



# Education, Economy, Equity and Environment – Meet Envision’s Four E’s

New logo, new lingo, new leadership – Envision Coastal Alabama has embraced many changes in the past few months. Even with all the changes that have been made, one important element remains the same. Collaboration is the common thread in each Envision success story, and collaboration is still the key to Envision’s future success. As we sharpen the focus on regionalism, success will depend on the ability to join forces and create bi-county coalitions to reach our goals.

Gigi Armbricht with BellSouth and Envision chair, summed it up perfectly when she said, “Envision Coastal Alabama is a way for people on both sides of the bay to get to know each other, build trust and work together as a regional community.”

To that end, Envision’s E-Team co-chairs have been hard at work recruiting team members and defining their target projects. The E-Teams are already making great strides in redefining goals and strategies for the next five years. The Steering Committee of Envision Coastal Alabama met at the James P. Nix Center in Fairhope on Jan. 23 to hear reports of the E-Team chairmen on potential projects and goals.

E-Teams are being recruited to begin strategic planning for implementation of project goals, some of which were presented at the January meeting. If you are interested in working on one of the focus areas described below, please contact the E-chairs listed.

## Environment

Contact: Charlotte Cabaniss, Baldwin, (251) 580-1648  
or Cathy O’Keefe, Mobile, (251) 460-7131

These Envision strategies focus on protecting, restoring, maintaining and conserving the natural resources of Coastal Alabama as we build, grow and expand the infrastructure of the region with strong emphasis on the continuing improvement of water and air quality plus endorsing issues of sustainable land use.

Environment Team focus areas include:

- 1) Seeking constitutional reform that gives local areas greater control over zoning, planning, environmental management and growth;
- 2) Encouraging a consistent, high quality approach to planning, zoning and land management across the two counties;
- 3) Protecting the Mobile River Delta, its estuaries and waterways for the use of future generations; and
- 4) Empowering local residents in shaping the safety and quality of neighborhood life, including recreation, neighborhood improvement, crime prevention and aesthetics.

## