

# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MAY/JUNE 2020

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CHAMBER'S  
SMALL BUSINESS  
OF THE YEAR

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# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MAY/JUNE 2020



## 14 ON THE COVER:

Melissa Cross, president of McAleer's Office Furniture, is chairing the 2020 Chamber Chase campaign. This annual event relies on volunteers to sell memberships and event sponsorships, as well as solicit in-kind donations. To learn more about Chamber Chase, see pg. 14. Photo by: Jeff Tesney Photography



6



8



40

## IN THE ISSUE

- 6 News from Aker Solutions, Alabama's Seaport and WildNative
- 8 Help Us Find the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Year
- 12 Small Business of the Month: Dauphin Creek Realty and Associates
- 14 Cross Set to Lead Chamber's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Total Resource Development Campaign
- 17 Meet the Chamber's Board of Advisors
- 40 Chamber at Work
- 44 Member News
- 48 Calendar
- 50 New Members

## ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

**BUSINESS VIEW** (USPS 952-700) is published 10 times a year, monthly, except for the May/June and December/January issues, by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

451 Government St., Mobile, AL 36602  
251.433.6951 • mobilechamber.com

POSTMASTER send address changes to  
Attn: Finance Department BUSINESS VIEW  
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 2187, Mobile, AL 36652-2187  
or email [info@mobilechamber.com](mailto:info@mobilechamber.com) ©2020

**Publisher** William B. Sisson  
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**Graphic Design:** Wise Design Inc.

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

### WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Bill Sisson, President & CEO, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

The global health pandemic COVID-19 -coronavirus became far more real to south Alabamians in March, when the first cases were detected in Alabama. Since then, much has changed for all of us as we adapt to different ways of doing business and working to protect ourselves, our families, our companies and our community. One thing is certain: we're all in this together, and together we will make it through the short- and long-term effects of the virus.

At the Mobile Area Chamber, it has been amazing to see how businesses – both small and large – have stepped up over the past weeks to take care of their employees, figure out how to work remotely where possible and re-evaluate normal procedures and business protocols during these challenging times.

We appreciate your membership in the Chamber. Our entire Chamber team has been tirelessly focused on helping the business community navigate the changes. We are also working to connect businesses to relief funds available at the local, state and federal levels. With lightning speed, the Chamber created a COVID-19 page on our website to provide up-to-date and accurate information and links to resources as they become available. You can count on your Chamber to continue to help you navigate these fast-moving waters.

The Mobile Bay community is resilient, as is our strong business community. And while none of us yet knows the future beyond COVID-19, if we work in unison, we'll have the right ingredients to make us stronger on the other side.

# AKER, CHEVRON COLLABORATE ON UMBILICAL PROJECT



**A** Mobile manufacturer will make its mark on industry history. With a new agreement between Aker Solutions and Chevron, Aker will provide umbilicals, tube-like structures that link surface and seafloor oil and gas equipment for controls, power or heat, for the oil and gas sector's first deepwater high-pressure development.

Aker Solutions officials say the agreement will lay the foundation for a long-term collaborative relationship. The result is a work order for 15 miles of umbilicals that will be engineered, designed and manufactured in the Mobile facility, including service and installation support.

"Aker Solutions is committed to our relationship with Chevron and our Mobile site will continue to deliver high-quality umbilicals and service to this important client for the next 20 years," says **Jonah Margulis**, U.S. Country Manager for Aker Solutions.

Located off the coast of Louisiana in water depths of approximately 5,000 feet, stage one of Chevron's Anchor project is estimated at \$5.7 billion and consists of a seven-well development and semi-submersible floating production unit.

Announced last December, Chevron will be the operator and holds 62.86 percent working interest in the Anchor project. Total E&P USA, a subsidiary of the French-owned Total, owns the remaining interest.

**David Rodgers**, Mobile Area Chamber vice president of economic development, says: "Aker and Chevron continue to be exceptional manufacturers – Aker based in Mobile and Chevron on the Central Gulf Coast. We are proud of the many high-paying jobs both of these companies support in our regional economy."

The news came at the end of the first quarter, and work at Aker Solutions began immediately after.





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## CONTINUED GROWTH AT MOBILE'S PORT

**P**rogress continues at the Port of Mobile, recently recognized as one of the fastest-growing in the nation and one of the most improved terminals in North America.

In late March, the Alabama State Port Authority completed a 400-foot container dock extension at the APM Terminals Mobile facility, completing phase three. Three days later, the terminal for the first time simultaneously handled two container ships at the newly expanded berth.

