

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

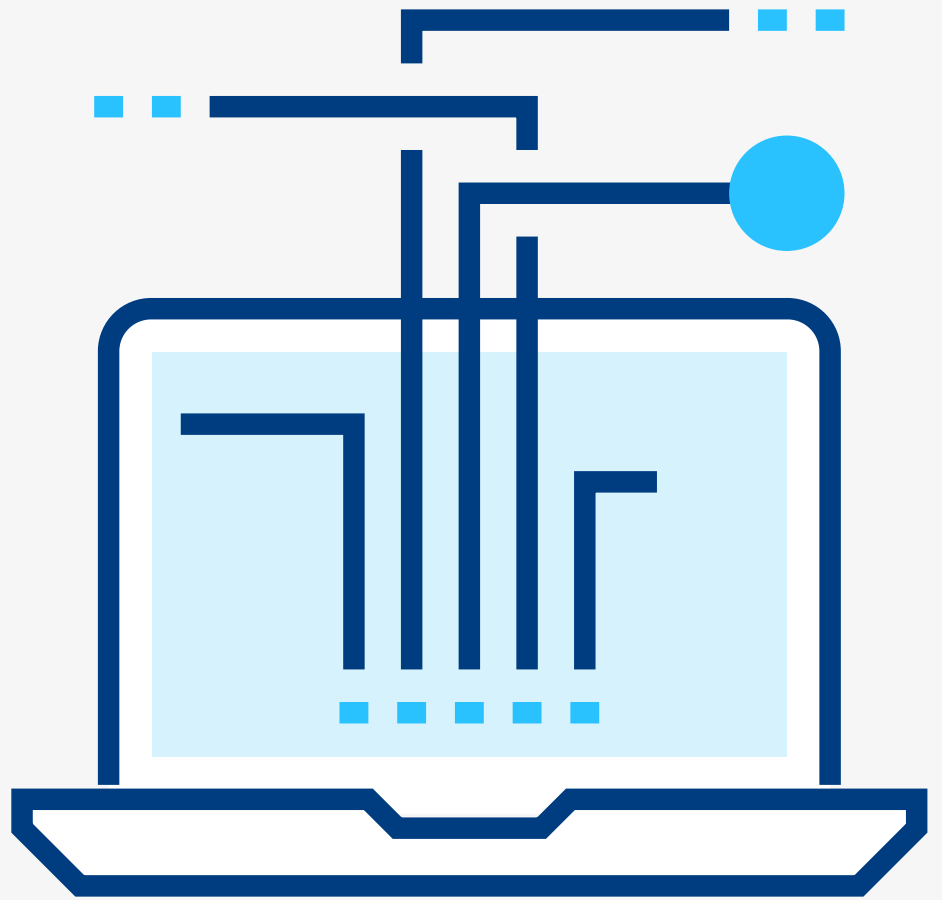
MARCH 2019

# the **business**VIEW

Meet 2019  
Chamber Chair  
**Daniel  
Dennis**

Flying from  
Downtown  
**Mobile**

**Mardi Gras  
in Mobile:**  
Mystics, Moon  
Pies & Money



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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

## Mobile's Economy Continues to Roll

The Chamber's annual State of the Economy (SOTE) event has grown into one of our signature events. It's especially enlightening because it provides not only a revealing picture of the local economy in the past year but also a snapshot of what the economy will be in the coming year.

By all measures, 2018 was a very good year for Mobile's economy – and perhaps most encouraging is the majority of business leaders believe 2019 will be an even better year for us. Details of the SOTE are provided in this issue, which I think you'll find very interesting.

Most telling was the fact almost three out of four survey respondents felt the Mobile MSA economy will be better in 2019 than in 2018. Interestingly, fewer respondents were as bullish about the national economy with just over half feeling the U.S. economy as a whole will be better in 2019. Perhaps the best news of all: the 2018 SOTE revealed our region continues to see significant growth in our annual average wages; the key to any strong economy.

We asked our members to tell us their top obstacles to business growth in the coming year, and they said attracting and retaining qualified employees was their



No. 1 concern. This was confirmation for us since our economic development strategy continues to have a strong focus on "talent development" with even more emphasis on this in our plan of action for the coming years.

Again on the positive side, business leaders indicate they will be expanding their

facilities or purchasing new equipment, with some 66 percent saying they plan to do so in 2019. The local GDP continues to rise, nearing the \$20 billion mark. This represents incredible productivity growth, rising from just over \$17 billion a mere five years ago.

By all accounts, we have much to look forward to in the new year. Mobile is poised for another year of strong growth, and we can all marvel at the local economy's ability to still yield meaningful growth and prosperity.



### ON THE COVER

Daniel Dennis, president of Roberts Brothers, is chairing the Chamber's board of directors for 2019. See his story on page 23. *Photo by Jeff Tesney.*

- 4 News You Can Use
- 7 Chamber Outlines Legislative Priorities
- 10 Small Business Corner: How to Capture and Keep Your Readers
- 11 Small Business of the Month: VisionSpot Consulting Group
- 12 Mardi Gras in Mobile: Mystics, Moon Pies & Money
- 16 State of Mobile's Economy
- 22 Crow Shields Bailey Wins the Community Service Award
- 23 Daniel Dennis Named 2019 Chamber Chair
- 24 Travel to China with the Chamber
- 26 Investor Focus: Merchants Transfer Co.
- 28 Board of Advisor Profiles: Rev. Bry Shields and Kendall Wall
- 29 Ambassador of the Month: Susan Kangal
- 29 Business Spotlight of the Month: Landrum HR
- 30 Calendar
- 32 Member News
- 35 Anniversaries
- 35 New Members

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# Flying from Downtown Mobile a Reality



Beginning in May, commercial passengers will have an opportunity to fly direct to several cities from Downtown Mobile Airport. In January, Frontier Airlines announced it would use the airport (airport code BFM), located at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley, to fly

direct to Denver and Chicago. This announcement was preceded by Via Airlines' announcement it would move from Mobile Regional Airport to the downtown location and add Birmingham as a second destination in addition to current service to Orlando in April.

"With flights beginning May 1, we will make air travel more affordable for everyone in the greater Mobile area. And Downtown Mobile Airport is more accessible to the region," said **Jonathan Freed**, director of corporate communications for Frontier Airlines.

**Elliot Maisel**, board chairman for the Mobile Airport Authority says they have been working diligently to establish premium air service for commercial air travelers.

"(Frontier and Via) will provide a major boost to air service for the citizens of Baldwin and Mobile counties," he added.

"Adding more capacity for air travel is always a benefit to new companies looking to locate in Mobile. Having direct access to hubs like Denver and Chicago allows for better access to our

recruitment and retention efforts in economic development," said **David Rodgers**, vice president of economic development for the Mobile Area Chamber.

Frontier flies one of the newest fleets in the industry, the Airbus A320, and has nearly 200 new planes on order. Via operates 50-seat Embraer ERJ145s. Flights from Mobile are seasonal at this time, and will increase as they meet demand. The schedule as of press time is for flights to run on the following schedule: Via Airlines to Birmingham (and additional service to Raleigh, N.C. on Sunday, Monday, Thursday and Friday ([www.viaairlines.com](http://www.viaairlines.com)) and Frontier Airlines to Chicago on Wednesday and Saturday and Denver on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday ([www.flyfrontier.com](http://www.flyfrontier.com)).



## Airbus Groundbreaking

*Brasfield & Gorrie's Preconstruction Manager Ebony Davidson was one of a dozen speakers at the Airbus groundbreaking for the new A220 Final Assembly Line. As speakers completed their remarks, they signed a steel beam that will become part of the new \$300 million facility. The project will create 400-plus new jobs, and the first of the new aircraft is scheduled to roll out in 2020. Also pictured is Megan Large, an Airbus A320 Final Assembly Line employee; and Justin Lieber, a student at UMS-Wright.* ○○





# Calling Aspiring Entrepreneurs



The hardest part of starting a business is taking the first step. Most businesses start small, and research shows that entrepreneurial training and mentoring is critical for new and emerging companies to succeed. Startup Weekend Mobile, set for March 29 to 31, can help you get your new business off the ground.

## What is it?

Startup Weekends are about learning by doing. Beginning Friday, March 29, aspiring entrepreneurs and others with a passion for startup success will spend the weekend building businesses from concept to completion during Mobile's fourth installment of this program.

## What happens during the weekend?

The weekend kicks off with concept pitching and building teams of individuals with various skills and expertise. During the remainder of the competition, teams research, plan and strategize to build the beginning of a fully operational company.


## Who should attend?

Entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs, business startup enthusiasts, web and software developers, designers, engineers, marketing gurus, business development specialists and anyone interested in building a business will benefit from this event.

## Why participate?

It's the ideal environment to build scalable companies that solve real-world problems. You will take an idea, work with entrepreneurs and experts, create a viable concept, develop

a plan, create a prototype and pitch it to a panel of judges for feedback to eventually launch the business. By Sunday evening, new businesses will be born. 

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

## Fast Facts

**What:** Startup Weekend Mobile is a collaboration of the Mobile Area Chamber, Innovation PortAL and community volunteers.

**When:** Friday, March 29 - 5 to 10 p.m.  
Saturday, March 30 - 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Sunday, March 31 - 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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

**Cost:** \$75

**Contact:** Corey James at 251-333-0963 or Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or [mobile@startupweekend.org](mailto:mobile@startupweekend.org)

**To register:** Register at [communities.techstars.com/usa/mobile/startup-weekend/13761](http://communities.techstars.com/usa/mobile/startup-weekend/13761) or <https://bit.ly/2SUqjYM>

# Help Us Find Mobile's Small Business of the Year

Applications are now being accepted for the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Year.

Community involvement, growth in employment, number of years in business and overall financial performance are the primary criteria requested in the application process, according to **Danette Richards**, director of small business for the Chamber.

If you know a deserving company, whether it's a customer or vendor or even your own company, be sure to nominate them. An independent committee will select three finalists who will be honored at a small business awards breakfast on Thursday, Aug. 22, where the winner will be revealed. All finalists will automatically be nominated to

the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Dream Big Small Business of the Year competition.


Previous winners were Blue Fish, 3 Echoes Productions, B&B Pet Stop and McAleer's Office Products.

The application deadline is Monday, April 29. For details and qualifying criteria, visit [www.mobilechamber.com/small-business](http://www.mobilechamber.com/small-business) or contact

## Dates to Remember

Applications Due: April 29

Awards Breakfast: Aug. 22

**Danette Richards** at [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com) or 251-431-8652. 

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## Chamber Introduces **LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES** for 2019

Having a seat at the table when important policy decisions are made is important. The Mobile Area Chamber provides this for its members and offers government relations as a member service. To accomplish this, the Chamber's community and governmental affairs team advocates for pro-business and key legislative issues impacting its members, locally, in Montgomery and in Washington D.C.

The issues and policies the Chamber supports are fundamental to Alabama's progress, creating a positive business environment and bringing jobs and opportunities to the area.

Legislative priorities are determined with member feedback, one-on-one conversations and task forces such as the Governmental Affairs Committee.

The following pages detail the Chamber's most critical issues for 2019. In February the Chamber met with the Alabama legislative delegation to outline its priorities. Members can stay up to date on advocacy progress throughout the year via its social media channels and [www.mobilechamber.com/community-government-affairs/](http://www.mobilechamber.com/community-government-affairs/)



# Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce 2019 Legislative Agenda

As a progressive advocate for the business community, the Mobile Area Chamber has overarching goals to accomplish this year, including:

## 1 The Chamber supports business and is growing the economy...

by striving for an active and internationally accessible port; fair, free and reciprocal trade; and pursuing a competitive tax code and a regulatory environment that keeps Alabama open for business.

### Fundamental Foundations

Mobile connects Alabama to the world, and the Chamber is pushing to fund infrastructure improvements to catapult our economic position in the region and nation. The Port of Mobile is a top economic driver for the state, and through deepening and widening the port, Mobile stands to be the gateway for economic success and growth statewide.

Improvements like deepening and widening the Mobile Harbor are essential to growth, and revenue is essential to infrastructure. Keeping the cyclical nature of funding, infrastructure and growth in mind, the Chamber is working to create a positive business environment that brings jobs to the area so we can grow our tax base and invest in Alabama.

With road, bridge and rail improvements in place, our booming economy will continue to soar.

In this environment, a strong public education system is critical to cultivating a thriving business community. The Chamber supports education systems such as Mobile County Public Schools, our community colleges and universities, and will continue to advocate to fully fund Alabama's education budget so we can deliver a college and career-ready workforce to our industry partners.

### A Healthy Alabama

In an effort to keep all Alabamians healthy, we are working to resolve the Medicare wage-index issue so our hospitals are adequately funded. The Chamber supports employer-based, provider-driven access to healthcare for all Alabamians, and seeks a provider-driven approach to reform Medicaid and ensure access to care.

### Training and Advancing Alabama's Workforce

The Chamber strives to create opportunities for south Alabamians by advocating for a legislative environment that allows area businesses to grow jobs and is attractive to new and expanding companies.

## 2 The Chamber is creating opportunities for Alabamians...

by encouraging our partners to increase access to Alabama beaches; expanding jobs within Mobile area companies; recruiting new companies; delivering new job opportunities; providing advancement opportunities for Mobilians; and creating training programs for Alabama's workforce.

We are seeking to increase opportunities for advancement through education and training programs for the Mobile region's workforce by facilitating partnerships between industry leaders and government entities to create and enhance workforce development programs.







With the support of the Alabama State Legislature, we will work to bridge the gap between job seekers and the training required to fill our many highly skilled jobs, thereby creating a competitive employment environment that favors Alabama workers.

## Good Stewardship of Alabama's Natural Resources

The Chamber collaborates with our partners to deepen and widen the Mobile Harbor, expand access to our beaches, and improve infrastructure to expand existing industry and attract new industries. We must not forget what makes Alabama special. Whether on water or land, we must protect our natural resources, and keep people across the world coming back to Alabama for more of our great outdoors.



## Made by Alabama, for America and the World

With an internationally connected port, five class one railroads, two high-capacity airports and two interstate systems, Mobile makes Alabama competitive.

The Chamber is actively engaged in keeping Mobile and the state attractive globally through advocating for tax credits and infrastructure investments that will draw industry to our area. We support fair, free and reciprocal trade that keeps Alabama open to foreign investors, and discourages tariffs and non-tariff barriers that impede local exporters and investment.

Legislative photos, districts and contact information are on the Chamber's website at [www.mobilechamber.com/community-government-affairs/](http://www.mobilechamber.com/community-government-affairs/)

## 3 The Chamber is advocating for Alabama...

by working to create an environment where industry and businesses can thrive; cultivating a positive legislative environment and economic landscape, and being good stewards of Alabama's natural resources.

## Supporting America's Largest Employer, Small Business

Small businesses across the country employ more than half of all American workers. Without them, our communities would lack the character and personality that makes Alabama memorable to visitors and brings us together as citizens. As such, creating a legislative environment where small business can grow freely is a top priority for the Chamber.

This community would cease to exist without entrepreneurs' drive to build a business from the ground up and their innovative approach to commerce. The Chamber backs these growing small businesses and the new business innovation and entrepreneurial hub, Innovation PortAL, working to help entrepreneurs get their ideas off the ground and spur regional growth.

# How to Create Captivating Content

What does your website say? Does it engage your audience? Do they want to stay and browse or learn more about your company? If not, your website, and most likely your social media posts, are content poor.

Providing relevant, engaging content attracts both customers and prospects, enticing them to read on and learn more about your business. When they find value in what you have to say, your message will spread beyond your own channels. This third-party endorsement carries much more credibility than a marketing message from you.

## Tell your story.

Great content is much more than a list of your company's functions, products and services. It should tell your story.

Put yourself in the audience's shoes. What do they care about? It's about them and how your company serves their needs.

Look at the pages or posts that get the most attention. By looking at what your audience is responding to, you'll understand what type of content they find valuable.

## Complement your content with video or photos.

Visual content is critical and should continue to tell the story. Constructing a script (content) doesn't have to be overwhelming. It can be short, and the message should be consistent with your other marketing mediums.

## Have a content strategy.

Develop a schedule to update and refresh the content regularly. People will return if they are going to see or learn something new.

One week, you might share an educational nugget, the next provide fun facts about your industry or a silly story about your company, or post a profile on one of your employees or customers, complete with photos or video, or share an interesting article.

## Measure success.

Analytics will tell you how many followers, users or email openers you have, but the numbers don't provide the whole picture. It's more important to monitor engagement – how often the users are interacting with you.

## Content is key.

Content connects your business to customers; it helps build your brand identity; and creates community, validates your company and keeps your customers and prospects coming back.

On Thursday, March 28, at the Mobile Area Chamber's **March Marketing Madness**, you will get advice for selecting and using the right tools to tell your story from brand consistency to digital media to video. See page 31 for details.



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# VisionSpot Consulting Group LLC

## Works to Develop Leaders

Dr. Valerie James spent more than two decades in corporate human resources mediating relationships between leaders and their employees. She saw firsthand the costs of ineffective leadership and communication breakdowns. She also saw how providing coaching and the proper tools and training could improve these relationships.

"In what felt like a blink, I was given a vision for changing the face of leadership," James said. "With a couple of trusted advisers and a big, audacious goal to teach leaders how to transform an ordinary day at work into an extraordinary day with and through others, my mission became possible."

James founded **VisionSpot Consulting Group LLC** in 1998, with a goal of transforming the way leaders and organizations work to improve productivity and employee engagement in the workplace.

VisionSpot Consulting Group is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

The firm began as a home-based administrative services company, helping small- and mid-sized businesses and startups with human resources and interim front-office management support. Ultimately, James found those services would be better utilized through the development of an instructional training model, designed to orient and develop leaders.

VisionSpot now offers the Solutions Maximizing Brilliance (SMB) School of Leadership and its signature Boost Camp on- and off-site training solutions, designed to improve employee skills, retention, service quality and business outcomes.

"With over 20 years of experience and a pool of professional, experienced and qualified consultants, we blend our deep leadership, human resources, training, process improvement, and project management experience to illuminate the connection of leadership development, corporate education and organizational development with business values, efficiency and

growth," James said. "Since our first year, we have grown at an exciting pace and have helped thousands of people achieve sustainable results far beyond the basics."

VisionSpot, which can be found at [vsleadership.com](http://vsleadership.com), was also a 2018 Eagle Award winner and received recognition from the California Senate and Legislative Assembly for designing, managing, staffing and opening the first healthcare technical, administrative, management, and clinical simulation training center in an ambulatory setting in California to enhance the patient experience.

The company also received local Senate recognition for designing and launching the first on-campus iLead Leadership Institute certification program at the University of South Alabama. James and her company are also involved in several civic projects. The firm has partnered with Franklin Street Baptist Church's Adopt-a-School program to launch the L.I.F.T. Academy (Leadership, Inclusion, Faith and Transformation) this year. The program focuses on leadership through service and Christian values for students at LeFlore High School.

James and her husband Anthony also founded "Sock it to Mobile," an annual drive to collect and donate socks to convalescent homes, the homeless, the elderly and hospitalized children. They've collected more than 8,000 socks to date.

"Always find a way to pay it forward by leveraging what you know, care about and enjoy, to give back," James said.

*Want to be featured here?  
Go to [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) to submit an application, or contact Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com). There is no cost/fee associated with the Small Business of the Month program.*

*Dr. Valerie James is owner of VisionSpot Consulting Group. She is pictured here receiving an Eagle Award from the Mobile Area Chamber in October 2018.*







# Mardi Gras in Mobile:



It's a chilly Saturday night in Mobile, and a masked reveler is preparing to parade in the streets of downtown Mobile. She packs clothes, her costume and mask, her bags of throws – beads and ramen noodles – money for an Uber, decorations for her table at the ball and, of course, her gown and shoes. The price of the night ahead of her reaches upwards of \$1,000.

Since most Mobile Mardi Gras associations are mystic (that is, secretive), *The Business View* was able to locate a reveler who spoke anonymously about her expenses for a night of Mardi Gras. "Counting my throws, costumes, my husband's tux rentals and everything else I have to buy; it's about \$1,500, easy just for the parade and ball," she says.

Mardi Gras is a major economic engine for Mobile and Baldwin counties. With more than 62 parading organizations tossing hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of throws to tens of thousands of enthusiastic crowds and extravagant balls with costumes, flowers, catering and pageantry, how could it not be?

A reveler's cost to participate is expensive, but many others are affected by the Carnival season as well. Think about the businesses that only work on Mardi Gras, and the businesses that cater to Mardi Gras for just a few weeks – that's a lot of people. According to **Craig Roberts**, architect, historian and author of *Mardi Gras in Mobile*, 11 percent of the population work on Mardi Gras-related activities.

"That number includes all the people in a Mardi Gras organization to those businesses who cater to those organizations, the parade-goers and everyone else who sells Mardi Gras," he said.

**Judi Gullede**, executive director of the Mobile Carnival Museum, says: "When you think about the number of people who work directly on Mardi Gras, or that Mardi Gras is a significant part of a businesses' budget – it starts to add up."



## 1703

The year of the first Mardi Gras in North America in Mobile



## 70

Balls to be held this Mardi Gras season

## 7

Mardi Gras parade routes in Mobile



## \$3,250

Horse rental fees for marshals riding with an organization







# Mystics, Moon Pies & Money

**\$20,000**

Approximate cost to build one  
Mardi Gras float

Gulledge referenced an old economic impact study that found more than 12,811 jobs are directly related to servicing Mardi Gras in Mobile and Baldwin counties. "Directly impacted jobs like float builders and people who cater to an organization are included, but so are grocery stores that order king cakes for the season, and restaurants, florists and caterers. Their budgets are impacted too."

Steve Joynt, editor of *Mobile Mask* magazine, estimates 3.5 percent of Mobile's population is in a Mardi Gras organization.

Joynt, who has been fascinated with Mardi Gras since his time as an editor at the *Press-Register*, now covers all the activities and parades for his magazine and website. "I kept saying Mobile needed a guide to this time of season, so I started it back in



Parading  
organizations  
in Mobile  
and  
Baldwin  
Counties

**62**

2012, and I'm already preparing for 2020," he said.

No one knows for sure just how much money rolls into our area during the 7½ weeks of balls and four weeks of parades. And the number of people, employees and businesses affected by Mardi Gras could be impossible to quantify. But the continuing popularity of Mobile's Mardi Gras indicates that the tradition and pageantry are a major tourism attraction and money generator for the city. So laissez les bons temps rouler!

**\$453.5m**

Result of direct spending pumped  
into Mobile and Baldwin counties  
during Mardi Gras

**25**



Trucks needed per day to pull  
floats for a Mardi Gras parade

**40**

Trucks needed for all parades  
on Mardi Gras Day



**\$300**

Approximate cost  
paid to someone to pull  
a float out of a barn

**892,811**

2017 crowd total estimates by the  
Mobile Police Department for  
18 days of parades



Source: *Mobile Mask* 2019 magazine (numbers are estimates) and Mobile Carnival Museum.

**23**

Miles of  
ALL Mardi Gras  
parade routes  
combined in Mobile

**\$250**



City permit to ride in a parade  
in downtown Mobile



**9**

Mobile Mardi Gras  
organizations

over **75**

years old

## From Mobile Mask

In 2008, Steve Joynt, publisher of *Mobile Mask*, conducted an economic study on the cost to put on a parade. His results were collected through interviews during an organization's night-time parade. Here's what he found:

- \$260,000 spent on the 14-float procession with a little more than half spent on throws
- \$53,000 on floats
- \$39,400 on float barn fees
- \$32,000 on costumes
- \$4,800 on insurance for all the organization's activities
- \$3,250 on horse rentals
- \$715 for truck rentals to pull the floats
- \$1,105 for drivers
- \$300 for drivers to pull the floats out of the float barns
- \$250 city permit to parade
- \$1,250 additional units for the parade
- \$600 per reveler for throws



The *Mobile Mask* is published annually in advance of Mardi Gras. To order a copy or to read more about Mobile's Mardi Gras online, go to [www.mobilemask.com](http://www.mobilemask.com).



Chuck McKay, Owner,  
Gulf Coast Beads

Courtesy of Gulf Coast Beads Facebook page.

# 5 Questions with Chuck

*The Business View* wanted to learn a little more about Mardi Gras and turned to **Chuck McKay**, owner of **Gulf Coast Beads**.

## How did you get started working in the Mardi Gras industry?

I have been in the Mardi Gras business for over 13 years. Former customers and friends

encouraged me to go out on my own in the Mardi Gras and party supply business. Gulf Coast Beads has loyal customers who work with us from all over, some of whom drive from out of state to visit our store every season. I love to have fun. What's more fun than helping other people celebrate?

## Since Mardi Gras is part of the Carnival Season, what do you do with the other months of the year?

We are open year-round and provide much more than parade throws. We have helped people with family reunions, weddings, corporate branding, trade shows and many other special events.

## Did you grow up celebrating Mardi Gras?

I was born and raised in Mobile and have loved Mardi

Gras my whole life. From scoring boxes of Cracker Jacks, moon pies and handfuls of beads and taffy as a child to jamming to the "Boom Boom" as a teen to riding in parades, I have participated in any Mardi Gras activity I can. My most vivid Mardi Gras memory is as a small child watching the MOT parade for the first time. Being scared to death as Vern, the dragon float, approached spitting fire.

## What's your favorite thing about Mardi Gras?

My favorite thing about Mardi Gras – Mobile, in particular – is that it is for all ages. There is such joy on children's faces as they watch the floats going by. Going to parades was a regular part of my children's upbringing. There is an energy in the air

during Mardi Gras season. This energy heightens as you feel the drumbeat and hear the horns from the bands as they march down the street.

## What's your favorite thing about Mobile?

The thing I love most about Mobile is the people. There is a wonderful blend of families who have spent generations here, and of newcomers from all parts of the country and the world. Mobile people are some of the friendliest you will ever meet, and each person has an interesting story to tell.

*Gulf Coast Beads is located at 5017 Cottage Hill Rd. For more information, visit [www.gulfcoastbeads.com](http://www.gulfcoastbeads.com).*

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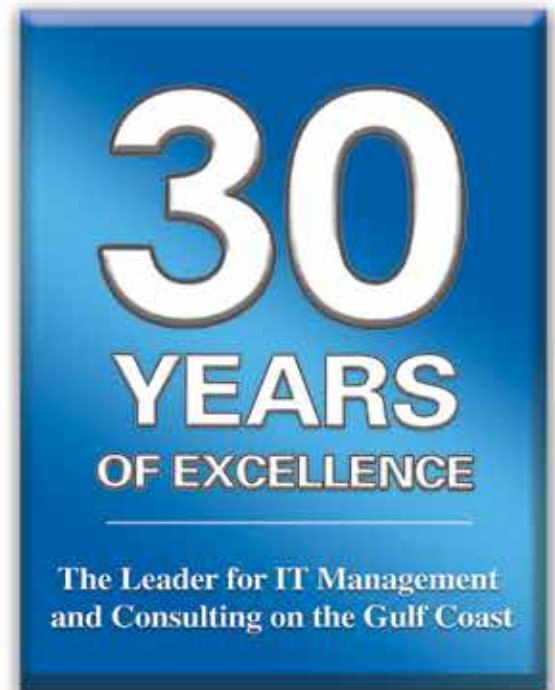
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# STATE OF THE ECONOMY 2018



The Mobile Area Chamber spotlighted major industries relevant to the area's economic development and growth at an annual event called State of the Economy. Those industries in 2018 included tourism, technology, manufacturing and trade.

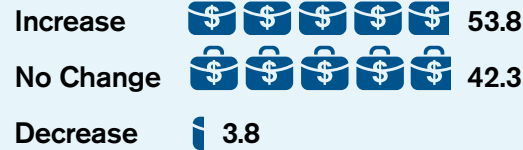
On the following pages are excerpts from the Chamber's book compiling information about each industry.

To see the full report, go to [www.mobilechamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-STOE-Program-12122018.pdf](http://www.mobilechamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-STOE-Program-12122018.pdf)

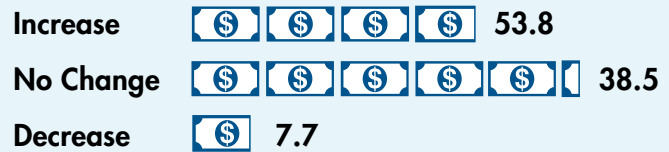
## Economic Outlook

### Mobile Metro Area Industry Performance Expectations Q4 - 2018

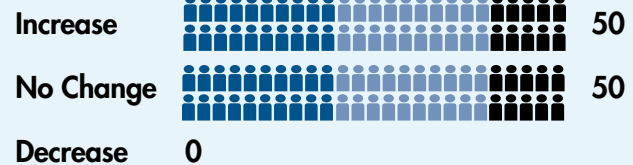
#### SALES



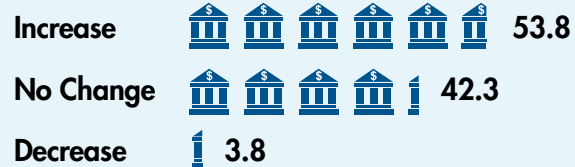
#### PROFITS



#### HIRING



#### CAPITAL EXPENDITURES



How to interpret the index: Index above 50 indicates positive outlook, Index below 50 indicates negative outlook  
Source: Alabama Business Confidence Index, The University of Alabama Culverhouse College of Commerce

## Mobile County Statistics

Population (2018)  
  
**414,270**

Population Growth  
since 2000 census  
**+3.45%**

**8.5%** of  
State Population  
  
Households (2017)  
**154,261**

Unemployment Rate  
(Sept. 2018)  
**4.6%**

Labor Force (Sept. 2018)  
**188,024**

High School Diploma  
or equivalence  
**85.9%**

Bachelor's Degree  
or higher  
**22.5%**

Source: StatsAmerica, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census, Emsi Q4 2018 Data Set/[www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)



Mobile has museums and attractions celebrating almost any local topic: history, art, science, horticulture, marine biology, antebellum architecture and, of course, the pageantry and revelry of Mardi Gras. These world-class museums not only make Mobile a cultural destination, but also provide educational facilities seldom found in a city its size.

Mobile has one of the Gulf Coast's liveliest performing arts scenes. Locally produced opera, symphony, dance and theater, along with traveling shows, give Mobilians a variety of performance options nearly any week of the year. Mobile's incredible climate supports year-round outdoor adventures. There are more than 70 parks and playgrounds in the Mobile area offering facilities for picnicking, canoeing, biking, hiking, camping and other leisure activities.

## VISITORS IN 2017 BY ATTRACTION:



**USS ALABAMA BATTLESHIP**  
400,000



**CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE**  
189,000



**GULF COAST EXPLOREUM  
SCIENCE CENTER**  
130,000



**BELLINGRATH GARDENS  
AND HOME**  
110,000



**GULF COAST DUCKS**  
60,000



**THE FORT OF COLONIAL MOBILE**  
40,000

## Number of Visitors

**2017 - 3,406,459**

**2016 - 3,227,689**

**2015 - 3,050,633**

**2014 - 2,958,008**

**2013 - 2,874,808**

**2012 - 2,829,714**

**2011 - 2,874,349**

*Alabama Tourism Department  
Economic Impact of Travel*

## Tourism Sector Facts & Figures

- Mobile County's tourism industry grew by 8 percent in 2017.
- Mobile is one of the most visited counties in the state.
- Of the seven major travel destinations in the state, Mobile showed increased activity in the first, second and third quarters of 2017.
- Mobile MSA is the third largest in the state in terms of travel-related spending.

*Source: Alabama Tourism Department Economic Impact 2017, Visit Mobile*

## Total Visitor Spending

**2017 - \$1.028 B**

**2016 - \$1.082 B**

**2015 - \$1.167 B**

*Source: Alabama Tourism Department Economic Impact of Travel*



Mobile is the home to an emerging technology ecosystem. The top seven technology companies by employment are home grown, except for Uniti Fiber, which bought Southern Light. Some 158 technology companies employ more than 5,500 in the Mobile area.

The leading occupational job categories in the Mobile area include software and systems software developers, computer systems analysts, computer programmers, and computer user support specialists.

As the focal point for technology in south Alabama and the central Gulf Coast, the Mobile Area Chamber is helping transform the area's economy to take advantage of strengths in four areas: software development, communications, IT manufacturing and services, and digital media.

## Spotlight on Prism Systems:

- Currently serves 39 different countries.
- Creates system control software for numerous Fortune 500 companies and other customers in industries such as energy, food and beverage, entertainment, government, oil and gas, pulp and paper, education and more.
- Educational attainment of its employees includes degrees from 13 major universities across the Southeast.
- Of the Prism employees, many earned bachelor of science degrees in engineering specializing in electrical, computer, wireless, mechanical, chemical, aerospace and software.

## Mobile's Technology Sector Facts & Figures

- Some industries that include technology occupations include information; software publishers; data processing, hosting and related services; computer systems design and related services; custom computer programming services; and computer systems design services.
- Leading occupational categories in Mobile for tech employees include computer programmers, software developers, network and computer systems administrators, computer user support specialists, and computer systems analysts.
- There are about 3,000 employees in various computer-related occupations. The annual mean wage as of May 2017 for these occupations was \$62,010 – a 2 percent increase since May 2016.

*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics*

## Largest Technology Companies in Mobile

Centralite Systems Inc.

CPSI

Global Tel Link

Powerschool Group LLC

Rural Sourcing Inc. (RSI)

The SSI Group Inc.

Uniti Fiber

Xanté

*Energy Management*

*Software (Healthcare)*

*Telecommunications*

*Software (K-12 Schools)*

*Software Development*

*Software-Claims Management Technology*

*Fiber, Optics, Equipment Services*

*Printer Manufacturing*





Leading major sectors in job growth, Mobile's key economic growth driver is manufacturing. In 2010, manufacturing employment in Mobile dropped to 13,900 employees – the lowest level of manufacturing employment in more than 20 years. In the years since the recession, manufacturing employment has continued to increase, driving economic growth in Mobile, and is now at 19,200 employees.

### Spotlight on AM/NS Calvert:

- 1,600 employees
- 2,373 acres
- Products: Hot-rolled sheet steel, hot-rolled pickled and oiled steel, cold-rolled sheet steel, advanced coated products
- Markets served: appliance/ HVAC, automotive, construction, distribution, pipe and tube

### Spotlight on BBB Industries:

- Serves the automotive aftermarket for passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles
- Geographically serves: Canada, United States and Mexico
- Remanufactures starters, alternators, brake calipers, turbochargers and power steering products
- Over 7,500 employees

## Mobile Manufacturing Sector Facts & Figures

- In 2017, the average salary in Mobile's manufacturing sector was \$72,753 – 9 percent more than the nation's average salary of \$66,835.
- The manufacturing sector in Mobile has experienced 24 percent wage growth from 2010 to 2017, greater than increases at the state (14 percent) and national level (16 percent).
- In July 2018, manufacturing employment in Mobile reached 19,200 employees.
- Manufacturing jobs in Mobile increased by 27 percent from 2010 to 2017, compared to 11 percent in Alabama.
- 3,982 new manufacturing jobs were added to the Mobile economy between 2010 and 2017, representing 15 percent of new manufacturing jobs in Alabama (27,166) during this same time period.
- Almost 90 percent of these new jobs were from foreign direct investments in the steel and shipbuilding industries – 51 percent (2,030 jobs) in shipbuilding and 36 percent (1,448 jobs) in steel.
- Shipbuilding employment from 2010 to 2017 nearly doubled, primarily due to expansions at Austal.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

### Manufacturing Employment in Mobile



Foreign investment in Mobile creates good jobs across a range of sectors. Mobile workers need trade to maintain and create jobs. Mobile County is home to 51 foreign-owned companies that support more than 13,500 Mobile area families. These companies represent 19 countries and cross 13 industry sectors. Foreign-based companies are represented in industries such as aerospace, chemicals, steel/metals, oil & gas, distribution, maritime and more.

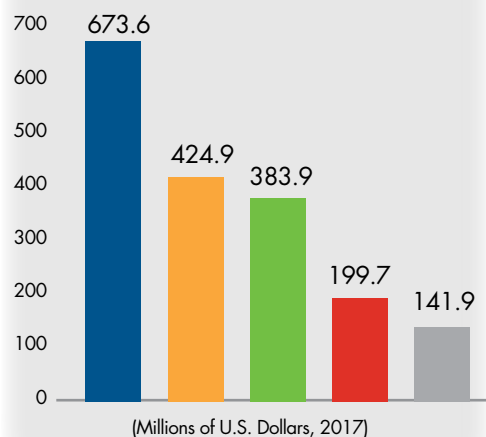
## Mobile Export Facts & Figures

- Manufacturers help to drive Mobile's economy, with \$1.998 billion in manufactured goods exports in 2017.
- That same year, Mobile exported \$545.5 million in services and \$98.8 million of non-manufactured goods, making Mobile's total value of exports \$2.64 billion.
- Mobile's manufactured goods exports accounted for 50.7 percent of Mobile's total manufacturing GDP and total exports account for 13.25 percent of total GDP.

Source: Brookings Export Monitor 2018

## Mobile's Top 5 Export Categories

- Chemicals
- Primary Metal Manufacturing
- Petroleum & Coal Products
- Transportation Equipment
- Paper Manufacturing



## Foreign-Based Companies in Mobile Fly These Flags:



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*Crow Shields Bailey was recognized at the Mobile Area Chamber's annual meeting as the 2018 Corporate Community Service Award winner. Pictured at Fuse Factory are nine of the key folks who drive Crow Shields Bailey's volunteer efforts. From left to right, they are: Andrew Bailey, John Gafford, Kristi Daughtery, Emilee Shuler, Gina McKellar, Diana Moore, Frank Schottgen, IV; Kenny Crow, Jr.; and John Shields. The Fuse Project is one of more than 30 community organizations highlighted in the company's application.*

# Crow Shields Bailey

## Wins the Corporate Community Service Award

The employees at Crow Shields Bailey spent more than 200 hours supporting philanthropic causes this past year, proving that community service is a core value of the full-service public accounting and consulting firm.

The company's 45-plus employees and shareholders made an impact on 20 community causes and serve in leadership roles across more than 31 nonprofit and community groups.

These efforts focused on youth development, childhood cancer, healthcare

and counseling, the environment, education, hurricane relief and more. Beneficiaries included University of South Alabama business students, LifeSouth Community Blood Centers, American Cancer Society, Child Advocacy Center, Camp Rap-A-Hope, Light of the Village, Salvation Army, Housing First, the Homeless Coalition, The Fuse Project and Junior Achievement.

Crow Shields Bailey supports their team's passion by offering flexible work hours to service and brings awareness of

their efforts through the company's social media channels, e-newsletters and website.

At the Mobile Area Chamber's annual meeting, Crow Shields Bailey was recognized as the winner of the 2018 Corporate Community Service Award, presented in conjunction with the Junior League of Mobile to companies based on the community efforts of their employees.



# A Conversation with Daniel Dennis, 2019 Chamber Chair

## 'Jobs Are the Cornerstone of Our Mission'



Photo by Jeff Tesney

“

*Obviously, jobs are the cornerstone of our mission, and that's why we have to create an environment and a culture where people can grow, companies can grow. In a very short time, Mobile has established itself as an aerospace hub, but the truth is our economy is incredibly diverse.*

”

**Daniel Dennis**

*President, Roberts Brothers*

*Mobile Area Chamber 2019 Board Chair*

The business of selling Mobile never sleeps, and sometimes that means reminding the very people who make the Port City's economy hum that dreaming big starts at home.

**Daniel Dennis**, incoming chairman of the Mobile Area Chamber, believes nurturing the region's talent pipeline while making entrepreneurship a part of every conversation – from the breakfast table to the board room – will be critical to maintaining Mobile's positive economic development momentum throughout 2019.

“Obviously, jobs are the cornerstone of our mission, and that's why we have to create an environment and a culture where people can grow, companies can grow. In a very short amount of time, Mobile has established itself as an aerospace hub, but the truth is our economy is incredibly diverse. The chemical sector is strong.

Our manufacturing sector is booming. Our service sector continues to grow, and our attractiveness as a home for corporate headquarters is only increasing,” said Dennis, president of Roberts Brothers.

“When you have this influx of job growth and activity, obviously we've got to do things we've never done in the past to prepare our population to maintain the growth we're seeing on the recruiting front, and I'm confident in our potential,” he said.

The Chamber, he believes, sits poised to not only facilitate workforce development conversations between such players as AIDT, Flight Works Alabama and an arsenal of university partners, but to then amplify those conversations and engage the broader business community.

“(The Chamber) facilitates communication, so once we realize we're all working toward the same goal – of producing and nurturing the most qualified, trained group we can find – we can truly promote change,” he said.

Longer-range, however, Mobile's economic prosperity hinges on the Chamber's ability to educate the local community about the true value of entrepreneurship, which he considers an “organic form of economic development.”

Whether it's showcasing the city's burgeoning technology-centered incubator, Innovation PortAL, or continuing to support mentoring programs such as 1702, entrepreneurship “will be a big part of our future,” Dennis said.

A Mobile native, Dennis earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Auburn University

and a juris doctorate from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University. He also holds a master of laws degree in real property development from the University of Miami School of Law. Since 2010, he has been responsible for strategic planning and the operation of Roberts Brothers' 285 sales associates and staff in five offices.

In addition to his new role with the Chamber, Dennis serves on the board of directors for both Visit Mobile and the Downtown Mobile Alliance. He also serves on the advisory boards for Regions Bank, The Salvation Army of Coastal Alabama and the University of South Alabama's Center for Real Estate Studies & Economic Development.



# TRAVEL TO CHINA

## with the Chamber in October

A decade after the Mobile Area Chamber hosted its first international trip, we will return to where it all began – China – and you are invited to join in from Oct. 1-9. The adventure costs \$2,199 per person based on double occupancy, including round-trip airfare from Los Angeles to Beijing, all meals, five-star hotel accommodations and the opportunity to hike the Great Wall of China and tour Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden Palace, the historic Hutong area and so much more.

The Chamber will work with passengers on obtaining a visa to travel. Guests wanting to see the Terracotta Warriors will be able to break off from the main itinerary to see them for an additional \$200. Details of the trip are listed below. The tour is expected to sell out quickly. For additional information, or to register, contact **Leigh Perry-Herndon** at 251-431-8645 or [lherndon@mobilechamber.com](mailto:lherndon@mobilechamber.com).

A deposit of \$300 is required at the time of registration, and the trip balance will be due July 15.

We hope you'll make plans to join us.

### Day 1: Oct. 1 Los Angeles/Beijing

Check in at Los Angeles International Airport one night before for an early-morning flight to Beijing.

### Day 2: Oct. 2 - Beijing

Arrive in Beijing, the capital of China, at 5:30 a.m. With a local tour guide, visit Tiananmen Square, the largest square in the world, and the Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City, home of 24 emperors with a total space of 9,999 rooms.

### Day 3: Oct. 3 - Beijing

Visit the 2008 Beijing Olympics venues for outside views of the National Stadium, Bird's Nest and the National Aquatic Center. Continue the

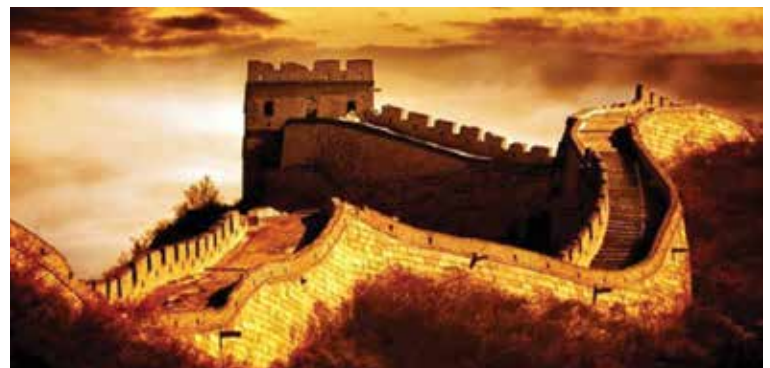
tour to the 4,000-mile long Great Wall of China, the only man made structure visible by naked eye from the moon, with a visit to the Jade Factory en route. Also see one of the 13 Ming emperors' tombs, which are fully excavated and open for exploration.

### Day 4: Oct. 4 - Beijing

Visit the Temple of Heaven, built in 1420 A.D., where the emperors prayed for a good harvest. Visit the Pearl Market and Summer Palace, known for its long corridor with a painted gallery. Kunming Lake,



Longevity Hill, Seventeen-Arch Bridge and Marble Boat are also on the schedule. Dinner will be a traditional Peking Roast Duck.





### Day 5: Oct. 5 - Beijing Shanghai/Suzhou

Morning flight to Shanghai, then take a bus ride to Suzhou. Afternoon sightseeing to Tiger Hill.

### Day 6: Oct. 6 Suzhou/Hangzhou

Visit the Suzhou silk factory, the centuries-old Lingering Garden and the National Embroidery Institute to see silk embroidery, an important local craft with a 1,000-year history. Travel to Hangzhou.

### Day 7: Oct. 7 Hangzhou/Shanghai

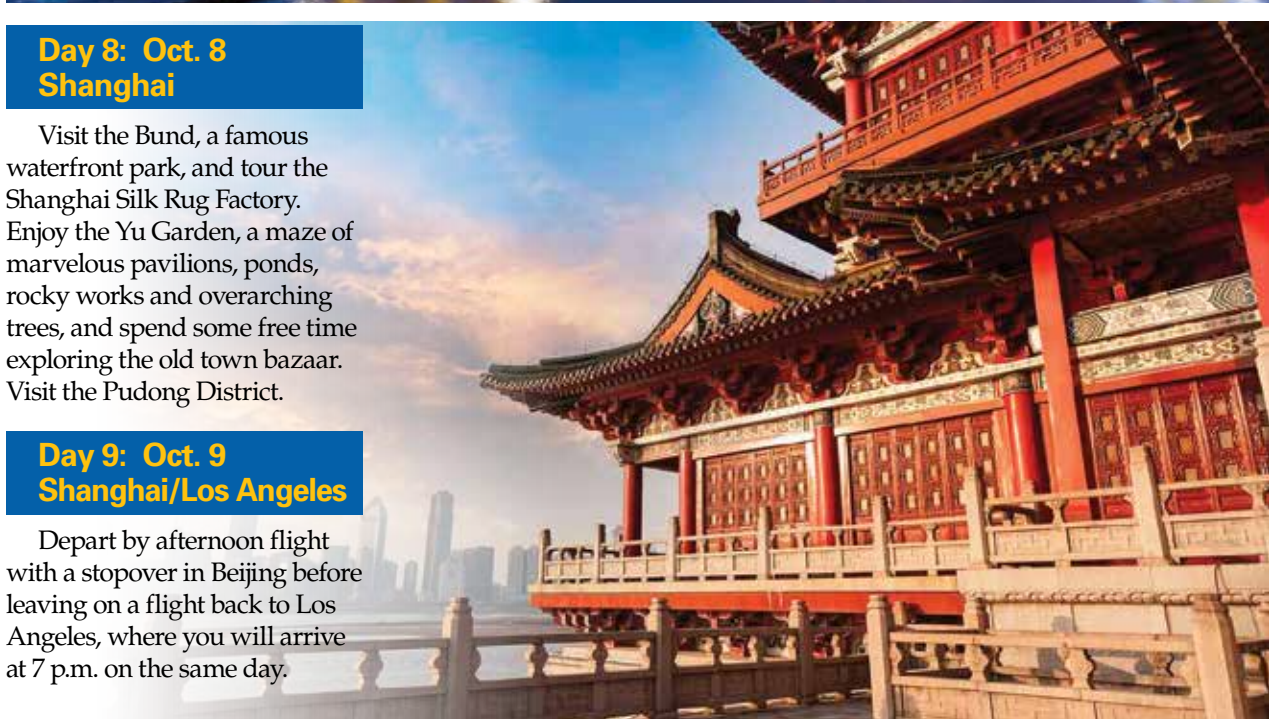
Take a boat ride on West Lake with relaxing stopover at jewel-like pagodas. See the Longjing Green Tea Plantation and the centuries-old Lingyin Temple, with a 64.3 foot-high, camphor wood-carved Buddha. Continue the bus journey to Shanghai.

### Day 8: Oct. 8 Shanghai

Visit the Bund, a famous waterfront park, and tour the Shanghai Silk Rug Factory. Enjoy the Yu Garden, a maze of marvelous pavilions, ponds, rocky works and overarching trees, and spend some free time exploring the old town bazaar. Visit the Pudong District.

### Day 9: Oct. 9 Shanghai/Los Angeles

Depart by afternoon flight with a stopover in Beijing before leaving on a flight back to Los Angeles, where you will arrive at 7 p.m. on the same day.



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# Merchants Transfer Co.

*Merchants Transfer Co. has been in business since 1904 and is south Alabama's largest warehousing, distribution, packaging and trucking company. Pictured from left to right are Ben Taul, vice president; Ellis Taul, warehouse manager; Ty Johnson, warehouse manager; Leanne Coburn, office manager; Rachael Dean, warehouse manager; and Bubba Simpson, IT coordinator.*

**Company officials:** Thomas M. Taul III, chairman/CEO; Mac Taul, president; Benjamin W. Taul, vice president, operations

**Years in business:** 115

**Brief company description:** Established in 1904, Merchants Transfer Co. is south Alabama's largest warehousing, distribution, packaging and trucking company with more than 100 years' experience. The company provides a range of logistical transferring solutions including flat-bed loading and unloading and trans-loading services. Merchants Transfer Co. also

provides a variety of packaging services, including stretch and bundle wrapping, display assembly and heat sealing.

**Why are you located in Mobile?**

"Because of the port, rail, air and interstate system Mobile offers for distribution opportunities," said Mac Taul.

**Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Partners for Growth initiative?** "We support the initiative because Mobile needs the business community working towards the common goal of selling

Mobile to outside investors," said Mac. "As a group, led by the chamber, we can sell ALL that we love about our city and attract needed growth in all sectors."

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

"Maximizing the potential of being at the convergence of I-10 and I-65, seven major rail lines, a breakbulk and container port and Brookley Field," replied Mac.

**Length of continuous Chamber membership:** Since 1968



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](mailto:nfranklin@mobilechamber.com).





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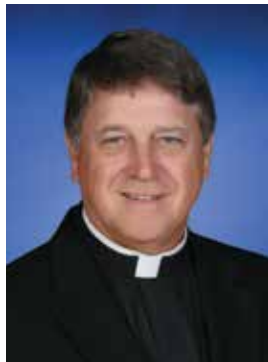
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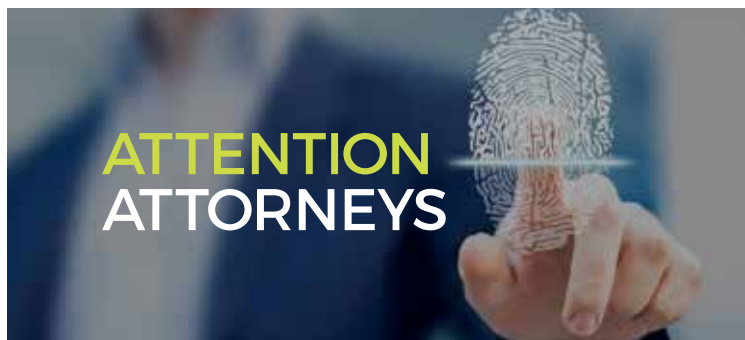
**William Bry Shields** is president of McGill-Toolen Catholic High School. He was ordained to the priesthood in December 1984, and served St. Ignatius Church, St. Mary Church and St. Pius X, where he is currently pastor. Shields received a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University; a master's degree in divinity from Yale University; and a master's degree in education from the University of South Alabama. He is past president of Mobile Rotary Club.



**Kendall Wall** is general manager for SMG-managed Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center, Mobile Civic Center and the Saenger Theatre. He has more than 30 years of experience in the entertainment, convention and tourism industries. Previously Wall served as SMG's general manager at the Florence Center in Florence, S.C., and as CEO of the Crown Center in Fayetteville, N.C., which encompassed the development and opening of the Crown Coliseum.

Wall started his career with the State Fair of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City, Okla. He holds a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma and a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi.

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



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**AMBASSADOR** of the month



Photo by Jeff Tesney

As an account executive with Lamar Advertising, “I sell the world’s largest medium and make people and businesses famous,” says **Susan Kangal**, referring to her company’s billboards. Kangal has been a Mobile Area Chamber ambassador for the past two years and is the Chamber’s Ambassador of the Month. “By working with the Chamber, I can represent Mobile business and share my love of the city with others,” she says. “It gives me an opportunity to network and make new friends.”

*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).*



## Landrum HR

*Landrum HR Companies Inc. operates as a staffing and human resource company, assisting in the areas of staffing, employee benefits, payroll, workers’ compensation, consulting and a variety of other HR-related services. Pictured above, from left to right: Britt Landrum III, CEO; Johnathan Taylor, chief financial officer; Mandy Sacco, vice president of staffing; and Kara Bloomberg, chief operating officer. Landrum HR partnered with Escambia County Professional Firefighters and Escambia County Professional Firefighters Charity with their Hurricane Michael relief efforts.*

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# MARCH 2019

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

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## 19 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:** Josh Duplantis Ph.D., executive director,  
SAWDC Alabama Works

**Topic:** "New Strategy for Workforce Development in Mobile"

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

No charge, but RSVP requested. Free parking.

**Sponsor:**



## 20 NONPROFIT ROUNDTABLE *\*Members Only*

A forum for Chamber-member nonprofit executives and managers.

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

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

**Speakers:** Dr. Todd Greer, dean, school of business,  
University of Mobile

**Topic:** The Value of Volunteers

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

No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested.

## 21 MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

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

**When:** 4 to 6 p.m.

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

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

No charge. Free parking.

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**Music:** The Tommy Morse Band

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## 26 GULF COAST TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

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

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

**Where:** Spring Hill College

**Speaker:** **Jeremy Moore** and Spring Hill College computer science faculty members

**Cost:** \$20 for Chamber members/\$25 for potential members/free for students and includes lunch

**Contact:** **Natalie Franklin** at 251-431-8636 or [nfranklin@mobilechamber.com](mailto:nfranklin@mobilechamber.com)

*Reservations required. Cancellations after March 22 not reimbursed to cover lunch cost.*

## 28 MARCH MARKETING MADNESS

*The most common question the Chamber is asked by small business owners is: "I need more customers, how do I get them?" That's where marketing comes in. No one can purchase your product if they don't know you exist. This is your chance to learn from the experts the best ways to get in front of an audience and turn them into customers.*

**When:** Morning Session - 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Afternoon Session - 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

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

**Cost:** \$20 for Chamber members/\$25 for potential members, each session

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

*Reservations requested. Free parking.*

**Morning Session:** "Marketing Fast Break – Scoring with a Hook Shot"

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 **Marcus Neto** helps you score by tipping off his tools and resources for consistent branding, the foundations of websites, and optimizing your social media appearance to help you score and win.



**Afternoon Session:** "Championship Strategies for Video and Visual Marketing"

**3 Echoes Productions Chad**

**Kirtland** goes for three – the three types of videos your business can't live without. He will also discuss why – and how – you should make a fast break for your phone any time a video opportunity arises. And **Stephanie Greenwood** takes center court to explain why visual consistency across all marketing and promotion channels should be a slam dunk for your brand.



## 29 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:** The 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.*

**Major Sponsors:**



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**Breakfast:** Dick Russell's Bar-B-Que

## 29-31 STARTUP WEEKEND MOBILE

*Startup Weekend Mobile, a program of Techstars and powered by Google for Entrepreneurs, is a collaboration of the Mobile Area Chamber and Innovation PortAL.*

**When:** March 29 from 5 to 10 p.m.

March 30 from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

March 31 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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

**Cost:** \$75 (Scholarships may be available.)

Register at [communities.techstars.com/usa/mobile/startup-weekend/13761](http://communities.techstars.com/usa/mobile/startup-weekend/13761) or <https://bit.ly/2SUqjYM>

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

*See story on page 5.*



## Who's New

**Bellator Real Estate & Development** added three realtors: **Emily Klyce Hansen**, **Jose Cardenas** and **Shelley Crooms**.



