

# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

APRIL 2021

## New Professionals **MAKE MOBILE HOME**

**NEW  
INVESTMENTS  
FOR MOBILE**

**MARKETING  
MOBILE to  
Attract Talent**





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# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

APRIL 2021

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## 18 ON THE COVER:

*Finn Roden, the chief compliance officer of AutoMOBILE International Terminal, is making the move to Mobile from Jacksonville, Fla. He is one of several professionals whose talent the Chamber is working to bring to Mobile. Read more about who's new to Mobile on pages 22-33. Photo by Toni Riales Photography.*



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## ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE: ATTRACTING AND KEEPING YOUNG TALENT

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

Study after study is revealing the next generation of bosses and workers is motivated not just by money but also by quality of life considerations. Increasingly, people are looking for great community, a slower pace and, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, the benefits of remote working. As major hubs like Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Atlanta struggle with both congestion and affordability, the Mobile region's value proposition is stronger than ever before.

That's why your Chamber is excited to roll out a talent attraction program, which has been two years in the making. The key to this program will be locating and reaching out to young talent who grew up in the

area but have located elsewhere for job opportunities.

I've always said I believe there is a magnet in Mobile Bay, and many of those relocated people are pining to come home. Our goal will be to show them the job opportunities in the region and recruit them back.

The rest is an easy sell: ease of commuting, an abundance of affordable housing, a distinct quality of place and a program backed by the Chamber to connect this talent to other young professionals in the greater business community.

I'm so excited about these attraction efforts – and I know without a doubt we can outpace our big-city competitors as a premier destination for talent.



# LOCAL FAMILY-RUN BUSINESS MAKES SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION

David Myer (center) and his sons, Bradley (left) and Brandon (right), look at the company's latest expansion blueprints.

Mobile-based **Myer Marine Services** is expanding its west Mobile facility by more than 50% and will hire 50 new employees over the next several years.

Led by **David Myer** and sons **Brandon** and **Bradley Myer**, the company is investing \$5.5 million to add 36,000 square feet to the current manufacturing operations and will purchase multiple adjacent buildings and properties.

One of the new buildings, once restored, will become home to the company's engineering department, growing sales team and administrative staff.

Myer Marine Services is a steel fabrication, machining and field services company, serving customers in the dredging, maritime, construction/infrastructure and specialty products industries primarily in the Southeast and along the Atlantic coast.

The Myers broke ground on the current location on Blackburn Drive in 2014 with plans to hire 40 additional employees and increase its workforce to 60-plus. Today, Myer Marine Services has 121 on its payroll.

David Myer, president of Myer Marine Services, said this new investment will help his company's overall goal to be a leader in steel fabrication and machining. "Since our founding in 2013, we have been very blessed to have continued steady growth for eight straight years, thanks to our talented and dedicated team of employees. We look forward to what is next."

"Myer Marine is a home-grown success story, and our Chamber is always proud to assist a local company grow," said **Christopher Mayfield**, the Mobile Area Chamber's director of existing industry.

The recent investment is driven by a growing customer base, according to Bradley Myer, vice president of business development. "With this project, we will be able to continue to diversify our services offered, increase our size and scope of projects, and branch into new target markets."

"With the expansion of our manufacturing facility and our growing workforce of skilled craftsmen in both shop- and field-based operations, we are able to offer our customers a true turn-key solution for large scale projects and across a broad spectrum of industries. The future is very bright for Myer Marine Services," added Brandon Myer, vice president of operations.

## AT A GLANCE

### MYER MARINE SERVICES

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT:** \$5.5 million

**JOBS:** 50, with average annual pay of \$61,000

# MOBILE AREA CHAMBER FINALIZES RAY-MONT DEAL



The Mobile Area Chamber announced recently Ray-Mont chose Mobile for a high-tech logistics park, its first in the South, thanks to a partnership with Alabama Export Railroad (ALE). There are 50 new jobs associated with the project.

ALE will jointly operate the site near the Port of Mobile with Ray-Mont Logistics and provide rail transportation services in conjunction with Canadian National Railway Co.

Ray-Mont, an integrated asset-based logistics company headquartered in Montreal, Canada, will bag and transport plastic resin containers, initially to customers in Asia and Latin America.

The new operation is “good commercial strategy,” said **Jonathan Hebert**, vice president of finance and corporate development with Ray-Mont Logistics.

Ray-Mont’s trans loading method combined with proprietary technology will offer regional customers seamless collaboration in facilitating international containerized trade.

Phase one of the project will include two bagging lines, and Ray-Mont plans to export 20,000 TEU (20-foot equivalent unit) shipping containers annually.

“Along with our core partners Canadian National and Ray-Mont Logistics, APM Terminals and Port of Mobile, we believe this project represents the first step toward the establishment of a multicommodity logistics hub, which will serve producers and global markets for decades to come,” said **Kate Luce**, president and CEO of Alabama Export Railroad.

Hebert added the park’s terminal will be operational in early 2022. “Our analysis based on projections and customer demand indicates that, at full capacity, the volume of additional TEUs moving through our site at the Port of Mobile could exceed five times what the first phase is expected to deliver,” he said.

“The project is an example of how Mobile is a growing destination for distribution operations,” said **David Rodgers**, vice president of economic development for the Mobile Area Chamber.

Ray-Mont currently has operations in Montreal, Vancouver and British Columbia, Canada, and Seattle, Wash.

## AT A GLANCE

### RAY-MONT LOGISTICS

**KEY PARTNER:** Alabama Export Railroad (ALE)

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT:** \$15 million, plus another \$4 million by ALE

**JOBS:** 50, with an average annual pay of \$70,000

**TIMELINE:** Operational in 2022

# REN SEAFOODS ANNOUNCES NEW OPERATIONS IN MOBILE



Ren Seafoods recently announced plans to build a seafood processing facility and distribution hub in Mobile. The company's decision to invest and locate in Mobile was prompted by their partnership with MTC Logistics, who will open a 300,000-square-foot cold storage facility across from APM Terminals later this year.

"We are following their path and its vicinity allows us to combine product deliveries to have a unique logistics operation," said **Javier Infante**, CEO of Ren Seafoods. "In addition, there is high-quality, local seafood in this region that we will be able to access for our customer base."

It was the second economic development announcement made by the Mobile Area Chamber recently. "This project further cements Mobile as a prime location for logistics and warehousing," said **David Rodgers**, the Mobile Area Chamber's vice president of economic development.

At press time, Ren Seafoods was under contract to purchase the old Smith's Bakery building on the west I-65 service road for its new facility, expected to be complete later this year, investing \$12.4 million in the project. As the company is ramping up operations, it will hire 50-plus employees.

"Most national seafood companies are concentrated in New England, Miami, Seattle, etc. We are creating a hub for seafood distribution covering the Southern region," said Infante.

**Brooks Royster**, vice president of international supply chain solutions for MTC Logistics, said Ren Seafoods is the first customer to come to Mobile to be near this facility. "It is further testament to Mobile being successful as a logistics hub and able to attract new international players."

Royster added he expects other companies will follow suit.



## AT A GLANCE

### REN SEAFOODS

**KEY PARTNER:** MTC Logistics

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT:** \$12.4 million

**JOBS:** 54, with an average annual pay of \$40,000

**TIMELINE:** Operational in 2021



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Mosley Building Systems has grown from a local steel erector in Chunchula to a dominant steel business in the Southeast. Pictured from left to right are: Ingrid Collins, office administrator; Mitch Mosley, vice president; Kathleen Johnson, administrative assistant; Scott Quebodeaux, sales and project management; and Jason Mosley, president.

