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From the Publisher - Bill Sisson

Horizons 2025 and Beyond

Since returning to the Mobile Area Chamber three years ago, it has been amazing to see sweeping changes facing chambers of commerce across the country.

These are indeed exciting times, and multi-generational workers are forcing membership organizations like ours to take a serious look at our programs and services to make sure we are continuing to meet the needs and wants of an ever-broadening chamber membership base.

I'm proud to tell you that our Chamber is right on track, and we have been focusing our energy on enhancing our existing programs, while developing new ones in the small, minority and entrepreneurial business realms. Guiding us has been a national-level effort by the Association of



Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) called Horizons 2025.

Horizons was a huge research initiative by ACCE to provide chambers with vital information about key "influencers" in our organizations and how they will shape us in the next 10 years and beyond.

Over the next year, you will see us delve into more detail about how these influencers are affecting us, and how we can take advantage of these changes to build an even stronger chamber.

I'm excited about the possibilities the future holds for Mobile and the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce. With your continued help and support, I'm convinced that our Chamber's best years are ahead of us well into the future.

How can we not get excited about that?

ON THE COVER

Chris Blankenship, director of Alabama Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources Marine Resources Division, stands on a mound of oyster shells that are part of an oyster shell recycling project. Learn more about the Alabama Coastal Foundation effort on page 12. *Photo by Vivian Stevens, Alabama Marine Resources Division.*

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James K. Lyons, CEO of the Alabama State Port Authority (right), and Rene Rolando Fernandez de Lara Cabezas, the Republic of Cuba Ministry of Transportation's director of inland waterway and sea transport (left), signed an agreement in February to help facilitate trade growth and promote all water carrier services between Asia, Europe, Latin America and the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Port of Mobile and Port Administration of Cuba Enter Agreement

In February, the Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA) and the National Port Administration (NPA) of Cuba signed a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Port of Mobile and the Cuban ports, marking the first Cuban port agreement signed on U.S. soil since 1959.

"We are seeing increasing demand for normalized trade between the U.S. and Cuba," said **James K. Lyons**, CEO of the ASPA. "It is our goal to foster relationships between the ports and their maritime communities to further changes in U.S.-Cuban trade policy and facilitate improved ocean carriage services to the benefit of our shippers."

Currently, U.S.-sanctioned trade between Alabama and Cuba principally includes poultry and forest products. In addition to increasing potential sales at Mobile-area businesses and cargo at the Port of Mobile,

ZIM Integrated Shipping Ltd. provides bookings between the port and Cuba's Port of Mariel.

Under the MOU, the two organizations commit to collaborating in port and cargo marketing studies and strategies, engaging in promotion and exhibition activities, and sharing data to the mutual benefit of their respective seaports as allowed under governing law in both countries.

"This further strengthens our unique geographical position to take advantage of increased trade and develop stronger relationships with an emerging market once additional trade is allowed," said **Troy Wayman**, the Chamber's vice president of economic development. "The Alabama State Port Authority continues to take a proactive and aggressive approach to increase capacity and economic development in general."

Mobile County Now an ACT Work Ready Community

Mobile County recently earned the ACT Work Ready Community designation, becoming the third county in Alabama to receive this nationally recognized certification.

As such, Mobile joins more than 150 counties nationwide to demonstrate that it has the certified workforce needed to fill jobs and support economic development. The designation also highlights the effective partnerships Mobile has in place between education, business and workforce development.


"A prepared workforce is key to sustaining our vibrant economic development efforts," said Mobile County Commission President **Merceria Ludgood**.

To become certified, Mobile County had to meet goals for the number of National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC) earned by taking the ACT WorkKeys test, and the number of employers who recognize the NCRC. Employers can use the NCRC to screen job applicants and assess potential employees' job skills. More than 120 local employers are listed on the national website www.workreadycommunities.org, and more than 5,000 NCRC were earned in Mobile County alone.

"We are proud to become an official Work Ready Community, said Mobile Mayor **Sandy Stimpson**. "This sends a message to our citizens, current employers and potential future employees that Mobile is dedicated to cultivating a skilled, ready workforce."

This certification is a workforce development initiative of the region's designation as a federal Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) community, led by the Mobile Area Chamber.

To learn more about how this designation can impact your business, contact **Laura O'Conner** at **251-431-8647** or loconner@mobilechamber.com.

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

Alabama's Historic Tax Credit Program

The renewal of Alabama's Historic Tax Credit program is making headway in the Alabama Legislature this session.

As a top priority of the Mobile Area Chamber's 2017 legislative agenda, the credit is a crucial factor in the redevelopment of aging structures and a proven community builder.

During its first three years of operation, the tax credit was responsible for 2,133 direct construction jobs and 1,373 operational-phase jobs across the state. Cities across Alabama have benefited. Some of the Mobile projects using the tax credit program are:

- Marine Street Lofts
- Old Shell Road Lofts
- Staples-Pake Building
- Buick Building
- The Admiral Hotel

And these historic renovation projects are stimulating even more private investment in the areas around them.

The 2016 economic impact study of the tax credit, performed by public accounting firm Novogradac & Co. LLP, found that every \$1 the state invests through the tax credit, nearly \$4 will be paid in state and local taxes over the next 20 years.

"The Historic Tax Credit has enabled developers to make renovation projects work



Supporters of the Alabama Historic Tax Credit renewal gathered in Mobile recently in front of the Staples-Pake Building, under renovation thanks to the previous tax credit legislation.

financially, that may not have otherwise been possible. In addition to the added community benefits these projects bring to historic areas, there are few

other investments that have a 4 to 1 return for our state's tax dollars," said **Patty Howell**, director of regional affairs for the Chamber. ☺☺

High Expectations for Mobile

The word on the street is good – even very good – at least when you're talking about Mobile's business confidence for a strong first quarter in 2017.

We expect to grow in 2017 as they have in the past five years," says **Glenda Snodgrass** with The Net Effect. "Our primary business focus has always been on information security, and there has been a greater need for the services we provide."

Mobile's optimism about sales, profits, new hires and capital expenditures by local business owners and managers set a record high, and led other state metros, according to a statewide quarterly survey by The University of Alabama (UA).

Alec Naman of Naman's Catering says: "We have seen a surge in corporate confidence going back to November and December." Naman says

revenue for November, December and January was up 30 percent and February was

on a similar track. As a result, Naman is adding staff and upgrading equipment.

When asked which of the four benchmarks looked promising, Bama Pest Control's **Clarence Johnson** answered all of the above. Although the first quarter is typically the company's seasonal slow time they are holding steady. But Johnson says his company experienced tremendous growth last year over 2015, and is on track to repeat it this year.

According to UA's Alabama Business Confidence Index for first quarter 2017, local results include:

- 76 percent of local respondents forecast increased sales;
- 68 percent expect increased profits;
- 36 percent anticipate hiring; and
- 52 percent believe capital expenditures will increase. ☺☺



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Emerging Leaders: A Strategic Plan for Accelerating Your Company's Growth



You're a successful business owner, so you must be doing something right. But perhaps you're stuck and don't know how to spark growth again. Or you're facing some challenges impeding your company's progress and need help.