“We continue to seek out and implement innovation and world-class infrastructure to meet the needs of our carriers and shippers,” said **Jimmy Lyons**, director and CEO for the Alabama State Port Authority. “We’re very pleased with both carrier and shipper confidence in our program as they continue to introduce larger ships, add capacity and increase volumes through the port.”

**Brian Harold**, managing director of APM Terminals Mobile, said, “We are very excited to complete this project, which allows us to offer a significant increase in berthing windows to our customers. This expansion also enables us to offer improved capabilities to quickly service vessels that may arrive ahead-of or behind schedule.”

The new dock is also capable of housing additional cranes in the future. Other recent improvements include an outbound gate expanded from four to six lanes and an Intermodal Rail Facility expanded by 10 acres.

Investments to date will soon be enhanced by the recent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-issued permit and receipt of full federal and state funding to take the Mobile Harbor to -50 foot draft by 2024. Construction on the channel and harbor improvements is expected to begin later this year.

# ARE YOU THE ONE?

## HELP US FIND THE MOBILE AREA CHAMBER'S SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



**A**pplications will now be accepted until May 11 for the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Year Award. Companies that exemplify business and civic leadership, financial performance, growth in employment and community involvement are encouraged to apply.

Do you know a deserving company, or a customer or vendor? Maybe your company is doing some new and exciting things, especially considering the COVID-19 crisis. We want to hear about it.

Applicants submit online, and all nominations will be reviewed by a volunteer selection committee. Three finalists are then chosen, with the winner being announced and finalists honored at the Chamber's Small Business Awards Breakfast on Thursday, Aug. 20.

**The application deadline is Monday, May 11.** For more details, tips and to apply, visit [mobilechamber.com/small-business](http://mobilechamber.com/small-business) or contact Danette Richards at [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com) or 251.431.8652.



**APPLICATION DEADLINE**  
IS MONDAY, MAY 11



**3 FINALISTS**  
ARE CHOSEN FROM  
THE APPLICANTS



APPLICANTS SUBMIT  
AN ONLINE  
APPLICATION



**3 FINALISTS HONORED**  
AT THE CHAMBER'S SMALL  
BUSINESS AWARDS BREAKFAST  
ON AUGUST 20



APPLICATIONS  
REVIEWED  
BY A VOLUNTEER  
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## WILDNATIVE BOAT TOURS AND GULFQUEST TO OFFER ENHANCED EXPERIENCES

**W**ildNative Tours has a new home and a new partnership. The water-based tour company is now conducting its “Secretly Awesome Tour” from Cooper Riverside Park and teaming up with GulfQuest National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico on special events, birthday parties, field trips and more.

“A maritime museum and a boat tour go together like Mobile and Mardi Gras,” said Captain **Michael Dorie**, president of WildNative Tours. “It’s a perfect opportunity for guests to engage with the hands-on exhibits at the museum, then step out the back door onto our boat and see everything they just learned about in action, in real time, in the port, the bay and the delta.”

**Mary Elizabeth Harper**, GulfQuest museum director, added: “The lower Alabama area is a fantastic place to live and visit, and the purpose of this partnership is to engage more people in the experiences that make our area shine.”

Earlier this year, GulfQuest introduced a free day for all Mobile County residents on every third Thursday of the month. On that day, WildNative tours will offer 50% off its tours with the code ThursdayThrills and 10% off in conjunction with any museum visit.

What is described as WildNative’s most comprehensive tour, the two-hour ride showcases Mobile’s port, Mobile Bay and the delta. Tours run seven days a week, with departures at 1 p.m., 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Visit [WildNativeTours.com](http://WildNativeTours.com) or call 251.272.4088 for more information on seasonal tours like Gators After Dark Private Group Boat Charter, the July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks Cruise and Kayak Paddles.

Under regular operating hours, the museum is open Tuesday-Saturday each week. Visit [gulfquest.org](http://gulfquest.org) or call 251.436.8901 for more information.

*Editors Note: Openings and hours may be changed due to COVID-19. Be sure to call or check the company website.*



Photo by Jeff Tesney Photography

Dauphin Creek Realty was named the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month. Pictured from left to right are: Russell Heidelberg, Michelle Hunter, owner Kimberly Thompson, Stephanie Pettaway and Dorcell James.

# DAUPHIN CREEK REALTY AND ASSOCIATES ADDS CONSTRUCTION TO ITS SERVICES

**I**ron sharpens iron," says **Kimberly Thompson**, managing broker/owner of Dauphin Creek Realty and Associates. She cites Proverbs 27:17 to describe how she is motivated and inspired by those she meets through the Mobile Area Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force.

