



envision
COASTAL ALABAMA

SEPTEMBER 2009

Coastal Economy Outlook to Feature Nationally Acclaimed Economists

Area business and community leaders will have an opportunity to hear two nationally renowned economists at the Coastal Economy Outlook. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta President **Dennis P. Lockhart** and **Dr. Martin Regalia**, vice president for economic and tax policy and chief economist at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, will share the stage as keynote speakers. Earlier this year, *USA Today* named Regalia one of the top 10 economists in the nation. Coastal Economy Outlook will take place Wednesday, Sept. 30 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center.

The focus of the seminar will be to:

- access current conditions in U.S. and regional credit markets;
- examine the state of the U.S. economy and its impact on local markets;
- present facts and analysis on the Mobile-Baldwin economy and the impact on financial and investment decisions; and
- forecast the future direction of the local economy.

Lockhart will present his views on the current state of the economy and provide an analysis of post-economic recovery efforts. With his vast experience in international finance, Lockhart will provide an insightful overview of the future of the national economy and the new world of global banking.

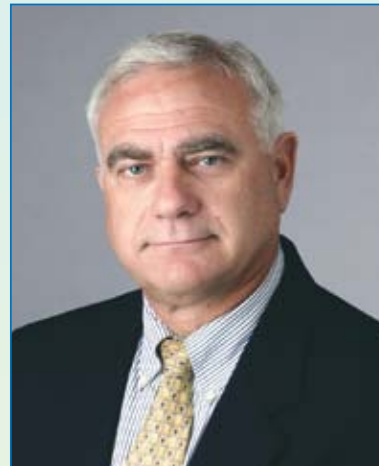


Dennis P. Lockhart

Lockhart has been president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta since 2007 and serves on the Federal Open Market Committee, the Federal Reserve System's chief monetary policy body. The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta covers the Sixth Federal Reserve District that encompasses Alabama, Florida and Georgia, as well as parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Regalia will present his assessment on current economic drivers and their impact on American businesses. Regalia has served in his current position at the U.S. Chamber since April 1993. Prior to joining the Chamber, he worked as the director of research for the Savings and Community Bankers of America (SCBA).

Other Coastal Economy Outlook panelists will include **Tim Russell**, Alabama revenue commissioner; **Troy Wayman**, vice president of economic development for the Mobile Area Chamber; **Robert Ingram**, president and chief executive of the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance; **Cedric Hatcher**, senior market executive for RBC Bank in Mobile; and **Dr. Donald Epley**, University of South Alabama distinguished professor of real estate and director of the USA Center for Real Estate Studies.



Dr. Martin Regalia

The event is sponsored by Envision Coastal Alabama, University of South Alabama Center for Continuing Education, University of South Alabama Center for Real Estate Studies, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance.

Registration deadline for this event is Wednesday, Sept. 23. Cost is \$85 to attend. To register, go to www.usacontinuinged.com or call 431-6536.



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COASTAL ALABAMA

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, Oct. 28
7:30 a.m.

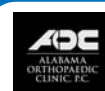
Grand Hotel Marriott Resort Grand Ballroom
Point Clear

Keynote Speaker: Joel Kotkin, Author of *The City*

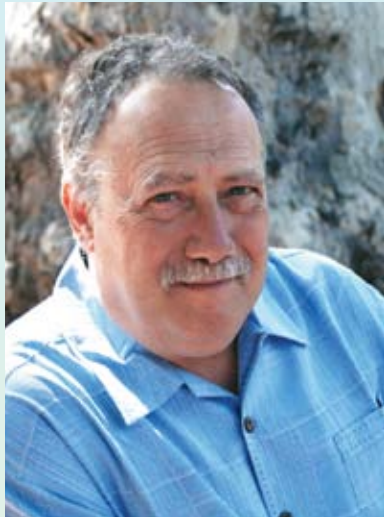
Cost: \$20

RSVP: Ailey Arrow at 251-431-8621

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Business Commentator and *Los Angeles Times* Bestseller Joel Kotkin to Keynote Envision Annual Meeting



Joel Kotkin, an internationally recognized authority on global, economic, political and social trends and author of the critically acclaimed book, *The City*, will be the keynote speaker during Envision Coastal Alabama's annual meeting set for Wednesday, Oct. 28 at 7:30 a.m. at Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club and Spa in Point Clear.