Photo by Toni Riales Photography

## EFFICIENCY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE MARK MOSLEY BUILDING SYSTEMS

In the two decades since **Jason** and **Mitch Mosley** took the helm of the company their father founded, **Mosley Building Systems** has thrived by integrating time-tested processes with cutting-edge technology. The brothers were raised in the industry-leading business, which Gerald Mosley built by applying his expertise in steel fabrication to the concept of building assembly.

His sons then honed their signature efficiency and customer service, helping expand Mosley Building Systems from its roots in general contracting. The company's pre-engineered buildings are now found among the distribution, shipbuilding, agriculture and aerospace industries all along the Gulf Coast.

Mosley Building Systems is the Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

"We employ the best of the best," Vice President **Mitch Mosley** said. "And because they were trained by us, they don't know the wrong way to do things."

He and Jason can be found on their job sites nearly every single day until the project is done, and that attention to detail is instilled in each and every employee they hire. That loyalty extends to staff development and training programs, which ensure there are no weak links in any facet of the company's work.

In fact, most of the company’s employees started off as laborers and are now skilled tradesmen in prosperous careers. And its metal-building installers are also certified to do work within the industry’s stringent 20- to 25-year warranty requirements.

The company also specializes in concrete work, site work, steel erection and insulated metal panel installation, allowing it to keep many key aspects of construction in-house. Each aspect serves the company’s core vision: to professionally build the infrastructure that fosters growth throughout industry.

Mosley Building Systems has long-standing relationships with its customers, which equates to a level of service above and beyond the assembly and erection of their buildings.

“At the end of the day we want you happy, under your budget and ahead of your schedule with your product,” Mitch Mosley said. “Because that’s what keeps this business running.”



Mitch (left) and Jason Mosley took over the business from their father and added their own expertise to build the company into its current state.

Photo by Toni Riales Photography

**COMPANY NAME:** Mosley Building Systems  
**LOCATION:** 7245 Arden Rd., Chunchula  
**WEBSITE:** mosleybuildingsystems.com  
**PHONE:** 251.675.4411  
**OWNERS:** Jason Mosley and Mitch Mosley  
**LENGTH OF CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP:** 2 years

Want to be featured as a Mobile Area Chamber Small Business of the Month? Go to [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com) to submit an application online, or contact Danette Richards at [drichards@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drichards@mobilechamber.com) or 251.431.8652 for questions and/or additional information.



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# Marketing Mobile to Attract Talent

**F**rom metallurgical engineer to computer network technician to orthodontic assistant, literally thousands of jobs for salaried employees in Mobile are listed on the Internet.

Increasingly, the Mobile Area Chamber is hearing how local companies need help finding a qualified pool of candidates to fill their open jobs.

In 2019, the Chamber expanded its workforce development efforts to address the needs of area employers looking for professionals to fill positions in engineering, IT, healthcare, human resources, specialized accountants and more.

With the help of an economic development marketing firm, Development Counsellors International (DCI), the Chamber is launching a new talent attraction program this year.

Through research and DCI's expertise, the Chamber is learning how potential candidates are motivated to relocate or return home for work, where they look for job opportunities and what the business community can do to sweeten their offers.

Ultimately, from this research, the Chamber will move forward with a series of programs, messages and resources to tell Mobile's story and what it has to offer.

Learn more about what talent attraction is and what it isn't, the Chamber's plan to attract talent in 2021, meet a few people who the Mobile area has attracted recently, and find a few interesting statistics gleaned from DCI's research.

# How the Chamber is Focusing Attention on Talent Attraction



*Business View* editors sat down with the Mobile Area Chamber's Manager of Talent Attraction **Cheryl Nicholls** to talk about the Chamber's role in helping draw professional candidates to jobs with area employers.

## What does "talent attraction" mean?

Cities across the nation are facing fierce competition to attract and retain talent in their regions. College graduates are moving away from their hometowns, often to larger cities, where they think more opportunities await them.

To combat this trend, industry and community leaders are working with the Chamber to develop a talent attraction program, promoting our area as a hub for job opportunities and an amazing place to live.

## What exactly is the Chamber's role?

Our goal is to sell our quality of place, resulting in a pool of candidates to fill open positions.

The Chamber's economic development team hired the specialized marketing firm Development Counsellors International (DCI) to create a marketing plan to attract and retain young talent in Mobile.

The plan is loaded with initiatives to be implemented in stages. We are expanding our role to sell the region not only as a business-friendly area for expansions or new location, but to sell Mobile as a vibrant and affordable city for young professionals with a growing downtown scene, lots of outdoor adventures and tons of family-friendly fun.



**"The plan is loaded with initiatives to be implemented in stages. We are expanding our role to sell the region not only as a business-friendly area for expansions or new location, but also to sell Mobile as a vibrant and affordable city for young professionals with a growing downtown scene, lots of outdoor adventures and tons of family-friendly fun."**

**Cheryl Nicholls**  
Manager of Talent Attraction  
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce



## MESSAGING MOBILE'S ATTRACTIVENESS

Based on input from survey participants, Development Counsellors International (DCI) offered sample messages for use by Mobile area businesses in their employee recruitment efforts. Here are a few of them.

### Meet Mobile, Ala.

- One of the largest cities on the Gulf Coast
- Where the bay meets a historic city
- Friendly and full of character



### What did we learn from DCI?

DCI confirmed the findings from our updated labor study. The number of salaried/professional job openings clearly outpaces the number of available candidates to fill these positions.

In surveying residents from Mobile's top target markets (Atlanta, Birmingham, Chicago and Houston), DCI found 44 percent of respondents were somewhat familiar or very familiar with Mobile. However, when asked what words or phrases come to mind when they thought of Mobile, a clear perception issue about living here became apparent.

On the other hand, strengths mentioned included our Gulf Coast location, housing variety, low taxes, culture of celebration and lack of traffic and congestion.

### What are the Chamber's 2021 priorities for talent attraction?

With a multi-layered approach, the Chamber will focus on three things this year:

- helping employers sell Mobile to potential and new talent;
- connecting transplants, boomerangs (those who leave Mobile and come back) and students to career/internship opportunities; and
- promoting Mobile's lifestyle and careers locally and in target markets.

### Make Yourself at Home in Mobile

- Historic homes walkable to downtown
- New and custom-built homes
- Waterfront: the bay is in your backyard



### Work in Mobile and Change the World

- Careers in engineering, healthcare, finance
- Industries: energy, aerospace, health, chemical, IT/high-tech
- Entrepreneurs resource: Innovation Portal



Photo by Chad Riley Photography

### Mobile's Global Roots Run Deep

- Founded by the French in the 1700s
- Coastal melting pot with Spanish, French, British, Caribbean and African influenced culture
- 50 global-headquartered companies



**"...strengths mentioned included our Gulf Coast location, housing variety, low taxes, culture of celebration and lack of traffic and congestion."**





## How will the Chamber address those priorities?

The Chamber is currently working on rolling out three programs for 2021:

**Mobile MeetUps** are quarterly events designed to connect college students to professionals, networking opportunities and community education events such as a young professionals group. The first event was held in January, with the second planned for mid- to late May. Each session features guest speakers covering topics such as job opportunities, community events, workforce/educational goals, job trends and volunteer opportunities.

**OnBoard Mobile** is an employer-centric familiarization program that's now in the planning stage.

The program aims to tap into the transplant or boomerang demographic to provide an immersive experience for those interviewing for positions in Mobile or new employees who are not familiar with the area. We want them to fall in love with Mobile.

