

# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE CHAMBER

OCTOBER 2022



## EAGLE AWARD WINNERS

SPOTLIGHT ON NORTH  
MOBILE COUNTY

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# BUSINESSVIEW

MOBILE CHAMBER

OCTOBER 2022



## 16 ON THE COVER:

Robert and Maxine Bryant, owners of Leaf and Petal Florist, are 2022 Eagle Award Hall of Fame winners. Read more about the program and all the winners on pages 16-22. Photo by LA Fotographee.



6



34



42

## IN THE ISSUE

- 6 News from Continental Aerospace Technologies, Canfor Southern Pine, Thompson Engineering and Mobile County Health Department
- 12 Small Business of the Month: Rock and Roll Offs
- 14 Mobile Honors Naturalist E.O. Wilson
- 16 Eagle Award Winners and the Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate
- 25 Spotlight on North Mobile
- 31 Partners for Growth V 2023-2027: Funding Economic Development
- 34 Member Spotlight: Alabama School of Math and Science
- 37 Executive Profile: Ellen Praytor Faulkner, Lewis Communications
- 38 Board of Advisors
- 40 Ribbon Cuttings
- 41 Chamber Welcomes New Staff
- 42 Chamber at Work
- 45 Around Town
- 46 Calendar
- 48 Member News

## ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

### A QUARTER CENTURY OF MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Bradley Byrne, Mobile Chamber President and CEO

For more than 25 years, the Mobile Chamber has recognized minority-owned companies through its prestigious Eagle Awards.

Over those years, we have celebrated more than 100 Eagle Award winners, four Hall of Fame winners, and more than 19 companies have been recognized as Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocates.

To say I am proud of the outreach and the way this Chamber has recognized its members through its many awards would be an understatement. Any size company that qualifies may be nominated – or nominate itself – to be in consideration for one of these many award recognitions.

This year's small business winners are an exceptional group from various industries, but all share a passion for

helping the community in which they live, and that is admirable.

Also, in this issue is a look at the cities north of Mobile – Saraland, Satsuma, Chickasaw and Prichard. Did you know the city of Chickasaw is celebrating 75 years as a city, or that water activities abound with these cities being close to the Mobile Delta?

When we at the Mobile Chamber talk about success, some of these northern neighbors have been instrumental in our effort to create industrial growth in our area and grow our economy.

A rising tide raises all boats, so what's good for our area is good for us all.

# CONTINENTAL AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGIES INVESTING IN FUTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



Continental, a subsidiary of Continental Aerospace Technologies Holding Limited, pledged to invest more funding in 2023 to accelerate product research and development. As a result, the global organization promised to increase its research and development investment commitment by 250 percent compared to previous years. This future funding launches Continental's renewed commitment to fulfilling the company's vision.

"While Continental has made great progress in recent years to continuously innovate our piston engines and engine components, we are ready to accelerate the R&D dedicated to future technological advances in our industry," said **Karen Hong**, CEO and president of Continental. "By investing the time and resources now, we are also preparing for the future of general aviation, which could look vastly different from today."

Continental's investment plans are designed to focus on current AvGas and Jet-A piston engine applications, future engine designs and applications, and sustainable/alternative fuels.

"Of course, we cannot share any projects that our airframe partners have not publicly announced, but I assure you that our global engineering teams are dedicated to providing innovative powerplant options that exceed our customers' expectations," said **Dr. David Dörner**, vice president of global research and development.

**By investing the time and resources now, we are also preparing for the future of general aviation, which could look vastly different from today."**

**Karen Hong**, CEO and President of Continental

Even though this renewed financial commitment is for 2023, Continental is already executing the accelerated multi-year R&D approach.

# CANFOR SOUTHERN PINE INVESTING \$210 MILLION FOR NEW FACILITY



Canfor Southern Pine Inc. is developing a new, state-of-the-art sawmill complex for manufacturing and processing wood products off Highway 43 in Axis, Ala., replacing its existing facility within the city limits of Mobile.

The nearly \$210 million investment will allow the company to retain 124 jobs in a modern work environment.

“This expansion reinforces Canfor’s commitment to the Mobile area, this community and their local workforce,” said Mobile Chamber President and CEO **Bradley Byrne**. “We’re grateful they’ve chosen to continue investing in our local economy. Canfor is an outstanding employer with a strong track record as a community partner.”

“Building on Canfor’s proud operating history in Alabama, we are excited to invest in a new world-class facility that will ensure our long-term ability to operate competitively,” said **Don Kayne**, Canfor Corp. president and CEO. “In addition, the facility’s versatility and flexibility will enhance our ability to more closely align our production of high-quality products with market demand.”

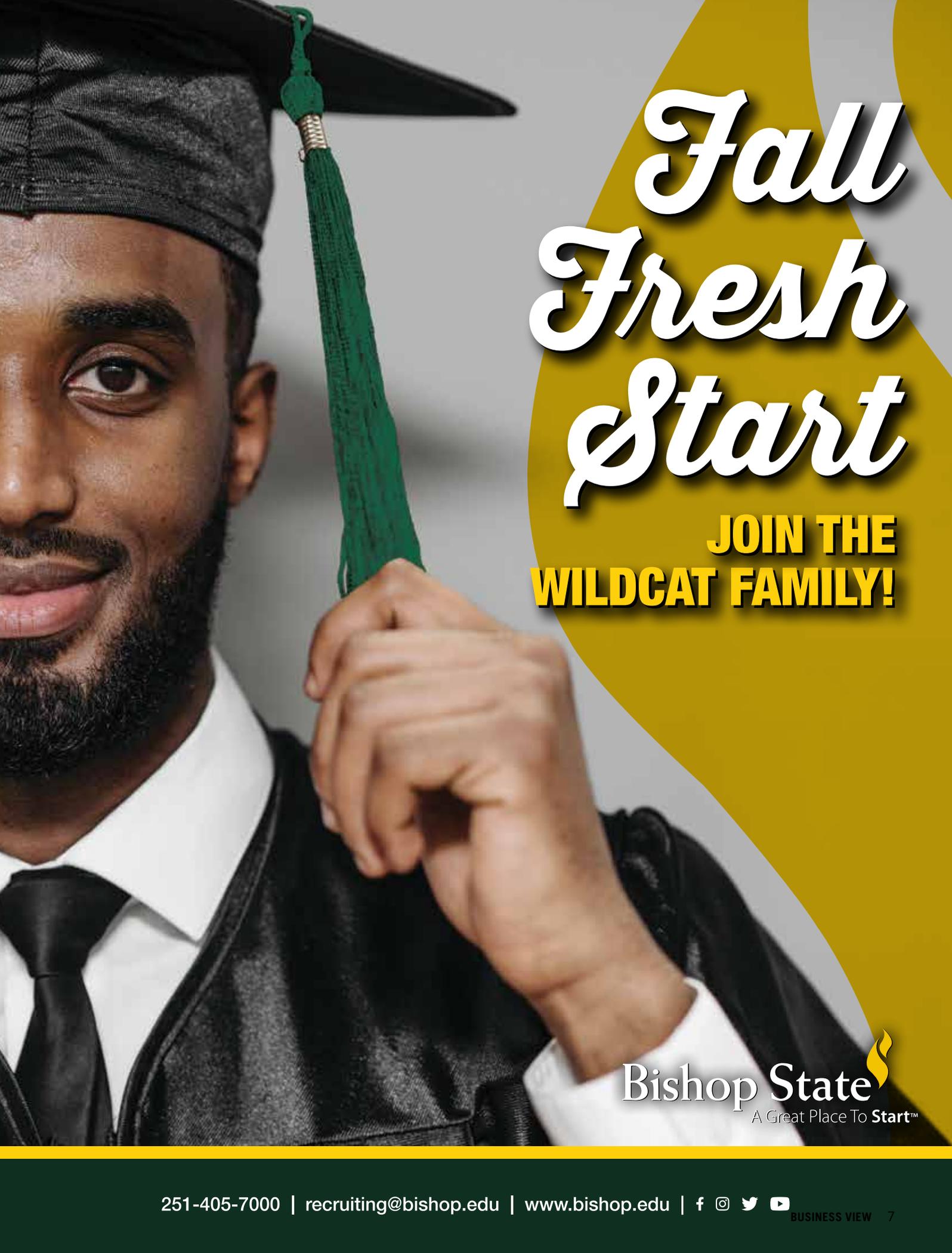
Using leading technology, the new sawmill will have an annual production capacity of 250-million board feet. The facility’s

design also includes investments in a biomass-fueled lumber drying system to help the company meet sustainability and decarbonization goals.

“We greatly value our employees and are committed to providing family-supporting jobs and generating economic activity in the region,” said **Tony Sheffield**, Canfor Southern Pine president. “We are pleased to be transforming the workplace for our employees by providing a new, modern facility that will continue to operate for generations.”

