



Community Leaders “Focus on the Positive” at Envision Coastal Alabama Summit

More than 200 Baldwin and Mobile county residents tackled complex issues relating to economy, education, environment and equity at the Daphne Civic Center at the July 10 Envision Coastal Alabama Community Summit.

Topics ranged from regional sewer systems to marketing public education. Each group agreed on the same formula for achieving success – focus on the positive . . . communicate . . . collaborate.

In less than two months, more than 300 regional citizens joined Envision action teams. Many new volunteers attended the summit that served as Envision’s official kick-off for phase two of the regional strategic plan. Participants shared ideas for new projects and enthusiastically accepted the challenge to re-energize and refocus Envision’s efforts for regional collaboration.

Donna Watts, president of the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, called volunteers to action saying, “We are not suggesting that any city or community give up or leave behind the unique characteristics that make Baldwin and Mobile the desirable areas they are; but rather we are asking that you consider setting aside personal agendas and checking your ego at the door and open your mind to the opportunities that lie ahead of us through our joined efforts.”

In his closing remarks, John Davis, former Envision chairman and president of Mobile Gas, commented that we may ask ourselves if the visioning and strategizing process makes a difference. “Yes” is the resounding answer to that question, as Davis said: “Vision sets the mark for which we all strive . . . Working together, embracing a unified

vision, we are making a difference . . . Realizing the vision is not a task for the few, nor is it likely to be achieved by the faint of heart. . . We and many more of our friends and neighbors must be actively involved, we must be bold and caring, we must be committed and purposeful, and we must be passionate in order to seize the day.”

If you are interested in joining an action team, fill out and return the “Join Envision” card printed in this newsletter. Envision meetings will alternate between Mobile and Baldwin locations to increase bi-county attendance. Visit www.envisioncoastalalabama.org for meeting notices or call Linda Ingram at the Envision office at 431-8628 for more information.



Gigi Armbricht with BellSouth and Envision chair, addresses more than 200 Baldwin and Mobile county citizens at the Envision Coastal Alabama Community Summit. Seated, left to right are Michael Pierce, MLK Redevelopment Corp.; Donna Watts, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce; Carolyn Akers, Education E-chair; Dee Fuhrman, Education E-team representative; Phil Norris, Equity E-chair; Ron Martin, Equity E-chair; and Charlotte Cabaniss Robertson, Environment E-chair.



Participants in the environment breakout session were eager to share their ideas for future Envision projects. Led by E-chairs Charlotte Cabaniss Robertson and Cathy O’Keefe, the environment group discussed several projects and included regional recycling, a regional sewer plan and regional public transportation within their top priorities. They emphasized the overlapping issues within the four Envision compass points and the need for collaboration between the four groups to create a sustainable coastal community. Envision leaders hope the newly launched on-line communications tool (see next page) will facilitate increased collaboration among the four focus areas.



There was standing room only for the Economy breakout session led by E-chairs Bob Mullican and Terry Harbin. The Economy Group discussed many issues and identified regional tourism, smart growth and comprehensive regional planning among their top priorities. They also emphasized the need for increased communication, not just collaboration, between the two counties. The group agreed that “focusing on the positive” should be Envision’s theme for phase two.



The “Focus on the Positive” theme continued in the Education breakout session led by Carolyn Akers and Dee Fuhrman. The group placed marketing public education and emphasizing positive developments among their top priorities. They also noted the fragmentation among grassroots groups in both counties. Education leaders on both sides of the bay hope to unify grassroots volunteers through increased collaboration and communication to achieve even greater advancements in public education.



Notice the collaboration in action during the Equity breakout session led by Equity E-chairs Phil Norris and Ron Martin. Baldwin County Public Transit Coalition Director Stan Virden swaps business cards with Mobile Metro Transit Manager Bob Williams. The group enjoyed an energetic discussion of transportation issues and agreed a primary goal should be securing a dedicated funding source for our regional transportation projects. Plans are already underway for a regional transportation summit. The Equity group also discussed implementing an apprenticeship program in schools and businesses for students interested in learning a trade without attending college.