**Mobile Revelers** will be a group of local city champions to assist the Chamber with anyone looking to locate to the area. Revelers will provide tours of the city, and real estate agents will offer home showings and tours of neighborhoods, while other Revelers will work to ensure newcomers obtain needed resources including relocation resources, how to get involved in the community and employment information for partners/spouses, to name a few.

Overall, we want participants to create long-lasting connections with the city and our community.



## MOBILE NAMED TOP CITY WORTH EXPLORING

Mobile landed in the top slot for “Top 10 U.S. Cities Worth Exploring in 2021” in *CEOworld Magazine*. The digital publication has an audience that includes, in addition to lead administrators, those in finance, technology and human resources.

With a nod to Mobile’s history and French heritage, the magazine noted the city has “a significant cultural background” and is “one of the Gulf Coast’s cultural centers.” Mobile’s art museums, historic architecture, oldest Mardi Gras celebration in the United States and availability of fresh seafood are also mentioned.

The only other city in the Southeast to make the list was Savannah, Ga., coming in at No. 10.

Other cities included were Fairbanks, Alaska, No. 2; Prescott, Ariz., 3; Fayetteville, Ark., 4; Denver, 5; Hartford, Conn., 6; Wilmington, Del., 7; Washington D.C., 8; and Tallahassee, Fla., 9.



## What's Next?

We are working with a Mobile-based company to design a talent attraction web-based resource section. When completed, this guide will offer prospective talent a fresh look at Mobile. Those seeking to relocate or remain in Mobile will find a cost of living calculator, a glance at Mobile's neighborhoods, a job board, listings of things to see and do as well as information about our schools, both K-12 and post-secondary options.

We will also work closely with university career services representatives throughout the state to connect students who have an interest in relocating or returning to Mobile after graduation. Initiatives include hosting career fairs with local employers, inviting students to attend Mobile MeetUp events and targeted social media advertising.

*Cheryl Nicholls is the Mobile Area Chamber's talent attraction manager. She can be reached at [cnicholls@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cnicholls@mobilechamber.com).*

# MESSAGING MOBILE'S

## JOB MARKET

Here are ways to promote Mobile as a hotspot for jobs:

- Mobile is a great place to start or grow a career in engineering, healthcare, finance and more. In fact, in the next year, it's estimated Mobile will have 20,000-plus open jobs to fill.
- The city is a national hub for the energy, aerospace, maritime and chemical industries, as well as a regional hub for health and IT/high-tech.
- Mobile has Airbus' first U.S.-based manufacturing facility and has attracted dozens of aerospace suppliers, as well as major engineering operations and the only cancer research center and Level I trauma center in the region.
- Mobile is a breeding ground for global companies changing the face of their industries like Austal and SSAB, as well as national brands including BASF and Kimberly-Clark. Additionally, Mobile has a wealth of resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Here are messages to promote Mobile's livability:

- Mobile's average cost of living is more than 11 percent lower than the national average and 8 percent lower than Atlanta, 30 percent lower than Chicago and 12 percent lower than Dallas. And Mobile earns a high livability score including outdoor activities, restaurants and the city's historical and international culture.
- Stuck in a city known for its infamous commutes? Swap to a city with low congestion – Mobile's commute time is lower than most major metros.
- Living in Mobile makes it easy to get to all the things that make the Gulf Coast great: one hour to the closest beach, two hours to Florida's famous "Emerald Coast" and two hours to New Orleans.
- Mobile is home to some 6,500 international residents (from Europe to Asia, and beyond) and global corporations representing 20-plus countries.

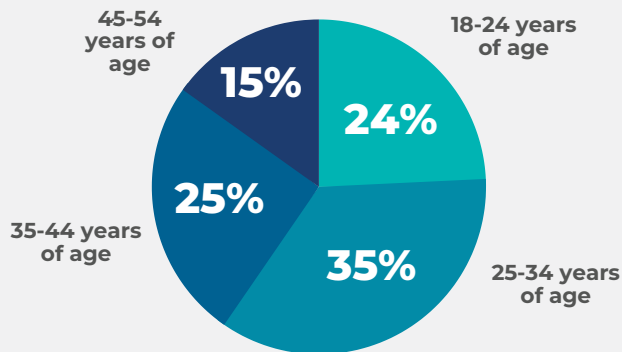
# MOBILE'S TALENT ATTRACTION SCORECARD

DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLOR'S INTERNATIONAL (DCI) MOBILE, ALABAMA TALENT SURVEY FINDINGS 2019

DCI's external talent survey consisted of seven focus groups, three in-depth interviews with human resource leaders and 1,206 respondents to an external online survey. The purpose was to determine key messages and develop a marketing strategy for talent attraction in Mobile. The results are as follows:

## THE PARTICIPANTS

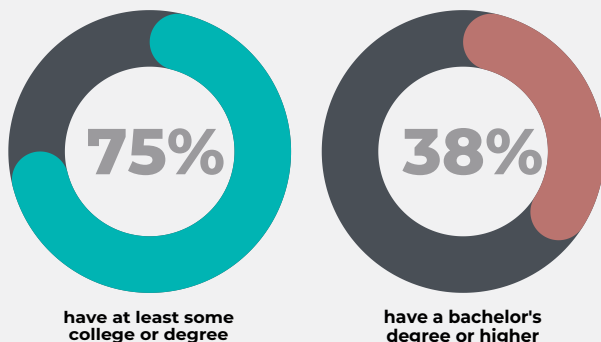
### AGE DISTRIBUTION



### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS



### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



## PERCEPTIONS OF MOBILE

**44% OF RESPONDENTS REPORT THEY ARE "SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR" OR "VERY FAMILIAR" WITH MOBILE.**

**WE ASKED WHAT INDUSTRY SECTORS DO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH MOBILE?**



**38%**  
oil & gas



**23%**  
healthcare



**22%**  
maritime



**21%**  
logistics/distribution



**17%**  
information technology



**17%**  
steel



**15%**  
chemical



**14%**  
aerospace

# MOBILE'S TALENT ATTRACTION SCORECARD

DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLOR'S INTERNATIONAL (DCI) MOBILE, ALABAMA TALENT SURVEY FINDINGS 2019

## RELOCATION

### WHAT TOOLS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL WHEN CONSIDERING A MOVE TO A NEW LOCATION?



**73%**

The chance to visit the location and see and experience it firsthand.



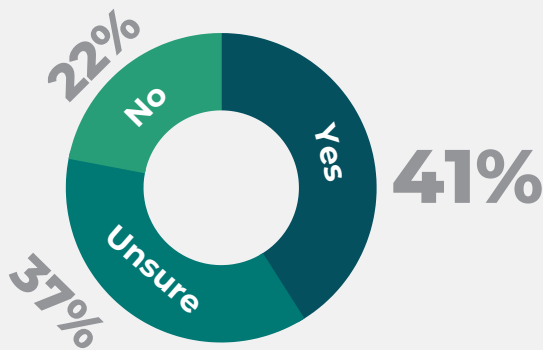
**59%**

Online resources with information on what it's like to live and work in the location under consideration.

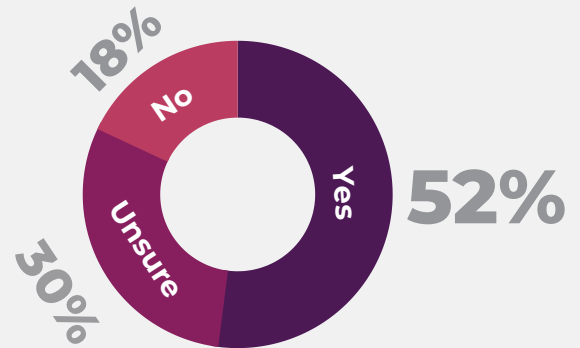


**58%**

Ability to talk with someone in your industry who is currently living and working in the location under consideration.