“The expansion of Canfor is a strategic investment in the community, sawmill industry and economy of south Alabama,” said Alabama **Gov. Kay Ivey**. “As one of the most heavily forested states in the nation, Alabama has ample opportunity to attract significant new capital investment in the forest industry, and it’s apparent we’re doing just that. Mobile – and all of Alabama – has been proud to be the host of Canfor’s U.S. headquarters, and we look forward to seeing their continued, nationwide success after this highly anticipated and much-needed facility growth.”

Canfor expects the new facility to be open by the third quarter of 2024.



# Fall Fresh Start

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# THOMPSON ENGINEERING ACQUIRES BKI'S ALABAMA OPERATIONS



*Pictured are seven of the 12 new employees working from the Tuscaloosa office (from left to right): Craig Williams PE; Sealy Lindsey; Danna Mills; Ed Henderson PE; Clay Randolph PE; Josh Rogers PE; and Alex Kirkland PE.*

Thompson Engineering, a multi-disciplined engineering firm with offices in eight southeastern states, announced it has acquired Burk-Kleinpeter Inc.'s (BKI) Alabama operations.

Burk-Kleinpeter Inc. is a multi-disciplined engineering and planning firm headquartered in New Orleans. For more than a century, BKI has provided engineering and planning services for major transportation, flood protection, water, sewer, drainage and other infrastructure projects that help reshape communities.

The acquisition is an important step in Thompson Engineering's plan to expand services across the Southeast and strengthens Thompson's capabilities in municipal infrastructure, site development, roadway/bridge design and construction engineering and inspection services.

"We're excited to welcome a talented group of engineering professionals and construction inspectors to our team," said **John Baker**, Thompson Engineering CEO. "This acquisition

further strengthens Thompson Engineering's reputation as the go-to firm for transportation and civil infrastructure design and construction solutions. We're equally excited about the expansion of our geotechnical, environmental, building envelope and structural services into a new region in Alabama."

The acquisition includes an office in Tuscaloosa with 12 employees but does not include BKI's Louisiana operations.

"Burk-Kleinpeter Inc. is currently going through a transition to strengthen our Louisiana operations. This strategic acquisition ensures that our faithful employees in Alabama will be able to continue to provide the same high level of services that our clients have come to expect," said BKI President **Michael Chopin**. "We are excited for the staff making this transition and the opportunities that lie ahead for them."



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# MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT FAMILY HEALTH RECEIVES FEDERAL FUNDING

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), awarded nearly \$90 million in American Rescue Plan funding to almost 1,400 community health centers across the country to advance health equity through better data collection and reporting.

**Family Health**, the primary care division of the **Mobile County Health Department (MCHD/FH)**, received a portion of the \$1.048 million shared among 16 community health centers in Alabama.

Since 1979, Family Health has provided comprehensive primary care to the people of Mobile County regardless of their ability to pay for services. MCHD/FH has 10 permanent service delivery sites in Mobile County and one site in Baldwin County. They are strategically located for maximum population reach and access to care.

Funding supports a data modernization effort aimed at better identifying and responding to the specific needs of patients and communities through improving data quality; advancing COVID-19 response, mitigation, and recovery efforts; and helping prepare for future public health emergencies.

HRSA's initiative is designed to enable health centers to have better data on patient health status and social determinants of health. With better information, programs can tailor their efforts to improve health outcomes and advance health equity by more precisely targeting the needs of specific communities or patients, particularly as part of the public health emergency response.

These awards will help strengthen efforts to eliminate inequities in COVID-19 care and outcomes within communities of color and other underserved populations. The nearly \$90 million in funding announced in August also builds on the \$7.6 billion invested over the past year from President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan to strengthen the health center workforce, renovate facilities and equip them with essential COVID-19 medical supplies.

"We have prioritized advancing equity in our COVID-19 response and throughout all of our work," said HHS Secretary **Xavier Becerra**. "Community health centers have played a pivotal role in the nation's COVID-19 response, and now serve more than 30-million people across the country. Today's investments will help ensure that all patients have equitable access to the high-quality health care they deserve."



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# A FAMILY BUSINESS THAT KEEPS IT CLEAN



Rocky Fremin and her son, Hunter Rodriguez, started Rock & Roll Offs as an extension of its already established commercial property companies.

The success of events in the south is often judged as much by the amount of fun the attendees have as the amount of trash littering the grounds or the quantity — and quality — of the bathrooms on premises. And despite its name, **Rock & Roll Offs** has nothing to do with performances on a stage but everything to do with the rest.

The company, founded under the title The Can Man in 2019, is the Mobile Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

A family business through and through, Rock & Roll Offs is owned and operated by **Rocky Fremin** and her son, **Hunter**. But it's not their first business together. Under the umbrella Fremin Ventures LLC, the two have run the commercial property company, FCS Facility Maintenance and FCS Property Services, which clears land and demolishes structures. Through that company, there was a constant need for dumpsters, which Fremin had to rent, until a better opportunity presented itself.

"We were doing work for the city of Mobile and had to address the budget and the cost of renting dumpsters, which really ate into our budget," Rocky Fremin said. "And Hunter said, 'Mama, we should think about getting into the dumpster business.'"

They parlayed that idea into Rock & Roll Offs, which didn't get its name from its owner or the family's love of soaring guitar riffs, but from the fact that after it was founded, the Fremins expanded the business to include dump trucks, which often carry stone.

"In the beginning of 2019 we purchased our first truck and six dumpsters," Fremin said. "And by the end of 2019, we had two trucks and almost 70 dumpsters."

Add to that a fleet of portable toilets, and the hard work continues to equal success — all with the two owners, an office manager and four full-time drivers.

It's the human waste removal that's still a growth opportunity for Rock & Roll Offs,

as Fremin said next year they will be expanding into executive bathroom trailers, which are air conditioned and offer the same usage as a comfortable water closet at home.

The family loves to support the community which has supported them, and Rocky said that manifests each year in the participation of the company and its employees in Coastal Cleanup, to which they donate dumpsters and boots on the ground collecting trash. Rock & Roll Offs also donates food items to those who need them, as well as school supplies.

“At least once a month, we are at some charitable event,” Fremin said.

The family is wired to do things differently, and that goes all the way to the naming of their trucks and drivers, who are called



Rangers. The trucks are named with dates like Ranger 1791 or 1787, Fremin said, referencing events that occurred in United States history.

“We want to stand out and make it fun for our drivers,” she said.

**COMPANY NAME:** Rock & Roll Offs  
**OWNER:** Rocky Fremin and Hunter Rodriguez  
**PHONE:** 251.645.2826  
**WEBSITE:** mobdumpsterrental.com  
**LOCATION:** 1401 Schillinger Rd N, Semmes

*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.*

# State of the Economy

**Thursday, December 1**

8:30 a.m. (Doors open at 8 a.m.)

Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa  
 Moonlight Ballroom

**Keynote Speaker:**

**Annie Baxter**

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# MOBILE HONORS NATURALIST E.O. WILSON

Alabama native **Edward Osborne (E.O.) Wilson**, a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning biologist, naturalist and writer, transformed his field of research on the behavior of ants. He applied his scientific perspective and experience to illuminate the human circumstance, including human origins, human nature and human interactions.

Wilson was born in Birmingham in 1929, but he spent several of his formative years in the Mobile area, where he researched nature. That's where his lifelong fascination with insects began. When Wilson was still in high school, he discovered the first colony of fire ants in the United States.

Since Wilson died in December 2021, tributes have been collected and shared on the [eowilsonfoundation.org](http://eowilsonfoundation.org) website from noted dignitaries, educators, scientists, presidents, musicians and actors.

"E.O. Wilson taught us so much about the importance of preserving our rich biodiversity, and perhaps more significant today, how cooperation, not conflict, has enabled humanity to survive and thrive," said former U.S. President **Bill Clinton**.

"His later books left us a roadmap for the future. I was honored to know him."

To celebrate Wilson's life and contributions to the scientific community, the Friends

of E.O. Wilson (which includes a number of local organizations, nonprofits and environmental groups) is hosting a day of activities on October 7 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the Mobile Museum of Art. The event is free and open to the public and will include testimonials, films and exhibits, refreshments and fellowship. In addition, there will be a keynote address from award-winning filmmaker Ben Raines.

"This day is important because E.O. Wilson is world-renowned as a scientist, philosopher and environmental activist," said **Andrew Saunders**, event organizer. "His contributions extend to all mankind. He is important to us locally because he is one of us – an Alabamian and a Mobilian. Our celebration of him in Mobile on October 7 is to give those who knew him and his works, or admired him and his works, an opportunity to come together in tribute to him."



