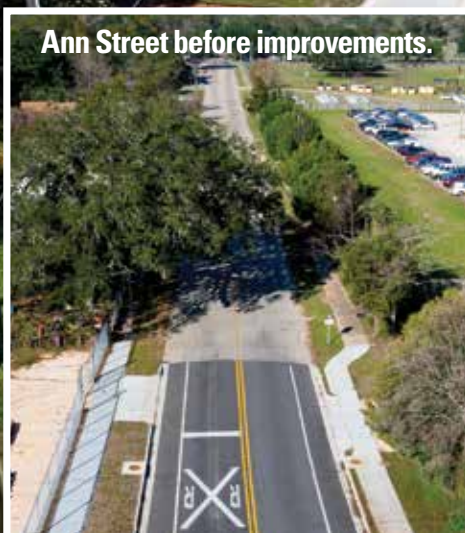


the **businessview**

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Ann Street before improvements.

**2015 Chamber
Annual Report**
and 2016
Plan of Action



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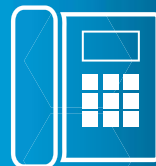
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From the Chairman

Last year was a reawakening for Mobile. We've found our momentum, and we're building on it. It has been an honor to serve as chairman of the Mobile Area Chamber during a year of growth and new investment.

Many of the accomplishments now coming to fruition are the result of efforts of many partners, including the Chamber, city of Mobile, Mobile County, Mobile Airport Authority, University of South Alabama, Alabama State Port Authority and many others. Most of our work is a process over months and years, and 2015 saw the completion of a number of milestones worth mentioning, including:

- The opening of Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley;
- The opening of the truly world-class GulfQuest National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico;
- The awarding of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge design/engineering contract by the Alabama Department of Transportation;
- The establishment of 1702, which created exciting synergy among local entrepreneurs;
- The beginnings of an innovation corridor on St. Louis Street in downtown Mobile;
- And the city's execution of a contract promising the return of Carnival Cruise Lines in November 2016.

I could go on, but I think you get the picture. Throughout the next 15 pages of *The Business View*, you'll get a sampling of some of the Chamber's most important work in 2015. At the end of the annual report, you can read about our plan for 2016.

To all of our members, thank you for your continued investment. If you are reading this and have not yet chosen to affiliate with our pro-business organization, consider this a personal invitation from me. Carolyn Golson, our vice president of membership, will be happy to work with you through the process of joining. She can be reached via email at cgolson@mobilechamber.com or by phone at 251-431-8622.

Frank J. Lott III, Heritage Homes
2015 Mobile Area Chamber Board Chairman



the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce **businessview**

February 2016 | Also in this issue

ON THE COVER Transforming streets in the city is a top priority of the Map for Mobile project. A portion of Ann Street near downtown Mobile is shown on the cover. It's easy to see why investing in Mobile's infrastructure needs to be a priority. Learn more about the Map for Mobile efforts on pages 26-27.

Photo by Jeff Tesney.

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In August, the Mobile Area Chamber hosted an event to recognize new industry announcements and company expansions reported to the Chamber from January 2014 through June 2015. The 34 companies recognized announced and added 2,148 new jobs and \$936.18 million in capital investment. Pictured here are representatives of these local companies who attended the reception.

Investors Report

The Mobile Area Chamber's recruiting efforts of new operations and expansions at area companies included projects in the aerospace, chemical, distribution/logistics, engineering, manufacturing, maritime, oil and gas, recycling and steel industries.

As a result, in 2015 four companies announced new operations in Mobile and 10 expansions are underway at nine others. The total project investments added up to \$499 million and generated 561 jobs with an average salary of \$60,593.

These totals include businesses with which the Chamber staff worked directly, with two expansions at AM/NS Calvert, and expansions at APM Terminals, Arkema, Blastech Mobile, MAAS Aviation, Prism Systems, Star Aviation, Tate & Lyle and Technip USA. New projects were Bayer Crop Science at Evonik Corp., Hutchinson, FedEx Ground and Reel USA.

Although announced in 2012, the grand opening of Airbus' U.S. Manufacturing Facility in September was a huge accomplishment for the Chamber and Team Mobile, culminating 10 years of efforts.

The Chamber's economic development efforts are funded by the **Partners for Growth (PFG)** program, a public-private partnership funded by performance contracts from the City of Mobile and Mobile County, along with pledges from 61 area companies and organizations.

Five-year program goals are to recruit 4,000 jobs with a \$40,000 average annual salary and \$1.5 billion in capital investments from 2013 to 2017.

More than halfway through, results for the first three years are 1,039 jobs, wages averaging \$56,170 and investments of \$815.6 million.

In addition to its role as the lead economic developer for the city and county, the Chamber continues to help acquaint new-to-Mobile senior-level executives and their spouses with the community through **Mobile Connect**. The four-session series was offered twice in 2015 and included 50 participants. The program is led by Mobile's community and business leaders.

Who's New in 2015

At the Paris Air Show in June, **Hutchinson Aerospace & Industry Inc.** announced plans to open an Aerospace Manufacturing Center of Excellence at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley. The Paris, France-headquartered company will support the Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility, also at Mobile Aeroplex, and boost its North American presence.

With an initial investment of \$2 million, Hutchinson will create 100 new jobs with an average annual salary of \$36,000.

Later in the year, **Reel USA**, another Airbus supplier announced it will locate at Mobile Aeroplex, and will hire 20 employees. The company provides jigs and tools maintenance.

In May, **FedEx Ground** announced it would build a major distribution center in a Theodore industrial park, projected to bring 100 full-time jobs to the area at peak operation. The new facility has an early 2016 completion timeline.

Bayer CropScience finalized its plans to locate two chemical manufacturing units at Evonik Corp. in July. When complete, the Leverkusen, Germany-based company will double production of its weed management technology and add an additional 25 employees to the Evonik roster with average annual salary of \$75,000. The total investment is estimated at \$200 million.



The Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility officially opened Sept. 14, drawing community support and the attention of more than 150 local, national and international members of the media.

Who's Expanding

On the heels of a 2014 \$40 million expansion, **AM/NS Calvert** announced two expansions in 2015. The first was a \$30 million investment to increase steel slab storage. In July, company officials said they will invest \$88 million to produce high-strength and highly formable steel to compete with aluminum in the automotive industry.

The 2015 investments total \$118 million and will create six new jobs, paying \$65,000 annually.

APM Terminals Mobile announced its expansion will create 81 jobs with average salaries of \$77,000. The company is investing \$47.5 million to increase capacity driven by demand. The project will be completed in two parts that include two additional ship-to-shore cranes and increased activity at the Alabama State Port Authority's Intermodal Container Transfer Facility.

Positioning itself to impact the 3D printing market, **Arkema** is investing \$60 million in its Axis operation, making it the only one of 24 North American sites to produce KepstanR PEKK. The Paris-based company will add 25 jobs with an average salary of \$100,000.

Blastech Mobile will build a new 21,000-square-foot facility on its existing Axis site, a \$4.5 million investment. By the end of year two, company officials expect to add more than 76 employees at an average annual salary of \$42,000.

Late in 2015, **Technip USA's** Mobile operation competed and won a \$31 million expansion to upgrade its facilities and equipment. The company provides project management, engineering and construction for the energy industry. The added investment will help Technip meet the increasingly complex projects in the Gulf of Mexico market.

Two Mobile-based companies announced new investments:

- Double digit growth is the reason behind **Star Aviation's** \$2.4 million expansion. The company broke ground on a new 24,000-square-foot

facility, adjacent to its principal office. Officials expect to hire as many as 50 employees over three years at an average annual salary of \$42,000.

- **Prism Systems** is expanding its software development capabilities and will create 16 new positions paying an average of \$70,000 annually. The company's capital investment is \$650,000.

Airbus Grand Opening Attracts New Investment

The Toulouse, France-based **Airbus** began assembling the first A320 in Mobile in 2015. The Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility is under contract by JetBlue and the aircraft is scheduled for delivery in 2016.

The \$600 million project, with an employment goal of 1,000 as of December, had more than 300 employees, and a backlog of more than 5,000 planes on the books.

The Chamber published a timeline in its monthly magazine *The Business View* representing the Airbus relationship from 2005, with the company's competition for a \$35 billion U.S. Air Force contract, to the September grand opening of its U.S. Manufacturing Facility at Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley.

Also at the air show, Ireland-based **MAAS Aviation** announced two projects – a \$13 million paint shop and a \$39 million twin-bay paint facility. Combined, MAAS will hire 114 employees.

As of December, the Chamber worked with Airbus and the Mobile Airport Authority to recruit 14 companies that will set up operations to work with Airbus.