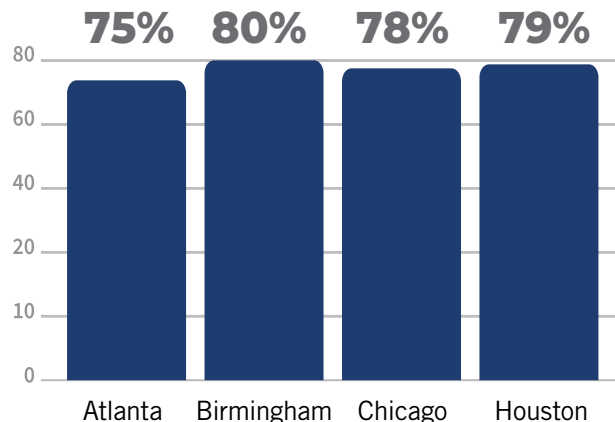
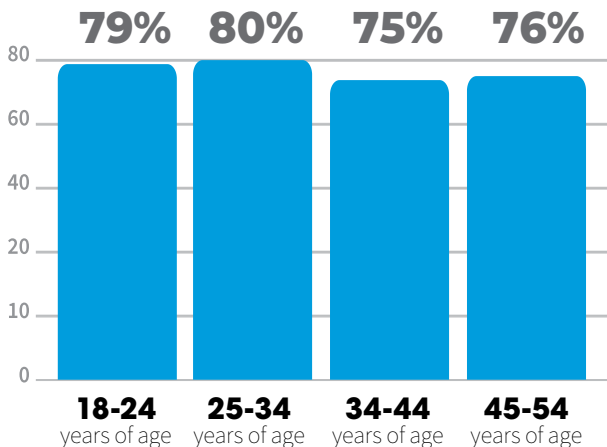


If a job opportunity that matched your skill and salary requirements was offered to you in Mobile, Ala., would you relocate there?



If you were offered a job that provided free training and allowed you to change your career path and/or upgrade your skills, would you relocate to Mobile, Ala. for this opportunity?

### WILLINGNESS TO RELOCATE BY AGE AND CITY (REPORTING 'YES' OR 'UNSURE')

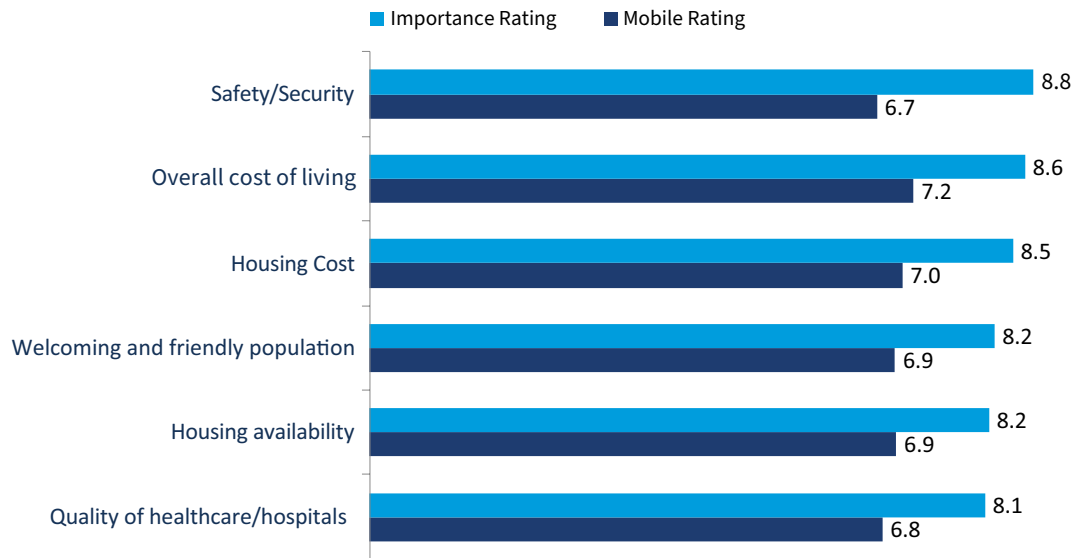


# MOBILE'S TALENT ATTRACTION SCORECARD

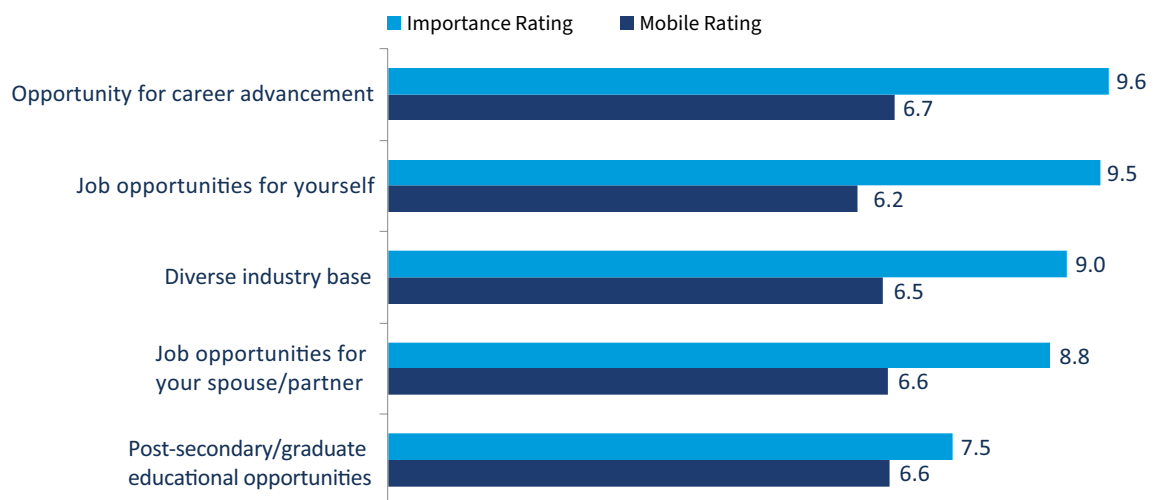
DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLOR'S INTERNATIONAL (DCI) MOBILE, ALABAMA TALENT SURVEY FINDINGS 2019

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS IN YOUR DECISION TO RELOCATE VERSUS RATING OF MOBILE



### IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS VERSUS RATING OF MOBILE



“Mobile’s rankings relative to their importance are strong...particularly among the factors that are of most importance to relocating talent. Often, DCI reports that how various communities rank in these factors tend to more unknown (with rankings falling more in the “5” or “6” range). While a community always wants to try to close the differential between their ratings and the importance of factors, this research shows that Mobile is working from a good, strong position and is viewed favorably on a number of relocation factors.” DCI





# MIA BRITTON

**Job Title:** Volunteer Coordinator

**Company:** City of Mobile Parks & Recreation Department

## **Why did you decide to move to Mobile?**

I came to Mobile in 2011 to study early childhood education at the University of South Alabama (USA). After I earned a degree in 2016, I returned home to Montgomery to teach. I was offered a graduate assistantship at USA in 2018 and started working on my master's degree in public administration.

## **What advice would you give someone looking to relocate here?**

Mobile is family-oriented and a melting pot of diverse cultures.

## **What are your favorite things about Mobile?**

The cost of living and the many opportunities for young adults. One might say education brought me here, but I believe the warm weather and beautiful beaches were the most convincing.