The poster features a photograph of E.O. Wilson holding a small insect. Below the photo is a circular logo with a white ant on a blue background. The text on the poster reads: "E.O. WILSON DAY in Mobile", "Friday, Oct. 7, 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm.", "Mobile Museum of Art", "Hosted with Keynote by Ben Raines", "Testimonials - Videos - Fellowship", "Photo Exhibition by acclaimed photographer: Alex Harris, of Duke University", and a list of sponsors including the Alabama Coastal Foundation, Alabama School of Math and Science, Alabama Audubon, The Carolyn W. Saunders Foundation, City of Mobile, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Downtown Alliance, E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation, GulfQuest, The Longleaf Alliance, Mobile Chamber, Mobile Botanical Gardens, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Mobile Baykeeper, Mobile County, The Nature Conservancy of Alabama, Scenic98Coastal, Seamen's Foundation, The Sierra Club, South Alabama Land Trust, and University of South Alabama Biology Department.





# 2022 EAGLE AWARDS MOBILE CHAMBER

Friday, October 7  
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel and Spa

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CARLA HARRIS**  
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**2022 EAGLE  
AWARD WINNER**



## EAGLE AWARD WINNER

# HONEST AIR LLC

**Nicholas Powe** started working in the HVAC industry at the age of 18 and enrolled in classes to become licensed in the trade. After graduating from Bishop State Community College and becoming a licensed HVAC contractor, Powe started Honest Air LLC in 2015, on his skills and faith.

The company offers product care services including air conditioning system installation (except window units); air vent installation; furnace conversions (from one fuel to another); refrigeration system installation; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) contractors; furnace humidifier installation; natural gas fireplace installation; duct work; dust collection; exhaust and ventilation equipment installation; and heating and ventilation system component installation.

“Our clients’ best interest always comes first, and everything we do is guided by our values and professional ethics,” said Powe. “We ensure that we hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards by meeting our clients’ needs precisely and completely. We offer service agreements that will help our clients maintain their HVAC system, which will help them save money with routine maintenance. We offer affordable financing to those clients who are experiencing hardship. This brings convenience and peace of mind to our clients.”

“Our clients’ best interest always comes first, and everything we do is guided by our values and professional ethics.”

**Nicholas Powe, owner**

One of the biggest challenges for the company is finding skilled, knowledgeable technicians. “Being a small business owner sometimes makes it hard to compete with the larger corporations,” said Powe. “Although we offer health and retirement benefits, we still face challenges to attract the skilled professional technician.”

In giving back to the community, Honest Air hosts youth giveaways during the holiday season and back-to-school time. In addition, Powe said he gives back to local churches monetarily or through free services.

*Seated from left to right: Vernekie Hall, Dee Scott, Tomika Tillman, Shanavia Spivery, Standing from left to right: Matthew Ballard, Nicolette Wheeler, Tyrone Hall, Nicholas Powe*

## EAGLE AWARD WINNER

# SoldByEllisG

**Ellis Foster** started his real estate journey four years ago when he moved to Mobile from Atlanta. He started out by purchasing an investment property and realized how expensive that venture could be. He researched grant and funding options and found out the property he purchased was on the city of Mobile's blighted properties list.

"Being on this list allowed it (the property) to qualify for funding to repair the exterior of the home and also additional funding assistance if I agreed to rent it as affordable housing," he said.

This discovery led him to start SoldbyEllisG in 2018.

Foster says that through his experience as a Realtor and working with clients who participate in the down payment assistance program offered by the city of Mobile, he realized the lack of quality in affordable housing options made it difficult to find his clients a decent home to purchase.

"This sparked my interest and ignited a passion that fuels my business still today: how I can create not just affordable housing opportunities for our community members, but quality affordable housing opportunities," he said.

After completing his first investment property, Foster is working closely with the city's community development department to assist and get involved in any way he can to help create quality affordable housing throughout the city of Mobile.

For his clients, Foster says education is the number one service he provides.

"Breaking the limiting belief of our citizens that home ownership is not a possibility for them is our mission," said Foster. "We do this by partnering with the city of Mobile to teach a down-payment assistance class multiple times a year to educate first-time homebuyers on the home-buying process and homeownership opportunities."

**“Breaking the limiting belief of our citizens that homeownership is not a possibility for them is our mission.”**

**Ellis Foster**, owner, SoldByEllisG

In addition to helping clients find homes, Foster says the company's other main focus is to fight blight in Mobile.

"Properties deemed unlivable and hazardous to our community are purchased and rehabbed to breathe life back into the area and create affordable housing opportunities for our neighbors."

Foster actively serves as a mentor in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program and previously served as a board member of the Dearborn YMCA and an emergent leader with United Way.



**2022  
EAGLE  
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WINNER**



FLOWER



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## EAGLE AWARD HALL OF FAME

# LEAF AND PETAL FLORIST & GIFT

**Robert Bryant** always aspired to own his own business. Having worked in retail for years, he and his wife, then a banker, were given the opportunity to take over a business when the original owners were ready to sell. This unexpected but fortunate surprise for the couple was a welcome change and they decided to take a leap and become florists. Twenty-six years later, **Leaf & Petal Florist & Gift** is still blooming and thriving.

This family-owned and run business provides flowers, plants and gifts for all occasions for customers in Mobile and the surrounding areas. In addition, the florist offers services for funeral homes, local schools, hospitals, churches and other local organizations.

Bryant's previous experience in retail no doubt helped his business thrive. He serves his customers with a commitment to outstanding customer service and by creating unique and artistic creations with flowers.

Bryant says his business has changed over the years as fewer people come into the store. Most orders he gets these days are by telephone and through the internet. His most popular item to sell? His beautiful display of greenery.

“Called from out of town and spoke with the most kind and wonderful gentleman! Family funeral, and because of the rating I chose this place. They did not disappoint!”

[Review from the store's website](#)

One review from the store's website stated they “called from out of town and spoke with the most kind and wonderful gentleman! Family funeral, and because of the rating I chose this place. They did not disappoint!”

Some challenges Bryant says have affected the growth of his company are wage increases, gas price increases and lack of wholesale distributors. Turnover isn't a major issue, however “this is a family-run business,” he laughed.

Leaf & Petal stays active in the community by supporting local schools, civic organizations, the American Cancer Society and the National Kidney Foundation.

*Pictured from left to right: Kendrick, Rosalyn, Robert, Maxine and Justin Bryant.*

Photo by LA Fotographeer

# THE REV. WESLEY A. JAMES 2022 MINORITY BUSINESS ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

## ALABAMA MEDIA GROUP

**Alabama Media Group (AMG)** is a digitally-focused news and information company combining the quality journalism of *The Birmingham News*, *The Huntsville Times* and Mobile's *Press-Register* and *The Mississippi Press* with the up-to-the-minute access of AL.com and gulflive.com.

"As both a digital marketing agency and a publisher, we drive daily conversations and engage millions through stories that are crafted to inform, entertain, or inspire; stories that connect our communities to the world around them," said **Angela Morgan**, director of inside sales for AMG.

As the Mobile Chamber's 2022 Rev. Wesley A. James Minority Business Advocate, AMG contributes to the minority community through marketing education and recruiting through mentorship and seminars across the state.

Locally, AMG partners with organizations like the United Way throughout the year to help support our communities by participating in numerous events such as Operation Backpack, Alabama Food Frenzy and the United Way Day of Caring. In addition, AMG has partnered with the Mobile Chamber as

the media sponsor to support and promote the launch of the online minority business directory, known as Quick Connect, donating more than \$40,000 in digital and print ads.

Recently, Alabama Media Group hosted a seminar for the Growth Alliance Task Force entitled "Effective Small Business Marketing." The 40+ business owners in attendance received tips on how they could effectively market their businesses on a budget. The seminar was such a success the training was extended to the National Association of Women-Owned Businesses and there are plans to expand the free seminars in 2023.

The organization is also committed to building a brighter future for college students. Advance Local Media, owner of al.com and a leader in digital media and marketing groups, offers a fully-funded Master of Science degree to minority candidates at The Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University in New York, to help journalists of color establish strong careers in media and communications.

*Pictured from left to right from Alabama Media Group are Annice Deweese, marketing manager; Angela Morgan, AMG director - inside sales; and Natalie Pruitt, AMG chief revenue officer.*

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# SPOTLIGHT ON NORTH MOBILE

The Mobile Chamber is only one part of a growing group of organizations, companies, cities and counties working together, politics aside, for the overall good of the Mobile area.

“Our partners in north Mobile County have been great team members to work with when we have a company looking to expand or relocate their business to our area,” said **Bradley Byrne**, president and CEO of the Mobile Chamber. “Working together is one of our strengths in this community. What’s good for one location or city is good for us all.”

Cities like Saraland, Satsuma, Chickasaw and Prichard have grown during the past few years as industry and populations have expanded in our area. Growth has been so strong that several have created their own school systems and have taken other steps to elevate the quality of life within their own city limits.