The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Emerging Leaders program, coming to Mobile in April, can help. This intensive executive-level entrepreneurial training initiative provides a fresh, thorough analysis of all components of your company by experts in financial and resource management, banking, sales and marketing, customer and market research and others – and it's free.

"Business owners often know where they want to take their business, but struggle with how to get there. They need the tools and expert guidance to spur acceleration and sustainable growth," said program manager **Brent McMahan**, senior area manager with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). "They leave the program with a vision, a mission and a plan to get there."

Janice Malone, president of Business Resource Design and Print and a 2015 graduate of the

Birmingham program, said that while her business was well-established, it was still not where it needed to be.

"The program helped me create a growth plan that helped me rotate my business from just a print shop to a marketing and design business that just happens to print. It was a game-changer for me. It's been a painful and intense process, but I have a plan and if I can fully implement it, then the business has a chance to thrive and survive into the future," she added.

How It Works

From April to October business owners will participate in approximately 40 hours of bi-weekly classroom instruction. From April to October. Participants will develop a three-year strategic growth action plan with benchmarks and performance targets that will help accelerate growth.

Experts bring a "real world" perspective as guest speakers. Additionally, class participants meet and work in smaller CEO peer mentoring groups and prepare "homework." The total time investment is approximately 100 hours.

"One of the keys to the success of this curriculum is that it causes the business owner to shift their focus from product and operations to the business itself and growth strategies," said Thomas Todt, Alabama district director, U.S. Small Business Administration. "Acquiring a trusted group of peers, advisors and networks that can provide access to regional and national markets are also key to the program's success."

Who Can Apply?

Criteria to participate:

- in operation at least three years;

- at least one employee besides the owner(s);
- average annual revenue for past three years of \$400,000 to \$10 million (exceptions may be allowed).

The program is limited to 20 businesses. The only cost is the time and commitment to successfully complete the curriculum over the course of seven months.

For more information, contact McMahan at brent.mcmahan@sba.gov or 251-544-7401 or **Danette Richards**, drichards@mobilechamber.com or 251-431-8652.

A flyer for April 2017 events at Bellingrath Gardens and Home. The background is a vibrant floral pattern with pink, red, and white flowers. The text is centered and uses various colors and fonts to highlight the events.

APRIL 2017 EVENTS

**24th Annual Camellia Classic
Open Car Show**
Saturday, April 1, 2017

**85th Anniversary of
Bellingrath Gardens**
Friday, April 7, 2017

**Easter Egg Hunt and Breakfast
with the Easter Bunny**
Saturday, April 8, 2017

Easter Sunrise Service
Sunday, April 16, 2017, at 6:30 AM

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Finding Hidden Costs in Your Business

You work hard to make money. Wouldn't it be nice to hold on to more of it?

An ongoing challenge for many small business owners is determining when operating costs are too high.

Consider expenses that are often taken for granted: the cost of electricity for lights and air conditioning, natural gas for heating, fuel to keep delivery vans or service trucks running, and water for restrooms or landscape irrigation. Until recently, it's been difficult to see what factors are driving these expenses and by how much.

The good news is technology is pulling back the veil on these hidden costs. Products are now available that can help you track where, when and how much of

these resources are being used, identify opportunities for savings and, in some cases, adjust systems automatically to optimize usage.

These new connected solutions fall into a category often described as the Internet of Things (IoT). They use sensory technology to assess what's happening in your business, connect to the Internet through a secure link to upload and analyze data and help you more efficiently manage what's being tracked. And many of these solutions are more affordable than you might think.

Examples include smart windows that adjust to the sun and weather to help reduce indoor heating, cooling and lighting expenses up to 40

percent; vehicle solutions that can reduce fuel purchases and idle time as much as 15 percent and 50 percent, respectively; and intelligent irrigation systems that can reduce water use by up to 50 percent.

Since many small businesses operate on a thin margin, these savings can make a big difference.

If those businesses could save \$10,000 a year on energy bills, it may not seem like much. Consider the alternative, though: Each retailer would have to sell more than a quarter of a million dollars in product annually to match those savings. And while further increasing sales requires perpetual effort, these cost savings recur based essentially on a one-time investment.

Deploying smart technology in your business can be a smart move. It can reveal hidden costs and help you gain a competitive edge through improved operating margins.

This column was written by Darren Beck, the senior director, corporate membership for Sustainable Brands and author of "Smart Business: Gaining an Edge Through IoT-Powered Sustainability." He can be reached at dbeck@sustainablebrands.com.



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Ken McElhaney Carries on a **State Farm** Family Tradition

Pictured: Ken McElhaney Jr.'s agency provide clients with auto, home, property, business, life and health insurance as well as annuities and mutual funds.

State Farm Insurance runs in Ken McElhaney's family.

His grandfather, A.E. Persons, began with the firm in 1947, working out of the old Staples-Pake Building. Persons passed away in 1958, and McElhaney's father, Ken McElhaney Sr., started with the firm that same year, serving State Farm customers' needs until his retirement in 1995.

McElhaney started his own State Farm agency in 1990 and has been carrying on the family tradition ever since.

"While my grandfather died just over a year before I was born, the fact that I am the third generation of my family to represent State Farm makes me feel very connected to him," McElhaney said. "I get to live the proverbial American dream in that all of my grandparents came from very humble beginnings, and the hard work they and my parents did has contributed in no small part to the success I have enjoyed."

Now the family tradition has moved to a fourth generation, as McElhaney's nephew works in State Farm's Enterprise Risk Management Department.

With an office located at 653 Government St., McElhaney says he "established my business downtown before it was the cool thing to do," and has served the area for 27 years. McElhaney Insurance Agency Inc. is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

Many things have changed about the insurance business since McElhaney's grandfather started with State Farm. Where several agents once shared the same office and did all the work themselves, without the help of any office staff, McElhaney now has seven full-time licensed insurance agents who work in his firm. His wife, Erica, is also a licensed agent and serves as the agency's business administrator.

Where his grandfather and father once wrote policies over their "mobile desk" – the hood of the car – McElhaney notes the vast majority of business is now conducted over the phone. Even so, he still strives for a personal touch.

"We still like to sit down face-to-face with our customers and review their insurance programs, and we still, on

occasion, meet with clients at their homes," he said. "I now have a large team to handle the clients' needs. But the rule in my office is that if a client wants to talk to me, they talk to me."

McElhaney and his agency have been actively involved in the Mobile community in several ways over the years. Most recently, they have made a significant contribution to Leinkauf Elementary to help augment the school's library. McElhaney also served for many years on the Mobile Historic Development Commission, has been a longtime member of the Chamber's board of advisors and has served on the legislative affairs committee.

"Mobile has been very good to my family over the years," he said, "so it is important to me to help make Mobile an even better place to live, work and raise a family."

Want to be featured here? Go to mobilechamber.com to submit an application, or contact Danette Richards at 251-431-8652 or drichards@mobilechamber.com.



Original Oyster House's two restaurants participate in the Alabama Coastal Foundation recycling program.