Kotkin will speak on the future sustainability of the nation's cities and share his perspective on the evolution of urban life. He is a presidential fellow in urban futures at Chapman University in Orange, Calif., who consults with leading economic development organizations, private companies, regions and cities.

The Envision Annual Meeting recognizes and celebrates the many volunteers and program partners who have contributed over the past year to the betterment of the Coastal Alabama region. Entering its 12th year, Envision continues to promote cooperative action among business and community leaders seeking ways to improve overall quality of life.

Kotkin writes the weekly "New Geographer" column for *Forbes.com* and a monthly column on trends for *Politico.com*. His work appears regularly in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The American Enterprise*.

As a senior fellow at the New America Foundation, Kotkin focuses on issues relating to the future of California as well as

on national economic, social and political developments. He is currently working on research projects relating to infrastructure development, the American heartland, the Houston region and the future of suburbia.

This year's annual meeting sponsors are Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic, Bay Security Co., First Community Bank, Infirmary Health System Inc., Meyer Real Estate, Mobile Airport Authority, Pilot Catastrophe Services Inc., Thames Batré Mattei Beville and Ison Insurance and Whitney Bank.

Registration for the annual meeting begins at 7 a.m. The cost is \$20 and includes breakfast. Reservations can be made by contacting Ailey Arrow at 431-8621 or aarrow@mobilechamber.com.

Inaugural Envision Mayors' Summit Promotes Regionalism



Creating economic diversity, managing growth, lack of publicly owned industrial property and protecting quality of life were just a few of the concerns raised at the inaugural Envision Coastal Alabama Mobile/Baldwin Mayors' Summit. Hosted by Envision Coastal Alabama's economy team, the June 26 conference, held at 5 Rivers Alabama's Delta Resource Center, sought to promote a spirit of cooperation and regionalism from mayors on both sides of Mobile Bay.

Mayors from Daphne, Dauphin Island, Fairhope, Gulf Shores, Magnolia Springs, Mount Vernon, Robertsdale, Saraland and Spanish Fort attended the meeting.

The summit, facilitated by **Ramona Hill**, certified trainer and facilitator with Workshops, Etc!, first offered the mayors an opportunity to listen to and question area economic leaders.

During the Mobile/Baldwin Mayors' Summit, municipal leaders from the bi-county area gathered to discuss community and economic development issues impacting their towns and cities – and discussed strategies to enhance regional cooperation.

Our regional effort is something a lot of communities are envious of. My experience here is that it is phenomenally easier to recruit business because everyone is on the same page.

Troy Wayman
Vice President of Economic Development
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

Troy Wayman, vice president of economic development for the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, told the group that despite a challenging economy, economic development teams from both sides of the bay are working together to court a number of business prospects. "Our regional effort is something a lot of communities are envious of. My experience here is

that it's phenomenally easier to recruit business because everyone is on the same page," Wayman said.

When it was the mayors' turn to talk, Hill encouraged city leaders to learn from one another by identifying challenges and successes in their respective communities. "We don't like to reinvent the wheel, so if we can jump-start by what others have done

we'll be that much further ahead," Hill said.

Area successes include the recruitment of Ryla Inc. to Saraland, the return of tourists to Baldwin County following hurricanes Ivan and Katrina, retail development in Spanish Fort, the expansion of Thomas Hospital in Fairhope and recently opened public beach access on Dauphin Island. Charles Houser, mayor of the newly created city of Magnolia Springs, said his town council recently completed its first comprehensive plan. He joked about the town's wish to be excluded from industrial development and playfully chided the other mayors, "Be careful what you wish for. Sometimes quality of life is more important than quantity," Houser said.

Most mayors said they faced similar challenges such as infrastructure, zoning and attracting new jobs. By far, the common denominator shared was keeping their cities economically sound. "We need a viable financial plan going forward that we can communicate to our small businesses,"

said **Robert Craft**, mayor of Gulf Shores. "Our goal is to keep the small businesses there, that's what the tourists come for. We don't want to lose the things that make us special."

In a post-summit survey, all nine mayors agreed the conference was helpful and they would attend a similar meeting in the future. Robertsdale Mayor **Charles Murphy**, who told the group his town boasts a balanced budget, said the conference offered opportunities for future success. "My goal here is to formulate new ideas and take them back to my community to make it better. This is a chance to build an alliance not only with neighboring communities in Baldwin County but across the bay in Mobile as well."