"When I see what other Chamber members are doing, I am empowered that I can do this as well," she says.

Thompson is fulfilling a lifelong dream of owning a business. Her full-service real estate brokerage firm specializes in residential sales, investment properties and, most recently, new construction.

Her newest endeavor includes securing an investor to build new homes. The first home is complete, and Thompson has two more planned. Located in the Eight Mile community, the 1,840-square-foot properties are considered starter homes, but they each have enough room for an owner to stay in it as the family expands.

**"When I see what other Chamber members are doing, I am empowered that I can do this as well," says Thompson.**



Photos by Jeff Tesney Photography

One way she contributes back to the community is by offering a free seminar for homebuyers. Presenters discuss a variety of topics, including what paperwork is needed, how credit scores affect the process and how to go about buying a home. Thompson also says she works with first-time homebuyers hand-in-hand so they are comfortable and knowledgeable about the resources available to them.

This year's seminar is tentatively scheduled for May. Watch the company's website for details at [dauphincreekrealty.info](http://dauphincreekrealty.info).



**COMPANY NAME:** Dauphin Creek Realty and Associates

**OWNER:** Kimberly Thompson

**PHONE:** 251.244.9843

**WEBSITE:** [DauphinCreekRealty.info](http://DauphinCreekRealty.info)

**FACEBOOK:** [facebook.com/sellmyhomes/](https://facebook.com/sellmyhomes/)



## CROSS SET TO LEAD 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CHAMBER CHASE CAMPAIGN

Photo by Jeff Tesney Photography

*Chamber Chase Chair Melissa Cross with McAleer's Office Furniture partnered with Mighty to create a video to kick off the 2020 Chamber Chase campaign. Pictured here with Cross is Mighty Partner & CEO Jarrett McCraw.*

In May, the Mobile Area Chamber will kick off its 24<sup>th</sup> annual total resource development campaign with dedicated volunteers and staff working to recruit new members, secure sponsorships for Chamber events and sell advertising space in Chamber publications. The ultimate goal is to help the Chamber continue its mission of being a progressive business advocate.

Each year, the group is led by a leader in the business community who is also a member of the Chamber's board of directors.

**Melissa Cross**, president of McAleer's Office Furniture, is chairing the group for 2020.

"The participation of our business community is crucial to supporting the Chamber in its efforts to continue growing our region's economy," said Cross. "The Chamber values its members and their investment. I encourage all of our area's businesses to join and get engaged with the work we're doing to make Mobile a better place to live and work."

"Volunteers are able to interact with the business community by contacting their clients and customers," said **Carolyn Golson**, the Chamber's vice president of membership. "They benefit from the exposure and networking with other volunteers, and it's an

opportunity to develop stronger relationships with customers. Volunteers can let their customers know about opportunities available at the Chamber and can also use their involvement with the campaign to make connections with potential customers."

"It's a great way for me to add value to what I deliver to my customers," said longtime Chamber Chase volunteer **James Alexander** of BancorpSouth. "It helps me help them find ways to get more invested in the community and find ways to network with other companies they'd like to do business with."

**Rachel New** of Trustmark Bank, who has worked on the campaign since 2013, added, "It has helped me learn how to network efficiently and help our customers get more connected in the community."

The Chamber Chase campaign will officially kick off on May 28, with a goal of \$1.55 million in memberships, sponsorships, advertisements and donated goods and services. To get involved as a volunteer, participate with a company team, or simply donate a door prize for the volunteers, contact Golson at 251.431.8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com).

# THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN SPONSORING? HERE'S WHAT SOME OF OUR VOLUNTEERS HAD TO SAY:

## ANNUAL MEETING

"Trustmark is the presenting sponsor of this event because of how well it is put together and attended. The program is very informative and the after party is so much fun, being able to mingle with clients and friends."

**Rachel New**, *Trustmark Bank*

"This event provides an excellent overview of everything happening at the Chamber. Fast-paced and well attended; I wouldn't miss it."

**Bernadette Windle**, *Roberts Brothers*

## BOARD OF ADVISORS INPUT BREAKFAST

"Though this event is only for the board of advisors (another great reason to join!), it is a great opportunity to share my thoughts with the Chamber as well as other business leaders."

**Melissa Cross**, *McAlee's Office Furniture*

## BUSINESS EXPO

"One of my favorites because our members get the chance to promote their business. They get to see customers and find new customers."

**Valencia Chaney**, *Alabama Power*

"McAlee's participates in the Expo every year because it is a great event to meet people, make new contacts and learn about other businesses in Mobile."

