

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

JUNE 2019

the **business**VIEW

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to Expand

Dauphin Island Sea Lab
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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

Quality of Life Defines Our Community

What is quality of life? Every community boasts that they have a superior quality of life. Here in our great city, we can boast a great deal about the advantages of living here. But quality of life is not measured just by great weather and a low cost of living. Those are certainly important things, and so are many other factors.



So what are the items on our quality of life wish list? The good news is many of those items cross generations. Not surprisingly, most young people are looking for the same amenities as empty-nesters, such as walkability and bike-friendly roads, diversity, a thriving restaurant scene and shopping, to name

After all, it can mean different things to different people. It also includes things like plentiful jobs, good education, healthcare and housing. Then there are the arts and culture, infrastructure – and let’s not forget low crime and reasonable taxes. Mobile has a lot to offer in all these areas, and we must work together to continue to improve our quality of life amenities to remain competitive in the talent attraction and economic development business.

If you were to go online and look up “quality of life,” you’ll find it simply means everything that makes a place worth calling home. We all live in Mobile for different reasons. Some of us were born here and never left. Others migrated here for family, friends or career, and some are just passing through.

A continually improving quality of life keeps us competitive and helps us to attract and retain population, boosts our national and international recognition, and ensures we’re seen as a desirable place to live, work and raise a family.

a few. There is a lot of discussion these days about millennials, but it’s important to remember these amenities are not just for them but for everyone who lives here.

Increasing our quality of life is not just the work of the chamber or our local city and county government. All of us as citizens have a part to play. I’m convinced the best approach to improving it is by taking on one project at a time. I challenge all of us to pick the project that we’re most interested in, roll up our sleeves and get involved. It could be in our neighborhood or our closest park, or grand projects like the Three Mile Creek initiative. It could mean supporting a favorite arts organization or adopting a local school. We’re blessed in our area with a fantastic quality of life, but working together to continue to improve it will position us for future population growth and in turn an ever-increasing standard of living. All it requires is commitment and persistence.

ON THE COVER

Shonnda Smith has been named Mobile’s parks and recreation director. Learn more about what she and her team are planning to enhance services for Mobilians on pgs. 15-16.

Photo by Jeff Tesney.

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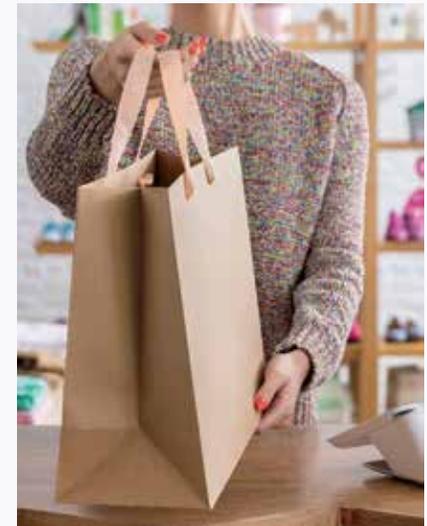
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Bay Steel Plans Expansion

Bay Steel Corp.'s Neal Collins (left) and Bob Collins (right) stand on the company's new site on Todd Acres Drive. The family-owned business is expanding and construction started this spring.

Mobile-based Bay Steel Corp. announced it is expanding local operations, investing \$6.29 million and hiring five additional employees. The new facility will be operational in the first quarter of 2020.

The family-owned business previously purchased 32 acres on Todd Acres Drive across from Mobile Commerce Park and recently decided to construct a 76,500-square-foot of office and warehousing space on 7.5 acres, according to **Neal Collins**, vice president of Bay

Steel. The company will move from its existing facility at the Port of Mobile.

"Our new operations will allow us to be more efficient with our space, triple the number of overhead cranes and give us room to grow, and we're excited about that," said Collins.

Bay Steel is a steel service center for carbon and galvanized steel and sells a variety of products primarily throughout the Southeast. The company's customers consist of manufacturers, fabricators and

contractors, supporting industrial, commercial, transportation, marine, chemical and energy businesses. Examples of how the products are used include construction or repair of chutes, conveyors, trailers, buildings, signs, boats, fences and lumber processing equipment.

"It's important that the Chamber support businesses grown and developed here. Of its key competitors, Bay Steel is unique in that it is the only steel service center and metal wholesaler headquartered in

Mobile," said **Colton Cureton**, the project manager for the Chamber who headed up the project.

MW Rogers Construction Co., based in Mobile, will serve as the general contractor.

After selling steel for another company, Bob Collins opened Bay Steel in 1988. Currently, the company has 13 employees.



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



Appropriately, the park's name, OWA, means "big water" in the Muscogee Creek language, the native tongue of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians who own and operate the development. The park contains a 14-acre lake and a splash pad. Construction will begin on a 100,000-square-foot indoor waterpark this summer.

OWA to Add Indoor Water Park

With new rides, entertainment, attractions, eateries and shopping, OWA's theme-amusement park recently rolled out plans for phase two of development: an indoor waterpark.

"We chose to start the next phase with a large indoor waterpark because it allows our guests a year-round opportunity to play in the

water," said **Kristin Hellmich**, OWA's director of marketing/public relations. "Whether it's cooling off their summer sunburns or escaping cold temperatures, this exciting new amenity will provide never-ending thrills."

The project will be 100,000 square feet under roof – large enough to hold seven Olympic-sized pools – and construction

will begin this summer.

OWA announced in April it would invest \$100 million and in addition to the waterpark, build a 200-room resort hotel with conference space and a luxury, family friendly RV park. Tentative completion dates currently target the end of 2019 for the RV park opening and early 2021 for the hotel and indoor waterpark.

"OWA is working to build jobs and create captivating, engaging experiences for visitors to the area. The added bonus: OWA is fun for the locals as well," said **Emily Eiland Gonzales**, Visit Mobile's vice president of communications and marketing.