Read about these cities and find out what north Mobile County has to offer.



# SARALAND, ALABAMA

[saraland.org](http://saraland.org)

Founded in 1957, Saraland calls itself the “Gateway to Progress” – and it is. The area’s population has grown to more than 16,000 residents.\* In 2006, Saraland officials formed their own city school system that is now ranked among the best school systems in the state of Alabama.

Saraland City Schools (SCS) is comprised of four schools: Saraland Early Education Center; Saraland Elementary School; Saraland Middle School; and Saraland High School. In 2018, SCS was one of 15 school systems to receive an “A” grade on the state report card. It received an “A” again in 2019 and ranked as one of the top five districts in the state. In 2017, Saraland Elementary was named a National Blue-Ribbon School. According to Alabama State Department of Education, for the 2020-2021 school year Saraland High School had a 95.56 percent graduation rate.

In addition to a new school system, the area is home to a new Infirmary Health medical facility with a diagnostic center and the Mobile Infirmary Emergency – Saraland offering 24-hour emergency care. New retail, restaurants and hotels also have moved to the area, helping to make Saraland a family-friendly community.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Census data, Saraland has more than 5,500 households, and its population

has a median household income of \$61,116. The population also has an 89 percent high school graduation education level, and 21 percent holding a bachelor’s degree or higher level of education.

Youth sports are popular in Saraland, which is home to 11 city parks for recreational activities of all kinds, including baseball, softball, tennis and soccer. The city’s McAuthor-McKinney Recreation Center offers an outstanding venue for young people to play basketball and volleyball and participate in other activities.

Located adjacent to the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, the area boasts water activities like canoeing, kayaking and fishing.

The city government consists of a mayor, Dr. Howard Rubenstein, and five council members: Joe McDonald, Newton Cromer, Wayne Biggs, Natalie Moye and Veronica Hudson.

The Saraland Area Chamber of Commerce was formed in the 1980s, “working together to build a healthy economy and improve the quality of life in the community.”

## **Saraland Area Chamber of Commerce**

939 Saraland Blvd. S., Saraland, AL 36571 | 251.675.4444  
[saralandchamber.com](http://saralandchamber.com)

\* US Census Bureau 2020 Census Data



# SATSUMA, ALABAMA

[cityofsatsuma.com](http://cityofsatsuma.com)

Situated near creeks and waterways, Satsuma has become a gateway to the Mobile Delta and the Mobile River, with numerous neighborhoods located along its banks.

Incorporated in 1959, the city of Satsuma once was home to a thriving citrus and pecan-growing economy, which is how it got its name.

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 census, Satsuma's population is approximately 6,700, with 2,100 households and a median household income of \$82,768. The population also has a 92 percent high school graduation education level and 27 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

Satsuma's government consists of Mayor Mark Barlow and five council members: Randy Little, James M. (Mike) Butler, Jason Skelton, Allison Reese and E. L. "Bubba" Phillips.

According to the city's website, Satsuma recognizes the importance protecting its natural environment and "balances the need for growth and economic development with environmental consideration."

Satsuma City School System (SCSS) was established in 2012 and consists of two schools: Robert E. Lee Elementary and Satsuma High. According to the Alabama State Department of Education, SCSS earned an "A" on its overall report card for the 2018-19 school year and for the 2020-2021 school year has a 96.12 percent graduation rate.



# CHICKASAW, ALABAMA

[cityofchickasaw.org](http://cityofchickasaw.org)

Celebrating 75 years as a city, Chickasaw was established in 1946 and calls itself one of Mobile's best-kept secrets, "a great place to live."

City-maintained parks include tennis courts and a softball/baseball field. Bill Brooks Park is where citizens can enjoy fishing, sightseeing and all that nature has to offer on its boardwalks.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 census data, the city's population is approximately 6,300, with 2,100 households and a median household income of \$32,332. The population also has an 86 percent high school graduation education level and 14 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

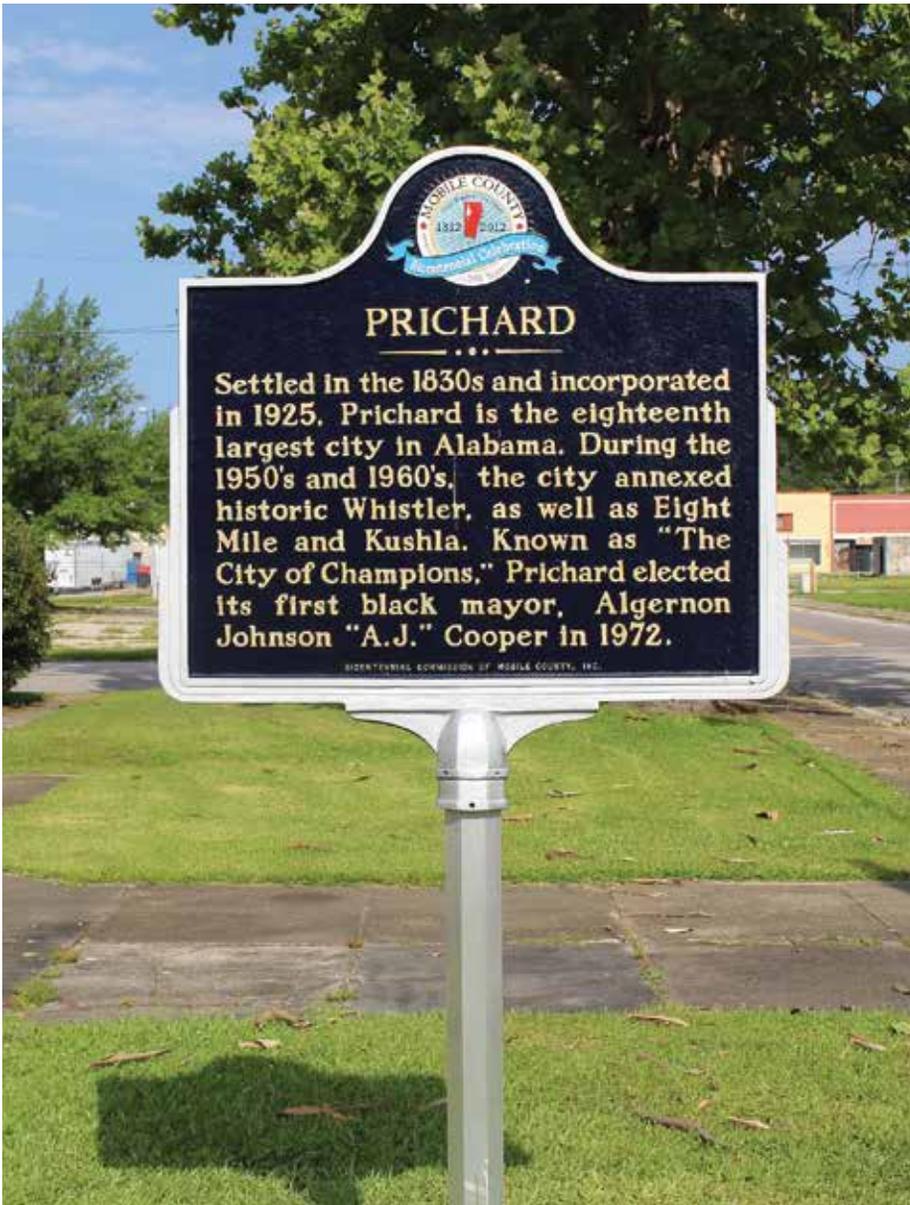
The city government consists of Mayor Barry Broadhead and five council members: Jason Rawls, Kendall Sterrett, Jennifer White, James Hanson and Adam Bourne.

Chickasaw City Schools (CCS) was established in 2010. CCS consists of four schools: Alabama Destinations Career Academy of Chickasaw City Schools, Chickasaw Early Learning Center, Chickasaw Elementary School and Chickasaw Middle/High School.

According to Alabama State Department of Education. CCS had a 93.2 percent graduation rate for the 2020-21 school year.

## **Chickasaw Chamber of Commerce**

22 Grant St., Chickasaw, AL 36611 | 251.452.6450  
[facebook.com/chickasawchamber](https://facebook.com/chickasawchamber)



# PRICHARD, ALABAMA

[thecityofprichard.org](http://thecityofprichard.org)

Settled in the 1830s and incorporated in 1925, Prichard is known as “The City of Champions,” as it’s home to several notable National Football League players.

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 census, the city’s population is approximately 19,000 and includes 7,409 households, with a median household income of \$30,464. The population also has an 80 percent high school graduation education level and includes 10 percent with a bachelor’s degree or higher level of education.

The city government consists of Mayor Jimmie Gardner and five council members: Annie Williams, Stephani Johnson Norwood, Derrick Griffin, George McCall and Ossia Edwards.