**Melissa Cross**, *McAlee's Office Furniture*

"This is event was HUGE last year! In fact, it sold out! Love attending and walking every aisle to see all the different businesses there are in this community. It is amazing what Mobile has to offer consumers and businesses."

**Rachel New**, *Trustmark Bank*

## CHAMBER CHASE VICTORY CELEBRATION

"It's so fast-paced and fun! I love the build up to announcing the campaign total."

**Abe Harper**, *Harper Technologies*

"It is rewarding to see the volunteers be recognized for their hard work."

**Bernadette Windle**, *Roberts Brothers*

## EAGLE AWARDS

"A can't miss event because our small businesses, minority-owned and women-owned businesses are acknowledged."

**Valencia Chaney**, *Alabama Power*

## EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE

"I love hearing about all the exciting things happening in Mobile and getting to know influencers in our business community."

**Melissa Cross**, *McAlee's Office Furniture*

## MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

"Sometimes you just need to let your hair down with the Chamber Staff! I know they appreciate their members, and this is a fun way for them to show it. I never miss it!"

**Melissa Cross**, *McAlee's Office Furniture*

"A relaxing, fun afternoon of casual networking. Definitely one of my favorites."

**Abe Harper**, *Harper Technologies*

## SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS BREAKFAST

"As a previous Small Business of the Year Award Winner (2015), we enjoy getting the chance to recognize and celebrate small businesses in our community."

**Melissa Cross**, *McAlee's Office Furniture*

"Ninety-three percent of the Chamber's members are small businesses so it is very rewarding to see our small businesses recognized."

**Valencia Chaney**, *Alabama Power*

## TEAMS PARTICIPATING

*as of March 17, 2020*

Alabama Power	Jeff Tesney Photography
Arkema	LLB&B Inc. Real Estate
BancorpSouth	MACC Ambassadors
BB&T, now Truist	MACC Board of Directors
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama	MACC Growth Alliance Task Force
Blue Fish	McAlee's Office Furniture
C Spire	Regions Bank
Century Bank	Renasant Bank
Crow Shields Bailey	Roberts Brothers
Evonik	ServisFirst Bank
Hancock Whitney Bank	Spire
Hargrove Engineers + Constructors	The Stewart Lodges
Harper Technologies	Trustmark National Bank
IBERIABANK	Wilkins Miller

## Get Involved

### How can the business community be a part of the Mobile Chamber's annual campaign, Chamber Chase?

- Visit the campaign website, [chamberchase.com](http://chamberchase.com), for ideas
- Join the Chamber
- Raise your visibility by joining the Chamber's board of advisors
- Gain exposure for your company by sponsoring an event
- Promote your business with an advertisement in a Chamber publication
- Contact Carolyn Golson at 251.431.8622 for details or to discuss ideas

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# BOARD OF ADVISORS

The Mobile Area Chamber provides board of advisors members an avenue to give valuable input on critical organization and community issues; facilitates peer-to-peer interaction; and delivers a high level of recognition.

This group meets three times a year at various locations, hearing business and governmental leaders and other speakers address pertinent topics. In addition, the group receives invitations to other events for Chamber leadership.

For information on joining the board of advisors, contact Shelly Mattingly at 251.431.8655 or smattingly@mobilechamber.com.



★ The star indicates those whose companies are also investors in Partners for Growth, the Chamber's long-term economic and community development program.

*As of March 2020.*



**Sumner G. Adams**  
*Norton Lilly International* ★



**Glyn Agnew**  
*AT&T* ★



**Diana Allen**  
*The SSI Group LLC*



**Douglas L. Anderson**  
*Burr & Forman LLP* ★



**Alex Arendall**  
*ServisFirst Bank* ★



**Christopher Ashcraft**  
*Express Employment Professionals*



**Celia Mann Baehr**  
*Mobile Symphony Inc.*



**Owen Bailey**  
*USA Health*



**Christopher L. Baldwin**  
*Seabulk Towing* ★



**Scott A. Beauchemin**  
*General Dynamics (Mission Systems)*



**Kinley Bell**  
*Marine Rigging Inc.*



**Matthew D. Bell**  
*HDR Engineering Inc.*



**Andrew Betts**  
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**Kel Boisvert**  
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**Preston Bolt Jr.**  
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**Jerry Carl**  
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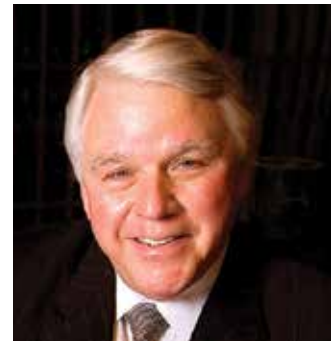
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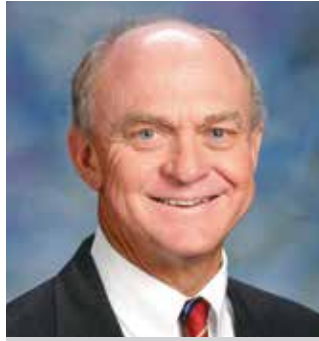