Thanks to New Recycling Program, Oysters Are Making Their Own Beds

Gulf Coast residents love to eat oysters. Now that love can help replenish the Gulf of Mexico beds where they grow.

The Alabama Oyster Shell Recycling Program takes the shells that remain after polishing off a dozen of the succulent bivalves and recycles them to restore oyster beds in the Gulf of Mexico. Alabama Coastal Foundation (ACF) Executive Director **Mark Berte** said the idea has been around for some time, but it took a friendly nudge from a local chef to get the ball rolling.

"This is a program people have been talking about for decades," Berte said. "The Alabama Coastal Foundation does outreach events. We had one at the Flora-Bama Yacht Club back in December of 2015. We asked people what we should focus on and the chef there, Chris Sherrill, said that

we really need to bring the idea into reality."

With a two-year grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation to fund the program, the organization began distributing 35-gallon collection bins last October to local restaurants, and asked the owners and employees to collect discarded oyster shells there instead of throwing them away.

The distinctive green bins are emptied three times a week, and the shells are transported to the Alabama Marine Resources Division in Gulf Shores, where they're cured for six months to eliminate any bacteria or other contaminants. Then they are returned to the water to replenish oyster beds in the Gulf.

Restored oysters beds do more than just grow new oysters. They provide habitats for fish,

shrimp and crabs, prevent shoreline erosion and clean the waters by filtering out silt, sediment and excess nutrients. "Every shell that collects can have up to 10 adult oysters growing on it," Berte said, "and every adult oyster can filter 15 gallons of water per day."

ACF now has 112 bins at 16 restaurants in Mobile and Baldwin counties, with plans to add more restaurants later this spring.

"Basically, we're projecting to have over 2.7 million shells collected by the end of this year, which is about seven acres of oyster reefs," Berte said. "We do eat a lot of oysters."

Historically, Alabama is the largest processor of oysters in America.

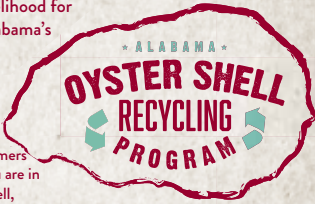


Chamber-Member Restaurants Participating Are:

- Bluegill Restaurant
- Original Oyster House
- Felix's Fish Camp
- Red or White
- Half Shell Oyster House
- Wintzell's Oyster House

☆☆☆ RECYCLE YOUR SHELLS ☆☆☆

Alabama Gulf oysters provide more than just a meal—they provide a livelihood for thousands of hard-working men and women. And if we want to keep Alabama's oyster harvests strong and growing, it's important to recycle your shells.



ORDER 'EM




Support for Alabama's oyster tongs and oyster farmers starts with your favorite local restaurants. When you are in coastal Alabama and ordering oysters on the half shell, support Gulf Coast locations that are partnering with the Alabama Coastal Foundation to recycle their oyster shells.

COLLECT 'EM

After you've cleaned your plate, save those shells! Participating restaurants have their shells collected at least three times a week. So the more oysters you eat, the more oyster shells can be recycled!




CURE 'EM




Once the oyster shells have been picked up, they're brought to the Alabama Marine Resources Division in Gulf Shores. The shells are then stored and left to cure for six months.

REFURBISH 'EM

When the shells are ready to go back into the water they're deposited on designated sites in the waters of Alabama. These recycled shells are the building blocks of newly restored oyster beds.



MAINTAIN 'EM



These replenished oyster beds do more than just grow new oysters. They provide habitats for Gulf fish and crabs, they prevent shoreline erosion, and they clean the waters by filtering out silt, sediment, and excess nutrients.

LEARN MORE

Alabama's Oyster Shell Recycling Program is only successful with your support! To learn more about why recycling is important, please visit joinACF.org or call (251) 990-6002.



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CELEBRATE INNOVATE PARTICIPATE

In February, the Mobile Area Chamber hosted its annual meeting with a new concept in a new location. More than 1,100 members joined in the fun evening presented by Trustmark. Highlights of the evening included Liz Freeman's introduction as 2017 board chair and a great after-party featuring the Excelsior Band and The Mulligan Brothers. Mark your calendar for next year's meeting, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 22, at the Mobile Convention Center.





Photos by Jeff Tesney



How to Quickly Estimate the Market Value of a Small Business

By: William Bruce, accredited business intermediary for William Bruce Business Sales & Acquisitions LLC

As a business intermediary and appraiser, I'm often asked what a small business is worth. Unlike publicly traded companies, it's almost impossible to find public information on the market value of privately held businesses.

However, there are two methods of quickly approximating value: (1) applying a multiple to the discretionary earnings of the business; and (2) applying a percentage to the company's annual revenue.

What are discretionary earnings, sometimes referred to as cash flow? Cash flow is NOT the profit or loss you show Uncle Sam on your tax return, as almost all business owners run some expenses through the

business that are not necessary to the operation of the business.

Discretionary earnings are the total cash flow the business generates in a year that is available to the owner after deductions for only the necessary operating expenses. In other words, it means the total owner's benefit regardless of how the owner takes the money out of the business. More formally, it is the amount of cash left over after only necessary operating expenses available for (1) owner's remuneration including benefits; (2) return on investment; and (3) debt service, if any.

Once discretionary earnings are correctly calculated, almost all privately held businesses

will appraise for somewhere between one to four times discretionary earnings. Exactly where in this range a specific business falls depends on the type of business.

For example, we know an accounting practice will appraise for 2.5 to 3.5 times discretionary earnings. A wholesale distributor of durable goods carries an average 2.5 multiple.

A less accurate method of estimating value applies a percentage to the company's annual revenue. For example, a full-service restaurant with a liquor license will be worth about 25 percent annual revenue if the restaurant is earning the average bottom line profit for its peer group.

But you, as the owner, seller or buyer of the business, are the final arbiter of what the business is worth to you. Remember, these guidelines are only averages. A particular business' worth to you might be more or less than it's worth to the next person who looks at it.

William Bruce is an accredited business intermediary with William Bruce Business Sales & Acquisitions LLC. He currently serves as president of the American Business Brokers Association. Contact him at Will@WilliamBruce.org or 251-990-5934. His website is www.WilliamBruce.org.

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Tour Tuscany and the Italian Riviera

with the Chamber this November

Join members and guests of the Mobile Area Chamber as they travel across the Italian countryside, over the rolling hills of Tuscany and to the enchanting Italian Riviera, Nov. 3 through 10. The trip includes a relaxing three-night stay in a Tuscan estate and a chance to savor the sprawling vineyards and charming medieval hill towns of the region. As of press time, only 10 seats remain on this trip.

Spend time at one of the oldest wineries in Tuscany and take a guided tour of the treasures of Florence. Throughout your journey, discover a land rich in history, culture and cuisine. While there, enjoy an interactive pasta-making demonstration, spend a day exploring the Cinque Terre's rugged coastline by train, explore either the Uffizi Gallery or the Leonardo da Vinci Museum, visit Siena, Pisa and Lucca, and take a boat ride from Santa Margherita Ligure to visit glamorous Portofino. Guests will also spend three nights on the stunning Riviera.