Other Airbus suppliers announced in 2015 were: **AAA Aerospace USA Inc., AKKA, Assystem, ATT Metrology Services, InterInformatics U.S., Safran Messier-Bugatti-Dowty USA, Sonovision USA and Vartan Aviation Group.**

Additional Headlines

Alabama State Port Authority and Alabama Steel Terminals opened a \$36 million steel coil handling facility at the Port of Mobile. It is a joint venture between TriState Maritime Services and the Richardson Group. The project, announced in 2013, has an associated 100 jobs.

The U.S. Navy awarded **Austal** a \$53.4 million contract to purchase long-lead materials such as the main propulsion engines and generators for an 11th transport ship. In 2008, the Navy awarded Austal a \$1.6 billion, 10-transport ship contract.

Earlier in 2015, the Navy established an option for an 11th Littoral Combat Ship (LCS). If exercised, the option would bring the number of Austal-built LCS vessels to 13. In December, the Navy issued Austal another \$51.6 million for LCS upgrades and preliminary design to transition the LCS to a Frigate.

As the largest private employer, Austal now has more than 4,000 employees in Mobile. Current contracts secure work through 2022 in the city.

During its restructuring plans, **Tate & Lyle** decided to close its Singapore operation, transfer the equipment to McIntosh and purchase additional equipment needed to produce all of the no-calorie sweetener used in food and beverages, known best as Splenda, locally in its Washington County facility.

The London-based company will hire 10 additional employees at an annual salary of \$120,000 and invest \$20 million, with a mid-2016 completion date.

Washington County Accomplishments

In addition to its lead economic development role with the City of Mobile and Mobile County, the Chamber staffs the **Washington County Economic Development Initiative** (WCedi).

Tate and Lyle's announcement was a major win for the program. In addition, recruiting efforts included

alternative energy, logistics and distribution, specialty and petro-chemicals, human capital development and wood products projects.

In 2015, the program drew two new investors – Washington County Business Park and Long Leaf Land & Timber Co.

In partnership with the Washington County Revenue Commissioner's Office, the WCedi hosted a seminar on a new online personal property tax recording system for business and industry presented by the Alabama Department of Revenue and Alabama Department of Commerce. More than 25 industry and business representatives attended.

National Designation

As part of the **Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership** (IMCP) initiative through the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Chamber



worked locally to identify needed resources and gaps in service,

conducted a regional supply chain study as it relates to workforce and completed a local branding effort – Advancing Southwest Alabama – that includes a website and logo.

In July, the Delta Regional Authority used Mobile as its backdrop to announce the next wave of IMCP communities. During Co-Chairman Chris Masingill's visit, he met with local stakeholders and invited the Chamber-led coalition to apply for the ACT Work Ready Community designation for Region 9.

Accepted mid-year, the coalition has two years to meet the goals. The ACT Work Ready designation aligns with economic development by linking education and workforce development and matching to job availability. There are direct benefits to employers and education/training programs as well as individuals.



The Gulf Coast Technology Council has collectively awarded \$51,500 in scholarships to 47 recipients over the last eight years. Pictured on the front row are the 2015 recipients: Alec Averitt, Wesley Jabbari, Amber Parker, Melody Pickett, Cody Martin, Mariam Hamade and Russ Hernandez. Averitt, Hamade, Martin and Parker are students at the University of South Alabama, Pickett is a student at ITT Technical Institute, Hernandez is a student at Remington College and Jabbari is a student at University of Mobile. Pictured behind the students are some of the GCTC scholarship donors.



The Mobile Area Chamber's international trade division hosted several business and government delegations in 2015. The group from Katowice, Poland, pictured above visited Mobile in October.

From the Inside

The Chamber conducted its first-ever **State of the Economy** with a sold-out crowd of 250. The program included reports from the aviation, chemical/manufacturing, healthcare and maritime sectors and results of a Chamber-member survey forecasting year-end expectations for 2015 and 2016. Nationally recognized economist Donald Ratajczak Ph.D., was the keynote speaker.

Business Retention and Expansion – A Commitment to Established Companies

In 2015, staff and volunteers visited 60 engineering, construction and accounting companies to identify industry trends and look for issues the Chamber can help resolve.

Key to these efforts are three committees: the **Business Retention and Expansion Committee** of 90 member companies, representing large and small businesses and entrepreneurs, which meets bi-monthly to share information on current events; the **Gulf Coast Technology Council (GCTC)**, created to support the high-tech industry and comprised of 86 companies, focusing on industry-related advances; and **OffshoreAlabama.com**, a partnership of more than 220 southwest Alabama offshore oil and gas producers, service providers, suppliers and associated companies.

For the fourth consecutive year, 32 members of OffshoreAlabama.com teamed up to host a booth at the Offshore Technology Conference, the largest global trade show in the oil and gas industry, held in Houston. The conference drew approximately 96,000 attendees from 130 countries and featured 2,500 of the world's leading offshore service and manufacturing companies.

In an effort to build awareness of local technology jobs, the GCTC again awarded scholarships. In 2015, member companies donated \$6,000 in scholarships given to seven local college students pursuing technology-related careers.

Manufacturer of the Year

For a decade of growth, **Evonik Corp.** was named the Chamber's Manufacturer of the Year. The German company expanded 11 times since 2005, creating 114 jobs and investing approximately \$378 million in its Mobile facility.

Innovator of the Year

Horizon Shipbuilding was recognized as Innovator of the Year for developing a specialized project management software that helped the Bayou La Batre-based company shorten timelines, create a more efficient work schedule and positively impact the company's bottom line.

International Trade Division Reaches Beyond Local Borders

The Chamber's **International Trade** division connects Mobile companies to world markets by promoting exports through trade missions and trade shows, providing educational workshops and providing marketing assistance. The division strives to foster cooperation with local, state and regional trade entities to ensure a healthy climate for trade.

Representatives from 20 companies participated in the Chamber's trade missions. The year's destinations included Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Johannesburg, South Africa; and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. South African mission participants also took part in the U.S. Commercial Service Trade Winds Africa Business Development Conference.

The missions led to projected and reported sales of approximately \$12 million and the creation of 203 jobs. Over the last decade, mission participants reported more than \$267 million in sales, supporting the creation of 4,803 jobs.

The Chamber hosted business and government delegations from Katowice, Poland; Pyeongtaek, Korea; Koshigaya, Japan; and individuals traveling with the U.S. State Department from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Mexico, Monaco, Nicaragua, Peru, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Uruguay.

The Chamber coordinated and hosted the 2015 regional **World Trade Conference**, focusing on business opportunities in the sub-Saharan region of Africa and drawing 100-plus attendees.

The conference is a product of the four-state alliance between government and nonprofit organizations from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi, rotating annually. It was last held in Mobile in 2011.

In an effort to cross-train employees and advance international business skills at Alabama companies, the Chamber, in coordination with the Alabama District Export Council, Alabama International Trade Center and U.S. Commercial Service, hosted an **International Trade Leadership Series**. More than 100 individuals participated in the series, with 10 completing all four sessions and earning an International Trade Training Certificate from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

In addition, the Chamber hosted and sponsored 11 trade-related meetings, including a town hall meeting on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and a seminar on preparing to do business in Cuba. In all, the topics drew 1,073 attendees.

Two local companies honored with the Governor's Trade Excellence Award were nominated by the Chamber. **Gulf Trading** and **Prism Systems** accepted the awards at the state capitol from Gov. Robert Bentley.

Workforce Development – Mobile's Next Generation of Workers

The Chamber facilitates several workforce development initiatives and partners with local organizations to help create a skilled workforce to meet the needs of local employers. Partners include the Bay Area Healthcare Coalition, Mobile Area Education Foundation, Mobile Works and Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council.

In addition, the Chamber's efforts include outreach and assistance to area companies.

Healthcare-related initiatives included the annual **Health Occupations Career Fair**, a two-day event attended by 675 students; and more than 100 rising Mobile and Baldwin County high school seniors were selected to participate in the **Summer Scrubs** job shadowing program at 13 area hospitals and clinics.

The Chamber launched its **Young Entrepreneurs Academy** (YEA), a national program in 160-plus communities nationwide. Fourteen Alabama School of Math & Science students were selected to participate in this 30-week program held at the University of South Alabama to learn how to develop and launch their own business. The first class graduates in May 2016.

The Chamber held **AIDT Leadership Skills** training classes. The two-session series drew a total of 131 attendees.