**Melissa Cross**  
McAler's Office Furniture



**Allan Crow**

*Robert J. Baggett Inc.*



**J. Kenny Crow Jr.**

*Crow Shields Bailey PC*



**Chris Curry**

*Mobile Airport Authority*



**Daniel A. Dennis IV**

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**Gilbert Diaz Jr.**

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*Triumph Airborne Structures*



**Taylor Engerson**

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*Esfeller Construction Co. Inc.*



**Ellen Praytor Faulkner**

*Lewis Communications Inc.*



**Chris Fausak**

*Fausak Tires & Service*



**Tommy Faust**

*Trustmark Bank*



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*Synovus*



**Karl Ficken**

*Spire*



**Mark Fillers**

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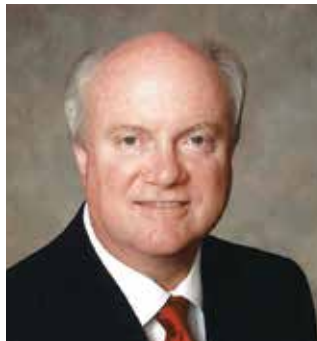
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**Ronald A. Snider**  
*Jones Walker LLP* ★



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*BBVA* ★



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*Springhill Medical Center* ★



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**Fred T. Stimpson**  
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A collage of images related to industrial and construction work. The top left shows a large industrial structure with a glass roof. The top right shows a construction site with workers in safety gear. The bottom left shows a yellow industrial crane. The bottom right shows a worker using a surveying instrument. The central part of the collage is a white diamond shape containing the G.A.WEST logo and contact information.

  
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# CHAMBER AT WORK

## CHAMBER MEETS MEMBER NEEDS DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

The Mobile Area Chamber reacted swiftly to meet the needs of members at the onset of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. A few of those activities included a new web portal on our website dedicated to information, links and news related to the virus; launching a Stay Safe. Stay Local. Facebook group to expand the Chamber's shop local messaging and allow members to post updates on services and hours; organizing and hosting watch parties promoting members; promoting member businesses through Instagram stories; and contacting member businesses via email and phone to offer assistance.

## CHAMBER SPONSORS EDUCATIONAL SUMMIT

The Chamber sponsored Coastal Alabama Partnership's Educational Summit with leaders from the Alabama Legislature, including House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, Sen. Clyde Chambliss and Rep. Terri Collins, as well as the Mobile/Baldwin delegation. Airbus, Austal and the Alabama State Port Authority were key partners in the summit, created to update legislative leadership on Mobile's impact.

## CHAMBER STAFFER JOINS COMMITTEE

Nancy Hewston, the Chamber's vice president of community and governmental affairs, was appointed to the technical coordinating and citizens advisory committee of the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPO). The committee provides assistance and makes recommendations to the MPO voting membership for a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process.

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR METRO FIVE CHAMBERS

The Chamber community and governmental affairs team met via conference call with its counterparts from chambers in Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa to discuss relevant issues in the legislative session. In each session, there are key issues impacting metro areas across the state and, wherever possible, the Chambers work together to accomplish shared goals.

## CHAMBER ATTENDS ALABAMA-GERMANY PARTNERSHIP EVENT

Several members of the Chamber's economic development team traveled to Huntsville in early March to attend the annual Alabama-Germany Partnership dinner. This event brings German and American leaders from industrial, cultural, educational and governmental sectors together to recognize the impact and importance of Germany to Alabama and vice versa.

## INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDYING BEST PRACTICES

Christina Stimpson, the Chamber's director of international business, attended the first joint meeting between the Alabama District Export Council and Georgia District Export Council to learn best practices between the organizations. Updates from this meeting included phase one of the U.S.-China trade deal and its implementation strategies; coronavirus; and state and federal strategic plans for the two councils.

## CHAMBER HOSTS ALABAMA TRADE PARTNERS RECEPTION

The Chamber was the premier sponsor of the state's inaugural Alabama Trade Partners Reception, held in Atlanta. The reception, held in February, honored consulates and other trade association and partners, and was attended by more than 100 people, including 20 consul generals from more than 25 countries.