Cost of the trip is \$3,399, based on double occupancy. The single room rate is an additional \$250. The price includes roundtrip airfare from

Mobile, all hotel accommodations, all side and day trips, six breakfasts and four dinners. A deposit of \$250 holds your reservation with final payment due Sept. 3. Guests wanting to extend their trip while in Italy are welcome to, and Collette – the tour operator – can work with guests individually.

To register or for more information, contact **Leigh Perry-Herndon** at 251-431-8645 or lherndon@mobilechamber.com.

Itinerary

Nov. 3: Leave Mobile for Florence (overnight flight).

Nov. 4: Tour begins with a relaxing three-night stay on the Italian Riviera. Enjoy your first authentic Italian dinner, expertly paired with wines, at a welcome dinner.

Nov. 5: Travel to the seaside town of Santa Margherita Ligure for a boat ride to glamorous Portofino. Take in the town's colorful harbor, dotted by fishing boats and yachts, set against a backdrop of pastel-colored buildings. Return to Santa Margherita Ligure for free time to peruse its charming streets and boutiques.

Nov. 6: Spend a day exploring the Cinque Terre, with its rugged coastline dotted with terraced vineyards. Travel by rail through this nearly inaccessible string of fishing villages nestled between the mountains and the Mediterranean. Your tour manager will help plan your day and make the most of your time in these five towns.

Nov. 7: As you head toward Tuscany, visit the ancient maritime Republic of Pisa to discover the Piazza Dei Miracoli, view the Duomo (Cathedral) and, of course, the famous Leaning Tower. Make a stop in the medieval city of Lucca, encircled by 16th-century Renaissance walls. A guide takes you on an informative tour including a visit to the Cathedral of San Martino and the Piazza Napoleone. Continue on to Tuscany, where you will stay in a traditional Tuscan estate for three spectacular nights.

Nov. 8: A scenic journey through Tuscany's graceful low-lying hills brings you to the lovely medieval city of Siena. Delight in its narrow Gothic streets, magnificent palaces and historic Piazza del Campo. After a walking tour with a

local expert, take some time to explore the medieval corners of Siena, with its great shops and outdoor cafés. Continue to one of the oldest wine estates in the Monteriggioni region and sit down with a family member to hear about their wine and taste their creations along with other local products.

Nov. 9: In Florence, the "Cradle of the Italian Renaissance," join a local guide for a walking tour of this fascinating city and see Florence's Cathedral of Santa Maria Del Fiore and the Palazzo Vecchio. Then select either the world-famous Uffizi Gallery, where a local expert will bring to life some of the most important works from the Renaissance period, or the Leonardo da Vinci Museum, where a local expert will introduce you to the world of this brilliant engineer, inventor, anatomist, painter, sculptor, architect, botanist, musician and writer.

Nov. 10: Return to Mobile (or extend your time in Florence or Europe on your own with Collette's assistance).

Chamber Hosts Military Appreciation Luncheon

The Mobile Area Chamber will host its 30th annual Military Appreciation Luncheon on Wednesday, April 19, from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park.

This event offers the business community an opportunity to show its appreciation for active-duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces. In addition, outstanding ROTC and JROTC cadets from area schools will be honored and awards will be presented for exceptional service to the community.

Awards to be presented include:

- Baldwin County Teachers of the Year, presented by the Air Force Association;
- Emergency Responder of the Year,

presented by the Army Corps of Engineers;

- Casteix & Abbot Awards, presented by the Navy League;
- Spouse of the Year, presented by the U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Training Center of Mobile;
- Above & Beyond Business of the Year, presented by Employer Support Guard & Reserve; and
- South Alabama Marine of the Year, presented by the Marine Corps League.

Marine Corps **Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia** will serve as keynote speaker. Battaglia is the former senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and

was the senior non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Armed Forces. Tickets are available through Friday, April 14 for \$30 per ticket and can be purchased by contacting **Mallory Tyson** at **251-431-8621**, or by registering online at **www.events.mobilechamber.com**. Payment must be made at the time of reservation.

Sponsors for the event: Airbus Defense and Space, Army Aviation Center Federal Credit Union, Austal, BAE Systems, Hargrove Engineers + Constructors, Ingalls Shipbuilding, Mobile County, Pilot Catastrophe and Volkert. Venue sponsor: USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park. Photography sponsor: Jeff Tesney Photography

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Let Us Thank You in Person

It's a day of appreciation at the Mobile Area Chamber, complete with food, drink and live music. Join us for the eighth annual Member Appreciation Day, and let our staff say thank you. Invitees include the Chamber's 2,000-plus members, board of advisors, board of directors, Partners for Growth investors and all volunteers.

Membership investment allows the Chamber to accomplish its mission to "serve as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the Mobile area's economic well-being." As the oldest and largest Chamber in the state and one of only 3 percent of chambers in the nation with 5-Star

Accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Mobile Area Chamber is a pro-business organization working to recruit jobs and advocate for business-friendly legislation on local, state and federal levels.

A fish fry will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. on the Chamber lawn at 451 Government St. Plan to drop by the Chamber on Tuesday, April 11, and meet our team. Staff from communications, economic development, governmental affairs, membership, small business, trade and workforce development will be on hand to talk about the Chamber and how to get more involved.

FAST FACTS

What: Member Appreciation Day

When: Tuesday, April 11 from 4 to 6 p.m.

Where: Mobile Area Chamber Lawn and Atrium, 451 Government St.

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

Why attend?

- Drop by to meet Chamber staff and allow us to say "thank you for your support," not to mention the opportunity to network with other members
- Fish fry catered by Alec Naman Catering
- Live music provided by The Tommy Morse Band

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Thank You

Member Appreciation Day

Tuesday, April 11

4 to 6 p.m.

451 Government St.

Let us say "Thank You" for your support and for being a member of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce with an afternoon of fish, fun and refreshments.

Sponsors:

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Caterer:

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Music:

The Tommy Morse Band



MOBILE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

For more information, call 251-431-8617
or visit events.mobilechamber.com

Healthcare Careers in the Forefront

Healthcare careers remain in high demand and Mobile schools are preparing students with the Mobile Area Chamber's help.

The Chamber's annual Health Occupations Career Fair (HOCF) hosted more than 700 10th grade students from Mobile and Baldwin counties, highlighting various career and education options available in the healthcare sector.

"We were excited to have the opportunity to provide students hands-on exposure to the high-demand, high-wage healthcare jobs in our area. This year, we brought in a few new exhibits in response survey comments from our previous participants," said **Carol Statter**, workforce development coordinator at Infirmary Health and chair of the Chamber's Bay Area Healthcare Coalition.



"While doctors and nurses immediately come to mind as healthcare careers to pursue, the

coalition does not want to limit students' career aspirations to only those jobs," said **Emily McGrath**, who served as the Chamber's director, education and workforce development until last month. "Pharmacists, diagnostic sonographers and physician assistants are among the other medical careers alongside doctors and nurses on the list of needed occupations through 2022, and those careers are highlighted in this year's HOCF."

Skills and education requirements are rising for the many healthcare jobs available, and Mobile County Public Schools (MCPSS) encourages students to plan out and engage in their career pathway as early as possible.

"BAHC partners with the school system to further expose students to the plethora of careers in healthcare," explained McGrath. Blount High School's Healthcare Signature Academy features pathways for students interested in sports medicine, emergency management systems and allied health. MCPSS also allows healthcare students to intern at local hospitals and facilities, including Infirmary Health, the University of South Alabama, CVS Pharmacies and AltaPointe Health System.

"By working with local healthcare providers we can ensure that our graduates are prepared for post secondary success," says **Larry Mouton**, MCPSS assistant superintendent for workforce development. "We cannot put too much emphasis on the importance of professional partnerships which allow our students to have clinical internships, guest speakers, and experts who act as program mentors." 

Military Appreciation Luncheon

Wednesday, April 19, 2017
Noon to 1:30 p.m.
USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park
Aircraft Pavilion

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 BAE Systems, Hargrove Engineers + Constructors,
 Ingalls Shipbuilding, Mobile County, Pilot, Volkert

Venue:
 USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park

Photography:
 Jeff Tesney Photography

\$30 per ticket or \$240 for table of 8 - Reservations are required.
 Register by contacting Mallory Tyson at mtyson@mobilechamber.com or call 251-431-8621 with credit card information.



MOBILE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chris Jett



UNIVERSITY of SOUTH ALABAMA
Children's & Women's
HOSPITAL



Company: University of South Alabama Children's & Women's Hospital

Title: Administrator

Hometown: Mobile

Education: Jett earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama, and master's degrees in health administration and business administration from The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

First job: Hanging wallpaper with his father.

Previous experience: Jett began his career in the medical industry as an administrative resident at USA Medical Center and USA Children's & Women's Hospital and soon was promoted to assistant to the hospital administrator. He served as acting director of quality management and materials management. Prior to his current position, he was named assistant administrator for women's health services at USA Health, including outpatient and inpatient operations across the 3,800-employee health system.

Accomplishments: Jett served as chairman of the 2015 March for Babies as part of the March of Dimes executive leadership team; was recognized among the "40 Under 40" by Mobile Bay magazine in 2014; was in Mobile United's Leadership Mobile Class of 2013-14; served on the Make-a-Wish regional advisory council; and was vice-chair of the Mobile County Healthcare Emergency Response Coalition in 2014.

Secret to success: "I am fortunate to work with amazing people at Children's & Women's Hospital," said Jett. "My secret has been that if I include the right people from the beginning, we usually come up with the best solution and the best chance to implement it."

Brief company description: USA Children's & Women's Hospital is one of five freestanding hospitals in the U.S. dedicated to treating the unique healthcare needs of children and women. Equipped with the area's only Level III neonatal intensive care unit, the 1,200-employee hospital offers the most advanced care for premature and critically ill newborns and the area's only neonatal transport team. More than 2,800 babies are delivered at USA Children's & Women's each year, making it Mobile's leader in births.



Mississippi Export Railroad

Company officials: D. Gregory Luce Jr., chairman; Kate C. Luce, chief operating officer; Dederia L. Demouey, vice president of finance/secretary-treasurer; Mark B. Miller, vice president of operations; and Aaron Bowers, manager of marketing and business development

Years in business: 95

Brief company description: Mississippi Export Railroad is a Class III railroad serving the Alabama and Mississippi coastal and interior industrial areas. It connects to the Canadian National Railroad in Evanston, Miss.; CSX Railroad in

Pascagoula, Miss.; Norfolk Southern Railroad in Mobile and Hattiesburg, Miss.; Kansas City Southern Railroad in Jackson, Miss.; and the Mobile Terminal Railroad in Mobile. Among the principal customers are Southern Co., Vulcan Materials Co., Chevron Corp. and Omega Protein Co.

Why are you located in Mobile? “We have believed in the Alabama-Mississippi coastal area for nearly a century,” said Greg Luce.

Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce’s Partners for Growth initiative? “We are a

part of the community and share the responsibility of maintaining an outstanding Chamber of Commerce that strives to grow business in our community by bringing stakeholders together to prepare for the future,” Luce said.

What do you see as Mobile’s greatest potential? “Mobile is and will continue to be a growing manufacturing and industrial area that is pro-business. Austal and the Port of Mobile have been major drivers of commerce in Mobile. Airbus and its supporting industries will provide more opportunity for Mobile. Additionally, the

expansion of the Panama Canal could bring more commerce to the Gulf Coast,” Luce said.

Length of continuous Chamber membership: Since 2004



Partners for Growth (PFG) is the Mobile Area Chamber’s long-term economic and community development program. For more information, contact **Katrina Dewrell**, the Chamber’s investor relations coordinator, at 251-431-8611 or kdewrell@mobilechamber.com.

Small Business Owners and Managers Meet

Each month, the Chamber hosts Executive Roundtable, a forum for owners and managers of member small businesses to network and hear updates on timely business and community issues impacting Mobile's economy. Recent speakers have included Chamber President and CEO Bill Sisson, who presented on the local economy, and Allison Langan Covington with Bradford Health Services, who discussed substance abuse in the workplace. Sponsored by BancorpSouth, the meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber.

To learn more about this program, contact Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607 or brembert@mobilechamber.com.

Staff Elected to Serve on State and Regional PR Boards

Chamber staff serve in various board positions to promote the public relations industry and the organization. Those boards include Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) Mobile chapter, PRCA state chapter and the Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF). Susan Rak-Blanchard is serving as vice president of communications for the state PRCA organization and board advisor for the Mobile chapter; and Leigh Perry-Herndon is serving as president of SPRF.

Minority Business Boot Camps

The Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force held the second business boot camp for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Co-sponsored by BBVA Compass, the three-day series focused on the topic "Recipes for Growth." Nathaniel Patterson with Patterson Marketing Group presented "Marketing for the Digital Age;" Ramonica Gamble of Ramonica Gamble Consulting discussed "Customer Service Innovations;" and Darrel Campbell with The Grind, Small Business Development Co., presented "Small Business Success: Credit, Funding & Key

Performance Indicators." The event drew more than 150 attendees.

Chamber Partners with City to Promote Y.E.S. to Member Businesses

The Chamber's workforce development department partnered with the City of Mobile to introduce potential employers to the City's Y.E.S. (Youth Empowered for Success) Initiative and encourage an expansion of youth employment opportunities.

Business Retention and Expansion Committee Meets

Members of the Chamber's Business Retention and Expansion committee heard a presentation from Brad James, executive director of the Advanced Manufacturing Center in Brookley, about the industry-driven, targeted training to be offered at a newly renovated facility to help the Alabama Community College System address a projected need for nearly 5,000 skilled workers across southwest Alabama in the next 12 months.

The training facility is slated for an area of the Brookley campus known as the Gallery on the eastern side of the Alabama Aerospace Innovation Research Center.