2015 New and Expanding Companies

Company Name	Type Project	Projected Jobs	Investment Total	Product Type	Average Salary New/Existing Jobs
AM/NS Calvert	Exp	N/A	\$30 M	Slab Expansion	\$65,000
AM/NS Calvert	Exp	6	\$88 M	High-Strength Steel	\$65,000
APM Terminals	Exp	81	\$47.5 M	Expand Container Facility	\$52,600
Arkema	Exp	25	\$60 M	3-D Printing Product	\$100,000
Bayer Crop/Evonik	New	25	\$200 M	Weed Management Project	\$75,000
Blastech Mobile	Exp	76	\$4.5 M	Blasting Steel Plate	\$75,000
FedEx Ground*	New	100	TBA	Distribution/Delivery	TBA
Hutchinson	New	100	\$2 M	Thermal Insulation	\$36,000
MAAS Aviation	Exp	52	\$13 M	Aircraft Paint Services	\$41,153
Prism Systems	Exp	16	\$650,000	Software Development	\$70,000
Reel USA*	New	20	TBA	Jigs & Tool Maintenance	TBA
Star Aviation	Exp	50	\$2.4 M	Facility Expansion	\$42,000
Tate & Lyle	Exp	10	\$20 M	Consolidation Project	\$120,000
Technip USA	Exp	0	\$31 M	Facility & Equip. Upgrade	\$115,150

The Mobile Area Chamber's economic development efforts included four new companies announcing operations in Mobile and 10 expansions at nine companies. The investments were \$499 million and generated 561 jobs with an average salary of \$60,593.

** Chamber helped with project, but did not come before the Industrial Development Board of the City of Mobile.*



The Mobile Area Chamber's economic development efforts are supported by a public-private partnership under the Partners for Growth initiative.

The following companies and organizations pledged funds to support the Chamber's aggressive and successful economic development program of work.

Pictured are PFG Co-Chairs: R. Michael Saxon, Alabama Power Co., and Brian R. Willman, Regions Bank.



Saxon



Willman



Adams and Reese LLP
Airbus Americas Inc.
Aker Solutions
Akzo Nobel Functional Chemicals LLC
Alabama Media Group
Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic PC
Alabama Power Co.
Alabama State Port Authority
AltaPointe Health Systems Inc.
AM/NS Calvert
APM Terminals Mobile LLC
Arcadis U.S.
Arkema Inc.
Armbrecht Jackson LLP
ASF Logistics Inc.
Alabama Associated General Contractors (AGC)
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Austal
BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards Alabama
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Gulf City Body & Trailer Works Inc.
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Gulf Electric Co. Inc. of Mobile
Gulf States Engineering
Gwin's Commercial Printing
H. O. Weaver & Sons Inc.
Hancock Bank
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Olin Corp.
The Orthopaedic Group PC
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Thompson Engineering Inc.
Thompson Tractor Co. Inc.
Trustmark National Bank
U-J Chevrolet Co. Inc.
University of South Alabama
Volkert Inc.
VT MAE
Ward International Trucks LLC
Wells Fargo
White-Spinner Realty Inc.
Wilkins Miller LLC
Willis of Alabama Inc.
World Omni Financial Corp.

As of Dec. 1, 2015

Expanding the Circle of Recognition

During the Chamber's **Small Business Week** luncheon in May, three local companies were named Small Business of the Year finalists – **American WeatherStar**, a supplier of roof coatings and materials; **McAleer's Office Furniture**, a retailer of new and used office furniture; and **Wilson Dismukes**, a retailer of outdoor power equipment and small engine parts.

The week's activities also included four workshops addressing small business issues.

Small Business of the Year

McAleer's Office Furniture was selected as the Chamber's 2015 Small Business of the Year. In addition to selling office furniture, the company offers interior design services. The 36-year-old family business has 21 employees.

The company, nominated by the Chamber, went on to win the top award in its category from the Alabama Retail Association.



McAleer's Office Furniture has carved a unique niche as an office furniture store. Staying on top of industry trends and expanding services such as interior design and customer service have helped the company remain innovative and relevant, said President Melissa Cross (second row left).

Outstanding Entrepreneur

Also during Small Business Week, **Ralph A. Hargrove**, president and founder of Hargrove Engineers + Constructors, was honored as the Chamber's Outstanding Entrepreneur. Hargrove started his company in 1995 as the sole employee. Today, there are 332 employees locally and 950 total in 11 offices across the U.S.



Hargrove

Hargrove was also the keynote speaker at the Chamber's Expo luncheon in August. More than 250 people were in attendance.

Entrepreneur Collaboration

To foster innovation, collaboration and mentorship, the first-ever peer network of chief executive officers and business leaders was launched in partnership with the Chamber in 2015. The year-long, invitation-only program was named **1702**, inspired by the year of the City of Mobile's founding, and drew an inaugural class of 24 executives, many from the region's most promising companies spanning technology, aerospace, manufacturing and consumer sectors.

Honoring Small Businesses Year-Round

Recognizing the efforts of small businesses is a Chamber priority, so local companies are profiled in its monthly magazine, *The Business View*. Those featured in 2015 were:

- 3 Echoes Productions
- ASF Intermodal
- Chicken Salad Chick
- Domke Market
- Gallery Homes
- Georgia Roussos Catering
- Nelco Commercial Maintenance
- Perfecting That Cleaning Service
- Personal Edge Fitness
- Small's Mortuary Inc. and Cremation Services
- Greg's Professional Barber & Beauty Salon Inc.

Professional Development That is Out of This World

The Chamber held its second **NASA Business Forum** in 2015, offering local companies a look at business opportunities with four NASA service centers in Alabama, Florida and Mississippi as well as with its prime contractors. More than 175 people attended. The Chamber held a similar program in 2013.

In addition to NASA, the Chamber held 30-plus professional development and match making sessions, including the **Executive Roundtable** for small business owners and managers. These offerings drew more than 1,100 participants and covered topics such as cybersecurity, crowd funding, growing your business and habits of top producers.

The Chamber continued to mentor small business owners through one-on-one counseling sessions in partnership with the Alabama Small Business Development Center.

The **Growth Alliance Task Force (GATF)** addressed how volunteers can increase Chamber membership in the minority-owned business community.

A newly formed GATF strategic planning subcommittee met to establish goals related to business development, outreach and finance.



Photo by Davis Photography

Each year the Mobile Area Chamber honors minority businesses for their business operations, revenue and/or employee growth and community involvement. This year's winners, pictured above, were Baheth Research and Development Laboratories and New Life Housing.

Eagle Award Winners

Susan L. Taylor, former editor-in-chief of *Essence* magazine, was the keynote speaker at the Chamber's **Minority Business Conference** held in partnership with the Mobile Minority Business Development Agency Business Center (MBDA).

Baheth Research and Development Laboratories and **New Life Housing** were honored at the event as Eagle Award winners. These companies were recognized for business operations, revenue and/or employee growth and community involvement.

Attendance surpassed 300 at the conference.

Minority Business Advocate

The Chamber presented the **Alabama Department of Transportation Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Unit** with its Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate Award. The unit was recognized for its outstanding supplier diversity programs.

Minority Business Center and Business Growth

The **Mobile Minority Business Development Agency Business Center (MBDA)** is a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce and is operated by the Chamber. During its nine years in operation, the center assisted more than 1,700 minority-owned business clients statewide, helping them secure more than \$1 billion in contracts and financial assistance, and creating more than 1,100 new jobs.

The MBDA hosted several workshops and events in 2015, including Doing Business with Government Enterprises and Business Sunday, a national collaborative effort between the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Commerce Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and MBDA.

Prior to the NASA Business Forum, the Mobile Area Chamber hosted a reception welcoming senior NASA procurement experts and representatives from major aerospace prime contractors. Pictured with the Chamber's Vice President of Small Business Development Darrell Randle (far left) and NASA's Small Business Specialist David Brock (far right) are representatives from Brand Energy Solutions LLC.





The Mobile Area Chamber held its annual legislative reception in April, drawing a large contingency of the Southwest Alabama legislative delegation. The event offers Mobile's business community a chance to thank the delegation for their work on behalf of local business and industry.

An Eye on the Issues

The Chamber works on local, state and federal issues to encourage a pro-business environment for members. To accomplish this, the Chamber's Community & Governmental Affairs department oversees several committees and task forces, including a **Governmental Affairs Committee**, **Military Affairs Committee** and an **Energy Committee**.

In addition, the Chamber has a contract lobbyist who represents the Chamber on business-related issues in the Alabama Legislature.

2015 Legislative Scorecard

The Chamber monitored hundreds of bills introduced in the Alabama Legislature in 2015. Two significant game changers came in the form of economic development industry recruitment and existing industry expansions.

One of the new laws provides a much-needed credit for new jobs created in Alabama. The other extends ad valorem tax abatements for up to 20 years, doubling the previous 10-year-provision.

In a sea of more than 1,200 bills introduced, several other Chamber-supported measures passed, including the School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, Prison Reform, electronic filing of business personal property tax returns and increased funding and expansion of Alabama's First-Class pre-K program.

In collaboration with other state business groups, the Chamber successfully defeated efforts to repeal Alabama College and Career Ready Standards and a bill aimed at allowing people to carry a pistol without a permit in vehicles or places of business.

The Chamber will continue to work on extending historic tax credits, a tax credit for increased uses at the state port and tax credits for research and development at certain Alabama-based research companies.

Energy Sector

The Mobile City Planning Commission postponed, until January 2016, consideration of the proposed amendment to create additional city regulations on the location and construction of certain above-ground petroleum storage tanks.

The Chamber's Energy Committee has been involved in this issue for two-plus years, working to ensure all parties understand how energy products and critical infrastructure, such as these tanks, drive continued economic development in the region.

During the course of this debate, the Chamber's governing board of directors adopted a position on economic development endorsing its role in supporting balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and procedures that encourage development and growth within the city and county.

RESTORE Act Settled – Impact for Mobile

More than five years after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, settlement monies began trickling down to impacted cities and states. Determining how the money is distributed and what projects are funded remains a Chamber priority.

The Chamber continues its support of long-term environmental restoration and economic recovery projects in the coastal region.

Inching Closer

In early 2015, Gov. Robert Bentley announced the Alabama Department of Transportation could move forward with a preliminary design process for an approved route for the **I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway** widening project. Later in the year, a team led by **Thompson Engineering** was awarded the contract for the project. Through the **Build the Bridge Coalition**, the Chamber has worked for nearly 17 years to advocate for a bridge aimed at alleviating traffic congestion heading through the Wallace and Bankhead tunnels.



Learning from New Orleans

In June, the Chamber hosted 85 business and community leaders on its annual **Leaders Exchange** to New Orleans. The group heard first-hand about the Big Easy's entrepreneurial renaissance and efforts in four key areas: innovation centers and the entrepreneurial pipeline; urban parks, trails and recreation facilities; critical infrastructure improvements; and opportunities for collaboration along the Gulf Coast.

The program increased the focus on local issues, such as infrastructure (RESTORE Act and the I-10 Mobile River Bridge), entrepreneurialism (1702 and an innovation center in downtown Mobile), community branding and the Mobile Greenways Initiative, including Three Mile Creek restoration.

Corporate Community Service Award

Roberts Brothers Inc., a real estate company, was the 2015 winner of the Corporate Community Service Award. This award recognizes companies for their service to the community and is jointly presented annually by the Chamber and the Junior League of Mobile.

Elected Officials and Networking



Left to right, Mayor Sandy Stimpson; Connie Hudson, Mobile County Commission; Bill Sisson, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce; Frank Lott, Heritage Homes.

The Community & Governmental Affairs department hosted several large networking events where members and guests had an opportunity to hear from local, state and federal elected officials. The largest is the annual **State of the City & County luncheon**, which drew a sold-out audience of 900 to hear from Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson and Mobile County Commission then-President Connie Hudson.

Nearly 250 people attended a **Legislative Lunch** where the Chamber presented its annual Legislative Agenda. This year's guest speaker was Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley.

Also, the Chamber hosted three sold-out **Forum Alabama** events with speakers Sen. Richard Shelby, Rep. Bradley Byrne and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx.

Federal issues, such as the Export-Import Bank, free trade agreements, Austal's U.S. Navy contracts, Airbus and aerospace growth in Mobile, the Port of Mobile, the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and dredging were all key topics during the annual **Washington D.C. Fly-In** that took place in late fall. The Chamber hosts this annual trip as part of its work on federal advocacy issues.

In December, Congress passed a \$300 billion transportation bill that included language reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank for four years. The Chamber sees the bank as a key tool for companies looking to market products and services abroad. Both of these measures were high on the Chamber's 2015 agenda.

More than 100 people traveled to Montgomery during the legislative session to attend an annual Chamber reception to thank the Mobile-Baldwin legislative delegation. The reception brought together a full house of legislators, state government officials and their staffs, as well as Mobile business leaders, to discuss key issues at stake during the regular session.

And in December, the Chamber held its annual **Champagne and Oysters** reception honoring elected officials. It was attended by more than 150 people.

Military Impacts Our Community

The Chamber's Military Affairs Committee works to connect the business community with active and retired military personnel. In 2015, there were several special events to help with this effort.

In April, the Chamber hosted its annual **Military Appreciation Day** luncheon and awards at the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park with more than 325 in attendance. Maj. Gen. Mike Wooley (USAF, ret.) was the guest speaker, and awards included outstanding ROTC cadets from the University of South Alabama and JROTC cadets from Mobile County Public Schools.

The Chamber continued to assist the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission with its annual **Veterans Day** parade in downtown Mobile and luncheon. The commission honored **Adm. Thad W. Allen (USCG, ret.)** as Patriot of the Year and **Jim Jeffries** as Veteran of the Year. More than 500 people attended the sold-out luncheon.



At the Mobile Area Chamber's Military Appreciation Day luncheon, Crown Products was recognized with the Above & Beyond award for its support of Guard and Reservists. The award was presented by the Employers Support of Guard & Reserve.



Lance Covan with Mitternacht Inc. (fourth from the left, first row) led the Mobile Area Chamber's total resource development campaign, Chamber Chase. Pictured with Covan are some of the campaign's most successful volunteers, who helped the Chamber raise \$1.7 million, including 67 new members.

Chamber Chase

Over the course of 14 weeks each summer, the Chamber conducts its annual total resource development campaign aimed at empowering volunteers to recruit new members, sell event sponsorships and advertising in Chamber publications, and obtain donated goods and services to offset the organization's bottom line.

In 2015, **Lance Covan** with Mitternacht Inc., served as **Chamber Chase** chairman and the campaign raised more than \$1.7 million, adding 67 new members and 23 new board of advisors. Fifty-four volunteers representing 31 companies participated.

Top honors were awarded to **Terri Owler**, Arkema Inc., Top Category One Producer (representing sponsorships); **Linda Faulkner**, Evonik Industries, Top Category Two Producer and team captain for the Top Category Two Team (representing donated goods and services the Chamber would normally purchase); **Sherry Coker**, ServisFirst Bank, Top Category Three Producer and team captain for the Top Category Three Team (representing items that add value to the Chamber's program of work); **Stephen Schlautman**, Regions Bank, team captain for the Top Category One Team; and **Allison Allen**, Alabama Power Co., Top Rookie Producer.

Networking Events

Other ways the Chamber provides value to its members are with its various networking events. From early morning coffees to late afternoon receptions, the Chamber hosted 30 networking events in 2015, including **Business After Hours**, **Coffee with the Chamber**, **Networking@Noon**, **Membership 101**, **Women's Roundtable**, **Nonprofit Roundtable** and the annual **golf tournament**. In all, more than 1,000 participants took advantage of these events to build business relationships.

Ribbon Cuttings

Assisting with members' grand openings and ribbon cutting celebrations is just one of the many ways the Chamber provides value. In 2015, the organization worked with 59 businesses on their events.

Business Expo

The largest of all Chamber events is the annual **Business Expo**, held in August at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center. In 2015, there were more than 2,500 people in attendance at this one-day event, with more than 220 Chamber members participating with booths. Alongside the exhibitors there were 19 local, state and federal resource partners on hand to talk with attendees about starting, growing and managing a small business.

The Chamber again provided a special workshop in advance of Business Expo to help exhibitors maximize their investment with tips on displays, conversation starters and generating booth traffic.



In 2015, Business Expo drew a huge crowd of attendees and more than 220 companies hosted a booth to reach new customers.

Board of Advisors

Representing the organization's largest dues-paying members, the board of advisors meets three times a year with the Chamber's governing board of directors, and receives invitations to several receptions and small group breakfasts with fellow board members. In 2015, there were 261 members of the board of advisors.

Ambassadors – of the Year and of the Month



Putcha

Saty Putcha, owner of Murphy Business and Financial Corp., was named the 2015 Ambassador of the Year.

Ambassadors are volunteers from member companies who assist the Chamber by visiting with members and attending various Chamber events.

Recognized as Ambassadors of the Month were:

- Stephanie Bondora, The Admiral Hotel
- Liz Brewer, Bank of the Ozarks
- Torrian Davis, Army Aviation Center Federal Credit Union
- Lane Elmore, Edward Jones
- Peggy Folz, BriFolz Enterprises LLC
- Lisa Kavanagh, Junior League of Mobile
- Dorothy May, A Gathering of Jewels
- Phillip Moore, AHI Properties
- Saty Putcha, Murphy Business and Financial Corp.
- Mary Dean Wilbur, Lamar Advertising Co. of Mobile



Member Appreciation Day is a spring networking event where Mobile Area Chamber staff say thank you to its members.

With Our Thanks

There was Chamber of Commerce weather for **Member Appreciation Day**, held in April with a fish fry on the Chamber's front lawn. The annual event drew more than 300 attendees, and allowed staff to say thank you to its members with a fun party, complete with live music.



The Chamber assists members with ribbon cutting events like this one picture above at BR Williams Inc. - Mobile Distribution Center.

Getting News to Members

As the traditional media landscape continues to change in the Mobile market, business and economic news is oftentimes hard to find. This may be one reason readership and advertising continue to grow for both the Chamber's monthly magazine, *The Business View*, and its weekly electronic companion, *The Business View Weekly*. Readership of the print magazine is 22,100 and electronic subscribers to the weekly email number approximately 8,600.

New for 2015 was an effort to pull several stories out of the magazine and post them on the Chamber's blog (www.mobilechamber.com/blog) to increase brand awareness throughout each month.

Media Training for Staff

The department hosted a two-day media training session led by Trahan & Associates on "how to deliver clear and concise messages" related to Chamber activities and events. Sixteen Chamber staff members participated in the hands-on training that included on-site mock interviews.

Selling Mobile in the Big Apple



The Mobile Area Chamber likes to spread the good news about what's going on in Mobile, and in 2015 took that story to New York City.

The Chamber worked with DCI on a **national media tour and a site selectors tour in New York** in October, coinciding with the Alabama State Port Authority's annual New York reception.

Outlets visited included CNN Business, Bloomberg Radio, *Wall Street Journal*, Reuters, *Business Insider* and *The Street*. Site selector appointments included Deloitte, Oxford Economics, BDO and Site Selection Group.



Significant Social Media Growth Continues



Traffic continues to grow for the Chamber's social media outlets. Currently, the Chamber has more than 3,869 Facebook likes, 6,563 followers on Twitter and 1,216 members in the LinkedIn group.

To better engage this group of followers, a social media audit was done in 2015, and outcomes are being implemented.



Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson and Mobile County Commissioner Connie Hudson speak with international media during the Paris Air Show in June. They attended the announcement by Hutchinson Aerospace to open a facility in Mobile.

Live from Paris

From the **Paris Air Show** in June, the Chamber worked both in Mobile and abroad to increase interest in Team Mobile's efforts at the show. The Chamber assisted local media in setting up live and taped interviews, took videos and photos, and posted blog updates.

While in Paris, the Chamber also dedicated one day to meeting with national and international press in an effort to sell Mobile's economic story beyond Airbus and the aerospace sector.

Media Efforts for Airbus Grand Opening

The Chamber worked with the national and international Airbus corporate communications team on a variety of projects surrounding the grand opening of the Airbus U.S. Manufacturing Facility on Sept. 14. Efforts included: transportation, media packages for international press, several special events for international and national press, media interviews and registration assistance.

More than 150 local, national and international press were in Mobile for the events surrounding the opening.

Managing Chamber Events

To maximize resources, the Chamber's events manager coordinated logistics for 50 events in 2015. With a central point of contact overseeing details, it allows other staffers to focus their efforts on programming to provide better value to Chamber members.

Shop Local Message

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, the Chamber enhanced its traditional branding efforts to include a "shop local" message. The traditional print ads appeared in *Mobile Bay* magazine, *Lagniappe* and *Steppin' Out*.





Fiscally Strong

The Mobile Area Chamber ended 2015 in a strong financial position with a positive bottom line. In addition to membership and board of advisor dues, the Chamber's revenue streams include performance contracts, Partners for Growth pledge investments, advertising sales and Chamber Chase-recruited sponsorships and in-kind contributions.

The Chamber's finance staff manages the organization's human resources, operations and the activities and finances of the Industrial Development Authority of Mobile County, Industrial Development Board of the City of Mobile, Industrial Park Board of Mobile County and the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

The Mobile Area Chamber strives to maximize member benefits, while staying fiscally strong. Below is a breakdown of the Chamber's revenue streams and expenses.



Five-Star Chamber

The Mobile Area Chamber remains a five-star accredited Chamber, the



highest designation given by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The ranking places the Mobile Area Chamber in the top 1 percent of the country's nearly 7,000 Chambers.

Audits

The Chamber's finances, as well as those of the four boards the organization manages, are audited annually to ensure adherence to accounting standards.



The Chamber hosted a group of 44 people to Portugal in March. For six years the Chamber's hosted groups for international travel. Also in 2015, a group visited several cities in Spain.

Chamber Travel a Value to Members

Now in its sixth year, Chamber travel continues to be of value to members who want to travel internationally with their peers. In 2015, the Chamber took 44 people to Portugal, and in November, an additional 32 people traveled to Spain. These trips provide members and their guests with opportunities to network while traveling socially, and are a source of non-dues revenue for the Chamber.

Staff Accolades



Stimpson

Christina Stimpson, the Chamber's international trade director, graduated from Leadership Mobile in 2015. She was also named to DCI "40 Under 40."

design was named a senior practitioner by the Southern Public Relations Federation.



Rencher

Ashley Horn, the Chamber's director of digital media and



Horn

Dawn Rencher, the Chamber's director of member relations graduated from the Institute for Organizational Management, a four-year Chamber training program run by the U.S.

Chamber of Commerce.

LeMaris Alston, the Chamber's technology support specialist, graduated from ConnectMobile, a program offered by Mobile United.



Alston

Save Local Now Introduced

The Chamber launched a free digital marketing platform to assist members called **Save Local Now** in 2015. This website and app gives people access to exclusive offers from Chamber members, and enables

members to push everything from discounts and coupons to information and new product launches from one place. Members using the program have a dashboard so they can see – in real time data – what marketing efforts are working, and what needs to be tweaked.

In the Community

During 2015, Chamber staff participated in several community events including the Fuse Project's Dragon Boat Race, a tailgating event in partnership with the University of South Alabama Jaguars, Bellingrath Gardens Balloon Glow and the United Way of Southwest Alabama's Day of Caring.

Chamber Receives MCPS Award

In April, the Chamber was presented the "Workforce Development Starts with Us" award from Mobile County Public Schools. The award highlighted the Chamber for efforts to bring business and industry leaders to the table with K-12 educators to talk about the ever-changing needs of Mobile's workforce.

In the News

- *fDi* magazine ranked Mobile No. 5 in the Small American Cities of the Future 2015/2016 – Business Friendly.
- *Forbes.com* ranked Mobile No. 1 among Mid-Sized Cities for New Manufacturing Growth.
- *CNN Money* ranked Mobile No. 5 nationwide for a "living wage."
- *nerdwallet* ranked Mobile No. 10 among its Top 10 U.S. Cities on the Rise and No. 11 among Cities with the Fastest Growing Incomes.
- *ZipRecruiter* ranked Mobile No. 19 among Top Southern Cities for Jobs.
- *Global Trade* magazine named Mobile as one of the nation's top cities for a strong workforce in its annual "Best Cities for Global Trade" issue.
- United Airlines' *Dossier* magazine featured Alabama in June with a 40-plus page package that included several stories on and mentions of Mobile.



2015 Executive Committee



Frank J. Lott III
Heritage Homes
Chairman of the Board



Raymond L. Bell
Bell Law Firm PC
Vice Chair
Minority Business



Steven D. Carey
CertaPro Painters of Mobile and Baldwin Counties
Vice Chair Military Affairs



K.W. Michael Chambers
Swift Biotechnology LLC
Immediate Past Chair



W. Lance Cován
Mitternight Inc.
Vice Chair Membership/
Chamber Chase



J. Kenny Crow Jr.
Crow Shields Bailey PC
Vice Chair Small
Business Development



Daniel A. Dennis IV
Roberts Brothers Inc.
Vice Chair Economic
Development



Elizabeth D. Freeman
Long's Human Resource Services
Vice Chair
Governmental Affairs



Mark Nix
Infirmary Health
Chairman-Elect and
Vice Chair Finance and
Operations



William B. Sisson
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
President & CEO



Beth Stafford
Stafford & Associates Inc.
Vice Chair Communications
& Marketing



James F. Watkins
Maynard Cooper & Gale PC
Legal Counsel

In addition to the Executive Committee, serving on the 2015 Board of Directors were:

Damian Bell
Rock Bridge Wealth Management Inc.

Robert H. Bender
Springdale Travel

Britton Bonner
Adams and Reese LLP

Lynne U. Chronister
University of South Alabama

Beverly Cooper
Christian Benevolent Funeral Home Inc.

William Daniels Jr.
Burr & Forman LLP

Harrietta Eaton
CorroMetrics Services Inc.

Tyrone Fenderson Jr.
Commonwealth National Bank

Mark Fillers
BBVA Compass Bank

James M. Fine
Mobile Gas, A Sempra Co.

Russell F. Golson
ExxonMobil

Jason Gregory
Willis of Alabama Inc.

Terry H. Harbin
BancorpSouth

Mark E. Hieronymus
Hieronymus CPAs LLC

Charles E. Hyland Jr.
Mobile Area Water and Sewer System

Michael L. Lapeyrouse
The American Equity Underwriters Inc.

Robin H. Luce
JubileeScape Inc.

James M. Lyons
The SSI Group Inc.

Janice Malone
Business Resource Design and Print

Letitia McCane
Bishop State Community College

Richard T. McCreary
BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards Alabama

Clint D. McFerrin
Cintas Corp.

Laurie Owen
University of South Alabama Mitchell Cancer Institute

Craig D. Perciavalle
Austal

Davis Pilot Jr.
Pilot Catastrophe Services Inc.

Rhett C. Ross
Continental Motors Inc.

Scott Rothermel
Performance Contractors Inc.

George Vann Jr.
BASF Corp.

Michael Wallis
Outokumpu Stainless USA

Lee Walters
Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood Inc.

Oliver Washington III
Shore Acres Plant Farm

Roger Wehner
Mobile Airport Authority

Brian R. Willman
Regions Bank

The Mobile Area Chamber has created a strategic plan to guide its direction for the years 2016-2018. Chamber staff worked with members of its board of directors and a consultant to discuss key issues and set benchmarks to measure the organization's success.

Below is an overview of the strategy, vision and success indicators for each of the organization's four areas of focus – jobs, advocacy, excellence and value.

Strategic Goal: **Jobs**

Retain, expand and recruit businesses, investment and jobs in the Mobile area.

VISION: By year-end 2018, the Mobile area will have steadily increased jobs and business and capital investments in our community. The Chamber will also lead business engagement in more efficient workforce development initiatives.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Median income growth trends for the combined statistical area
2. Primary jobs gained
3. Average salary of jobs gained
4. Total capital invested

Strategic Goal: **Advocacy**

Create an environment that promotes business and community growth.

VISION: By year-end 2018, Mobile will have a stronger, more diversified business climate. Chamber-led efforts will have secured a more business-friendly environment and needed infrastructure improvements, balancing sustainable growth and ongoing development. Chamber programs and events will have encouraged diversity and fostered community growth.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Legislative accomplishments
2. Progress in realizing the I-10 Mobile River bridge
3. Progress in economic recovery from the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico

Strategic Goal: **Value**

Provide value, services, opportunities and recognition for members.

VISION: By year-end 2018, the Chamber will be nationally recognized for consistently exceeding member expectations and delivering the value of membership.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Exceed 2,200 members and the national average in membership retention
2. Board of Advisors engagement and growth
3. Member satisfaction
4. Increased usage of member rewards and benefits

Strategic Goal: **Excellence**

Operate the Chamber with excellence, innovation and efficiency.

VISION: By year-end 2018, the Chamber will be recognized as one of the nation's best through accreditation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber will be an effective, credible and vital organization known for its high standards, ethical behavior and responsive service.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Five-star accreditation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce
2. Certification by the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama
3. Healthy Chamber finances
4. Membership growth and retention



Each year, the Mobile Area Chamber staff writes its Plan of Action, a list of tactics to achieve the goals of its strategic plan. The strategic plan was rewritten in 2015 to cover the years 2016-2018. Below is a summary of the 2016 Plan of Action.

Communications & Marketing

- Provide a constant, proactive and interactive communications program to Mobile Area Chamber members to encourage and maintain interest in and support for the Chamber and our efforts. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*
- Improve the Chamber's image in the minds of the public and make people better aware of who we are and our mission. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Promote the Chamber and the Mobile area via the Chamber's websites, electronic publications and social media outlets. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Improve dialogue with media outlets and promote Chamber activities and issues more heavily in the local media. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Assist the economic development department with implementing the national marketing campaign. *(Supports strategic goal: Jobs)*

Community and Governmental Affairs

- Develop and obtain passage of the Chamber's Community Legislative Agenda. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Recognize and promote importance of transportation infrastructure to continued business growth. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Promote a local, business-friendly political and legislative climate that encourages economic growth, is responsive to business needs and supportive of business success. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Convene key groups and organizations to identify and work on vital community issues. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Improve communication with the membership, elected officials and Chamber staff on key community issues. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Implement the Leaders Exchange with a focus on workable solutions to regional and local issues. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Encourage positive military and civilian relationships. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*

Economic Development

- Aggressively market the Mobile region for business locations and expansions based on community strengths and unique strategic advantages and governed by community quality of life objectives. Support the five-year Partners for Growth goal of creating an average of 800 new jobs per year. *(Supports strategic goals: Jobs and Advocacy)*
- Staff economic development services for the Washington County Economic Development Initiative. *(Supports strategic goal: Jobs)*
- Provide staff support and expertise to the Industrial Development Board, the Industrial Development Authority and the Industrial Park Board. *(Supports strategic goals: Jobs and Value)*
- Involve Chamber volunteer leadership, city and county elected leadership and local agency allies in current Plan of Action implementation, as well as long-term economic development planning and funding. *(Supports strategic goals: Jobs and Value)*
- Generate, collect, organize, provide and publish information to support economic development activities that service Chamber members' needs. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*
- Further develop the Mobile region as a center for international trade and transportation to enhance the foreign sales of area products and services. *(Supports strategic goals: Jobs and Advocacy)*
- Improve Mobile's ability to respond to workforce needs. *(Supports strategic goal: Jobs)*

Finance & Operations

- Provide and maintain financial control and related services. *(Supports strategic goal: Excellence)*
- Develop and maintain all records, forms and reports relating to human resource management. *(Supports strategic goal: Excellence)*
- Coordinate maintenance of the Chamber building, grounds, fixtures and equipment. *(Supports strategic goal: Excellence)*
- Enhance Chamber and Chamber Foundation operations through improvement of processes and procedures. *(Supports strategic goal: Excellence)*
- Enhance the Chamber's information technology assets. *(Supports strategic goal: Excellence)*



Membership

- Exceed budgeted goals for dues and non-dues income to support Chamber operations. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*
- Provide innovative programs and services that our members desire and value. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*
- Ensure awesome customer service to improve member retention and development. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*

Small Business Development

- Market and provide technical assistance to area small businesses to help stimulate their development and foster job creation. *(Supports strategic goals: Jobs and Value)*
- Provide business assistance to minority-owned businesses and encourage their participation in all Chamber activities. *(Supports strategic goals: Jobs and Value)*

- Coordinate task force activities of select programs, products and services benefiting small businesses. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*
- Create a system to share local funding sources with interested businesses. *(Supports strategic goals: Jobs and Value)*
- Provide continuing education, training and business development opportunities for small businesses. *(Supports strategic goal: Value)*
- Serve as an advocate on issues of concern to the small business community. *(Supports strategic goal: Advocacy)*
- Facilitate assistance provided by other small business resources in the Mobile/Baldwin area. *(Supports strategic goals: Advocacy and Value)*

How to Reach Your Chamber Staff

Administration

Bill Sisson, President and CEO: 251-431-8610
Shelly Mattingly, Executive Assistant: 251-431-8655
Bob Chappelle, Chief Operating Officer: 251-431-8644
Jackie Davidson, Assistant: 251-431-8605
Katrina Dewrell, Executive Coordinator: 251-431-8611

Communications and Marketing

Leigh Perry-Herndon, Vice President: 251-431-8645
René Eiland, Account Executive, Advertising: 251-431-8635
Ashley Horn, Director of Digital Media & Design: 251-431-8623
Susan Rak-Blanchard, Director of Communications & Marketing: 251-431-8641
Marion Warren Randall, Event Manager: 251-431-8640
Carolyn Wilson, Assistant: 251-431-8606

Community and Governmental Affairs

Ginny Russell, Vice President: 251-431-8618
Patty Howell, Director of Regional Affairs: 251-431-8601
Carolyn Hunt, Assistant: 251-431-8621

Economic Development

Troy Wayman, Vice President: 251-431-8650
Cesny Soffronoff, Coordinator Administrative Services: 251-431-8636

Economic Development Divisions:

Business Development

David Rodgers, Project Manager: 251-431-8602
Austin Monk, Washington County Economic Developer: 344-332-0565
Emily Jerkins, Project Coordinator: 251-431-8602

Business Retention and Expansion

Steve Russell, Director: 251-431-8654
Al Ruffin, Research Manager: 251-431-8656

Education and Workforce Development

Emily McGrath, Director: 251-431-8651

International Trade

Christina Stimpson, Director: 251-431-8648

Finance and Operations

Joe Mareno, Chief Financial Officer: 251-431-862
Matt Hariel, Director: 251-431-862
LeMaris Alston, Technology: 251-431-8626
Hope Bush-Collins, Custodian: 251-431-8634
Chani Johnson, Finance Assistant: 251-431-8627
Donna Ikner, Finance Assistant: 251-461-8609
Jackie Davidson, Assistant: 251-431-8605
Grant Carrera, Security: 251-431-8658

Membership

Carolyn Golson, Vice President: 251-431-8622
Dawn Rencher, Director Member Relations: 251-431-8649
Jackie Livingston, Account Executive: 251-431-8642
Alison Unger, Assistant: 251-431-8617
Odetta Stutts, Help Desk Receptionist: 251-433-6951

Small Business Development

Darrell Randle, Vice President: 251-431-8615
Danette Richards, Director: 251-431-8652
Brenda Rembert, Assistant: 251-431-8607



Cheryl and Larry Nichols have run their small business since 1976. They have an office in Mobile and one in Southfield, Mich.

Two Firms, Two States, Two Decades of Success

Considering death and taxes are life's only guarantees, **Larry Nichols** chose wisely 40 years ago.

The owner of Nichols Financial Services credits nurturing clients and empowering them to boost their financial literacy while sustaining two separate profitable business models in two states for the past two decades.