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**1-2 LARGE CROWD FOR MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY** More than 200 people turned out for the Chamber's 12<sup>th</sup> annual Member Appreciation Day in mid-March. Staff and guests enjoyed live music, a taco bar and drinks while networking on the Chamber's lawn.

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH BIO ALABAMA** Several members of the Chamber's economic development team attended a roundtable discussion with Bio Alabama at the Mitchell Cancer Institute in early November. Discussions focused on the current bioscience community, where it is going, and ways to connect and foster a strong bioscience community via initiatives within startup and tech transfer, workforce development, and business attraction and retention.

**USA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM** Cheryl Nicholls, the Chamber's director of workforce and education, worked with the University of South Alabama College of Engineering to develop an internship information session event in early spring. Attended by more than 15 engineering employers, the event was an opportunity to engage local employers in conversation about talent attraction in the Mobile area.

**CHAMBER NAMES NEW AMBASSADORS** Andrea Cape of Kloud7, Lane Elmore of Edward Jones, Jessica Lipscomb of The Stewart Lodges and Dixie Pellegrino with The Hiller Companies were named Chamber ambassadors. Ambassadors are a group of volunteer members who assist the Chamber with a variety of projects, including event registration, member visits and ribbon cuttings. To learn more about this group, contact Dawn Rencher at 251.431.8649 or [drencher@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drencher@mobilechamber.com).

**MEMBER RIBBON CUTTINGS AND GRAND OPENINGS** Chamber staff and ambassadors helped cut ribbons and celebrate grand openings at Mo'Bay Beignet Co. and Rock N Roll Sushi Midtown. For more information, contact Dawn Rencher at 251.431.8649 or [drencher@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drencher@mobilechamber.com).



2

**NEW BOARD OF ADVISORS MEMBERS NAMED** The Chamber announced two new board of advisors members, bringing the number to 261. They are 22<sup>nd</sup> State Bank and Threaded Fasteners Inc. To learn more about this group of influential members, contact Shelly Mattingly at 251.431.8655 or [smattingly@mobilechamber.com](mailto:smattingly@mobilechamber.com).

**DEVELOPING THE CHAMBER'S DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY** In early 2020, the Chamber's leadership, staff and key volunteers initiated conversations with local CEOs to discuss how to intentionally improve diversity and inclusion in the Mobile area and how it impacts the community. The Chamber is working with The Eddie Hill Consulting Group from Birmingham on this effort, and results from the meetings will be used to develop a community strategy.

**CHAMBER RELAUNCHES ONLINE NEWSROOM** Coinciding with the March issue of the *Business View*, the Chamber launched its redesigned online newsroom to better coordinate with the new magazine design and feature more articles, news and photos. The new section of the site can be found at [mobilechamber.com/news](http://mobilechamber.com/news).



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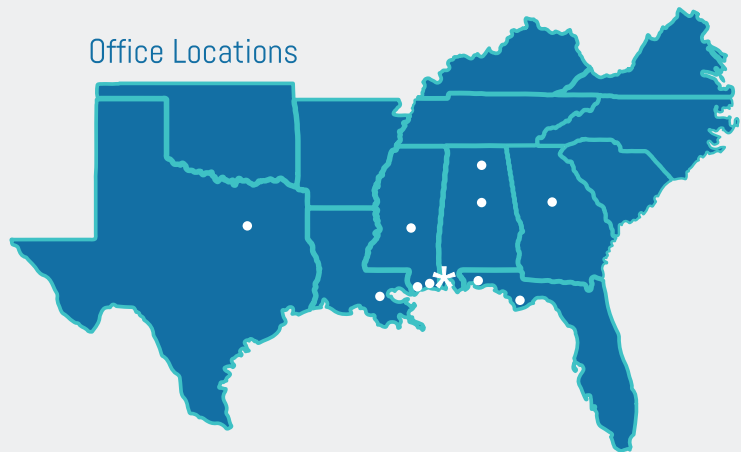
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## WHO'S NEW

## Shelby Smith Joins USA Health



Smith

**Shelby Smith** was named director of care access for **USA Health's** outpatient academic practice, which includes clinic locations in both Mobile and Baldwin counties. Smith earned a bachelor's degree in human services and counseling from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., and a master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology from Capella University in Minneapolis.

## The SSI Group Has New President and CEO



Allen

The **SSI Group** named **Diana Allen Ph.D.**, a healthcare executive with more than two decades of revenue cycle experience, as president and CEO. Allen earned a master's degree in healthcare administration at Cambridge College in Charlestown, Mass., and a doctorate of management in healthcare administration from Colorado Technical University in Colorado Springs, Colo.