Envision Coastal Alabama's economy team will examine the opportunities and challenges discussed at the Mayors' Summit as well as survey comments and feedback to identify and write a report on regional issues facing south Alabama communities.

Community Reinvestment through Volunteer Service: Business Support is Needed Now More than Ever



CORPORATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD TIMELINE

- What:** Corporate Community Service Awards Application Training
- Workshop Dates:** Wednesday, Sept. 16 and Thursday, Sept. 24
- Time:** Both workshops begin at 4 p.m.
- Where:** Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
- Application Deadline:** Friday, Nov. 6 at 5 p.m.
- Winner Notification:** December 2009
- Awards Presentation:** Mobile Area Chamber Annual Meeting Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2010

Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic employees participate in the Shrimp Cookoff.



CORPORATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD CRITERIA

- Entries will be judged on their own merit based on the following criteria:**
- Results:** What are the actual results of the company's employee volunteer efforts?
- Impact:** How has the company implemented its program to help solve community problems? What impact has been made on the community?
- Participation:** What percentage of employees participated in company sponsored or endorsed volunteer projects?
- Project Management:** How has the company been actively involved in the management of the employee volunteer program?
- Application:** A copy of the official application can be downloaded at www.mobilechamber.com

As the director of the region's volunteer action center, every day I see social service agencies struggling under the weight of growing needs and scarce resources. Many donors are holding back and adopting a "wait and see" attitude. Foundations are finding their investment portfolios shrinking and are unable to invest as much into the programs they support. I implore companies and civic leaders to recognize these needs and redouble efforts to support these agencies and the work they do to keep the fabric of our community from unraveling.

Businesses both large and small can make a tremendous impact on their community by providing financial and in-kind resources to local agencies and individuals in need. While dollars may be tight, many companies find they are able to provide skilled volunteers to a project that makes a difference in our community.

Pegasus TSI, an engineering and construction management firm, is an example of a small operation made up of approximately 20 employees who utilized their employees' technical skills to make two elderly women's homes more safe and secure. "Both projects turned out to be incredible opportunities for our employees to build camaraderie and gain a greater sense of pride in our company for its commitment to community service," said Mike Troup, Pegasus TSI's Mobile office manager.

As civic leaders and corporate citizens we have a role to play in the quality of life in our community. It is my hope that, like Pegasus TSI, each of us will give something of ourselves so that the larger community and economy can reach its full potential. To celebrate these efforts, Envision Coastal Alabama in partnership with the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Volunteer Mobile recognizes the contributions of Chamber members each year through the presentation of the Corporate Community Service Award. The award honors employers who provide opportunities and time for employees to participate in community civic



By Diana Brinson, Volunteer Mobile Inc.

affairs. Last year's winner, Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic (AOC), was recognized for the countless acts of service and support given to more than 60 charities, community organizations and social service agencies in the Mobile area.

"Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic strives to encourage our employees to be good corporate citizens and offers many

opportunities for them to give back to our community. Our corporation consists of 285 employees but our clinic feels more like a close-knit family that enjoys working, playing and volunteering together," said Dean Brown, AOC's chief executive officer.

Beginning in September, Volunteer Mobile will offer a series of workshops designed to assist local businesses that want to develop their own employee volunteer programs. In addition, businesses will also be given the opportunity to learn how to apply for the Corporate Community Service

Businesses both large and small can make a tremendous impact on their community by providing financial and in-kind resources to local agencies and individuals in need.

Diana Brinson
Executive Director
Volunteer Mobile Inc.

Award. Workshop participants will be given tips on how to showcase their efforts. Businesses of all sizes are encouraged to apply for this award. Applications will be judged not on the number of employees participating in volunteer activities, but on the percentage of involvement. This

evaluation method gives companies of all sizes equal weight during the judging process.

For a copy of the Corporate Community Service Award application, visit the Mobile Area Chamber web site at www.mobilechamber.com under News and Events and click on 2009 Corporate Community Service Award or contact Shayla Jones Beaco at 431-8628 or sbeaco@mobilechamber.com.

For more information on how your company can have an impact on our community, contact Volunteer Mobile at 433-4456 or www.volunteermobile.org.

Diana Brinson is the executive director for Volunteer Mobile. She can be reached at 433-4456 or dbrinson@volunteermobile.org.