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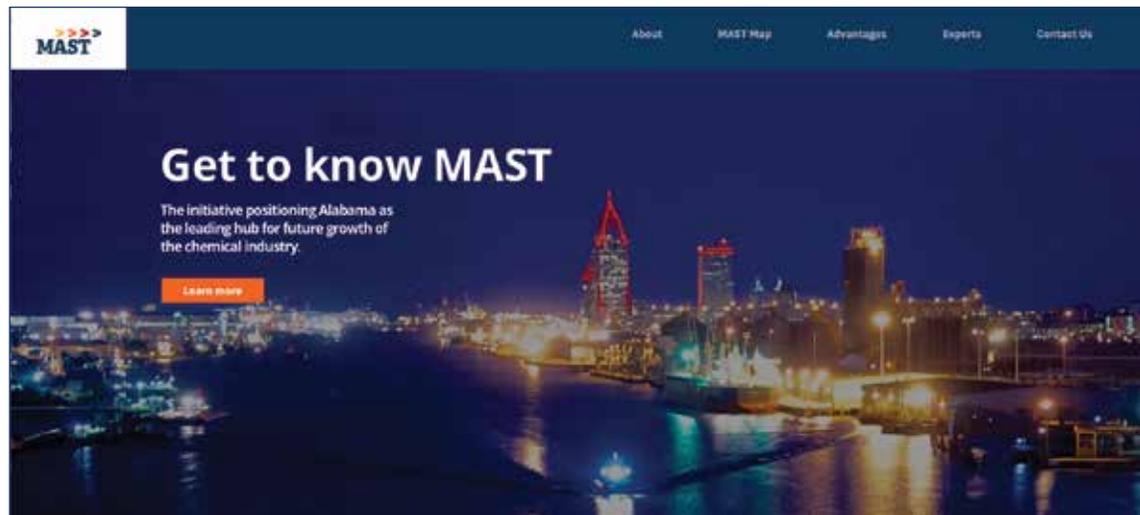
MAST Unveils Website Promoting Manufacturing Corridor

Name a field of manufacturing — aerospace, automotive, forest products, food, healthcare, and so on — and chances are that chemicals are part of its process. In fact, about 96% of all manufactured goods are directly touched by the chemical products industry.

What's more, chemical companies are innovators. As an industry, they are focused on improving efficiencies, reducing their impact on the environment and developing more and better leading-edge products. As it has with research and development in LEDs, solar cells, electric vehicle batteries, agriculture, nanotechnology, life sciences and a host of other areas, the chemical industry will continue to help define the directions of technological change.

Supporting the ongoing growth and advancement of the chemical products industry in Alabama — creating jobs, attracting new business and investment — is the mission of the MAST Initiative. It began when Alabama Power, working with the Mobile Area Chamber, commissioned multiple independent studies of the Mobile region to evaluate existing infrastructure and assets supporting the industry, identify issues and opportunities relative to its future growth, and develop a strategy for success. MAST recently introduced a new logo and website at the IHS Markit World Petrochemical Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

"MAST" is an acronym for McIntosh, Axis, Saraland and



Theodore, the four communities in Mobile and Washington counties that comprise the 60-mile corridor, home to more than 25 chemical companies. Together these companies employ more than 4,000 people — a number that has grown by 10% since 2010 — and combine for annual payrolls that total approximately \$500 million.



The MAST Corridor offers numerous advantages for chemical companies, including direct access to the nation's 11th-largest port and five Class 1 railroads. At nearly 1,500 miles, Alabama's inland

waterways system is the sixth-largest in the country. Along with the presence of a skilled labor force, those factors ensure the corridor will remain a strong base of operations for the chemical industry for decades to come.

"The economic impact of the MAST Corridor is clear," says **Nick Sellers**, vice president of Alabama Power's Mobile division. "The number of people employed by those businesses, along with the payrolls they represent,

generate a tremendous multiplier effect that is felt throughout the region. The MAST Initiative can play a major role in maximizing that impact in the years ahead."

For more information about MAST, go to MASTAlabama.com.



PRCA is Going Back to the Basics of Public Relations and You're Invited to Join In



The poster features a dark blue background with various icons and colorful geometric shapes. At the top center is the PRCA logo with 'MOBILE' underneath. Below it, the word 'TOOLKIT' is written in large, colorful, blocky letters. Underneath 'TOOLKIT' is the text 'GO BACK TO BASICS WITH THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUCCESSFUL PR STRATEGIES'. Below that is 'JOIN US JUNE 28 AT THE MOBILE MARRIOTT REGISTER NOW AT:' followed by a green button with the URL 'http://bit.ly/PRCAToolkit2019'. Below the URL are the ticket prices: 'MEMBER (EARLY BIRD): \$60 (\$70 after June 1)', 'GUEST (EARLY BIRD): \$75 (\$85 after June 1)', and 'STUDENT: \$30'. A small '2019' logo is also present. At the bottom left, a light blue box titled 'SPEAKER SESSIONS:' lists three speakers with their titles and topics. At the bottom right, there is a yellow box for 'EARLY BIRD PRICING ENDS JUNE 1ST' and a red box for '1st 50 ticket purchasers entered to win a free PRCA Luncheon.'

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MEMBER (EARLY BIRD): **\$60** (\$70 after June 1)
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STUDENT: **\$30**

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SPEAKER SESSIONS:

Donna Ritchey, APR, SPRF Hall of Fame, GodwinGroup
Effective Strategies: Donna serves as the Vice Chair and Chief Strategy Officer of the 80-year-old, privately-held communications firm.

Amy Boyle Collins & Sarah Centorino, Gamble Communications
Serving Up Beignet Fest: How Gamble Communications Put a New Food Festival on the Map

Mark Barry, University of Alabama, Minerva
Pitch, Please: Proven Strategies That Help When It's Your Turn to Talk

And more to come!

EARLY BIRD PRICING ENDS JUNE 1ST

1st 50 ticket purchasers entered to win a free PRCA Luncheon.

One of the basic building blocks and fundamentals of public relations is to always tell the truth. We get so bogged down in the day-to-day that we may lose sight of what public relations is and why it is so essential for a company, how to work in the good times but also prepare for the worst.

This year's Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) Mobile Chapter is going back to the basics of public relations by hosting its annual professional development workshop, "Toolkit 2019—Go Back to the Basics with the Building Blocks for Successful PR Strategies," on Friday, June 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mobile Marriott, 3101 Airport Blvd.

The workshop will feature industry experts sharing the latest trends in strategy, event planning and social media.

"This event is a great way for anyone in business to learn some basic public relations skills," said **Amanda Young**, vice president of community projects for PRCA Mobile and marketing & communications manager for Feeding the Gulf Coast. "This year's presenters are in the top of their field from a variety of industries and will share their best practices for working in public relations and building effective communication strategies."

Tickets are available now and are \$70 for PRCA members, \$85 for guests and \$30 for students. The cost includes a light breakfast and lunch.

Register today at <http://bit.ly/PRCAToolkit2019>.

Latest Technology Coming to Exploreum's Dome Theater

A much-needed upgrade to the Exploreum Science Center is underway. Work began in April to update its IMAX dome theater to become a digital laser-based Giant Screen Dome theater. The project is being funded by an investment by the Porch Creek Indians (PCI).