## **Before moving here, what are some things you researched about Mobile?**

I researched Mobile's culture, food and local organizations as well as local eateries. I loved the rich culture and history, youth-involved programs and weekend activities through city programs like LoDa ArtWalk and the local eateries. I'm a huge foodie.

## **Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

Montgomery, Ala.

## **Where did you live before you moved to Mobile?**

Montgomery, Ala.



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# CHRIS & STACIE HARTSFIELD

**Job Title (Chris):** Director of Business Development

**Company:** Campus Book Store

**Job Title (Stacie):** Realtor

**Company:** Bellator Real Estate & Development

## Why did you decide to move to Mobile?

We were offered the chance to move to Mobile to take over a textbook store within his company, so we jumped at the chance. We had visited here several times before, so we knew we already loved the city.

## What advice would you give someone looking to relocate here?

Don't just go by what others say and what you read about Mobile. Every city has its statistics that can sway you one way or another. Come here, experience it for a while and see how you feel about it then.

## What are your favorite things about Mobile?

Without question, the people. Mobilians are just a gracious and welcoming type of people. There is a warmth to almost everyone you meet here, and it can make you realize you found a long-term home that you didn't know you were looking for.

## Before moving here, what are some things you researched about Mobile?

We looked at so much before moving here: the school options, housing prices and of course proximity to the beach. We have always loved older and established cities, and Mobile has such a rich and diverse history we knew it would be a good fit. Also, we had really missed the Southern hospitality it offers and the warmth.

## Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Central Arkansas

## Where did you live before you moved to Mobile?

Lexington, Ky.





# WANDA JONES

**Job Title:** Assistant Professor of Chemistry

**Company:** University of Mobile

## **Why did you decide to move to Mobile?**

I moved to be closer to family here on the coast, career opportunities and involvement in local community organizations.

## **What advice would you give someone looking to relocate here?**

Get involved in organizations and churches in the area. Find out about the community's needs.

## **What are your favorite things about Mobile?**

I am involved in the Junior League of Mobile and the Mobile Foster Parent Association. I love being close to the Battleship, the beaches, Five Rivers Delta Resource Center and exploring Mobile's rich history, including Africatown and the Mobile Carnival Museum.

## **Before moving here, what are some things you researched about Mobile?**

The job market, housing market and things to do for people with families, churches and community organizations.

## **Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

Selma/Dallas County, Ala.

## **Where did you live before you moved to Mobile?**

Ithaca, N.Y., then Auburn, Ala.



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# DR. MARYANN IJEOMA MBAKA

**Job Title:** Trauma Surgeon/Assistant Professor of Surgery

**Company:** USA Health/University of South Alabama College of Medicine

## **Why did you decide to move to Mobile?**

To join the region's only level-one trauma center at USA Health University Hospital.

## **What advice would you give someone looking to relocate here?**

There are many options for real estate depending on your interest, so take your time to see which best suits your needs.

## **What are your favorite things about Mobile?**

Having a shorter commute due to less traffic.

## **Before moving here, what are some things you researched about Mobile?**

Running trails, ways my husband and I can get involved in the community, places to live and good restaurants.

## **Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I was born in Southeastern Nigeria, and moved to Houston at age 13.

## **Where did you live before you moved to Mobile?**

I have been blessed to live in different cities. The last city I lived in was Oakland, Calif.





# ERIC MICHAELS

**Job Title:** Founder/Owner

**Company:** FOTO ATM (At The Moment)

## **Why did you decide to move to Mobile?**

My fiancée, Andi Perdzock, and I desperately wanted to escape the never-ending winter of Chicago. Her parents moved to Mobile, which gave us the perfect opportunity to visit Mobile. It turned into a three-week stay. We went back to Chicago and put our house on the market.

**What advice would you give someone looking to relocate here?** If you like beautiful real estate, scenic drives, fun weekend trips and access to some of the most picturesque beaches, Mobile might be your place.

**What are your favorite things about Mobile?** We love the architecture and soul of the city. Our favorite walk is with our dog past the fountain in Washington Square on our way to our favorite neighborhood pub for live music and a cold beer.

**Before moving here, what are some things you researched about Mobile?** I'm a big fan of the great outdoors. Naturally, the weather was appealing but we also loved the fun vibe of the downtown area. We flip houses, so we saw a lot of potential here.

**Where were you born and where did you grow up?** Valparaiso, Ind.

**Where did you live before you moved to Mobile?** Chicago, Ill.







# FINN RODEN

**Job Title:** Chief Compliance Officer

**Company:** AutoMOBILE International Terminal (AIT)

## **Why did you decide to move to Mobile?**

I have a history with the Port of Mobile in a previous company/role, and I always enjoyed working with the Port of Mobile management and the affiliated terminals, stevedoring companies and vessel agencies. You can say I had a soft spot in my heart for Mobile from those experiences. And when the AutoMOBILE International Terminal (AIT) opportunity presented itself, it was an easy decision.

## **What advice would you give someone looking to relocate here?**

Consider it. Do it. For business, the growth factor is obvious. Alabama and Mobile are growing. The bay, the beaches and city development are something great to experience. I will have to wait until next year to give my report on the Mobile Mardi Gras.

## **What are your favorite things about Mobile?**

My wife and I love to be near the water. She is a beach lover, and I am a boat lover. Mobile Bay and Mobile's proximity to some beautiful beaches hit all the points for us. As we delve deeper into the area, we look forward to discovering new restaurants. I forgot to mention we are foodies as well.

## **Before moving here, what are some things you researched about Mobile?**

The business development climate of Mobile, and the state, was very important for me to research. The success of our AIT development is going to be a big part of my Mobile experience. It was obvious that the state, the city and area are keen to develop new businesses and help in a new business's success. The economic growth of Mobile is inevitable, and I am lucky to be a part of it.

## **Where were you born and where did you grow up?**

I was born in Ventura, Calif.

## **Where did you live before you moved to Mobile?**

Jacksonville, Fla.

# WHAT'S WORKING: HOW A FEW LOCAL COMPANIES ARE FINDING THE PEOPLE THEY NEED

As the Mobile Area Chamber is ramping up its talent attraction program and resources for area employers to help them fill open salaried positions, many local companies already have an

established playbook when it comes to keeping local folks here or recruiting from outside the region. The *Business View* editors spoke to several local human resource specialists to share their tips.



## JAMILA WILSON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER BASF

Jamila Wilson says BASF has a strong recruiting strategy, including relationships with area colleges. If she is attending a job fair in search of engineers, she makes sure a BASF engineer accompanies her. From an applicant's perspective, she knows they want to know everything they can that day and only someone in a similar position will be able to answer their questions.

Taking the time to make sure the candidate is the "right fit" for the company's culture is also important. Wilson looks for someone who believes in BASF's core values



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## CHAD VINSON

VICE PRESIDENT HUMAN RESOURCES  
HARGROVE ENGINEERS + CONSTRUCTORS

Two things Chad Vinson talks about related to Hargrove's recruiting efforts are community involvement through the company's foundation and employees having a stake in the company – big draws for today's workforce.



## BRITTANY STINSON

RECRUITING LEADER - EAST REGION  
HARGROVE ENGINEERS + CONSTRUCTORS

Brittany Stinson agrees the company culture is a huge selling point. She adds Hargrove works to promote from within and, when needed, asks employees to help find the right people to fill open positions. Technology-wise, LinkedIn and the company's website are the largest online platforms for advertising the jobs they have to fill.

## LIZ FREEMAN

PRESIDENT  
LONG'S HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

With the unique perspective of recruiting for clients and her own company, Liz Freeman says she takes every opportunity to be involved with the Chamber, especially with events. There she learns who she can connect potential applicants to for community resources, like housing, insurance, young professional groups and more.

The company also has an active internship program, which has proven successful in finding future employees who joined the Long's team.



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# PUT YOUR RETIREMENT TO WORK

by John Garrett, Edward Jones

U.S. workers are facing a growing dilemma: many are ill-prepared for retirement. The main reason is only about half of private sector workers are covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan, according to The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. For small business owners, sponsoring a retirement plan can seem overwhelming and expensive.

In an effort to raise the tide and incentivize business owners to establish a retirement plan, Congress passed the SECURE Act legislation (Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement) in December 2019 and put this comprehensive retirement and savings law into effect Jan. 1, 2020.

The law has several key provisions intended to enhance one's ability to save for retirement.

Of the more than 20 sections of the SECURE Act, a few of the key highlights include:

- Increase in age for required minimum distributions (RMDs) from 70½ to 72.
- Removal of the "stretch" IRA option for certain non-spouse beneficiaries
- Repeal of the maximum age for traditional IRA contributions.
- Additional uses of section 529 plans
- Tax credits for business retirement plans

Regarding the new tax credits for business retirement plans, the new law increases the maximum credit available to smaller businesses for establishing an employer plan from \$500 per

year to \$5,000 per year and modified the calculation of the dollar limit of the credit. The credit still applies to 50 percent of the plan's qualifying administrative and retirement education expenses for each of the first three years of the plan. A new tax credit of \$500 is also available for some smaller employers who set up automatic enrollment in their plans.

One additional benefit to small businesses is a company-sponsored retirement plan helps attract and retain quality employees. This can play a significant role in a candidate's decision for where they choose to work.

Partnering with a CPA or a financial advisor allows small business owners to establish a retirement plan efficiently and legally. Utilizing those relationships or an attorney or HR provider will help owners maximize the benefits they provide under the SECURE Act.



Garrett

## ABOUT THE EXPERT

*John Garrett is a financial advisor for Edward Jones. He can be reached at 251.431.9869. Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.*

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## INVESTOR FOCUS

# COWLES, MURPHY, GLOVER & ASSOCIATES INC.

*The Alabama Steel Terminal (pictured above) was designed by Cowles, Murphy, Glover & Associates.*

**Company officials:** Gary Cowles, president; David Murphy, vice president; John Glover, secretary

**Address:** 457 St. Michael St., Mobile

**Number of employees:** 15

**Website:** cmg-a.com

**Years in business:** 20

**Brief company description:** Cowles, Murphy, Glover & Associates (CMG) is a full-service engineering firm offering services for industrial and commercial clients.

CMG has combined experience in marine applications, material handling, rail design, commercial and industrial buildings, shipyard facilities, heavy lift and rigging, hoisting and hauling equipment design; mechanical, electrical and plumbing; and civil site development. CMG is located in Mobile, LaGrange, Ga., and Memphis, Tenn., and provides engineering services across the Southeast and throughout the world.

Cowles and Murphy Engineering was established in March 2000 by Gary Cowles and David Murphy. In 2002, the firm became Cowles, Murphy, Glover and Associates with the addition of John Glover. Scott Fletcher became a shareholder January 2019.

**Why do you support the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's Partners for Growth Initiative?** "In order to assist the economic community and to promote the favorable benefits for businesses in the area," said Cowles.

**How long have you been a continuous Mobile Area Chamber Member?** Since 2001

### About Partners For Growth:

Growing Global, Investing Local 2018-2022, Partners For Growth is a five-year, public-private initiative of the



Mobile Area Chamber, to grow and diversify Mobile's economy. Its five pillars include: 1) new business recruitment and investment attraction; 2) existing industry support, innovation and entrepreneurship; 3) workforce attraction, retention and development; 4) diverse business development; and 5) business advocacy and quality of place.

Join the Chamber's economic development investors by contacting David Rodgers, vice president, economic development, at 251.431.8657 or [drodgers@mobilechamber.com](mailto:drodgers@mobilechamber.com).

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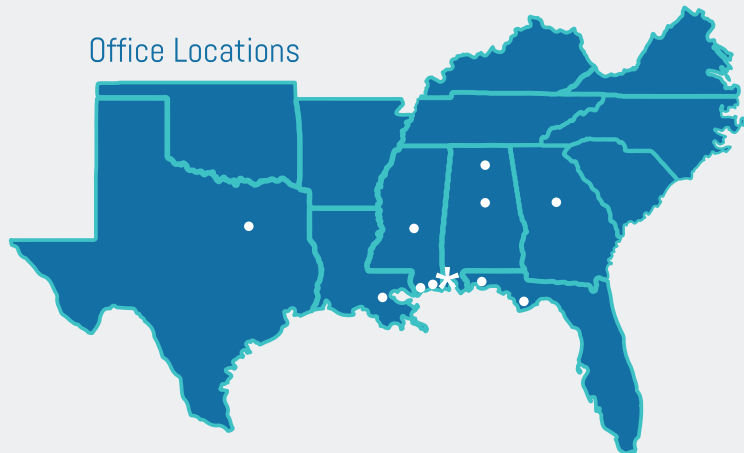
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## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

# MARCUS PEZENT

### BASF CORP.

**TITLE:** Site Director

**HOMETOWN:** Jackson, Ala.

**EDUCATION:** Master's degree in mechanical engineering from The University of Alabama

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:** Pezent has worked for BASF for more than 20 years, holding several positions: interim site manager of BASF's McIntosh facility; team leader for the environmental, health and safety group; production manager in operation and site infrastructure; site director in Texas and Canada; and most recently, production director at the Geismar facility.

**PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Pezent worked in the United States, Canada and Europe to implement solutions for optimizing and transforming organizations and systems.

**SECRET TO SUCCESS:** Having a great team, hard work and determination.

**WHAT WORD WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF?** Thankful.

**WHAT IS YOUR PASSION?** My personal passion is education. I value it for my family as well as our community. At work, my passion is the safety of our employees and contractors.

**WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST USEFUL THINGS YOU OWN?** My tractor.

**ASIDE FROM NECESSITIES, WHAT ONE THING COULD YOU NOT GO A DAY WITHOUT?** Reading.

**WHAT QUALITY DO YOU MOST LIKE IN PEOPLE?** Curious about why things happen and humble.

**BEST PLACE TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL?** Home.

**BEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?** Helping people develop in their professional lives.

**BRIEF COMPANY DESCRIPTION:** BASF works to create chemistry for a sustainable future by combining economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. The company portfolio is organized into six segments: chemicals, materials, industrial solutions, surface technologies, nutrition and care, and agricultural solutions.

BASF Corp., headquartered in Florham Park, N.J., is the North American affiliate of BASF SE, Ludwigshaven, Germany. BASF has approximately 17,000 employees in North America and sales of \$18.7 billion in 2020. For more information about BASF's North American operations, visit [basf.com/us](https://www.basf.com/us).





## TODD S. KENNEDY

### PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

**Kennedy** is president of Providence Hospital, where he previously served as executive vice president and chief operating officer. Before coming to Mobile, Kennedy served as president and chief operating officer of St. Vincent's East in Birmingham. Kennedy received a master's degree in health administration and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He also earned a bachelor's degree in health administration from Auburn University. Providence Hospital is a Partners for Growth Investor.

## CLAYTON LEGEAR

### MERCHANTS & MARINE BANK

**Legear** is president and CEO of Pascagoula, Miss.-based Merchants & Marine Bank (M&M Bank) and the bank's holding company, Merchants & Marine Bancorp Inc. He joined the bank in 2011. Previously, Legear served with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Troy University and is a graduate of the Graduate School of Banking of the South at Louisiana State University. Legear is an alumnus of Leadership Jackson County and Leadership Mississippi. He has also been recognized as one of the Top 10 Business Leaders Under 40 by the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce. He is active in the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce (chairman of the board), Gulf Coast Business Council (director), United Way of Jackson and George County (vice president/treasurer), Pascagoula Rotary Club, East Central Men's Club and the Mississippi Bankers Association.



## PHILLIP H. RIVERS

### WARREN AVERETT LLC

**Rivers** leads the Mobile office of Warren Averett LLC. He has more than 15 years of accounting experience in a wide range of industries including real estate, healthcare, financial services, manufacturing and transportation. He specializes in complex accounting and auditing matters for his clients, providing internal control reviews, due diligence and debt issuances as well as assisting with mergers, acquisitions and spinoffs. Rivers joined Warren Averett in 2012, after 11 years with a national firm. He earned a bachelor's degree in business (accounting) and master's in business administration from Troy University, and is a member of the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

# CHAMBER AT WORK

## **CHAMBER LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES SIGNED INTO LAW**

Within the first two weeks of the legislative session, several of the Chamber's items from the 2021 Legislative Agenda were already addressed.

Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law the economic development incentives bill (HB 192), COVID-19 liability protection (SB 30) and the CARES Act income tax exemption (HB 170).

The Chamber continues to advocate for the renewal of the Alabama Historic Tax Credit with statewide partners.

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAMS – ONE GRADUATES, ONE RETURNS**

Eleven companies graduated from the inaugural Roadmap for Growth (RFG) high-level training for small businesses owners. The RFG training was initiated to replace the U.S. Small Business Administration's Emerging Leaders program that was canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the fourth year, the Emerging Leaders program selected Mobile as a site for 2021. Participants were interviewed in March, and this year's class will be announced this month. The seven-month program runs from April 6 to Oct. 19.

## **NEW ADVISORS NAMED**

Five companies recently joined the Chamber's Board of Advisors. They are: Affordable Homes Gulf Coast, BankPlus, PowerSouth Energy, Smash My Trash and The Orthopaedic Group. To date there are 262 members. To learn more about this exclusive group of members, contact Shelly Mattingly at smattingly@mobilechamber.com or 251.431.8655.

## **CHAMBER HOSTS QUARTERLY NETWORKING**

**IN-PERSON** The Chamber's latest Coffee with the Chamber, sponsored by S&S Sprinkler, was held at Hank Aaron Stadium by the Mobile Sports and Entertainment Group. This event provides attendees the opportunity to network before work.

## **RECENT RIBBON CUTTINGS**

Chamber staff and ambassadors helped cut ribbons and celebrate grand openings at Nothing Bundt Cakes, Profile and Royalty Ave Boutique. For more information on how the Chamber can assist with your event, contact Carolyn Golson at cgolson@mobilechamber.com or 251.431.8622.

## **CHAMBER HOSTS SERIES WITH GOOGLE**

The Chamber's Small Business Development department hosted a series of Google webinars that concluded in March. The free virtual webinars presented some of the many Google tools and the ways small businesses can take advantage of them to improve their online presence. More than 200 participants took advantage of the series.

## **SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL INCREASES MEETINGS**

To meet the demand of its clients and members, the Small Business Council changed from quarterly meetings to monthly Zoom meetings. During the January meeting, Brent McMahan, senior area manager, U.S. Small Business Administration, discussed the new or revised provisions to the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program found in the CARES Act 2.

## **GROWTH ALLIANCE TASK FORCE MEETS**

The Chamber's Growth Alliance Task Force, supporting minority members, held their monthly meeting. Cynthia Nelms, vice president planning and contracts, Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE), talked about the Existing Industry and Training Program (EITP) Grant, a program through SWAPTE that provides grant-funding assistance to businesses to provide new or upgraded skills training to employees.

## **CHAMBER HOSTS SESSIONS ON COVID**

The Chamber hosted two Zoom calls on COVID 19-related topics as a benefit of membership. The first session was on "The Vaccine and Returning to the Workplace – How are Companies Planning to Deal with Virtual Employees Returning to the Workplace?" and the second was a presentation by the Mobile County Health Department with a timeline on COVID-19 vaccines and priorities in Mobile County.

## **RESCHEDULED EVENTS**

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the Chamber's Annual Meeting was rescheduled to Thursday, May 27. All previously purchased tickets will be honored.

Out of an abundance of caution, the Business Expo also was rescheduled for Thursday, Aug. 19.



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# APRIL 2021

Note: Watch the Mobile Area Chamber's website, [web.mobilechamber.com/events](http://web.mobilechamber.com/events), and our social media channels for updates as we continue to balance in-person and virtual events.

## 8 MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

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

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

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

**Contact:** Carolyn Golson at 251.431.8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com)

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## 15 MEMBERSHIP 101

*\*Members Only*

**VIA ZOOM:** Meet other members and Chamber staff virtually to learn more ways to benefit from your membership.

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

**Contact:** Carolyn Golson at 251.431.8622 or [cgolson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cgolson@mobilechamber.com)

Registration requested for Zoom meeting code.

## 20 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE

*\*Members Only*

**VIA ZOOM:** A monthly forum for Chamber-member small business owners and managers featuring speakers on important business topics.

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

**Speaker:** Dr. Rendi Murphree, Mobile County Health Department

**Topic:** COVID-19 Update

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

Registration requested for Zoom meeting code.

**Sponsor:** BancorpSouth

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■  
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at 251.431.8606 or  
[cwilson@mobilechamber.com](mailto:cwilson@mobilechamber.com)

Meeting Presented By



## WHO'S NEW

### Austal USA Appoints Koblas VP



Koblas

**Sandra Koblas** was appointed vice president of human resources at **Austal USA**. She previously served as director of human resources for the past eight years. Koblas earned a bachelor's degree in human resources from the University of South Alabama.

### Crow Shields Bailey Announces Promotions



Sokom



Bunting



Finnorn



Ledbetter

**Kirsten Sokom** was promoted to manager in the audit department. **Brooke Bunting**, **Andrew Finnorn** and **Sarah Ledbetter** were all promoted to senior accountant.

### New Agents Join Bellator Real Estate & Development



Beeco



Horn



Meherg



Morris



Saia



Valdez

**Bellator Real Estate & Development** added seven Realtors: **Susan Beeco**, **Stefani Horn**, **Jason Meherg**, **Ann Mitchell**, **Viktoria Morris**, **Danna Saia** and **Lacy Valdez**.

### Two Local Attorneys Named Partners at Burr & Forman LLP



Burns



Killion

**Burr & Forman LLP** elected nine attorneys to partnership. In Mobile, **Christine**

**Burns**, who practices in the firm's tort, trial and insurance practice section (TIPS), and **Emily Killion**, who practices in the area of labor and employment, are among the nine new partners.

### Roberts Brothers Adds Realtors



Cochran



deLeon



Eldridge



Sara Pate



Summer Pate



Quinley



Rathle



Reid



Sides

**Sam Cochran**, **Cole deLeon**, **Sandra Eldridge**, **Sara Pate**, **Summer Pate**, **Catherine Quinley**, **Grainger Rathle**, **Caren Reid** and **Meagan Sides** joined **Roberts Brothers**.

### Port Authority Announces Management Changes



Frisher



Adams



Inge

**Beth Ann Frisher** joined the Alabama State Port Authority senior management team as the chief commercial officer. Frisher earned a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a master's degree in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Judith Adams** is now vice president of internal/external affairs for the Port Authority. She will continue to manage community and public affairs, internal and external communications.

**Bill Inge**, vice president of general cargo and intermodal operations, will add the Theodore Terminals and operating lease terminals management to his portfolio of responsibilities.

### Harris Joins Johnstone Adams



Harris

**Mark E. Harris** joined **Johnstone Adams LLC**, where he practices business and corporate law. Harris earned a law degree and a master's degree in business administration from The University of Alabama. He also holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Southern Mississippi.

### Woddail Becomes Assistant VP at River Bank & Trust

**Chad Woddail** joined **River Bank & Trust** as assistant vice president and relationship manager. Woddail, a seasoned banker, earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and finance from the University of South Alabama.

### BSCC Introduces Volleyball Coach



Keshock

**Bishop State Community College** hired **Nicole Keshock** as the head coach of the college's first-ever volleyball program. Keshock earned a bachelor's degree in communications and a master's degree in sport management from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.

### IXL Real Estate Grows Team



Conner



Porter



Seaborn



Smith

**iXL Real Estate** hired agents **Paola Conner**, **Jerry** and **Julia Porter**, **Tresha Seaborn** and **Rebecca Smith**.

## BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

### New Gynecology Division Created for Adolescents

**USA Health's** department of obstetrics and gynecology recently added a pediatric and adolescent gynecology division. The first of its kind in Mobile and Baldwin counties, the new division creates a more comfortable environment for girls seeking preventative and routine care or treatment for gynecologic issues. Patients may also receive sexual health education.

Doctors **Nicolette Holliday** and **Tracy Roth**, both obstetrician-gynecologists and educators of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, lead the division. Pediatric and adolescent patients will be seen at USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital on the fourth floor.

## Hargrove Opens Office In Texas

Mobile-based **Hargrove Engineers + Constructors** expanded its Gulf Coast presence with a new office in Houston to support the company's clients in the oil and gas, refining, chemical and manufacturing industries, as well as other industrial sectors in the area. The Houston office is Hargrove's 16<sup>th</sup> full-service operation, with 15 domestic offices and one international.

## Mobile County Commission Approves Two Building Projects

The Mobile County Commission approved \$350,000 toward two building projects at **Bishop State Community College**, with \$250,000 going toward the naming rights for the Advanced Manufacturing Center Lecture Hall and \$100,000 for naming rights to the Health Sciences Facility Nursing Simulation Suite.

The lecture hall will be accessible to Bishop State students, faculty and staff as well as industries, businesses and the community. The 1,150-square-foot nursing simulation suite will include state-of-the-art simulators to give students a world-class experience in treating patients and solving complex problems. Construction on both projects is scheduled to be completed in the fall.

## Goodwyn Mills Cawood Opens New Department

**Goodwyn Mills Cawood** has a new, stand alone disaster recovery department led by Executive Vice President **Robert Ramsey**. GMC's disaster recovery team helps communities navigate the response planning process, including assistance in pre-disaster planning and more.

## WELL DONE

### Tunnell Elected Commission Chair



Tunnell

The **USS ALABAMA Battleship Commission** elected **Bill Tunnell** to serve as commission chairman for the upcoming term, expiring in 2022. Tunnell previously served as the executive director of Battleship Memorial Park until 2016.

Other elected officers include **W. Terrance Ankerson**, vice chairman; **Herbert J. Malone Jr.**, commission secretary; and **Robert Jaques**, commission treasurer.

## Two Johnstone Adams Partners Included in Super Lawyers List



Collins



Welch

**Celia J. Collins** of **Johnstone Adams LLC** was selected to the 2020

Mid-South Super

Lawyers list in the employment and labor law category. Additionally, attorney **Jessica L. Welch** was selected to the 2020 Mid-South Rising Stars in the category of business and corporate law. The Super Lawyers rating service is determined from more than 70 practice areas by those who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement.

In other news, Johnstone Adams LLC was included in the 2021 *U.S. News* – Best Lawyers “Best Law Firms” list regionally in 12 practice areas. Firms included in this list are recognized for professional excellence with persistently impressive ratings from clients and peers.

## Coker Named Associate Director at Alabama Banking School



Coker

**ServisFirst Bank** Mobile Vice President, Private Banking Officer **Sherry Coker** was selected as associate director for the Alabama Banking School (ABS).

Coker will serve a term of two years. Organized in 1975 and sponsored by the Alabama Bankers Association, ABS provides a planned environment for the study of banking tailored to the needs of Alabama banks.

## Boteler and Richardson Named 2020 Super Lawyers



Boteler



Richardson

**Boteler Richardson Wolfe** partners **Knox Boteler** and **Mat**

**Richardson**

were selected to the 2020 Mid-South Super Lawyers list. Representing fewer than 5 percent of attorneys in Alabama, the Super Lawyers list reflects a highly competitive peer-driven recognition.

## ASMS Seniors Named National Merit Finalists

Ten percent of the seniors in the **Alabama School of Mathematics and Science (ASMS)** Class of 2021 were named National Merit Finalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corp., for a total of seven students in all – a significantly high number compared to other high schools of similar size. These students are in the top 1 percent of high school seniors in the nation.

# CONGRATULATIONS

## BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF SOUTH ALABAMA

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**Todd L. Denison**  
*Phelps Dunbar, LLP*

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF SOUTH ALABAMA



## Spring Hill College Nursing Division Awarded Another #1 Ranking

The **Spring Hill College** nursing division was awarded another number one ranking as the top bachelor of science of nursing (BSN) program in the state of Alabama, according to RNCareers.org, in its 6<sup>th</sup> annual nursing school report. RNCareers.org is independently published by a team of nurse educators, nurse practitioners, RNs and LPNs.

## Wesley Carpenter Listed Among 'Top 40 Advisors Under 40'



**Merrill Lynch Wealth Management** Financial Advisor **S. Wesley Carpenter** was named to the 2021 Financial Planning "Top 40 Advisors Under 40" list. Carpenter is a senior

vice president and senior resident director-wealth management advisor at Merrill Lynch.

## COMMUNITY

### Alabama Power Awards 'Students to Stewards' Grants

Six Alabama public schools students received conservation education grants through the **Alabama Power Foundation's** "Students to Stewards" initiative. The grants promote environmental stewardship, sustainability and education. They can be used for a variety of environmental education-related projects, including in-school and field learning, outdoor classrooms and teacher training.

Mobile County's Alma Bryant High School was among the six.

Submission deadline for Member News is two months prior to publication. News releases should be one or two brief paragraphs. Photos must be professional headshots labeled with the person's first and last name, and must be 300 dpi at full size and saved in an eps, tiff or jpg format. Send your information to [news@mobilechamber.com](mailto:news@mobilechamber.com)

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## ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER

### TONI RIALES

Toni Riales is a commercial photographer with a studio located in Mobile. After starting out in radio, she became a fashion photographer who now has 20 years of professional photography experience. She works with local, regional and national magazines for fashion editorial; shoots commercial, food and product photography for small and large businesses; and creates portfolios for modeling agencies across the country. Her work has been featured in magazines including *Mobile Bay*, *Cliché Los Angeles*, *Fashion Chicago*, *EnVie Tokyo* and *Vogue Italia*, as well as numerous others. With the help of Dana Lee Davis, photo assistant, Toni's work is featured on the cover, as well as the Small Business of the Month story on page 10. To see more of Riales' portfolio, visit [toniriales.com](http://toniriales.com).

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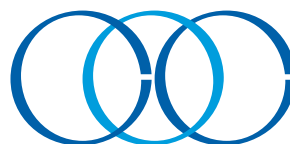
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