## Prichard Area Chamber of Commerce

309 Wilson Ave., Prichard, AL 36610 | 251.285.0653

## AFRICATOWN

While technically located within the Mobile city limits, Africatown was formed by a group of 32 West Africans, who in 1860 were included in the last known illegal shipment of slaves to the United States aboard the *Clotilda*.

With a renewed interest to preserve their history, the area has been established as its own community and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.

Most recently, Africatown was named one of the “15 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2022” by *Smithsonian* magazine. The magazine explained Africatown was chosen for its new museum giving the former enslaved founders and their descendants a place to tell their stories.

In addition, the Mobile County Commission is spearheading Africatown Heritage House, a \$1.3 million collaborative community effort that will eventually house a History Museum of Mobile exhibit about 110 enslaved West Africans, the ship that brought them to Alabama, and the unique community of Africatown.



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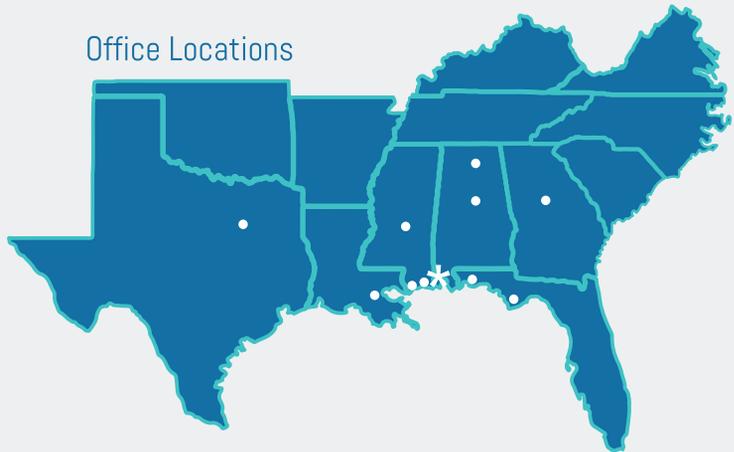


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# PARTNERS FOR GROWTH V

## 2023-2027: FUNDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### A Message from PFG V Co-Chairs:

Team Mobile has done a tremendous job of marketing the Mobile area to domestic and international prospects. With continued growth in jobs and investments and third-party business rankings, Mobile has become a globally significant player in multiple industry sectors.

Despite Mobile's recent growth and progress, now is not the time to be complacent in our efforts to attract, grow and create businesses and quality jobs. Competition from other communities is too intense, and impediments to future growth are too acute for us to not pursue aggressive intentional strategies.

To continue our success in recruiting new industry and supporting industry expansions, we must put an enhanced focus on developing strong workforce solutions; recruiting young, smart talent to the area; and supporting downtown development and other quality of life assets for the community. All of our economic development efforts must be informed by an overarching agenda for diversity, equity and inclusion.

The following strategic objectives will serve as a framework for a five-year plan to ensure we are working toward a better Mobile.

Partners For Growth is a five-year, public-private initiative of the Mobile Chamber to grow and diversify Mobile's economy.

The work we do would not be possible without these investments. Together, we have transformed Mobile's economy and effectively competed for jobs and investment. It is this direct investment that will create prosperity and growth for local businesses and residents. And will build a better Mobile.

**Honorable Merceria Ludgood**, Mobile County Commission

**Patrick Murphy**, Alabama Power

**Mayor Sandy Stimpson**, City of Mobile

**Christian White**, Regions Bank

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).



**Partners  
For Growth**  
Funding Economic Development

## 5 YEAR GOALS/METRICS\*

**TOTAL FIVE-YEAR BUDGET:  
\$13.5 MILLION**

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

#### 1) SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESS AND EXPANSIONS

Engage and support existing employers to identify expansion opportunities, address challenges and facilitate competitiveness.

#### 2) INVESTOR RELATIONS ENGAGEMENT

Actively engage investors in the Mobile Chamber's economic development program activities and oversight.

#### 3) NEW BUSINESS INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Leverage Mobile's global competitiveness to advance the creation of quality jobs and attract new capital investment to enhance economic growth.

#### 4) QUALITY OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Prioritize the development of assets within the community to enhance the quality of life and standard of living for new and existing citizens.

#### 5) TALENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Improve Mobile's ability to attract, retain and develop talent in the area.



**2,500 NEW PRIMARY JOBS**  
*with average annual wages of \$62,500.*



**\$1.5 BILLION IN NEW CAPITAL INVESTMENT**  
*new and expansion projects*



**ACHIEVE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF \$52,500**  
*in Mobile County.*



**INCREASE LABOR PARTICIPATION RATE**  
*to meet or exceed the national average.*



**INCREASE POPULATION**  
*in the 18-65 age range*

*\*The Mobile Chamber's economic development team will have varying degrees of control and direct impact on these metrics. As critical measures of economic growth and prosperity and indicators of progress toward our strategic objectives, we will track, monitor and report these metrics over the course of the five-year initiative.*

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# ALABAMA SCHOOL OF MATH AND SCIENCE MARKS 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

The Alabama School of Math and Science (ASMS) is not only celebrating 30 years of graduations, but also a new expansion of its facility in midtown Mobile.

The school announced it would soon start construction of a new science research center named after Alabama's prominent scientist and "the father of biodiversity," Dr. E.O. Wilson.

The facility is designed to enhance opportunities for ASMS students to conduct research and participate in cutting-edge learning experiences with upgraded classrooms, state-of-the-art laboratory equipment, innovative technology, research rooms and collaboration spaces.

"The Wilson Science Research Center is our continued commitment to transforming the landscape of education in Alabama and changing student outcomes forever," said ASMS President **Dr. John Hoyle**. "Because that is what our graduates will tell you: ASMS changed their lives forever."

Known as "Alabama's High School," ASMS was founded in 1989 as the state's first fully residential public high school for sophomores, juniors and seniors seeking advanced studies in math, science, computer science and the humanities.

Before STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) was even called STEM, ASMS delivered a world-class

STEM education free of charge to students from all 67 counties in Alabama. Tuition, room and board are free, as the school is funded by the state.

"We are a line item in the state of Alabama's budget, and that gives us the freedom to make quick decisions academically for our students and what's best for our school," said Hoyle.

As an independent state agency, ASMS instructors teach college-level classes, students are recruited from every county in Alabama and the school hires university-level instructors to serve as faculty members.



With this state status, ASMS sets itself apart through its accelerated curriculum, living-learning environment, leadership opportunities and research focus not available anywhere else in the state. In addition, ASMS has a history of improving students' educational outcomes through improved standardized test scores, grades, college admissions offers, scholarship packages and eventually job placement.

ASMS boasts an exceptional STEM curriculum that allows students to forge their own academic path and decide the number of classes they take. Faculty members help students design their own course schedules each term, and students may take such high-level electives as flight studies, astrophysics, number theory, organic chemistry, marine biology, inorganic chemistry, cybersecurity and much more.

"You don't have to be a genius to attend school at ASMS, but if you are a hard worker with a good attitude, ASMS might be right for you," said Hoyle.

Academics will always remain at the forefront for ASMS, but the school also focuses on instilling leadership and research skills.

"There are a lot of smart people, but nowadays, that's not enough," said Hoyle.

The school has expanded its offerings to include the Jo Bonner Leadership Academy, which teaches leadership development and experiential learning by giving students the opportunity to participate in group workshops, team-building exercises, skills training, breakout sessions and personal reflection.

The school's research fellows program allows ASMS students to conduct original research designed to foster and facilitate the research process with classmates they work with a faculty mentor. Students in the program publish their work, speak at symposiums, participate in poster presentations and even present at academic conferences.

"This extra teaching gives our students an advantage in today's workplace," said Hoyle. "Workplaces have now become team-centered. Companies like Apple and Google all work in teams. So an individual may be the brightest in their field, but they need to be able to work with others and also be leaders in their field."

The school partners with Alabama colleges and universities and hopes to expand its partnerships through local business and industries in Mobile. "We want people to know the STEM pipeline flows through ASMS, and students today can't learn fast enough to make up for the demand of our advanced workplaces," said Hoyle.

ASMS receives more than 400 applications from potential students, but it has fewer than 300 openings, making it a very competitive school. "We are the most diverse high school in Alabama, and we take a holistic approach to our application process through testing and interviews," said Hoyle. "We have an amazing administrative staff and faculty who work with the students on all levels to prepare them for college and beyond."

When asked why the school chose to name the new science center after E.O. Wilson, Hoyle said the school's founder, **Ann Bedsole**, took the idea to its board. "It's fitting to me with his being such a prominent scientist raised in Mobile, and I hope it is a good example that, just like him, you *can* affect the world from Mobile, Alabama."