"PCI's investment will enable the Exploreum to show, for the first time, the latest digital giant screen films," said **Don Comeaux**, executive director of the Exploreum. "And, in the very near future, we will be able to show commercial, full-length feature

films. We'll be putting the viewers' experience in overdrive with greater contrast, clarity and visually stunning images that are superior to any previous technology. The theater will be an immersive experience unique to the Gulf Coast Region and beyond, and we're looking forward to this cutting-edge conversion."

In addition to a modern visual experience, the theater will be getting a nearly top to bottom overhaul in other areas as well. A state-of-the-art sound system will be installed during the conversion process,

delivering enhanced audio equal to that of the new visuals. Other renovations include new seating, flooring and lighting, resulting in a nearly brand-new theater.

This cutting-edge technology will enable the Exploreum to greatly expand its various educational and professional programs. Live video conferencing, dynamic and interactive presentations, and streaming broadcasts from entities such as NASA as well as TED Talks will all be possible with the new configuration.

D3D Cinema, working in

concert with Christie Digital Systems, will be replacing the existing film projection system with a laser-illuminated system and upgrading the audio system with a dome-optimized surround-sound speaker for a lifelike and immersive aural experience, capable of reproducing the clap of a sonic boom or the whisper of an evening breeze with equal fidelity.

According to Exploreum officials, the project is expected to take three months to complete.



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Slingshot's Mobile team includes: top row (left to right): Kim Landry, Mallory Helms, Morgan Loden, Rachael Calhoun, Stephen Wyatt, Cortney Jefferson, Megan Bassett, Blake Waters, Emily Kennedy; and sitting (left to right): Lauren Griffin, Ryan Klasing, Ale McMurphy, Brooke Gorum and Brad Custred/president.

Once a Side Project, Slingshot Aims High and Nails It

Slingshot Concierge Group started in 1995 as a kiosk in a mall selling cell phones under the name Planet Cellular. Since those humble beginnings, it has swelled rapidly, weathered a storm that almost sank it, and then rose to ride the wave again.

Slingshot, a provider of AT&T Solutions designed to help companies utilize the internet to drive their business, is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

Planet Cellular grew from that one kiosk to 85 retail stores before it was sold in 2013. Three years before that sale, however, the company began a project that would ultimately launch Slingshot.

"While we were growing the retail business, in 2010 AT&T approached us and asked us to pilot their U-verse product for

their residential channel," said **Emily Kennedy**, employee engagement manager for Slingshot. "Once we sold the retail stores in 2013, this side project became the main project. At that time, we rebranded as Slingshot and that is when our journey started."

Slingshot's services include telephone/internet/fiber, AT&T internet services, VOIP (voice over internet protocol), fiber optic connectivity, hosted IP-PBX (private branch exchange), network security, and remote backup and cloud solutions. The company serves residential and commercial customers in 18 states and is the liaison for AT&T services in more than 1,000 apartment complexes across the country.

Three years ago, however, the company weathered a crisis

that had it on the brink of collapse. "AT&T realigned channels, which at the time knocked us out of our main business," Kennedy said. "Due to our successful history with AT&T, we were able to negotiate our way into the proper channel. Although this phase was difficult, we grew larger as a result of this circumstance."

Since then, Slingshot has thrived on its ability to innovate and stay ahead of the curve, which is essential in a technology-driven industry. The company and its 40 employees have given back to the community through involvement in Big Brothers Big Sisters and Feeding America.

"We believe our people and our culture are the true differentiator between us and our competitors," Kennedy

said. "Our industry revolves around apartment complexes and internet. Luckily for us, these two things are growing rapidly and show no signs of slowing down. Although we have experienced some success, we believe we have barely scratched the surface on where we could go in this industry as it continues to grow."

Slingshot is located at 202 Government St.

Want to be featured here? Go to mobilechamber.com to submit an application, or contact Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or d Richards@mobilechamber.com. There is no cost/fee associated with the Small Business of the Month program.



New Mobile Parks & Rec Director Understands Need for Green Space

For more than 20 years **Shonnda Smith** has worked to develop and implement quality programs in cities across the country. Earlier this year, she was named director of parks and recreation for the City of Mobile. Since moving to Mobile, the former chief programming officer for the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission has learned about Mobile's assets and areas of need, and developing a strategy to improve residents' quality of life.

To get to know her better, *The Business View* recently posed a series of questions to Smith. Here is what she had to say:

Q How is a strong parks and recreation program an asset to a city?

A A strong parks and recreation program can transform a city. By providing programs and services that enhance an individual's mental,

physical and spiritual well-being, parks and recreation is where all citizens will and can congregate, regardless of belief system, income or ethnicity. It is the parks and recreation program's responsibility to provide an environment that invites all ages, genders and ethnicities to participate.

Q What types of programming can best activate our downtown parks (not just Cathedral and Bienville Square)?

A To activate downtown parks, we can provide independent and instructor-led activities during lunch, in the evening after work, and on the weekends, which can include fitness classes, art classes, live music, mommy and me classes, corn hole, horseshoe, chess/checker tables and shuffleboard. These activities can be offered at any park regardless of where it is

located. Having a successful program has a lot to do with making sure it is scheduled on the right day and time and most importantly, activating local businesses to get their employees engaged in the activities.

Q Can you share insight on public/private partnerships that work to enhance our parks throughout the city?

A There are various concepts of public/private partnerships happening throughout parks and recreation departments. However, I am most familiar with the "friends of" groups that provide financial support, leadership and guidance around programming and maintaining parks. Park foundations are created to raise money to support capital projects, securing grants/sponsorships, and/or hosting fundraisers to support projects at the request

of the department. The last type would be a shared partnership where an entity agrees to take on the upkeep of the park/facility as a value-for-value trade-off. This allows the parks and recreation department to redirect those funds to other services.

Q Do you think parks and recreation enhances economic development and talent attraction efforts? How?

A Definitely! Parks and recreation can transform the city. Many cities are using sports tourism to bring in visitors to stay overnight and eat at the restaurants as another way of bringing revenue to the city. In addition, when families or businesses are looking to move into a new city, they are looking for ways to be engaged as a family. We also are a connector to workforce development.



Photo by Jeff Tesney

The city of Mobile is designated a “Tech Hire” city and now has also been selected as a cohort for the National Rec to Tech Design Challenge. Through parks and recreation programming, we are continuing to build our technology talent pipeline during after-school and out-of-school time. A great parks and recreation department provides

recreational and athletic services to fulfill the whole person and family.