For a complete listing of priority strategies for each focus area, please visit www.envisioncoastalalabama.org or request a copy of Envision’s new brochure by contacting Linda Ingram at 431-8628 or linda@mobilechamber.com.

Candidates' Campaign Workshop Offered This Fall

The University of South Alabama and the Mobile Area Chamber will join together again to sponsor a three-part Candidates' Campaign Workshop this fall. The classes are designed to offer non-partisan venues for education and preparation to encourage private sector leaders and area citizens to run for elective office. The classes will address issues relevant for prospective candidates, political campaign volunteers and those interested in understanding more about the political process.

The campaign workshops address strategies within Envision's Equity action team. A task force, chaired by David Johnson, USA's dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, is working to select topics and speakers for the workshops. Task force members include John Smykla, USA; Leonard Bright, USA; Konrad Kressley, USA; Ann Walsh, League of Women Voters; Barbara Drummond,

Mobile County Commission; Mike Marshall, *Mobile Register*; Marilyn McDevitt, Probate Court; Joe Webb; Happy Fulford, USA; Ron Martin, Alabama Power/Envision Equity Co-Chair; Chris Pringle, former state legislator; and Judge Herman Thomas.

Registration fee for the three-part workshop is \$25. For more information contact Linda Ingram at 431-8628.

Workshop Details:

- Tuesday, October 21, 6-8 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 28, 6-8 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 4, 6-8 p.m.
- Classes will be held in the University of South Alabama Main Campus, Humanities Building, Room 170

Mobile and Baldwin Chambers Collaborate on Regional Marketing Trip

Terry Burkle, communications director of the South Baldwin Chamber, and Deborah York Geiger, communications director of the Mobile Area Chamber, recently teamed up for a regional marketing trip to Birmingham. Burkle and Geiger compiled comprehensive media packets, labeled with the Envision Coastal Alabama logo and containing information on businesses and happenings in Baldwin and Mobile counties. Prior to the trip Burkle contacted each Baldwin County Chamber to gather information to promote the county as a whole.

Burkle and Geiger met with editors from *Southern Living*, *Birmingham Magazine*,

Birmingham Weekly, *Coastal Living* and *Birmingham Business Journal* to pitch regional and county-specific story ideas. The communications duo shared travel story ideas with tips for giving visitors a positive Baldwin and Mobile experience.

Donna Watts, president of the South Baldwin Chamber, noted the impact of the media trip saying, "We are thrilled to have this partnership opportunity and to take a regional approach to marketing both counties. We can achieve great results by leveraging each other to accomplish the overall goal of getting more print media attention for our region."

Subscribe to Envision's On-line Communications Tool


Subscribe to the Envision "list serve," an Internet tool used to exchange ideas, discuss issues and stay in touch with your action team.

The list serve is a great place to post notices of meetings, conferences and media-generated reports/documents other group members might find helpful or interesting. It is also a place to post questions, ask for further information and share viewpoints on issues. The list serve is a great place

to dialogue, learn, problem-solve and collaborate on key issues of interest to us all.

The University of South Alabama has assisted Envision in setting up four list serves to improve communication within the four focus areas.

To subscribe to the list serve, contact Linda Ingram at the Envision office, 431-8628 or email linda@mobilechamber.com.



I want to participate in the following focus area(s):

Economy **Environment**

Education **Equity**

Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Please enroll me in the following information lists serve:

Economy **Environment** **Education** **Equity**

Signature _____

Return to: Linda Ingram, P.O. Box 2187, Mobile, AL 36652

Mobile United Noted as "Better Leader" by Southern Growth Policies Board

Mobile United was recently featured in the Southern Growth Policies Board annual *Report on the Future of the South* as a "Better Leader." The publication recognized Mobile United as an innovative regional program in developing leaders. The Southern Growth Policies Board was created in 1971 to help make the South the best place to live, work and do business.



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