  
67 counties in Alabama represented

  
Research Fellows Program

  
2/3 alumni leading in STEM

  
All faculty have a Ph.D. or Master's degree.

  
16 average class size

  
166 National Merit Finalists since 1993

  
National Champion of Toshiba / NSTA ExploraVision

  
2200+ alumni

  
10 academic departments

  
2 study abroad programs

  
100% college acceptance

  
10+ Directed Reading and Research courses

  
Over \$250 million in merit-based scholarships since 2002



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## EXECUTIVE PROFILE

# ELLEN PRAYTOR FAULKNER

## LEWIS COMMUNICATIONS

**TITLE:** CEO

**HOMETOWN:** Mobile

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in visual communications from Auburn University

**FIRST JOB:** Account executive for *Mobile Bay Monthly* magazine (PMT Publishing)

**WHO/WHAT INSPIRES YOU?** I have a strong faith. My mom was a civic leader who owned the first female-owned real estate company in Mobile and was active in our church. She was my hero, and she taught me solid values.

**WHAT WORD WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF?** Determined

**SECRET TO SUCCESS:** I don't think there's one secret to success. I truly believe it takes hard work, resilience, passion and a respect and love for the people around you.

**DO YOU BELIEVE IN LUCK OR DESTINY?** I believe that if you put yourself in the right place at the right time enough, it changes your luck and affects your destiny.

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

**WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST INDULGENCE?** Good wine and fresh flowers.

**WHAT TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?** I wish I could sing, but that ship never came in.

**WHAT QUALITY DO YOU MOST LIKE IN PEOPLE?** A combination of empathy, passion and curiosity.

**WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO OF FICTION?** Mary Tyler Moore. She could turn the world on with her smile.

**WHAT IS YOUR MOST MARKED CHARACTERISTIC?** Sticking to my word.

**BRIEF COMPANY DESCRIPTION:** Lewis Communications is a marketing performance company specializing in proving and improving the financial impact of marketing on business performance. While known nationally for strategy and creativity, Lewis functions as a business growth partner for leading clients in the healthcare, banking, business-to-business and direct-to-consumer categories.





## NIKKI HOCUTT

### SEABULK TOWING

**Hocutt** is operations manager for Seabulk Towing. A native of Mobile, Hocutt began her career on the waterfront as a receptionist at Radcliff/Economy Marine. For the next 17 years she advanced her position several times within the company and eventually became an outside sales representative for the Baldwin County area selling fuel and lubricants to farmers, trucking companies and various end-users. In 2011, she began working for Seabulk Towing as their operations coordinator and in 2021, after 10 years of service, was promoted to operations manager over Seabulk's Mobile, Ala. operation. Hocutt is an active member of numerous maritime organizations supporting the Port of Mobile and its mariners.

## LEONARDO MONTENEGRO

### AUTOMOBILE INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL (AIT)

Originally from Argentina, **Montenegro** moved to Alabama in March 2020. He is the chief operating officer for the AutoMOBILE International Terminal (AIT). Upon his arrival, he was the project manager during the construction of the facility. Montenegro is an industrial engineer with more than 10 years of experience in the RORO (Roll On Roll Off) Terminal business working for Terminal Zarate in Argentina. Previously, he lived in Arizona, working in construction with renewable energy.



## CHAD MARCHAND

### DELASHMET & MARCHAND PC

**Marchand** is a shareholder at DeLashmet & Marchand PC. Marchand received a bachelor's degree in Environmental Sciences from Auburn University and earned a juris doctorate from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University, graduating cum laude. While at Cumberland, Marchand served as the editor in chief of the American Journal of Trial Advocacy; he won the Judge James O. Haley Mock Trial competition; served as a Cordell Hull Legal Research and Writing Teaching Fellow, participated in the Justice Shores Moot Court competition; and was a member of the Cumberland Trial Advocacy Board.

Marchand is a graduate of the 2010 class of Leadership Mobile and was selected as one of Mobile Bay's Top 40 Under 40. He is an active member of Defense Research Institute, the Trucking Industry Defense Association and Mobile United, among other organizations.



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Sunday, Nov. 20, 2:30 p.m.

Saenger Theatre

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# CHAMBER AT WORK Ribbon Cuttings



For information on how the Mobile Chamber can help your business with a ribbon cutting or grand opening, contact Michael Galvin at 251.431.8628.



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Restaurants



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Banks



## MISSION FITNESS

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## GARY GRADY JR. JOINS THE CHAMBER'S MEMBERSHIP TEAM

**Gary Grady Jr.** is a new membership account executive at the Mobile Chamber. He will be responsible for recruiting local businesses to become members of the Chamber and upgrading existing members to the board of advisors. He will work with prospective members to determine their business needs and help them better understand how the Chamber can help them.

Grady previously worked as a corporate broking intern with Willis Towers Watson. He also worked as a licensed property and casualty producer at HUB International Gulf South and as an account executive specializing in captive insurance programs at Turner Insurance and Bonding Co. Most recently, he was a field representative with the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB).

“Gary is a great addition to the membership team,” said **Michael Galvin**, senior vice president of member engagement. “He brings skills, experience and a passion for assisting business owners.”

“As a lifelong Mobilian, I am thrilled and honored to begin working for the Mobile Chamber,” said Grady. “I am grateful for the opportunity to play a part in the prodigious work they are doing on behalf of this community.”

Grady can be reached at 251.680.2126 or [ggrady@mobilechamber.com](mailto:ggrady@mobilechamber.com).

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Gardens and Home

**HELLO OCTOBER**

**FALL MOVIE SERIES**  
October 7, October 29

**SCARECROWS IN THE GARDENS**  
October 10-31

**BOO AT BELLINGRATH**  
October 29

**CASCADING CHRYSANTHEMUM DISPLAY**  
November 1-30

# CHAMBER AT WORK



**1 ACCE CONFERENCE IN INDIANAPOLIS** Mobile Chamber executives joined other chambers around the nation at the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) convention in July. They learned strategies to accelerate positive change within the Chamber and our community.

**2 CHAMBER CHASE CONCLUDES** The Mobile Chamber's Chamber Chase total resource campaign came to a celebrated end with an arrival by Chair Tommy Faust of Trustmark Bank in a vintage airplane. Faust announced the campaign raised more than \$1.1 million by bringing in new members and selling event sponsorships and advertising. For a complete wrap-up of the campaign, watch for the November 2022 issue of the *Business View*.

**3 YPMOB NETWORKING EVENT FOR SCHOOLS** The Mobile Chamber's Young Professional Group, YP of MOB, held a networking event for young professionals and collected school supplies and raise funds for Mobile County Public Schools.

**4 & 5 BRITISH CONSULATE VISIT** In partnership with the Alabama Department of Commerce, the Mobile Chamber's economic development team hosted delegates from the British Consulate General's Office in Atlanta. Deputy Consul General Colin Gray and Senior Trade Policy Advisor Ryan Evans toured Mobile for two days, meeting with business leaders and public officials to explore cooperative opportunities.

**COFFEE WITH THE CHAMBER** The Mobile Chamber hosted its Coffee with the Chamber at Soul Caffeine. The event is a way for professionals to network before heading to work.



**6 FORUM ALABAMA WITH CONG. JERRY CARL** The Mobile Chamber hosted a Forum Alabama with Congressman Jerry Carl, presented by Mamun with ReMax Partners. Carl spoke about the momentum Team Mobile has created, maintained and will continue to produce in the Mobile area.

**7 BUSINESS COUNCIL OF ALABAMA CONFERENCE** Members of the Mobile Chamber’s advocacy team attended the Business Council of Alabama’s 2022 Government Affairs Conference. The conference included networking with business and state leaders to stay up to date on current topics and interests.

**8 GROWTH ALLIANCE TASK FORCE MEETING** The Mobile Chamber’s Growth Alliance Task Force (GATF) August meeting featured State Rep. Napoleon Bracy, manager, diversity inclusion and affirmative action, Austal USA, whose presentation was titled “Doing Business with Austal.” Bracy spoke about potential contract opportunities with Austal and how to get small and minority-owned businesses listed in the bid process.



# BUSINESS EXPO

The Mobile Chamber's annual Business EXPO was held at the Mobile Convention Center and featured more than 150 member booths showcasing products and services to more than 1,000 attendees.



# AROUND TOWN



*Note: These events are subject to change by the organizer. Check the websites listed below for more information and correct times and dates.*

## **24th Annual Dauphin Street Beer Festival**

**Oct. 1 from 6 to 9 p.m. • Downtown Mobile**

Local taverns and restaurants will welcome participants to sample craft beers and imports.

[beerfestmobile.com](http://beerfestmobile.com)

## **National Shrimp Festival**

**Oct. 6 to 9 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (Thursday - Saturday) and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Sunday) • Gulf Shores, Ala.**

Four-day celebration of our favorite seafood with music, crafts and more.