Q Safety is a top issue for Chamber-member businesses. This carries over to having safe parks. What does the city do to ensure our kids are safe?

A Safety is always a concern when providing services. Having positive activities at the park typically redirects bad behavior. It is also important that there is very close and consistent communication between parks and recreation and the police department. This ensures a regular presence at the parks and community centers and responsiveness to calls. We are building this relationship to provide the best services to our citizens.

Q It’s no secret Mobile’s parks have been neglected. Having had a little time to assess, what are your top three to five areas to tackle?

A My top five areas would be changing organizational culture on how we do business and address the public and their concerns, creating and implementing a three-to-five-year strategic

action plan, creating and requesting a budget to support a standard of service across parks and recreation, providing timely communication internally and externally, increasing programming, and providing professional development and training for staff.

Q What’s the best way to learn more about the amenities of Mobile’s parks and recreational services?

A The City of Mobile’s website is a great source to view all of the parks and recreational facilities, but we encourage visitors to connect with us through our social media platforms (Facebook @mobileparks, City of Mobile’s Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites) to receive the most current news. We also welcome you to visit our community centers and pick up our seasonal brochures.



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The Science Beneath the Sea



The Dauphin Island Sea Lab's 65-foot boat, ALABAMA DISCOVERY, is one of several in a fleet of vessels that carry scientists, university students and Discovery Hall program participants into Mobile Bay and northern Gulf to conduct research, measure salinity and oxygen, and collect marine animals.

On 32 acres at the eastern end of Dauphin Island is the nationally recognized marine science institution – the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL). Most are likely familiar with its Estuarium, a museum-like display, full of marine life from clown fish to alligators to sea horses.

Not as widely known is that DISL serves as Alabama's marine research and education facility. What makes it unique is the partnerships with 23 colleges and universities statewide, its Estuarium, which is open to the public seven days a week year around, and its physical location.

Dauphin Island is one of only a few places in the world where waters with one daily high and one low tide in the Gulf of Mexico meet nearby

waters with multiple high and low tides of different heights. Plus, DISL has quick access to the Gulf, Mississippi Sound, Mobile Bay and their contiguous bays, beaches and marshes. Essentially, DISL is a mecca of learning opportunities when it comes to marine science.

College and university students work under DISL faculty and marine educators to understand what keeps the local ecosystems of Mobile Bay and the northern Gulf of Mexico healthy.

In addition to undergraduate and post-graduate programs, DISL hosts thousands of children

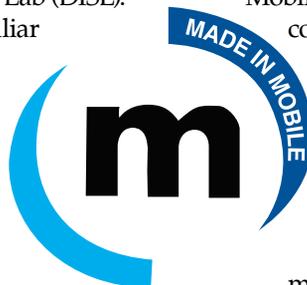
annually in its educational Discovery Hall program and summer camps, and had more than 82,000 visitors in 2018. DISL also has temporary housing and lab space for

international researchers and scientists.

Beyond the surface, the DISL's research is the foundation for coastal zone management policies, educates the next generation of marine scientists, provides professional development to teachers and encourages STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) professions.

If you enjoy marine life, the area's waterways and beaches, and fresh local seafood, it's easy to connect the work of the DISL to Mobile's quality of life.

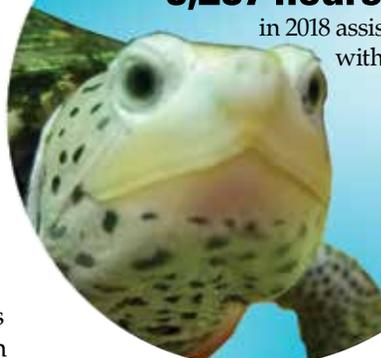
"We're the assurance that the Gulf is healthy," said **Dr. John Valentine**, executive director of DISL.



The Estuarium drew
82,307 visitors
in 2018.



DISL vessels
were at sea for
5,287 hours
in 2018 assisting
with research.





The Dauphin Island Sea Lab has 15 faculty and six marine educators among its 103 full-time employees. Pictured here are (front to back): Dr. Tina Miller-Way, Dr. Xiangli Wang, Dr. John Dindo, Dr. Sean Powers and Dr. John Valentine.

One of the sea lab's most recent studies was a four-year effort measuring how human activities and urbanization affect water quality in the region. From the research conducted, the DISL developed a website with resources, including a fact sheet and action plan on how you can minimize your pollution.

Valentine joined the sea lab 31 years ago and before being named executive director in 2011, he chaired the organization's university programs. The Burlington, N.C., native completed his doctorate research at DISL and since joining the staff, has written or co-authored 95 grant proposals for research, including the one that led to the creation of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) in 1995.

Under direction of the DISL, NEP's role is to connect the foundational science created at the sea lab to science-based decision making when it comes

to maintaining and managing the area's vast natural resources, according to **Roberta Swann**, NEP's executive director.

The work of DISL was thrown into the national spotlight in 2010 when the Deepwater Horizon disaster dumped millions of gallons of oil in the

DISL faculty secured **\$12.2 million** in funding for research in 2018.



Gulf of Mexico. Media outlets from around the world staged interviews at the sea lab as the Central Gulf Coast, and the nation, struggled to understand the effects of the largest marine oil spill in history following an oil drilling



Ryan Parker, a student at the University of South Alabama, helps a young visitor during Discovery Day, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's annual spring event designed to help surrounding communities learn more about the region's natural resources from what lives in the water to how plastics breakdown on the beach.

rig explosion south of Louisiana. "It was at that time we learned how much we didn't know about the Gulf," said Valentine.

research on the Gulf's ecosystems and economic sustainability, and people became more interested in the gulf.

One outcome included an economic impact study on the Gulf of Mexico and its five bordering states – Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas – showing \$2 trillion of the nation's gross domestic product is generated annually by the region, and if calculated as a country, the U.S. Gulf states would rank seventh in the world based on the GDP. Alabama's share was \$18.2 billion.

"People tend to think it's the economy versus the environment. That's a false choice," said Valentine. "We are partners in sustainable growth in this community."

Cont. on pg. 19

7,218 students from **30 schools** in eight counties were visited by Bay Mobile.



A few notable positives came from the environmental disaster – it spurred new



46,000
students and teachers
participated in the DISL's
Discovery Hall learning
program, representing
44 of Alabama's
67 counties.

Established in 1971, DISL receives funding through grants, state appropriations, program revenues, auxiliaries and fundraising activities.