Fonseca



Howard

**Dr. Annabelle L. Fonseca** joined the **University of South Alabama (USA) College of Medicine** as an assistant professor in the department of surgery and a surgical oncologist with **USA Health**. Fonseca earned a medical degree at Padmashree Dr. D.Y. Patil Medical College in India. She obtained a master's degree in health science at Yale University School of Medicine.

**Dr. J. Harrison Howard** also joined the USA College of Medicine as an associate

professor in the department of surgery and a surgical oncologist with **USA Health**. Howard earned a medical degree at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and completed his residency at UAB Hospital.

The **Alabama State Port Authority** announced four promotions on its senior management team: **Linda Paaymans**, formerly senior vice president of finance, is now chief financial officer and secretary/treasurer of the board of directors. Paaymans is a graduate of Yale University and holds a master's degree in business administration from the Lubin School of Business at Pace University.

**Danny Barnett** was promoted to vice president of human resources. He retired from the Alabama Army National Guard in 2007 with the rank of major. He holds a bachelor's degree in management of human resources from Faulkner University.

**Bill Inge** was promoted to vice president, general cargo and central services. He has more than 38 years of experience in maritime transportation and terminal operations. He has a bachelor's degree in English from The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn.

**Parrish Lawler** was promoted to director of trade and development. He has more than 20 years of experience in transportation, logistics, sales and marketing. He earned a degree in political science and history from Elon University in Elon, N.C.



**Davis Dugger** joined **River Bank & Trust** as vice president and relationship manager. He holds a bachelor's degree in commerce and business administration-finance from The University of Alabama.

She earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of South Alabama.

**Blake LaMont** was moved up to senior accountant. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from The University of Alabama.



Griffith



Johnson

**Burr & Forman LLP** elected two Mobile attorneys to partnership: **Matt Griffith**, a member of the construction and project development practice group, and **Taylor Johnson**, a member of the commercial litigation practice group.



Smoak



Cockerham



Sullivan



Wright

**Neel-Schaffer Inc.**, a multi-disciplined engineering, planning, and construction management firm announced **Sonny Smoak** was promoted to senior vice president, and **Steve Cockerham**, **Richard Sullivan** and **Stan Wright** are now vice presidents with the firm. Smoak holds bachelor's degrees in English, psychology and civil engineering from Louisiana State University. Cockerham holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Mississippi. Sullivan earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Tennessee Tech. Wright received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Mississippi State University.



McKellar



Deighton



Ard



LaMont

**Crow Shields and Bailey** announced the following promotions: **Gina McKellar** is now a managing shareholder. She received a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of South Alabama. **Sherri Deighton** was promoted to manager. Deighton received a bachelor's degree in accounting/general business and master's degree in education from Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio. **Emma Ard** was promoted to senior accountant.





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Wright

Maynard Cooper named 10 new shareholders: Allen B. "Josh" Bennett, Christie Keifer Borton, Emily J. Chancey, H. Finn Cox Jr., Starr Turner Drum, Jessica Shaver Everest, Evan P. Moltz, Bradley G. Siegal, Ryan D. Thompson and Ashley T. Wright.

Steve Wiczorek, head coach of the Spring Hill College men's soccer team, was named head coach of the AFC Mobile soccer team.

Adams and Reese named Neal Townsend a partner. He received a law degree from the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University and a bachelor's degree in political science from The University of Alabama.

The Original Oyster House promoted Rebecca Walter to banquet room



coordinator with the restaurant. She is a graduate of the University of South Alabama with a degree in strategic communications.

### Business Endeavors

Frazer, Greene, Upchurch & Baker LLC changed its name to Frazer Greene LLC.

Continental Motors Group Ltd. entered a strategic partnership with Liaoning Cub Aircraft Corp. to be the engine provider for the Top Cub, the first kit aircraft built in China, for the Chinese market.

The University of South Alabama and Hancock Whitney announced the university's new on-campus football stadium, scheduled to open in 2020, will be named Hancock Whitney Stadium in recognition of a new, comprehensive financial partnership.

Tyndall Federal Credit Union opened its newest branch located at 6353A Cottage Hill Rd. in Mobile. The new location, featuring a state-of-the-art design and a walk-up ATM, is in the shopping plaza across the street from the Walmart Market.

### Well Done

Wilkins Miller accounting and advisory firm was named to the "Best Accounting Firms for Women" by *Accounting Today* for the second year in a row. Wilkins Miller is the only firm from Alabama to make the list and one of only 15 firms in the country to be recognized. Coming in the eighth spot, Wilkins Miller's team is made up of 67 percent female employees with 36 percent of those in leadership positions.



Taubel



Johnson



Cruz



Kelley

The Original Oyster House restaurants named its 2018 Employees of the Year. They are: Karen Taubel, a longtime server; Chris Johnson, a back-of-the-house stock employee; Victoria Cruz, a longtime key manager; and Britney Kelley, cashier.

The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) presented Alabama Power with the association's "Emergency Recovery Award" for its

outstanding power restoration efforts after severe weather and tornadoes in March 2018 and a derecho wind event in June 2018. The award is given to select member companies to recognize their extraordinary efforts to restore power to customers after service disruptions caused by severe weather conditions or other natural events. EEI is the association that represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies.

Mobile Infirmary, Thomas Hospital and North Baldwin Infirmary achieved straight As in The Leapfrog Group's Fall 2018 Hospital Safety Grade. Grades are assigned to hospitals across the country based on how safe they are for patients. The Leapfrog Group is a national nonprofit organization driving a movement for giant leaps forward in the quality and safety of American healthcare.



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**ServisFirst Bank**, a subsidiary of ServisFirst Bancshares, Inc., recently promoted

**Sherry Coker** to Coker vice president and private banker of ServisFirst Bank Mobile. Coker is a graduate of the Alabama Banking School.



**BBB Industries**, a remanufacturer of automotive aftermarket parts, partnered with TFI Envision Inc., a strategic creative marketing and design agency, to win an American Graphic Design Award and a dotCOMM Gold Award.

**Ozanam Pharmacy** presented the 2018 Gardberg Awards to **David Dekle** and **Cecilia Mace**, of the Original Oyster House restaurants; and **Robert Battles** with the **Mobile County Board of School Commissioners**. The award recognizes members of

the community who support the pharmacy's mission of providing medication to the poor and uninsured.

**Mobile Fire-Rescue Chief Mark Sealy**

received the distinguished Award of Excellence for achieving an ISO-1 rating for the Mobile Fire-Rescue Department (MFRD), the best in the country. This is only the second time the award was given to an individual that has served the City of Mobile through public office.



The **United Way of Southwest Alabama (UWSWA)** was awarded one of four Alabama Power Foundation Elevate grants, which strengthen communities by funding projects, providing capacity-building workshops and assisting in networking

opportunities for nonprofit organizations across the state. The funding will help provide a United Way Clarke County Outreach Center in Grove Hill, scheduled to open this spring.

## Community News

**BancorpSouth Bank** donated \$15,000 to Feeding the Gulf Coast to support the fight against hunger in communities across the Gulf Coast of Alabama, Florida and Mississippi. The nonprofit organization distributes more than 19 million meals annually to a 24-county service area in Alabama, Florida and Mississippi through the food bank's partners and hunger-relief programs.

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).

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## 5 years

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## 1-4 years

22<sup>nd</sup> State Bank  
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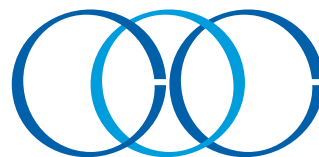
## ADVERTISERS' INDEX

Ascension/Providence Medical Group .....	10	Interstate Printing & Graphics ....	28
BancorpSouth .....	21	Lagniappe .....	34
BBVA Compass.....	25	Legal Imaging .....	28
Business Sales & Acquisitions, William Bruce.....	30	Logical Computer Solutions.....	15
C Spire.....	2	Mobile Symphony Orchestra.....	28
Coastal Alabama Community College .....	6	Regions Bank .....	14
Coast Safe and Lock.....	34	State Farm - Makeda Nichols ....	27
Community Bank .....	27	Stewart Lodges .....	7
G.A. West .....	21	The Neutral Solution.....	27
Gwin's Commercial Printing.....	33	Willis Tower Watson .....	29
		Wonderland Express.....	32

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