Member Ribbon Cuttings and Grand Openings

Chamber staff and ambassadors helped cut ribbons and celebrate grand openings at Altitude Trampoline Park, Cheyanne Marie Boudoir, First Heritage Credit, Grimaldi's Pizzeria, Golden Acres Circle of Care Health Care, Hilton Garden Inn Mobile Downtown, Hood's Discount Home Center, Infirmary Cancer Care, Pelican Landing, Pottery Barn, SOHO Events & Rentals and Williams-Sonoma. For more information, contact Dawn Rencher at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.

2018 Chamber Travel: Iceland in March and Danube River Cruise in October

The Chamber announced the locations for its 2018 international travel program for members and guests. In March, a group will travel to Iceland to see the Northern Lights, and in October, the Chamber will host a group for a river cruise along the Danube River. For more information or details for either trip, contact Leigh Perry-Herndon at 251-431-8645 or lherndon@mobilechamber.com.

YEA! Graduation

The second year of Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is well underway. Through this program, eight high school students from the Alabama School of Math and Science complete an entrepreneurial curriculum through a national program facilitated by the University of South Alabama and the Chamber. During the

Monday night classes at Exchange 202, the students are currently working on implementing their business plans and hearing from local business leaders and mentors each week.

Chamber Names New Ambassadors

Michelle Brown, Seabulk Towing; Susan Kangal, Lamar Advertising Co. of Mobile; Charlie McCants, Mobile Bay Tornados; Lisa Phillips, Heroman Services Plant Co.; and Matt Wilson, Advantage IT Management, were named new Chamber ambassadors. Ambassadors are a group of volunteer members who assist the Chamber with a variety of projects, including event registration, member visits and attending ribbon cuttings. To learn more about this group, contact Dawn Rencher at 431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.

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Merceria L. Ludgood is president of the Mobile County Commission, representing District 1. She received bachelor's and master's degrees from The University of Alabama, and graduated from Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. She received a master of divinity degree from Alabama Interdenominational Seminary in 1990. Ludgood began her law practice with the firm of Figures Irby and Ludgood, and in 1988 established a solo practice. In 1991, she was selected to lead the Legal Services Corporation of Alabama, where she managed fourteen offices located across the state. In 1995, Ludgood joined the staff of the Legal Services Corp., in Washington, D.C., as Office of Program Services director. Upon her return to Mobile, she served as assistant county attorney for fourteen years. Ludgood is a recipient of the prestigious Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship. She lends her time to many organizations, including the Alabama State Bar Board of Bar Commissioners, Mobile Bar Association Executive Committee, United Way Women's Initiative, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. Mobile County is a Partners for Growth Investor.



Travis R. Short is founder, owner, and president of Horizon Shipbuilding, Inc. He began working in the maritime industry as a young man in his father's shipyard and advanced through various shipyard trades, managing the family's small-boat manufacturing facility after graduating from the University of South Alabama with a degree in business management. In 1997, Short and his father founded Horizon, and in 2002, Short assumed complete ownership of the company and began expanding manufacturing capabilities. In 2010, Horizon received the Governor's Trade Excellence award for Exporter of the Year, as well as recognition as Alabama International Trade Center Exporter of the Year. He serves as Bayou La Batre Port Authority president, Maritime Training Center Advisory Council chairman and Booth Elementary Advisory Board member. He is a member of the Mobile Works board, Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council, Bayou La Batre Area Chamber board of directors, Mobile Area Chamber board of directors, OffshoreAlabama.com and the Gulf Coast Shipbuilders Consortium. Horizon Shipbuilding is a Partners for Growth Investor.



George M. Simmerman Jr. is vice president and chief counsel for Ingalls Shipbuilding Division of Huntington Ingalls Industries. He served as vice president, assistant general counsel and sector counsel for Northrup Grumman's shipbuilding sector between 2008 and 2011. He was in private practice before joining Litton Industries (now Northrop Grumman Corp.) in 1991. Simmerman is a member of the American, Alabama, Mississippi and Jackson County bar associations. He is a fellow of the American Bar Foundation. He served on the board of the Mississippi Bar's Young Lawyers Section and the Loyola University School of Law's Annual Longshore Act Conference, and as Mississippi chair of the American Bar Association's Public Contract Law Section. Simmerman has been admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal, Fifth, Ninth and Eleventh Circuits. He received a bachelor's degree with honors in political science from Spring Hill College, and graduated with honors as a juris doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law.



For more information about the Chamber's board of advisors, contact Katrina Dewrell at 251-431-8611 or kdewrell@mobilechamber.com.

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AMBASSADOR of the month



Photo by Jeff Tesney

After **Charlie McCants** joined the Chamber's ambassador program, he hustled to become the Chamber's Ambassador of the Month in nearly record time. It's no wonder he's quick on his feet. McCants, a Monroeville native, is the owner of the Mobile Bay Tornados, an American Basketball Association (ABA) team and the only professional basketball team in Mobile. Being an ambassador "gives me the opportunity help the Chamber achieve its objectives in community growth and development," said McCants.

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



Mobile Marble Co.

Mobile Marble Co. offers bathroom remodeling products and services. Founded in 1973 as a family-run business, Mobile Marble offers free estimates and features a showroom with displays filled with ideas. The company is located at 6656 Overlook Rd. Pictured: (L-R) Mike Waldo, who is mostly in the field meeting with clients and monitoring on-going jobs, and owner, David Lindsey, who now runs the company started by his father. For more information, call 251-344-6272 or visit www.mobilemarblecompany.com.



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How to Get in *The Business View*

The *Business View* is the Mobile Area Chamber's monthly publication featuring activities and accomplishments of the Chamber and its member businesses. If your business is a member, keep reading – this feature is designed to outline how member companies can be highlighted.

For those who are not members and who want to know about joining, contact Carolyn Golson, the Mobile Area Chamber's vice president of membership, at 251-431-8622 or cgolson@mobilechamber.com.



News You Can Use

The business briefs featured in this section of the magazine are centered around positive economic development headlines such as company expansions, business-changing contracts, significant hiring initiatives, new investments and more. Occasionally, there is room to accommodate major community news and initiatives.

Member News



One of the publication's most popular columns, Member News reports management-level new hires and promotions; business endeavors such as new products, new locations, major projects, etc.; management-level awards, certifications,

board officers, national and regional industry awards and annual company awards.

Weekly headlines and events sponsored by member organizations are promoted through the Chamber's weekly e-newsletter sent to more than 9,000 recipients. Available to anyone free of charge, e-mail info@mobilechamber.com to subscribe to *The Business View Weekly*.

News releases should be one or two brief paragraphs. Photos must be professional headshots and must be 300 dpi at full size in an eps, tif or jpg format.

Information can be sent to news@mobilechamber.com. Those submitting events to the weekly e-newsletter must use the automated form on the website at www.mobilechamber.com/calendar/submit-news-events/.

Calendar

The calendar printed in *The Business View* outlines activities of the Mobile Area Chamber.



Small Business of the Month

A volunteer committee reviews applications and selects a business to be featured in each issue as Small Business of the Month. Criteria includes employing less than 100 people, being a member in good standing of the Mobile Area Chamber for at least one year, in business for two-plus years and sales or profit growth.