Today, the campus has 103 full-time employees, 15 classrooms for traditional and distance-learning, three dorms, 10 family-style houses for visiting faculty and scientists, two research buildings, 13 laboratories and a fleet of vessels.

Once a U.S. Air Force facility, the sea lab performs transformational marine research and raises public awareness of the value of the region's natural resources. "So much can still be done here, because we still know so little about the Gulf," said Valentine.

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This spring was a busy time for events hosted by the Mobile Area Chamber. Hundreds of members and guests attended events in March and April including small group training sessions, an awards luncheon honoring the local military community, a golf tournament, a few networking sessions and so much more.

If you were not able to join us for any of the events, but want to still get involved with the Chamber, not to worry, each month in the back of this magazine is a complete calendar of events. And if you're looking a little further out to plan your calendar, go to events.mobilechamber.com to see what's happening in the next 90 days.



Military Appreciation Lunch

The Mobile Area Chamber hosted its annual Military Appreciation Lunch and helped present 20 awards honoring active-duty members of all branches of the military and Mobile County High School JROTC and ROTC cadets. The Chamber also honored Capt. Hal Pierce (Ret.) with the Maj. Gen. Gary Cooper Outstanding Service Award. The luncheon was attended by numerous public officials including City of Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, Mobile County Commission President Connie Hudson and Lt. Col. Robert Barrow, U.S. Army (Ret.) and director of Army instruction with Mobile County Public Schools. The lunch also featured a keynote address by Nathan Cox, president and CEO of 68 Ventures. Pictured from left to right are Maj. Brad Israel, chair of the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee, Cooper; Pierce, Connie Hudson; Stimpson; and Bob Chappelle with the Chamber.

Member Appreciation Day

The weather was "chamber of commerce" perfect for Member Appreciation Day, an opportunity for members and staff to greet each other and enjoy a fish fry. More than 300 members and guests attended the annual event.





Board of Advisors Breakfast Meeting

The Chamber's board of advisors met for a breakfast featuring state of Alabama Governor's Office Chief of Staff Jo Bonner. Pictured from left to right are: Robin Luce, JubileeScape; Bill Sisson, Chamber president and CEO; Bonner; Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson; Chamber Board Chair Daniel Dennis, Roberts Brothers; and Kendall Wall, SMG Mobile.



Health Occupations Career Fair

Nearly 600 Mobile and Baldwin County high school students participated in the Health Occupations Career Fair. Presented by the Mobile Area Chamber's Bay Area Healthcare Coalition, the hands-on event encourages future healthcare careers and offers students an inside look at what each career entails. Healthcare careers included ophthalmology, dentistry, physical therapy, paramedics, nursing, veterinarian services, pharmacists, surgery and occupational therapy, among others.



Chamber Golf Classic Tournament

More than 160 golfers teed up for a golf tournament on a beautiful spring day at the Chamber's annual Golf Classic. The event was held at The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail/Magnolia Grove golf course.



Executive Entrepreneur Program Kicks Off New Class



Twenty business owners and executives were selected to participate in the 2019 Emerging Leaders class presented by the U.S. Small Business Administration. In this executive level entrepreneurial program they will spend the next seven months developing a three-year strategic growth action plan. Pictured here are: Enoch Smith, Easy Heating & Cooling; Ricky Lightcap Jr., Alabama Heat Exchangers; John Hart, Compound Pharmaceutical Tech; Michelle Crowe, e-worc web & new media; Bo Blackwell, Blackwell Realty; Lindsey Stiegler, Soirée Signatures; RC Roux, The Roux Co.; Cadie Gaut, Payroll Vault; Jarrett McCraw, Mighty; Jennifer Jenkins, JJPR; Jeff Brinson, Southwestern Coaching; Mary Collins, Collins Counseling & Associates; Rashawn Figures, Dortch, Figures & Sons; Rosemary Corte, Harvest Jewels; Lee Pittman, Pittman Tractor Co.; Shawn Dominguez, Dominguez Design-Build; Jason Overstreet, Overstreet and Associates; Ben Shulman, Dog Ranch Resort; and Bill Stitt, Bill E's. Not pictured: Jeffrey Adams, Southeast Machine Works.

Bradley Byrne Forum

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne was in Mobile in April to address members of the business community at the Chamber's Forum Alabama breakfast. During this event, Byrne discussed the most pressing issues facing the state and region. In addition, Byrne was presented with a Spirit of Enterprise award given in recognition of his pro-growth policies by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Pictured from left to right are : Lance Covan, Mitternacht; Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson; Alvin Hope, Maynard Cooper & Gayle; Mobile County Commission President Connie Hudson; Byrne; Clark Jackson, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Southeast Region; Terry Harbin, Chamber Board Chair-elect with BancorpSouth; and Chamber President & CEO Bill Sisson.



Startup Weekend Mobile

The Mobile Area Chamber and Innovation PortAL coordinated Mobile's fourth Techstars Startup Weekend Mobile, a 54-hour event that included training, consulting, business planning and a pitch competition for budding entrepreneurs.



Startup Weekend's top three teams were: Toss, which explored the idea of developing eco-friendly shampoo and conditioner single-use pods took first place. Hair RX, the second-place finisher, had a plan to develop a line of wigs and hair extensions. Citrus, the third-place winner, is a program designed to match students with nonprofits for project-based internships.



Chamber Chase Begins



The Mobile Area Chamber launched Chamber Chase in April, announcing its \$1.4 million goal. Led by Jennie Campbell with Stewart Lodges at Steelwood, the 14-week campaign engages volunteers to bring in new Chamber members; and solicit event sponsorships, advertising and in-kind donations. To learn more about how to get involved, go to www.chamberchase.com.





Back to Basics: Information Security for SMBs

By Glenda Snodgrass

Too many small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) are persuaded that the purchase of “this one product” or “this one managed service” will provide all the security their network requires. If this were true, large corporations with huge IT budgets would never have data breaches.

Before you start buying expensive new technology to protect your office network, take some time to examine your internal processes. Make sure you’re covering the basics.

Organization

It is quite common for SMBs to lack organization with respect to their information systems. In the early days, organization seems superfluous. But at some point, it becomes clear that organization is needed, yet the

job isn’t assigned to anyone. Often there simply isn’t anyone with the time, energy or expertise to take on the job. Occasionally, the task is taken on by a willing volunteer, but when that person leaves, the baton is not passed. All too often, the impact of organizational problems is realized only in a moment of crisis.

Typically, lack of organization means there is no information security program, no one person or group in charge of information systems, no documentation on system configurations and accounts, etc. Basic security practices are not being followed. Policies aren’t clear, and actions aren’t repeatable.

