bachelor's degree in political science from Valdosta State University in Georgia. His focus is on commercial property and casualty accounts, mainly in the areas of construction, hospitality and marine risks. He currently is a certified insurance counselor and certified marine insurance professional.

*



McLellan

Deb Becker, who retired.

The law firm of Burr & Forman hired office administrator Holly McLellan in its Mobile office, replacing

Legal Imaging LLC hired Kyle Stewart as computer forensics technician.



Stewart

Stewart graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in information technology. He also holds an associate's degree in business from Enterprise State Community College.

*

Commonwealth National Bank named Thomas Felder as its CEO.



Felder

Felder previously worked for nearly two years with Tri-State Bank of Memphis. He earned a bachelor's degree from Voorhees College in Denmark, S.C., in business administration, and a master's degree in business administration from Atlanta University.

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Sullivan



Servold



Haynes

Moffatt & Nichol announced **Mary Beth Sullivan, Kari Servold** and **Katherine**

Haynes joined the firm's Mobile office as members of the coastal engineering, environmental and water resource team and will support projects that enhance restoration and resilience throughout the Gulf Coast. Sullivan received both a bachelor's and a master's degree in civil engineering from The University of Alabama and is a registered professional engineer in Alabama and Mississippi. Servold graduated from the University of South Alabama,

receiving a master's degree in civil engineering. Haynes is a graduate of the University of South Alabama, where she earned a master's degree in civil engineering.

*

Merrill Lynch promoted **D. Austin Bradford** to resident director of the Mobile branch.

Austin earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from Auburn University. He joined Merrill Lynch as a financial advisor in 2009.



Bradford

Business Endeavors

Bishop State Community College was awarded a contract by the Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment and the U.S. Department of Labor to train out-of-school youth for employment. The "Fix It" program

will serve 40 participants between the ages of 16 to 24 who will choose to train in either residential construction or automobile collision repair. To learn more, contact the workforce development department at 251-405-7082 or workforce@bishop.edu.

Well Done

University of Mobile's online master of arts in education was named No. 9 in the nation using a cost metric, academic metric and online metric by Early-Childhood-Education-Degrees.com. Also, the school was ranked No. 2 in Alabama based on reputation and quality, according to College Consensus. The online ranking site combines respected national and international college rankings with student reviews to identify the Best Colleges and Universities in Alabama for 2018.

*

Dr. William E. Barrick, executive director of **Bellingrath Gardens and Home**, was inducted

into the Alabama Tourism Hall of Fame at the Alabama Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Barrick manages the 65-acre historic estate and serves as a trustee for the Bellingrath Morse Foundation, the estate of Walter and Bessie Bellingrath. Under his direction, Bellingrath Gardens has become a major tourist destination on the Gulf Coast, attracting 110,000 visitors each year.

*

Lisa Bond was recently recognized for her service as a **Humana** sales agent at Humana's annual President's Club celebration. Bond, who covers Baldwin and Mobile counties, was among 150 Humana agents selected for the honor based on her leadership in sales and member customer service.



Bond

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Wilkins Miller LLC announced **Taylor Brown** successfully completed and passed the uniform

Brown certified public accountant (CPA) examination. Brown rejoined the Wilkins Miller team in 2017 after gaining experience as an auditor at a regional firm. She graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business administration.

The late **Mayer Mitchell**, his wife, **Arlene Mitchell**, and his brother, **Abraham "Abe" Mitchell**, were recognized with one of the highest honors given by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) at an event in New York City. The annual Distinguished Friend of Education Award honors individuals whose volunteer service has advanced education even though he or she is not a

graduate of that institution. For more than 40 years, the Mitchells have served as trusted leaders, visionaries, advocates, advisers and benefactors of the **University of South Alabama**. Over the course of more than four decades, the Mitchells have made charitable contributions to USA totaling more than \$108 million.

Burr & Forman partner **Jeffrey Beaverstock** was appointed as a U.S. district judge for Alabama's Southern District. He joins other Burr & Forman alums who have gone on to become federal judges, including **Bess Creswell**, also from Mobile, appointed just a few months ago as the U.S. bankruptcy judge for the state's Middle District.

Adams and Reese celebrated the 30th anniversary of its HUGS (Hope, Understanding, Giving and Support) program across all its offices. Founded in 1988,

HUGS is an employee volunteer program that has provided charitable and philanthropic programs with financial resources, donations and countless hours of hands-on volunteer support.

The **Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama** presented 10 women in Mobile with its Leading Ladies Awards. Mobile Area Chamber member recipients were: **Chasity Byrd**, formerly with **FOX10**; **Casi Callaway**, **Mobile Baykeeper**; **Jill Chenoweth**, **United Way of Southwest Alabama**; **Ruby McCullough**, **Thriveway Consulting**; **Ashley Rich**, **Mobile County District Attorney's Office**; **Aimee Risser**, **Big**

Brothers Big Sisters of South Alabama; and **Elizabeth Stevens**, **Downtown Mobile Alliance**.

Kimberly Lyons, **The Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa's** pastry chef, was named one of the Top 25 Hotel Pastry Chefs to Watch by *Hotel F&B* magazine.

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.

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 203 are accredited, and of those only 103 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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