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Want to share Envision's latest news?
This report can be found at
www.envisioncoastalalabama.org

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Baby Steps – Smart Coast Fosters Efforts to Walk to School



On the first Friday of each school month, a group of excited children, parents and teachers shun the carpool line and gather in the Big Lots parking lot on Greeno Road in Fairhope. Depending on the month, they wear reindeer antlers, Mardi Gras beads, blow kazoos or bring their dogs. After a pep talk by Smart Coast co-founder Charlene Lee, the group sets off down the sidewalk for the half-mile walk to Fairhope Elementary and Fairhope Intermediate Schools. On the other side of town, in a similar exercise, children and parents walk to the Fairhope K-1 Center. The children are participating in a pilot program for Walk On First Friday (WOFF), themed walks designed by Envision Coastal Alabama strategy partner Smart Coast, to re-create a culture of walking and biking to school.

Started in fall 2008, WOFF is modeled after "National Walk to School Day" held each year in October. "Our intention is to create healthier children, educate the public about the need for safe routes to school and improve air quality by decreasing the number of cars idling in the carpool line," explained Lee. She added, "We've been very successful. On any first Friday, rain or shine, we have between 150 and 200 individuals walking to three Fairhope schools."

Smart Coast plans to initiate two new WOFF programs by the end of the 2009-10 school year. Ultimately, Lee said the organization intends to expand the program to both sides of Mobile Bay. For the current year, she said parent, teacher and student interest would determine whether the programs are in Mobile or Baldwin County schools.

To learn more or schedule a WOFF workshop, contact Charlene Lee at 928-2309 or visit www.smartcoast.org.

Computer Matchmaking at the Heart of CommuteSmart Mobile-Baldwin

Commuters in Baldwin County can now take advantage of a free online matchmaking service to share rides to work.

CommuteSmart Mobile-Baldwin replaces the year-old CommuteSmart Mobile program. According to Harrison, the move to include Baldwin County was prompted by the receipt of federal dollars known as Job Access Reverse Commute funds. Launched in May and created for people with long commutes, CommuteSmart Mobile-Baldwin is designed to help commuters save gas, reduce wear and tear on their vehicles and lessen stress levels from traveling long distances to work. The planning agency has three years to use the money.

Implemented by Envision Coastal Alabama partner South Alabama Regional

Planning Commission (SARPC), the ride-matching service is also intended as an environmentally friendly way to manage traffic congestion and reduce parking demand by taking cars off the road.

The project uses a ride-matching database to pair commuters with similar



trip patterns and work hours. "The program is open to anyone. In an effort to increase use, we are targeting many of the larger industries along Highway 43 in Mobile County," said Kevin Harrison, director of transportation for SARPC. "We've got a lot of places to hit. It's just a matter of going out there and trying to sell it to people."

"The number one reason for not carpooling is the fear of getting stuck at work when a family emergency occurs at home," explained Monica Williamson CommuteSmart project manager for SARPC. For that reason, Williamson said CommuteSmart offers three free emergency rides home per year for registered carpool participants in the program's database. The free ride, via taxi or transportation service, is available for family or personal emergencies or unscheduled overtime at the request of a supervisor.

For more information or to register for CommuteSmart Mobile-Baldwin call 706-1CAR or visit www.commutesmart.org/mobile.

Envision Environment Team Launches Internet Forum for Idea Sharing

Conservationists in south Alabama can swap ideas, share resources and create potential partnerships through the use of the newly created Alabama Conservation Forum. The Internet forum, developed by the Envision environment team and launched last spring, is part of the environment team's 2009 project goals.

The Alabama Conservation Forum uses Ning.com, a social networking tool for groups with similar interests, to link area conservation professionals. According to Bethany Kraft, Baldwin County

environment co-chair and executive director of Alabama Coastal Foundation, Ning works much like other social networking sites such as Facebook. However, access to the Ning social network is controlled by an administrator. Additionally, members can load files, have discussion forums and chat online with other members. To enter the web site, members use the address: <http://envisioncoastal.ning.com>.

Kraft said now that the forum is up and running, future efforts will focus on encouraging organizations to utilize the

site. "Our biggest task is reminding groups and individuals that there is an incredible network of conservation-minded folks in south Alabama who can provide resources, help with programs and together, work more efficiently. That's the connection we're trying to make," Kraft said.

Currently, the Alabama Conservation Forum has 20 members representing a variety of conservation groups and individuals in south Alabama. To join the social network, contact Bethany Kraft at 990-6002 or bkraft@joinacf.org.