Lack of organization generally leads to another of the basics that is often ignored: documentation.

Documentation

You can’t secure it if you don’t know it’s there. For this reason, an inventory of hardware and software is considered to be the first two controls of the Center for Internet Security’s 20 Controls. Yet few SMBs take even these first two steps to securing their information systems.

Without good documentation, it is difficult (if not impossible) to secure information systems. Good documentation includes:

- Asset lists
- Network diagrams
- Device configuration information
- Maintenance/support agreements
- Account/access lists
- Organizational chart with roles and responsibilities identified

- Network security and acceptable use policies
- Incident response plan
- Disaster recovery plan
- Business continuity plan

With good documentation, you know what you have, how it’s configured, who has access to it, why you need it and how to replace it in an emergency.

In the next installment of this series, we’ll tackle the final basic principle that is often overlooked.

This is the first of a two-part series exploring three foundational principles for developing an effective information security program in your business, regardless of size by Glenda Snodgrass, president and lead consultant at The Net Effect. Snodgrass can be reached at grs@theneteffect.com.



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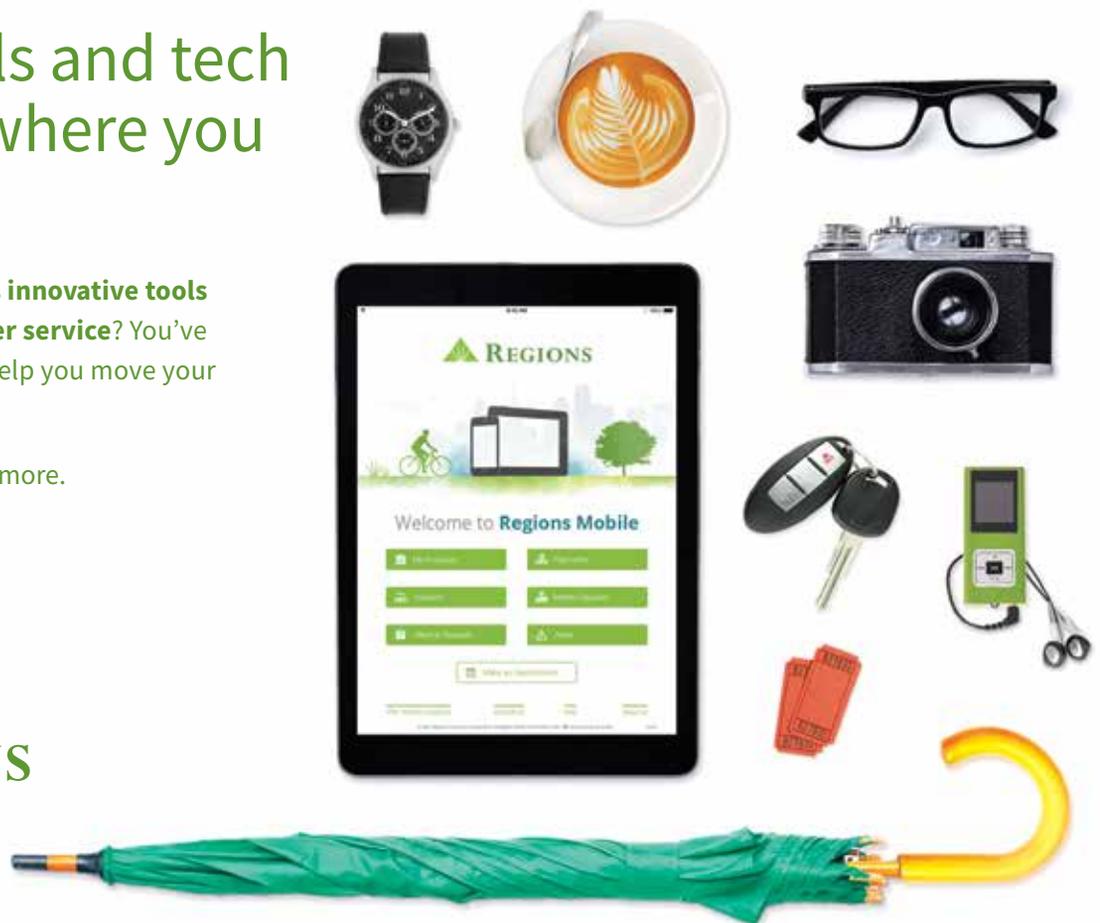
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Dr. E. Joseph Lee

Company: Spring Hill College

Title: President

Hometown: Bath, Maine

Education: Lee graduated from Saint Michael's College in Vermont with a bachelor's degree in French literature and a master's degree in education. He attended the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard University before earning a doctorate in higher education administration from Boston College.

First job: While attending a Jesuit high school in Maine, Lee first worked with the Jesuits as a young admissions counselor at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. He was an active member of Jesuit Association of Student Personnel Administrators for 15 years.

Previous experience: Lee comes to Spring Hill College from The Registry, a national firm providing interim leadership in higher education. His most recent assignments include interim vice president for enrollment management for the University of Maine, president of Pine Manor College in Massachusetts and interim director of admissions at Boston Architectural College. Prior to his work with The Registry, Lee served as president for Saint Joseph's College in Maine and Thomas More College in Kentucky.

Accomplishments: His record of achievements in previous positions includes strategic planning, enrollment development and a commitment to faculty and staff engagement.

Secret to success: "Building a great team and letting them do their job."

Brief company description: Founded in 1830, Spring Hill College is the oldest Catholic college in the Southeast and the third-oldest Jesuit college in the United States. The private liberal arts college with around 1,400 students is located on 450 acres in Mobile.





Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza

The Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel hotel boasts 363 rooms, 10 suites and 44,000 square feet of adaptable meeting space, located in the revitalized Downtown business and entertainment districts at 64 S. Water St., was recently named the 2018 Marriott Hotel of the Year. The Riverview connects by skywalk to the Arthur Outlaw Convention Center. Pictured is Clint DeJarnett, Sr. the hotel's new executive chef.



Photo by Jeff Tesney

Colleen Harrison, a Realtor with Keller Williams Realty, joined the Chamber's Ambassador program in January 2018. "I get to go out in the city and talk to the other business owners," she said. "It's a great way to hear about the new businesses that are coming to Mobile and to share in the excitement of business expansions." Harrison is the Chamber's Ambassador of the Month.

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.



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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. He joined the American Red Cross as a disaster fundraising officer in 2001, 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 USO, Mike returned to the Red Cross as the senior

development officer in Atlanta before taking his current post in 2014. Brown attended Auburn University.