[myshrimpfest.com](http://myshrimpfest.com)

## **E.O. Wilson Day in Mobile**

**Oct. 7 from 5 to 7:30 p.m.**

**Mobile Museum of Art, 4850 Museum Dr., Mobile**

The event will include testimonials, films and exhibits, refreshments, fellowship and a keynote address from award-winning filmmaker Ben Raines.

## **Greek Fest**

**Oct. 13 to 16 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. • 50 S. Ann St., Mobile**

Food, dancing, music and culture at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church.

[greekfestmobile.org](http://greekfestmobile.org)

## **PEP Reverse Trade Show**

**Oct. 20 from 1 to 4:30 p.m.**

**Fort Whiting, 1630 S. Broad St., Mobile**

Get face-to-face with decision-makers and buyers from more than 45 major manufacturers, shipbuilders, health, construction, and engineering businesses and government agencies.

[pepmobile.org/events/reverse-trade-show](http://pepmobile.org/events/reverse-trade-show)

## **Greater Gulf State Fair**

**Oct. 28 - Nov. 6 • The Grounds, 1035 Cody Rd N, Mobile**

The largest midway on the Gulf Coast, the Fair will have a must-see entertainment line-up as well as entertainment, food and attractions.

[greatergulfstatefair.com](http://greatergulfstatefair.com)

# OCTOBER 2022

For more information on Chamber events, visit [mobilechamber.com](http://mobilechamber.com)

## 7 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DE&I) BUSINESS FORUM

Before the Eagle Awards Luncheon, the day kicks off with the DE&I Forum: "5 Pillars of Business." A panel of experts will provide valuable information in financing and access to capital, legal, understanding financial records, human resources and marketing and sales.

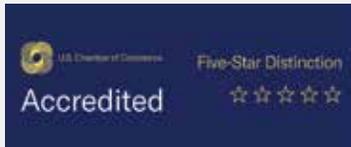
**When:** 9 to 11 a.m. (Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.)

**Where:** The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa

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

*Reservations are required by Oct. 3.*

**Presenting Sponsor:** Trustmark



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

## 7 EAGLE AWARDS LUNCHEON

*Celebrating 25 years, the annual Eagle Awards Luncheon, featuring the prestigious Eagle Award, recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of outstanding minority-owned businesses.*

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

**Where:** The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa

**Speaker:** Carla Harris, vice chair, managing director and senior client advisor at Morgan Stanley

**Cost:** \$60 per person or \$500 table of 8 for members/\$70 or \$600 table of 8 for guests (price includes admission to DE&I Business Forum)

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

*Reservations are required by Oct. 3 and payment is due at time of registration.*

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**Bronze Sponsors:** ASM Recycling, Bama Pest Control Inc., Keesler Federal Credit Union, Meador Warehousing & Distribution Inc.

**Media Sponsors:** Cumulus, WALA Fox10 & Nspire U!

## 13 BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

*Join the Chamber for our popular after-hours event.*

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

**Where:** SmartBank, 3704 Dauphin St.

**Cost:** Free for members/\$10 for guests

**Contact:** Andrea Cape at 251-431-8622 or [acape@mobilechamber.com](mailto:acape@mobilechamber.com)

*Reservations not required.*

**Sponsor:** SmartBank

## 18 EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE

*\*Members Only*

*Executive Roundtable is a monthly meeting open to all Chamber members featuring presentations by local business executives on timely topics affecting small business.*

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

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

**Speaker:** Glenda Snodgrass, president, The Net Effect

**Topic:** "Changing Perspectives on Cybersecurity"

**Contact:** Brenda Rembert at 251.431.8607 or [brembert@mobilechamber.com](mailto:brembert@mobilechamber.com)

*Registration requested due to limited seating.*

**Sponsor:** BancorpSouth

## THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF OUR OCTOBER EVENTS





## FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

L.A. ALSTON,  
L.A. FOTOGRAPHEE

Lemaris “L.A.” Alston is a husband, dad and photographer who prides himself in capturing happiness for clients on location and in his studio in Mobile. Since he started his photography business in 2011, Alston has completed more than 2,500 photo shoots and has photographed some of his clients’ most important life moments, from awards and graduations to engagements and weddings to newborns and families. Alston says photography is his passion, job and creative outlet. He has a bachelor’s degree from Alabama State University and a master’s degree and a doctorate from the University of Phoenix in computer information systems. He and his wife, Jamelah, live with their three children in Mobile. In this issue, Alston’s work can be seen in feature stories on the Eagle Award recipients. To see more of his portfolio, visit [lafotographee.com](http://lafotographee.com).

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## WHO'S NEW

## United Way Hires New Staff Members



Bell

Howard

Luckie

**United Way of Southwest Alabama** announced new resource development team members: **Kimberly D. Bell** is a new manager of donor relations. She graduated from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University with a bachelor's degree in secondary English education. **Kyrsti Howard** is the manager of regional development and county relations. Howard previously worked for the Washington County Hospital and Nursing Home. **Lauren Luckie** is also a manager of donor relations for Spring Hill College and United Way's partner agency, United Cerebral Palsy of Mobile.



Russ

## LLB&amp;B Hires New Realtor

**LLB&B Inc. Real Estate** added to its roster of agents with realtor **Anna B. Russ**.

## Spring Hill College Alumnus Named Rector of University in Rome



Lewis

Pope Francis has named **Father Mark A. Lewis**, a Spring Hill College alumnus, to be the next rector (president) of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Father Lewis earned bachelor's degrees in history and philosophy at Spring Hill College before entering the Society of Jesus at Grand Coteau. After completing a master's degree in philosophy at St. Louis University, he studied theology at Regis College in Toronto, Ontario, receiving the licentiate in 1991.

## Physician Joins Franklin Primary Health



Jefferson

**Franklin Primary Health Center Inc.** added **Richelle Jefferson MD** to its staff. Dr. Jefferson completed a family medicine residency at the University of South Alabama, where she served as chief resident. She earned a bachelor's degree in kinesiology from Louisiana State University and completed a master's degree in biology at Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss. She received a medical degree from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss.

## Infirmary Welcomes Interventional Cardiologist



Mansour



Omar

**Michael Mansour**, interventional cardiologist, joined Infirmary Health's

Diagnostic and Medical Clinic. Dr. Mansour earned a medical degree from the University of Mississippi and completed his residency with Ochsner Foundation Hospital. He is fellowship-trained in cardiology and interventional cardiology by the University of Florida and Harvard Medical School, respectively. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American College of Cardiology.

In addition, neurosurgeon **Nidal Bassam Omar** joined Infirmary Neurosurgery after completing a residency with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Dr. Omar is a graduate of the University of South Alabama with bachelor's degrees in biomedical sciences and psychology. He earned a medical degree from UAB and won the Stephen Mahaley Jr. MD Award for Translational Research at UAB Neurosurgery.

## World-Renowned Operatic Tenor Joins University of Mobile



Hendrick

**Michael Hendrick**, a leading operatic tenor whose career includes nearly three decades of performances with opera companies and symphony orchestras throughout the world, joined the faculty of the Alabama School of the Arts at the **University of Mobile**. Hendrick received a doctorate in musical arts in vocal performance with a minor in vocal pedagogy from Louisiana State University. A native of LaGrange, Ga., Hendrick earned a bachelor's degree in music education (voice) from Berry College in Rome, Georgia. At the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, he earned a master's degree in music in vocal performance followed by the artist diploma in opera performance.

## Infirmary Central Baldwin Physicians Hires Family Medicine Doctor



Staples

**Infirmary Central Baldwin Physicians** welcomed family medicine physician **Dr. Valerie Staples DO**. Dr. Staples is a graduate of Columbus State University with a bachelor of science in biology. She earned a degree in osteopathic medicine from the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Auburn. She completed her residency in family medicine in Foley.

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## The Orthopaedic Group PC Adds Sports Medicine Specialist



Stubbs

The **Orthopaedic Group PC** welcomed sports medicine specialist **Trevor M. Stubbs** to the practice. An orthopedic sports medicine surgeon, Dr. Stubbs received a medical degree from Louisiana State University Medical School in New Orleans and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

## American Equity Underwriters Announces Changes to Leadership Team



Dunne



Gunn

**American Equity Underwriters Inc.**, a provider of workers' compensation insurance for waterfront employers and program administrator for the American Longshore Mutual Association, announced two changes to the company's leadership team. **Tim Dunne**, formerly the senior vice president, director of information systems, has accepted the position of managing director. **Bo Gunn**, a senior software engineer, will succeed Dunne as senior vice president, director of information systems.