## Bellator Hires New Realtors



Goodman



Gunter



Jackson



Bernardi



Reed



Moore

**Bellator Real Estate & Development** added **Stephanie Goodman, Leigh Gunter, Craig Jackson, Forest Bernardi, Anderson Reed** and **Chris Moore**.

## Trustmark Names Watkins Vice President



Watkins

**Trustmark** selected **Ashley Persons Watkins** as vice president at its Mobile main office. Watkins obtained a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of South Alabama and completed the University of South Alabama Banking School.

## Roberts Brothers Welcomes New Agents and Staff



Autio



Graham



Green



Hudson



Hunter



Lawley



Morris



Raczkiewicz



Reynolds



Wallace



Ward



Brunson



Phillips

**Roberts Brothers** added new agents **Michelle Autio, Jennifer Graham, Aleen Green, Deena Hudson, Kim Hunter, Lance Lawley, Erica Morris, E.J. Raczkiewicz, Andre Reynolds, Tim Wallace** and **Debbie Ward**. In addition, the real estate firm announced several new staff members: **Laurye Brunson**, director of career development, and **Mike Phillips**, IT specialist.

## Keesler Federal Credit Union Adds Staff



Brooks



Bates



Bignell

**Keesler Federal Credit Union** named **Crystal Brooks** and **Brian Bates** branch managers of the new Midtown Mobile branch and Westwood Plaza locations, respectively, and **Samantha M. Bignell** community development officer for the Eastern Region.

## LeGrone Named First Vice President at Merrill Lynch



LeGrone

**Archie (A.J.) LeGrone**, wealth management advisor, was recently named first vice president of **Merrill Lynch**. He holds a finance degree from the University of South Alabama, and is a certified financial planner.

## Continental Aerospace Technologies Appoints CEO



Stoppek

Continental\*, an AVIC International Holding (HK) LTD company announced **Robert J. Stoppek** as CEO and president. Stoppek earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, and an executive master's degree in business administration from Northwestern University-Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Illinois.

## SAWDC Selects Wilson Executive Director



Wilson

The **Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC)** board of directors appointed **Bridget Wilson** as its executive director. Wilson holds a bachelor's degree in environmental science from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

## USA Health Selects Stover CFO



Stover

**Benny Stover** was named chief financial officer for **USA Health**. A certified public accountant with more than two decades of hospital administration experience, Stover earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from West Virginia University and a master's degree in business administration from John Brown University in Arkansas.

## BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

## Mississippi's Largest Credit Union Expands Footprint into Mobile

**Keesler Federal Credit Union** opened its first branches in Alabama, with two new locations in the Mobile market. The Mobile Westwood Plaza branch is at 7765 Airport Blvd., Ste. 201, and the Midtown Mobile branch is at 100 N. Florida St. For more information, visit [kfcu.org](http://kfcu.org) or call 888.533.7537.

## USA Health Introduces TeleTracking System

The **TeleTracking** system now in place at **USA Health** hospitals gives the USA Health Transfer Center a bird's-eye view of patient traffic flow with the goal of managing bed capacity more efficiently to provide critical services to the region. For patients, this means less waiting; for referring physicians, it means easier transfers to access USA Health's unique services.

## USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital Forms New Partnership

With a goal of providing vital health education, **USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital**, **Mobile Public Library** and the USA Alliance for Community Resilience are offering free family learning classes and basic life-saving skills to the community. Classes will be held at Children's & Women's Hospital at 1700 Center St., and at the main branch of the Mobile Public Library at 701 Government St. For more information, call the hospital at 251.415.1289 or the library at 251.340.1532. For a list of the classes, visit [usahealthsystem.com/events](http://usahealthsystem.com/events).

## UM Accepting Applications to its Alabama School of the Arts

**University of Mobile (UM)** is now accepting applications for graduate students in its newly developed master of arts in musical theatre program, pending approval by the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

The one-year master's degree program will prepare students to become marketable performers, teachers of theatrical practice or to further their educational training and goals toward a doctorate in musical arts or fine arts. For more information, visit [umobile.edu/asota](http://umobile.edu/asota).

## WELL DONE

### Sam Winter & Company Commits to Excellence



Winter



May



Smith



Bender

**Sam Winter, Steve May, Brantley Anne Smith and Helen Bender** of **Sam Winter & Company Real Estate** recently

earned the Commitment to Excellence endorsement from the National Association of Realtors. The endorsement goes to Realtors who have demonstrated knowledge and competency in 10 core areas of real estate practice.