For more information on how to nominate a company or apply, contact Danette Richards, the Chamber's director of small business development, at 251-431-8652 or d Richards@mobilechamber.com.



Business Spotlight

One business attending the Chamber's networking event, Business After Hours, is selected by random drawing from business cards collected for a photo and brief description in each issue of the magazine.



CEO Profile

This article introduces people filling the highest staff position in member companies. Some are chief executive officers, while others hold the title of president or manager.



Made in Mobile

An on-going series of articles, Made in Mobile highlights interesting products made in the Mobile area with broad distribution to regional, national and/or international markets.





Guest Columns

Chamber staff invite or select management-level employees to write articles addressing a specific topic primarily aimed at small businesses. Members have expressed an interest in a number of topics including marketing, international trade, employee management and legislative issues.

Directors and Advisors



The Business View recognizes the governing board of directors annually in the December issue.

The Chamber also has a board of advisors consisting of leaders whose companies make significant dues investments. Profiles of new advisors are featured monthly, and photos of the entire group run annually.

For more information on how to join the Chamber's board of advisors, contact Katrina Dewrell, the Chamber's executive coordinator, at 251-431-8611 or kdewrell@mobilechamber.com.

Ambassadors

Also featured monthly, ambassadors are Chamber volunteers from member companies who assist with Chamber activities such as ribbon cuttings, networking events, new member visits and other events.

Ambassadors earn points based on their participation, and the volunteer with the highest score is highlighted in *The Business View*.

For more information on how to join the Chamber's ambassador team, contact Dawn Rencher, the Chamber's director of member relations, at 251-431-8649 or drencher@mobilechamber.com.

Advertising

Part of *The Business View's* mission is to serve as an affordable advertising outlet.

It is not a profit-driven publication. Advertising offsets the cost of printing and mailing. *The Business View* is mailed

to members and businesses in Mobile County listed on a Dun & Bradstreet list, and has a circulation of close to 22,000 business owners and managers. In addition, the online link to the electronic version is e-mailed to more than 9,000 recipients and

available on the Chamber's blog and website, with articles posted on the Chamber's social media sites, including Facebook and LinkedIn.

Frequently, advertising space sells out months in advance. The advertising contract and guidelines can be found on the Chamber's website, www.mobilechamber.com. To check availability, contact the publication's advertising executive, René Eiland, at 251-431-8635 or reiland@mobilechamber.com.



Editorial Staff

Each month, the Chamber's communications and marketing team holds an editorial meeting to discuss ideas, information, stories and photographs for the next issue. Stories are written and edited by the communications team and a few freelance writers.

How to Pitch a Story:

There are several ways to pitch a story for *The Business View*: e-mail the who, what, where, when, why and how to news@mobilechamber.com or any member of the Chamber's communications and marketing team:

Leigh Perry-Herndon, 251-431-8645 or lherndon@mobilechamber.com;

Susan Rak-Blanchard, 251-431-8641 or susan@mobilechamber.com;

Ashley Horn, 251-431-8623 or ahorn@mobilechamber.com; or

Carolyn Wilson, 251-431-8606 or cwilson@mobilechamber.com.



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APRIL 2017

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

11 MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

The Chamber staff shows appreciation to its members with a fish fry and live music. See story on page 19.

When: 4 to 6 p.m.

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

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

No charge. Free parking.

Sponsors:



Caterer:



Product Sponsors: Buffalo Rock-Pepsi and Gulf Coast Containers

Music: The Tommy Morse Band

12 COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER

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

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

Where: New York Life, 1110 Montlimar Dr., 3rd floor

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

No charge. Reservations are not needed.

12 GULF COAST TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL AND LUNCH

A bimonthly lunch hosted by the Gulf Coast Technology Council.

When: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Where: 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

Speakers: John Hill, chief technology officer (retired), Retirement System of Alabama (RSA) and Renee Borg, technical specialist, RSA

Topic: "The Conception and Building of the RSA Data Center"

Cost: \$20 for Chamber members/\$25 for potential members/\$5 for students and includes lunch

Contact: Steve Russell at 251-431-8654 or srussell@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required. Cancellations after April 7 not reimbursed to cover lunch cost.



Left to Right: Rusty Allman, Chandler Gordon, Alex Arendall, Bruce Finley, Sherry Coker, Faith Webb, Jay Weber, Julie Tucker, Beth Cazalas, Domonic Gable, Jaye B Patterson, Mike Johnson, Lyn Peterson, Scott Patterson, Anita Chapman, Randy Adams, Becky Minto, Anna Maria Mazzarella, Walter Brand, Bryan Neth, Bibb Lamar

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18 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE **Members Only*

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

When: 8 to 9 a.m.

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: Jeff Mitchell, Cloud Solution Architect, Microsoft

Topic: "The Changing Landscape: From PCs to the Cloud"

Contact: Brenda Rembert at 251-431-8607

or brembert@mobilechamber.com

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

Sponsor:



26 WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE **Members Only*

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

When: 8 to 9 a.m.

Where: Mobile Area Chamber, 451 Government St.

Speaker: Dr. Matthew Barber, Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic

Topic: "Robotic Arm Assisted Surgery"

Contact: Alison Unger at 251-431-8617 or

aunger@mobilechamber.com

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

Sponsor:



19 MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY LUNCHEON

The event includes awards presented by the Navy League, Air Force Association, ESGR, USCG and National Guard & Reserve and recognition of distinguished JROTC & ROTC Cadets. See story on page 18.

When: Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Where: USS ALABAMA Battleship Memorial Park, Aircraft Pavilion

Cost: \$25 per person or \$200 for table of eight

Contact: Mallory Tyson at 251-431-8621 or

mtyson@mobilechamber.com

Reservations required by April 14 and payment due at time of reservation.

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Photography: Jeff Tesney Photography



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NMLS MLO #292717



Who's New



Dicks



Blum



Roveda

Crow Shields Bailey PC promoted three team members: **Colleen Dicks** and **Lori Blum** to supervisor,

and **Abby Roveda** to senior accountant. Dicks is a graduate of Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in finance. Blum graduated from the University of South Alabama with a bachelor's degree in accounting. Roveda is a graduate of The University of Alabama with bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting.



Collins



Smith



Turner



Cockrell

Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate – Generations welcomed several new agents: **Jason Collins** and **Charmaine Smith** in the Mobile office; and **Aaron Turner** and **Kathryn Cockrell** in the Spanish Fort office.



Bowers

Mostellar & Shreve LLP recently added **Anne Bowers** as a partner in the firm.

Bowers graduated from Baylor University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a major in accounting. She has more than 25 years of experience in the industry.



Deen



Burton



Adams



Coaxum



Donald

The City of Mobile hired five contract attorneys to represent indigent defendants:

Lisa Bumpers Deen, Donald Burton, John Adams, J.D. Coaxum and **Moshae Donald**. Deen is a graduate of The University of Alabama and Mississippi College School of Law. Burton earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of North Alabama and a law degree from Jones School of Law at Faulkner University in Montgomery. Adams is a graduate of The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business administration and holds both a law degree and a master's degree in business administration from Tulane University. Coaxum earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., and a juris doctorate from the Birmingham School of Law. Donald received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University in Huntsville and earned a juris doctorate from Vanderbilt University Law School.



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In other news, the city selected **Mott MacDonald** to lead the "One Mobile" project funded by the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant award. The firm was chosen to provide owner's representation services because of its experience in large transportation construction and knowledge of TIGER Grant administration. It will provide grant administration, project management, construction agreements, design oversight, contract administration, environmental review, project planning, procurement and project team coordination.



Wade Glenn was named vice president of **Middle Bay Transportation LLC**, a full-service agent-based intermodal drayage carrier and full transportation broker that began operations this year. Glenn has more than 30 years of experience in logistics and transportation.



Chepurna



Nassar



Studdard



Mason



Collins



Nguyen

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Cooper & Co. Inc. Realtors welcomed new associates **Viktoriya Chepurna, Shondae Nassar, Kim Studdard, Frances Mason, Teresa Collins and Andrew Nguyen.**



Jenkins

NAI Mobile hired **John Thomas "JT" Jenkins** as a commercial sales and leasing consultant.



Fuse Project announced **Ann-Brooks Morrisette** as its new planning and development manager.



Morrisette

Morrisette, a certified public accountant, graduated from The University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in commerce and business administration and a master's degree in accountancy.



McKenzie

Joe Jefferson Playhouse hired **Jason McKenzie** to serve as the organization's executive director.



Andrew "Andy" Freeman of **Adams and Reese** was named partner-in-charge of the firm's Mobile office. Freeman earned bachelor's degrees in computer science and political science from The University of Alabama and a juris doctorate from The University of Alabama.

Business Endeavors

Long's Human Resource Services launched a medical staffing division. Call **251-476-4080** for more information.



Fairhope-based event rental company **SOHO Events & Rentals** expanded operations to downtown Mobile with a new office at 359 St. Francis St. The approximately 1,100-square-foot space serves as a showroom and sales office.

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The **Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa** announced a 16-month renovation project. Plans span from redesigning meeting spaces to guest rooms to the spa. Alabama renovation partners are architect **Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood** and general contractor **Jesco Inc.** The estimated completion date is spring of 2018.

FedEx extended its lease at **Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley** and is adding an area for package sorting and expanded employee parking. In addition, the company is increasing its air cargo capacity to the Gulf Coast.

Mobile-based **Middle Bay Transportation**, a new agent-based intermodal drayage provider for all types of cargo, recently began local operations, with other offices in Memphis, Tenn., and Norfolk, Va. The firm is part of ASF Transportation Group, which also includes **ASF Intermodal** and **ASF**

Brokerage. The firm opened with three employees and 20 drivers, with plans to add additional team members as the company grows.

The 98-room **Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott** located at 2950 Township Blvd. in Saraland is now open.

Well Done



Phillips



Rogers

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Cooper & Co. Inc. REALTORS presented the following annual awards: Sales associate **Lynn Phillips** was named Rookie of the Year for 2016; and sales associate **Michelle Talbott Rogers** earned the Aden Jack Cooper Award, named for the company's

founder. In addition, 67 associates were recognized as Million Dollar Agents.

In other news, the company's **Vince Emmons** was recently awarded the City of Mobile's Exceptional Citizenship Award, for his efforts in advocating for Mobilians with intellectual and physical challenges.

Crow Shields Bailey partner **Cindy Rathle** was appointed to the board of directors for the Alabama Society of CPAs. She specializes in personal and business income tax, estate and gift tax returns, as well as small business accounting and consulting.



Rathle

Norton Lilly International Inc. has earned the WorldatWork Work-Life 2017 Seal of Distinction, for demonstrating leadership in workplace strategies that help employees with

personal work-life balance. The recognition is awarded each year to companies across North America that support employees at work and at home.

Randall Olson, vice president of talent development at **MTI Business Solutions**, was designated by Wiley Workplace Learning Solutions as an accredited facilitator for The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team.



Olson

Noble Events LLC was selected as a 2017 winner in "The Knot Best of Weddings," an award for the highest-rated wedding professionals as reviewed by couples, their families and wedding guests on The Knot, a leading wedding brand and marketplace.

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"Make an Impression"



Kenneth W. Nichols was appointed to the board of **Mobile Area Water and Sewer System**.

Nichols is a commercial sales and leasing agent for **Vallas Realty Inc.** and the owner of an engineering and development consulting firm. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from The University of Alabama and a master's degree in business administration from the University of South Alabama. He is a licensed professional engineer in five states.

*

Mobile Society for Human Resource Management elected the following new board members: president **Mary White** of **MTI Business Solutions**; VP programs/president-elect **Jeanine Wilson** of **JW Enterprises**; VP membership **Shelly Mathis** and past president **Carol Statter**, both of **Infirmity Health**

System; secretary **Cindy Giddens** of **Southern Earth Sciences**; and treasurer **Stephany Nabors** of **GAT Support**.

New directors include conference chair **Susie Jones** of **Sirius Technical Services**; governmental affairs director **Kay Watson** of **World Omni**; college relations director **Tiphannie Evans** of **Coastal Human Resources**; diversity director **Karla Rodgers** of **Infirmity Health System**; certification director **Lisa Nelson** of **AltaPointe Health Systems**; and foundation director **Adrienne Freeman** of **White-Spunner Construction**.

*

The pallet design system used for years by **Bay Wood Products** to create wooden pallets for customers was recently designated as bio-preferred by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Using bio-based materials displaces the need for non-renewable petroleum-based materials and plays a vital role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Josh Lepine of **Austal** was named the Mobile Area Council of Engineers' Naval Architect of the Year.

Lepine holds a bachelor's degree in naval architecture and marine engineering from the University of New Orleans and is an 11-year veteran of the industry. MACE recognizes the success of individuals who enhance the engineering profession through their contributions to industry, education and the community.

*

AM/NS Calvert facility and team received Ford Motor Co.'s Q1 Certification recognizing Ford's "preferred quality suppliers" for excellence beyond ISO/TS16949 certification requirements in the areas of capable systems, ongoing performance, site action plan, customer endorsement and continuous improvement.

Senior accountant **Eric Haynes** of **Wilkins Miller** received the Certified in Financial Forensics (CFF) Credential by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.



Haynes

*

The **Mobile Health Department** board elected officers and welcomed new members for 2017 including **Merceria L. Ludgood**, Mobile County Commission president.

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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Gulf States Automation
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5 years

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The Mobile Area Chamber was awarded a five-star rating by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the highest designation given. Of the 6,936 chambers in the U.S., only 203 are accredited, and of those only 103 have achieved five-star distinction. The Mobile Area Chamber has been accredited by the U.S. Chamber since the designation's inception more than 40 years ago.

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Know a company interested in benefiting from Chamber membership? Contact Emily Hatcher at 251-431-8619 or ehatcher@mobilechamber.com or Jackie Hecker at 251-431-8642 or jhecker@mobilechamber.com. Also, you'll find a complete membership list at www.mobilechamber.com.

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