## New Hires at Wilkins Miller

**Wilkins Miller LLC** hired **Melody Johnson** as an administrative assistant, **Kaden Dramer** as an associate and CPAs **Catherine Quackenbush** and **Katelyn Thigpen**. Johnson earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of South Alabama. Dramer has a bachelor's degree in accounting from Auburn University. Quackenbush holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from

University of South Alabama. Thigpen earned a bachelor's degree in commerce and business administration and a master's in accounting from The University of Alabama.

## EXIT Realty Lyon Announces New Hire

**Kermit Shamburger** has joined the growing team of real estate sales professionals at **EXIT Realty Lyon**.

## Cardiology Associates Adds Two New Specialists



Mullis



Gladden

**Cardiology Associates of Mobile** expands access to patients with heart rhythm

disorders and structural heart disease in Mobile with the addition **Dr. Andin Mullis**, cardiac electrophysiologist, and **Dr. James Gladden**, interventional and structural heart cardiologist.

Dr. Mullis most recently completed a fellowship in cardiac electrophysiology at the Medical University of South Carolina, and Dr. Gladden most recently completed a fellowship in interventional cardiology with advanced training in structural heart disease. Both Dr. Mullis and Dr. Gladden are fellowship-trained in cardiovascular diseases.

## BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

### Spring Hill College Expands Scholarship Program

**Spring Hill College** expanded the military scholarship program by offering tuition discounts for active duty and reserve members, military spouses and Coast Guard civilian employees. The college offers 19 different online e-programs with tracks in business, healthcare and liberal arts.

## MCHD Family Health Receives Grant

**Family Health**, the primary care division of the Mobile County Health Department, was selected by the Alabama Department of Public Health to receive an Improving Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening through Health Systems Change grant. Family Health was one of only three federally qualified health centers in Alabama to be chosen. The grant will help increase breast and cervical cancer screening rates and strengthen the delivery of cancer screening services.

## WELL DONE

### Merrill Lynch Advisor on Barron's Forbes Lists



Whiting

**Palmer G. Whiting**, a wealth management advisor and managing director in the **Merrill Lynch** Mobile office, was recently named to *Barron's* top 1,200 Financial Advisors and *Forbes'* Best-in-State Wealth Advisors lists for 2022.

### Wilkins Miller Accountant Earns Designation



Etheridge

**Logan Etheridge** of **Wilkins Miller LLC** has successfully completed and passed the uniform certified public accountant (CPA) examination. Etheridge earned a bachelor's in business administration with a concentration in accounting from the University of South Alabama.

### Somerby of Mobile Honored

**Somerby of Mobile** was awarded best Memory Care Senior Living by *U.S. News and World Report*.

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## WELL DONE

### Investment Advisor Firm Named Among Fastest-Growing

**Mitchell McLeod Pugh & Williams** was named in a ranking of the fastest-growing registered investment advisor firms in the United States in 2022 by *Citywire RIA*. The designation is determined by fastest growth in assets under management, growth in pure dollar-based assets under management and number of employees. As of the end of 2021, the firm's regulatory assets under management were approximately \$1.9 billion.

### Mobile Infirmar's Stroke Program Recognized

**Mobile Infirmar's** stroke program earned multiple recognitions from the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association. For the 11<sup>th</sup> year in a row, Mobile Infirmar earned the American Heart Association's GoldPlus Get With The Guidelines - Stroke quality achievement award for ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines, ultimately leading to more lives saved and reduced disability. The Infirmar also earned Target Stroke Honor Roll Elite and Target Type II Diabetes Honor Roll status, along with the Gold Plus status.

Mobile Infirmar also received the American Heart Association's Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite. To qualify for this recognition, Mobile Infirmar met specific criteria that reduced the time between an eligible patient's arrival at the hospital and treatment with the clot-buster alteplase.

Submission deadline for Member News is two months prior to publication. News releases should be one or two brief paragraphs. Photos must be professional head shots 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)

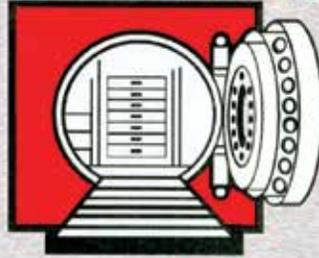
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a. Total No. of Copies	9,200	6,500
b. (1) Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions	none	none
b. (2) Paid in county subscriptions	none	none
b. (3) Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, counter sales	none	none
b. (4) Other classes mailed	none	none
c. Total paid and/or requested circulation	none	none
d. (1) Free distribution by mail outside county	342	342
d. (2) Free distribution by mail in county	1,539	1,539
d. (3) Free distribution - other classes mailed by U.S.P.S.	7,208	4,505
d. (4) Free distribution - outside the mail	100	100
e. Free distribution	9,189	6,486
f. Total distribution	9,189	7,224
g. Copies not distributed	11	14
h. Total	9,200	6,500
i. Percent paid and/or requested circulation	none	none

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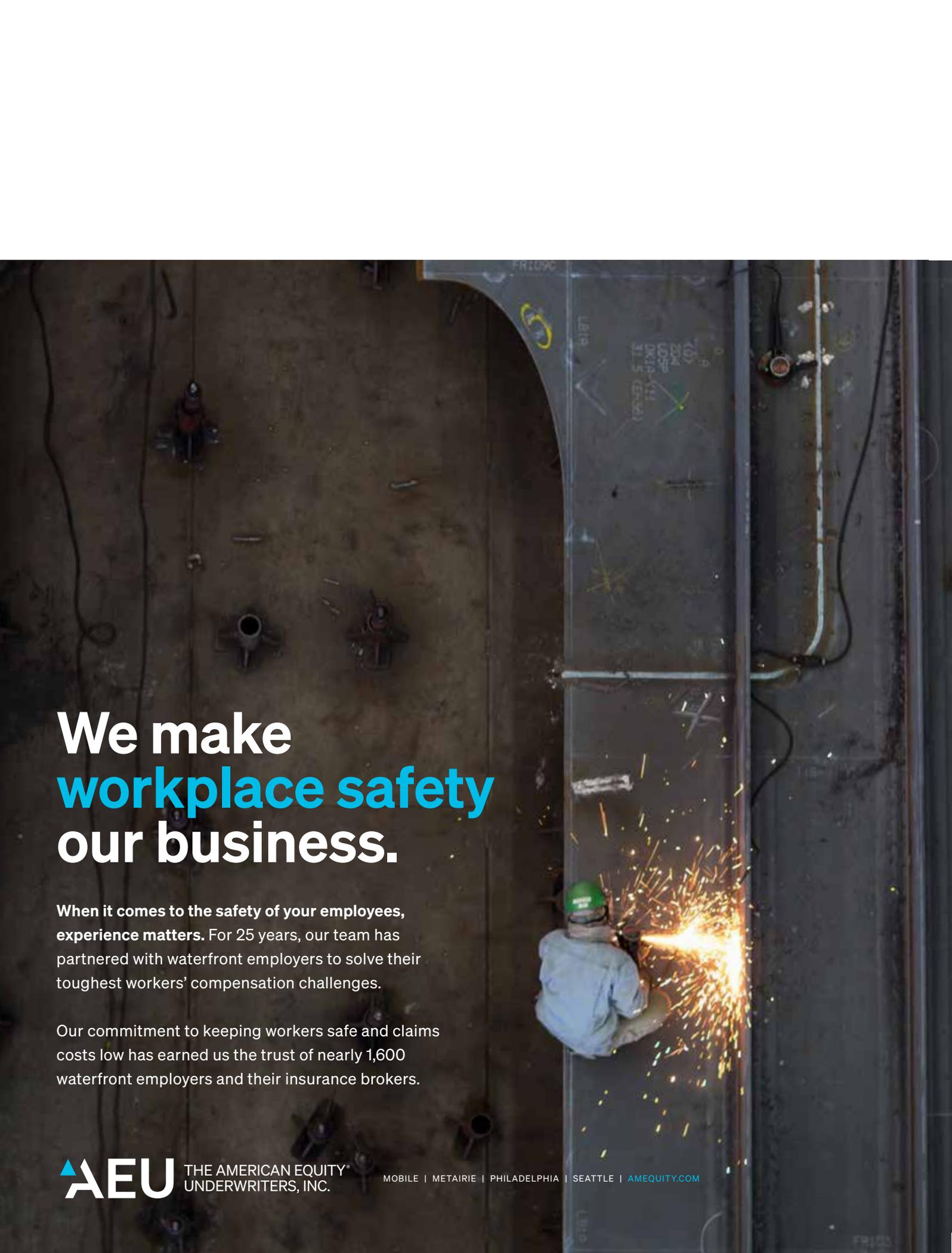
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An aerial photograph of a construction site at night. A welder wearing a green hard hat and a light blue jacket is positioned on a large, dark steel structure, creating a bright orange and yellow spark shower from a welding point. The structure is composed of various steel beams and plates, some with technical markings and handwritten notes. The background is dark, with some faint lights and cables visible.

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