### USA Health Physicians Appoint CMIOs

Three physicians at **USA Health** were appointed chief medical information officers (CMIOs) for different areas of USA Health and will serve as liaisons between the health system's information technology department and its care providers.

**Christine Fouty MD** will serve as CMIO for inpatient services, **Dean Naritoku MD** for outpatient services and **Spencer Liles MD** for surgical services.

## Bellator Holds Award Ceremony



Morton

**Bellator Real Estate & Development** recognized the accomplishments of its agents throughout the past year at a special award ceremony. **Cathy**

**Morton** received Bellator's highest award, the Eric A. Jones Award, named in honor of U.S. Marine Capt. Eric A. Jones. Other awards included: **Ida Sherman**, top producer; the **Beckham Partners**, top 3-plus-agent team; the **Johnny & Lawanna Sharpless Team**, top 2-agent team; and **Lillian Travis**, top Truland Homes producer. Office-level single agent winners included **Cindy Kusnierz, Ida Sherman, Daniela Nielsen, Deanie Buck, Melissa White** and **Erica Davies**, all as top agents. **Shelley Crooms** was named rookie of the year; **Adam Boehm**, referral agent of the year; and the Dana M. Carter Above and Beyond award went to office administrator **Monica Alidor**, who was recognized for her giving attitude.

## Bellator Ranks in Top 100

**Bellator Real Estate & Development** is included among REAL Trends Nation's Best Brokerages, ranking as the top independent brokerage along Alabama's Gulf Coast and the No. 2 independent brokerage in the state. Bellator was also ranked No. 77 in the REAL Trends Top Leading Real Estate Companies of the World® Affiliates rankings. Leading Real Estate Companies of the World® is an invitation-only network of independent real estate companies around globe that provides a world-class brokerage referral network for the clients they serve.

## USA Health University Hospital is Comprehensive Stroke Center

**USA Health University Hospital** earned a Comprehensive Stroke Center designation from DNV GL Healthcare, reflecting the highest level of competence for treatment of serious stroke events. University Hospital is the only certified comprehensive stroke center in southwest Alabama and one of only three in the state. DNV GL Healthcare is a national stroke certification organization that recognizes excellence in stroke care.

## Vande Waa Named to State Coronavirus Task Force

**John A. Vande Waa, D.O., Ph.D.**, professor of internal medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, is one of four infectious disease specialists serving on Gov. Kay Ivey's 18-member task force to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the state. Board-certified in infectious disease, Vande Waa earned a degree in osteopathic medicine from Michigan State University College and completed both residency and fellowship training at the University of Wisconsin.

## COMMUNITY

### USA Vision Research Receives Support

**University of South Alabama** researchers recently received \$25,000 from local Lions Clubs to buy equipment for conducting high-quality vision research and training the next generation of vision scientists. The University Lions Club, part of Lions Clubs International, is a civic organization that supports projects focusing on diabetes and vision.

### Lenoir Charitable Trust Donation Supports UM Students

A \$100,000 donation from The Ernestine L. Lenoir Charitable Trust to the **University of Mobile** praise and worship ensemble Ignite Worship will provide a new professional sound system for the traveling ensemble, one of more than 20 performing groups in the Alabama School of the Arts.

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 first and last name, and must be 300 dpi at full size and saved in an eps, tiff or jpg format. Send your information to [news@mobilechamber.com](mailto:news@mobilechamber.com)



The Mobile Area Chamber was awarded the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's highest designation. Of the 6,936 chambers in the U.S., only 3 percent achieved five-star distinction.


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As the coronavirus has forced events to cancel, please refer to the Mobile Area Chamber's website – [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) – and social media pages for the most up-to-date details on Chamber-hosted events.

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**FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHER****JEFF TESNEY**

Jeff Tesney has been around the photography business his entire life. The son of a former newspaper photographer, he has helped cover major local social events since his early teens. Because he had apprenticed with his father from such a young age, most people thought he was a professional photographer before the idea even crossed his mind.

Tesney officially went into business for himself in 1989. Over the past three decades, he has photographed more than 1,000 weddings and has shot portraits, social events and commercial projects around Mobile and throughout the United States.

He has been involved with the Chamber for more than 20 years.

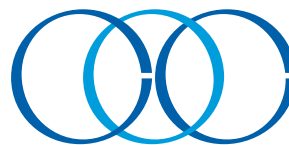
In this issue, Tesney's work can be seen on the cover, as well as Chamber Chase and the Small Business of the Month.



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