Nichols Financial Services is the Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

"Instead of making people feel that they have to have someone's help to accomplish a certain thing, we let them know they are perfectly capable of making sound financial decisions, and we can help by providing the information and being a resource," said Nichols, a Mobile native who launched the firm in Detroit in 1976.

And after 20 years in business in the Azalea City, Nichols said there is no question his clients respond well to not being underestimated.

By 1996, he said the "business climate in Mobile was improving," and he wanted to be closer to his aging parents, so he opted to expand his operation to his hometown and began splitting his time between the two cities.

The transition proved more difficult than he expected.

"When I left Michigan, people were pursuing me

because of my reputation and referrals, for my expertise in assisting individuals in maximizing their resources, specifically in tax planning and preparation and in the area of retirement planning," he said. "When I got home to Mobile, it was just the opposite. I had to, shall I say, establish myself and go out and reach new clients here in Mobile to make the operation profitable."

He spent the first few years back in Mobile handing out flyers and investing in television advertising, while working from Michigan 12 weeks of the year. The company "had to adapt" to the needs of clients in Mobile, he said, such as payroll accounting and income tax services for individuals and small businesses.

These days, he spends only two weeks each June, July and August on-site with the Southfield, Mich., practice. For the rest of the year, he works with his wife, Cheryl, and youngest child, Keturah, in the family-owned Mobile office on Michael Boulevard.

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Today it matters to Kelly that the Breast Center at Providence is a leader in Genetic Testing

When you have a family history of breast cancer, you want to do everything possible to understand your personal risk. When Kelly came to the Breast Center for her annual mammogram, she was given a Breast Cancer Questionnaire. After reviewing her history, we determined that Kelly was eligible for genetic testing. Her test was completed that same day and her results were back in three weeks.

Providence Hospital's Breast Center was the first in Mobile to have a full-time patient navigator, is the only center to provide same day genetic counseling and testing, and now offers 3-D mammography. To learn more about these services, visit www.phcbc.org

To learn more about Providence Hospital or find a physician practicing at Providence, visit www.providencehospital.org.



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MAP for Mobile



Almost a year ago, the city of Mobile launched a collaborative effort with citizens, community leaders, elected officials, city employees and consultants to create a citywide comprehensive plan. The process began with several months of public input in which hundreds of Mobilians shared their vision for Mobile's future.

"I got involved because I, like so many others, want the best for our community," said **Raymond L. Bell** of Bell Law Firm. "My interests were focused on the future of city-wide housing and community assets, as well as a robust business, commercial and industrial economy."

The result is Map for Mobile, which according to city officials, is a long-range guide to improve quality of life, build better financial stewardship and increase effectiveness in all areas of city operations.

"Good strategic planning is a meeting of the minds, and Map for Mobile has accomplished that through community-wide involvement at every step of the way," said **Bill Sisson**, president and CEO of the Mobile Area Chamber. "Without question, this strategy will guide Mobile into the future and provide an infrastructure framework that will be a great economic development tool."

The final plan was completed in November 2015 and implementation is underway, guiding decisions – near-term and long-range – in zoning, land use, code and ordinance changes and capital

improvement priorities. It does not propose rigid projects, programs or improvements; instead, it sets goals and policies the city uses to establish concrete plans and programs – many implemented gradually over the next few years.

"Successful cities of today are intentional about building walkable, livable places that enrich the lives of their residents," said **Elizabeth Stevens**, president and CEO of the Downtown Mobile Alliance. "Map for Mobile is the important first step."

One theme running throughout the plan is density, reflecting a nationwide shift in planning strategy. Increased density allows for more efficient delivery of public services and takes advantage of all areas with room for regeneration. Decades ago, development pushed farther from the city center into the suburbs. Now, the strategy is to rebuild older areas and encourage innovative ideas for developing a denser city.

Implementing the Plan

While Mobile looks to an era of expanded opportunities for economic development and accelerated growth, it also faces a number of challenges such as limited mobility, sprawling conditions and declining neighborhoods. Map for Mobile looks at these challenges as the city's biggest opportunities. "If Mobile can generate positive change in these areas, the quality of life for its citizens will improve and ensure continued growth," reads the plan.

Mobile Mayor **Sandy Stimpson** championed the document throughout the process. "Cities rely on leadership to help foster growth and be catalysts for collaboration and cooperation," Stimpson said. I assure you that Mobile's entire city leadership is dedicated to improving the quality of life for our citizens and investing in needed changes and improvements."



Focus on the Future Workshop

Mobilians came together to talk about how they wanted to see Mobile grow. Citizens' input was the framework for Map for Mobile, completed in November 2015.

Capital Improvement Planning

Mobilians can already see the plan making a difference in much-needed capital improvement projects underway in neighborhoods throughout the city. A city-wide capital improvement plan recommends current, near-term, mid-term and long-term projects, identifies how projects are funded and ensures that projects are guided by the plan.

One example is the Water Street improvement project, which shows how even a major corridor can meet the needs of all users including vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and public transit. Planning calls for Water Street to be reduced by two lanes, allowing for easier pedestrian access to the riverfront and creating an inviting streetscape in this highly visible area.

To learn more about Map for Mobile, or to download a PDF version of it, visit www.mapformobile.org.

Map for Mobile Principles

The city's new strategic plan identifies Mobile's opportunities for improvement and guides growth. Highlighted areas include:

- Strong neighborhoods with a sense of place and a mix of housing types within walking distance of amenities.
- Functional roadway corridors with safe accommodations for people and vehicles and a variety of thriving businesses supporting a robust economy.
- Strategic infill and redevelopment concentrated in vacant properties and blighted areas to create vibrant, revitalized neighborhoods.

- A connected community that is easy to navigate for pedestrians, automobiles, bicyclists and transit, with easy access to businesses, parks, open spaces, cultural amenities and other destinations.
- High-quality design of the built environment with attractive and distinctive streetscapes, well-maintained properties and distinctive new private development in keeping with a neighborhood's character.
- A strong, pedestrian-friendly downtown with interesting restaurants and entertainment options accommodating both tourists and residents.
- Greater opportunities to enjoy natural resources and recreational assets with quality parks and open spaces and inviting development at key waterfront locations easily connected to residential and commercial areas.





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These winners were randomly selected at the October and November Business After Hours events.



A Factor Marketing LLC

A Factor Marketing LLC is a full-service internet marketing company. Located at 4318 Downtowner Loop N., Ste. D, is locally owned and operated. The company works with clients to create an online strategy including a website, social media, content development, databases and more. Pictured are: front row, Leroy Dickson, Linda Whatley, Vanessa American Horse, Sean Crimmins and April McInnis, and back row: Jim Lonnergan, John Daniel, President/CEO and Les Miller.



School Aids

School Aids sells educational materials and classroom furnishings for students from early childhood to high school. Headquartered in Louisiana, the family-owned and operated business provides educators and parents the opportunity to shop online or from one of eight retail locations spanning five states: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Pictured is Jamee Pirozzi, store manager of the Mobile store located at 664 S. University Blvd.

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Photo by Jeff Tesney

Torrian Davis became an ambassador with the Mobile Area Chamber in the fall of 2015. As a business development officer at **Army Aviation Center Federal Credit Union**, his job is to promote the credit union and community relations. He says volunteering is a great way to get exposure while building relationships with the business community.

"I love being able to serve as a liaison between the Chamber and its members, while also watching the city, that has made me who I am, grow more and more by the day," Davis said. He is the Chamber's Ambassador of the Month for October.



Photo by Jeff Tesney

Phillip Moore of **AHI Properties** is a Realtor/leasing agent who provides property management services to individual homeowners and investors in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Originally from Russellville, Ala., Moore graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in allied health. "Being an ambassador allows me the opportunity to welcome new businesses to the Mobile area," said Moore, who is the Chamber's Ambassador of the Month for November.

Since the December/January issue of **The Business View** is a combined one, two ambassadors are featured here. To learn more about the Chamber's volunteer program, contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.

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

8-9 CHAMBER CLOSED - MARDI GRAS

16 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE **Members Only*

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

When: 8 to 9 a.m.

Where: Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speakers: Small business marketing and web experts panel

Topic: "Digital Marketing: Choosing the Right Tool for the Job"

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

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

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16 PORK & POLITICS IN THE PARK

Don't miss the Chamber's annual political networking event.

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

Where: USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park Aircraft Pavilion

Cost: \$25 per person

Contact: Carolyn Hunt at 251-431-8621 or chunt@mobilechamber.com

RSVP required by Feb. 12 and payment is due at time of registration. No refunds after that date.

17 GCTC LUNCHEON

A bimonthly lunch hosted by the Gulf Coast Technology Council.

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

Where: Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: Warren Nicholson, CEO, Nfina Technologies

Topic: "Technology and Entrepreneurship"

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

Contact: Emily Jerkins at 251-431-8602 or ejerkins@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required by Feb. 12 and payment is due at time of registration. No refunds after that date.