Karl H. Ficken is general manager for Spire (formerly Mobile Gas), where his current responsibilities include all areas of field operations. He began his career with Amoco Production Co. in 1981 and with Willmut Gas, a natural gas distribution company, in Hattiesburg, Miss., in 1989. Ficken obtained both a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. He serves on the board of the Alabama Natural Gas Association and the Southern Gas Association and is a past president of the Mississippi Natural Gas Association.



Karen Simmons became a certified public accountant and began her career in the public accounting field in 1991. She is a graduate of the University of South Alabama and a member of the American Society of CPAs and the Alabama Society of CPAs. Simmons is the secretary/treasurer of Marine Exhaust Systems of Alabama Inc. She was selected as the 2016 Citizen of the Year for the Southwest Mobile Chamber of Commerce and was nominated for the Women's Business

Alliance Entrepreneur of the Year award. Another of her companies, Karen C. Simmons PC, was a finalist for the 2017 Alabama Small Business of the Year.

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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for more information and to reserve your space

3 GULF COAST TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL MEETING

A bimonthly lunch hosted by the Gulf Coast Technology Council

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

Where: Bishop State Community College

Speaker: Dr. Kit Nast

Topic: "Career Development"

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

No charge, but seating is limited. RSVP requested and is exclusive to GCTC chamber members.

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12 NETWORKING@NOON *Members Only;

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When: Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Cost: \$10 and must be paid with reservation

Contact: Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com

Sponsor: 

11 MEMBERSHIP 101

Come meet other members and Chamber staff to learn about the many ways to benefit from your membership.

When: 8 to 9 a.m.

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

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

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

18 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: Craig Perciavalle, president, Austal USA

Topic: "Upcoming News and Projects at Austal"

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

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

Sponsor: 

25-26 AIDT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING LCSII

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

When: June 25 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
June 26 from 8 a.m. to noon

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

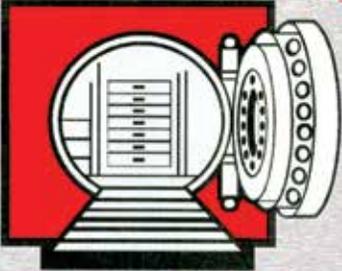
Cost: \$50 per person for members/\$60 for non-members, includes course materials, lunch and snacks

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

Reservations are required and no cancellations after June 14. Participation in LSI is recommended, but not required for an LSII course. Class size is limited to 25.

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Who's New

Derrick Williams is the new senior national sales manager at **Visit Mobile**. Williams has more than 25 years of hospitality experience in multiple hotel brands, including Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. He earned a bachelor's degree in personnel management at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and is nationally recognized as an expert in the Affinity/SMERF (social, military, education, religious and fraternal) market.



Williams



University of Mobile alumna and professor of nursing **Dr. Sarah Barnes-Witherspoon** was named interim dean for the school of nursing in the college of health professions. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from the University of Mobile.

Premier Medical Group promoted **Bettina McGahagin** to chief financial officer. She joined the practice in 1992 and was previously the accounting director.



McGahagin

Sam Winter & Co. added agent **Brantley Anne Smith**. Smith earned a bachelor's degree in human development and family studies from Auburn University.



Smith



J. Madden



A. Madden



Flynn



Korb



Essig



Duncan



Welford



Stewart

Bellator Real Estate & Development gained nine new realtors in the first quarter of 2019: **John and Amanda Madden, Lindsay Seibert, Christian Flynn, Lauren Korb, Rita Essig, Corey Duncan, Tim Welford and Sandra Stewart.**

Cherish Lombard joined **WKRG-TV News 5** as an anchor/reporter. The Mobile native returns to the Gulf Coast from Nashville, Tenn., where she worked as a reporter and evening anchor for **WKRN-TV**. Lombard is a graduate of the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in elementary education.



Lombard

Ambrecht Jackson LLP named **Duane A. Graham** managing partner. Graham received a bachelor's degree in history and a law degree from The University of Alabama.

Stacey O'Neil joined **C2 Wealth Strategies** as the director of marketing. She earned a bachelor's degree in communicative disorders from The University of Alabama, and a master's degree in education from the University of South Alabama.



O'Neil

Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate - Main Street Properties Mobile office welcomed **Toni Henry** as an agent.



Henry

Monde Donaldson joined the staff of **Better Business Bureau of Central & South Alabama** as vice president for education and development at their downtown Mobile location. She is a graduate of The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in communications.



Donaldson



Erickson



Dennis

The University of Mobile named **Cynthia Erickson EDD**, and **Karen Dennis PhD** new co-directors of its Center for Collaborative teaching. Erickson is an assistant professor of education and special education specialist in the school of education, and Dennis is an assistant professor of education and reading specialist. Future plans include offering the center's services beyond the university's faculty to alumni who are in the teaching profession.



Hansen



Fowler

New agents to **Roberts Brothers** include **Emily Klyce Hansen, Erin Fowler and Jill Lejsek.**



Lejsek



Honkanen

Dr. Richard Honkanen was appointed chair of the department of biochemistry and molecular biology at the

University of South Alabama College of Medicine. He earned a doctorate in microbiology from the University of Georgia in Athens, Ga.

Business Endeavors

The **University of Mobile** launched a center for collaborative teaching and learning that aims to improve the academic success of students by investing in the professional development of faculty. The center will offer programs to support new faculty as they grow in their profession, and provide all faculty with ongoing learning opportunities including the latest research-based best practices for higher education.

Austal USA was awarded a \$261.8 million contract for the 13th and 14th Expeditionary Fast Transport ships (EPF) by the U.S. Navy. The new contract not only expands Austal's current 12-ship EPF program, but company officials believe it could potentially lead to more medically based high-speed transport vessels.

Alabama Power and **Bishop State Community College** are partnering to offer a lineman training program to prepare students to work as electric utility linemen. The program will be offered at the college's Southwest campus on Dauphin Island Parkway. Bishop State will renovate a building to include three classrooms, a learning laboratory and an outdoor hands-on learning area where linemen can hone their skills.

Well Done



Carpenter



O'Brien

Merrill Lynch announced wealth management advisor **S. Wesley Carpenter** was recognized on the 2019 Forbes "Best-in-State Wealth Advisors" list. The ranking was developed by SHOOK Research and uses in-person and telephone due diligence meetings to evaluate each advisor based on qualitative criteria and quantitative criteria, including assets under management and revenue generated for their firms.

In other news, **Ashley O'Brien**, financial advisor on The Richardson Group Team with **Merrill Lynch**, successfully completed the team financial advisor program. O'Brien holds her series 7, series 66, life and health insurance license.

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education approved the **University of South Alabama Mitchell College of Business's** request to change its doctor of business administration to a doctor of philosophy in business administration. The change means graduates will earn a PhD instead of a DBA. Although the degree has changed, the curriculum and degree requirements remain the same.

The **Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites**, Spanish Fort-Daphne, located at exit 38 on I-10, earned the 2018 Torchbearer Award from Intercontinental Hotels Group. This award is given to the top-performing hotels as reported by guest scores throughout 2018.

Susan Stiegler, the assistant health officer for the **Mobile County Health Department**, was honored during the 63rd annual Alabama Public Health Association (ALPHA) Education Conference with the Anne M. Smith Public Health Nurse of the Year Award for her outstanding work that is exemplary of the mission of public health nursing in Alabama.



Stiegler was honored during the 63rd annual Alabama Public Health Association (ALPHA) Education Conference with the Anne M. Smith Public Health Nurse of the Year Award for her outstanding work that is exemplary of the mission of public health nursing in Alabama.



Bellator Real Estate & Development recently recognized **Bob Malone** with the company's highest award this year, the Eric A. Jones Award, named in honor of Captain Eric A. Jones, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps and lost his life in Afghanistan in 2009. Each year's recipient demonstrates a tireless pursuit for excellence in every endeavor, with a selfless attitude and an overall zest for his or her profession. Malone has been in real estate for more than 30 years.

The **Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel** earned the 2018 Marriott Franchise Hotel of the Year for the Distinctive Premium Hotels in North America. The category has 364 hotels in the following brands: Autograph, Renaissance, Gaylord Hotels, Westin, Le Meridien and Tribute Portfolio. The Hotel of the Year designation evaluates all aspects of each property: guest satisfaction, financial, community

involvement, employee opinions, event satisfaction and market share. In other distinctions, Renaissance Riverview Plaza has maintained its AAA Four Diamond status since 2011.

USA Health marketing & communications director **Jennifer Zoghby** was



named the top public relations professional in Alabama during the Public Relations Council of Alabama's annual conference. The Philip Ryder Forrest Jr. Professional Achievement Award is the highest annual honor bestowed by the organization.

Community News

The **USS ALABAMA Battleship Commission** announced the 2019-20 USS ALABAMA Crewmates:

Isabella Albert and **Emma Pitts**, both sophomores attending Spring Hill College; **Morgan Bates**, a junior at the University of Mobile; **Brianna Burrell**, a sophomore, and **Brooklyn Massey**, a freshman, both attending University of South Alabama; and **Emily Pounds**, a junior attending the University of West Florida. Each crewmate selected will receive a \$2,000 scholarship to the college or university of her choice.

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.

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Know a company interested in benefiting from Chamber membership? Contact Jackie Hecker at 251-431-8642 or jhecker@mobilechamber.com or Elizabeth Nelson at 251-431-8617 or enelson@mobilechamber.com. Also, find a membership directory at members.mobilechamber.com.

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809 Government St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-391-0872
www.brcdesignandprint.com
Marketing Consultants

Calagaz Printing

Kirsten Loper
3001 Mill St.
Mobile, AL 36607
251-478-0488
Printing

Celisse's School of the Equestrian Arts

Krystin Barrett
2568 Sollie Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695
251-289-1244
www.cseamobile.org
Nonprofit Organization/Equestrian Therapy

Charleston Apartment Homes

Hayley Gautreaux
2889 Sollie Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695-5526
251-633-0182
liveatcharlestonapartmenthomes.com
Apartments

Colleen Harrison - Keller Williams Realty Mobile

Colleen Harrison
1565 Hillcrest Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695
251-610-0710
Real Estate

Courtney & Morris Real Estate

Barbara Wells
4406 Old Shell Rd., Ste. C
Mobile, AL 36608
251-263-5150
courtneyandmorris.com
Real Estate

Database Solutions

Paul Shorrosh
3205 Westside Park Court
Mobile, AL 36695
251-338-3443
accuregsoftware.com
Software Services

Faith in Motion

Yolanda Arnold
10552 Eastern Shore #2425
Spanish Fort, AL 36527
251-930-8912
Faithinmotiontransportation@gmail.com
Transportation Services

Fete Uncommon Greenery

Catherine Burton
46 Buerger Rd.
Mobile, AL 36608
251-406-2945
Florists

Gibson Girls Task Masters

Evelyn Gibson
Daphne, AL
251-605-2133
www.facebook.com/Gibson-Girls-Task-Masters-276049966195178/
Cleaning Service

Mobile Foreign-Trade Zone Corp.

Greg Jones
2062 Old Shell Rd.
Mobile, AL 36607-3349
251-445-1372
www.ftzcorp.com
Trade Organization

Gulf Coast Events and Rentals

Emily Beebe
26503 State Hwy. 181
Daphne, AL 36526
251-621-1233
www.gceventsandrentals.com
Party Supplies-Renting

JC Express LLC

James Jones
3387 Hartsfieldway W.
Mobile, AL 36695
251-214-1020
Transportation Services

LifeSouth Community

Blood Centers Inc.

Marty Pittman
967 Hillcrest Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695-3912
251-706-1470
www.lifesouth.org
Health Care Services

Mattgraphy Logo & Website Design

Matthew J. King
1509 Government St., Ste. 204
Mobile, AL 36604
251-786-5407
mattgraphy.design
Website Design

Mutual of America

Matthew Brandt
11 N. Water St.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-460-3266
www.mutualofamerica.com
Employee Benefits

Opportunity 4 Entertainers & Performing Arts

Kalenski Adams
1111 E. I-65 Service Rd. S., Ste. 207
Mobile, AL 36606
251-300-8729
opportunity4entertainers.org
Nonprofit Organization

Surety Land Title Inc.

William Kahalley
5909 Airport Blvd.
Mobile, AL 36608
251-344-9100
www.suretyland.com
Title Insurance

The Mims Firm PC

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Kylie Foster
2112 Button Ln.
LaGrange, KY 40031
855-822-7246
www.vac2go.com
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Mobile, AL 36693
251-554-6505
Bakery

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Carswell Walcott
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Fairhope, AL 36532
251-928-6041
www.wavarchitects.com
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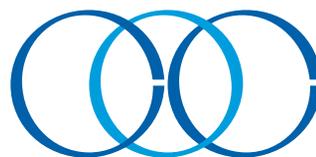
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