17 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

Start your day with the Chamber and network with other attendees.

When: 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Where: Stone Ridge at Somerby Park Apartment Homes, 1200 Somerby Dr.

Contact: Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or aunger@mobilechamber.com

No charge. Reservations are not needed.

24 WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE **Members Only*

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

When: 8 to 9 a.m.

Where: Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speakers: Exercise physiologists and dietitians from Springhill Medical Center

Topic: "Why Weight? Start Today With Steps Toward a Fitter You"

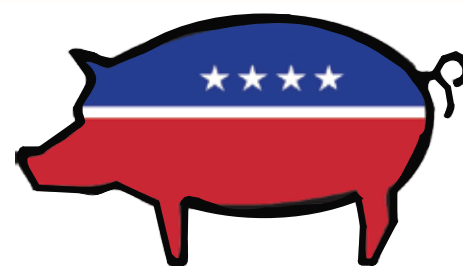
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Pork & Politics in the Park



Don't miss this opportunity to "ham it up" with local, state and federal officials and candidates to find out where they stand on critical legislative issues.

Tuesday, Feb. 16

USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$25. Reservation and cancellation deadline is Feb. 12.

For reservations, contact 251-431-8621 or chunt@mobilechamber.com with payment information.

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Venue: USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park | **Photography:** The Jim Owen Studio

Dessert: Cakes by Judi | **Catering:** Honeybaked Ham Co.

Beverage: Buffalo Rock and Gulf Distributing

This event has been approved by the State of Alabama Ethics Commission for participation by elected officials and government employees.



Who's New



Dickinson



Dean

Melissa Dickinson and **Wayne Dean** joined **United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Mobile** as special events coordinators. Dickinson graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in sport and special event marketing. Dean, a graduate of The University of Alabama, has experience in communications, marketing, development, public relations and special events with public, private and nonprofit organizations.

*

Wilkins Miller LLC accounting and advisory firm promoted **Jack Johnson CPA**,

Mandy Parker CPA and **Frank Smith CPA** to senior accountants, and **Bridget Ehlers** to talent and development coordinator. Johnson graduated from Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in English and earned a master's degree in accounting from University of South Alabama. Parker graduated from The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in accounting from the University of South Alabama. Smith graduated from The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in commerce and business administration and finance. Ehlers graduated from Troy University with a master's degree in public administration and holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Auburn University.

In addition, the firm named **Danielle Faircloth** as its new marketing coordinator. Faircloth graduated from Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in apparel merchandising,

design and production management. She most recently worked as the events manager for the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce.

*

The Alabama Community College System appointed **Dr. Valerie Richardson** president of **Bishop State Community College**.



Richardson

Richardson earned a bachelor's degree in biology and sociology and a master's degree in counseling education from Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville. She holds a doctorate in higher education administration from The University of Alabama.

*

BR Williams Mobile Distribution Center, a trucking, logistics and warehouse firm, hired **Mike McCord** as its facility manager.

Jones Walker LLP named **Henry F. O'Connor III** head of its Alabama office.



O'Connor is a partner in the firm's business and commercial transactions practice group in the Mobile office. He has more than two decades of leadership experience in the legal, real estate and financial services industries.

*



Coker

NAI Mobile named **Niki Coker** director of marketing. Coker graduated from The

University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in communication and information sciences, specializing in public relations and graphic design. She is also a licensed real estate agent.

Our Spring Hill Team



Dominic Gable, Jaye B. Patterson,
Mike Johnson, and Lyn Peterson



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Colantuono

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Cooper & Co. Inc. REALTORS welcomed new associates **Craig Colantuono** and **Lana Tunink**.



Tunink

Visit Mobile hired **Walter J. Calhoun Jr.** as director of visitor information services.

Calhoun earned an associate's degree in business administration from Bishop State Community College.



McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge LLC added new attorney **Alex Steadman** as an

associate. Steadman earned a bachelor's degree in economics and political science from The University of Alabama, where he also received a law degree.

*



Carla Joyner joined **First Community Bank** as a senior commercial

lender. She holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Auburn University at Montgomery. Joyner is a 15-year banking veteran with previous regional bank experience.

Business Endeavors

Providence Hospital completed renovations to its emergency department, including a new triage area and additional patient care rooms. The hospital's ER serves 55,000 patients annually.

Vallas Realty moved its office to 2600 Dauphin St., doubling the amount of space to accommodate new hires. The phone number remains **251-344-1444**.

*

Crow Shields Bailey PC, a full-service accounting and consulting firm, joined **McGladrey Alliance**, a national network of accounting and consulting firms spanning 38 states. Members provide access to additional financial resources, leadership training and professional development programs while maintaining local ownership, autonomy and client relationships.

Well Done

Kim Pettway was appointed to the board of commissioners of the **Mobile Housing Authority**. Pettway recently served as a commissioner on the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System Board.

Maynard V. Odom was elected chairman of the board of **Mobile Area Water & Sewer System**. Odom

serves as enrollment manager and advisor to international students at Bishop State Community College.

*

USA Mitchell Cancer Institute director **Dr. Michael Finan**, a



gynecologic oncologist, was listed among the "Top Cancer Doctors 2015" by *Newsweek* magazine. The list was compiled through peer nominations and research by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., the publisher of *America's Top Doctors*.

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Hand Arendall LLC announced two members of the firm's Mobile office were named "Lawyer of the Year" by *Best Lawyers*, **Caine O'Rear III** and **George M. Walker**.

In addition, the firm has 30 lawyers listed in *The Best Lawyers in America 2016*. The Mobile firm lawyers selected were: **J. Hodge Alves III**, **R. Preston Bolt Jr.**, **Stephen G. Crawford**, **Blane H. Crutchfield**, **Ginger P. Gaddy**, **William B. Givhan**, **Neil C. Johnston**, **Gregory L. Leatherbury, Jr.**, **T. Bruce McGowin**, **Brooks P. Milling**, **Henry T. Morrisette**, **Caine O'Rear III**, **David R. Quittmeyer** and **Norman M. Stockman**.

The Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality Alliance presented **Joe Roszkowski** and **David Dekle** of the **Original Oyster House** the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognized outstanding achievement in the restaurant industry and generous

contributions throughout the state of Alabama.

Best Companies Group named **Wilkins Miller LLC** one of the "2015 Best Companies to Work for in Alabama."

In other news, **Bob Slaby**, a manager with **Wilkins Miller LLC**, was selected as one of CPA Practice Advisor's "Forty Under 40." Slaby has more than 15 years of experience in public accounting.

Retirement plan specialist **Jamie Kertis** of **Grinkmeyer Leonard Financial** was named to the National Association of Plan Advisors' "2015 Top Women Advisors," recognizing the growing



Slaby



Kertis

number of women who are making significant contributions to the retirement plan industry.

National Research Corp. named **Providence Hospital** a winner of the company's 2015 Consumer Choice Award. This marks the 19th consecutive year Providence has won the award for its top consumer ratings in its market.

LLB&B Inc. Real Estate's Libba Latham was recognized as the Mobile Area Association of Realtors' Realtor of the Year for 2015 for her outstanding work in the real estate industry. She also holds several industry designations and an associate broker license.

Fifteen attorneys of **Armbrecht Jackson LLP** were named to the 2016 Edition of *Best Lawyers in America 2016*.



Latham

Mobile firm lawyers selected were: **Conrad P. Armbrecht**, **Gregory P. Bru**, **Edward A. Dean**, **Tamela E. Esham** and **Richard W. Franklin**. **Scott G. Brown**, **Duane A. Graham**, **M. Kathleen Miller** and **E. B. Peebles** were also named "Lawyers of the Year."

Community News

The **Mobile Symphony Orchestra (MSO)** received three substantial grants to support its efforts. The Community Foundation of South Alabama awarded the MSO \$20,000 toward its Harlem Quartet Education and Community Outreach Residency in 2016. The Alabama State Council on the Arts awarded a \$51,500 Performing Arts Grant to the MSO in support of the current season. And The Alabama Business Charitable Trust Fund Inc. awarded \$10,000 for a lighting retrofit in the Larkins Center.

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Wayne Roe
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Lisa May
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The **PNC Foundation** has awarded the **Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center** a \$25,000 grant to support the center's "Little Discoveries," an educational program series for children 5 and under. "Little Discoveries" fuses science, technology, engineering and math with creativity, art and reading.



The **Fuse Project** launched its after-school initiative at Pillans Middle School this fall.

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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Mobile Area Chamber



The Mobile Area Chamber was awarded a five-star rating by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the highest designation given. Of the 6,936 chambers in the U.S., only 301 are accredited, and of those only 43 have achieved five-star distinction. The Mobile Area Chamber has been accredited by the U.S. Chamber since the designation's inception more than 40 years ago.

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Mobile Ob-Gyn PC
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45 years

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40 years

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35 years

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30 years

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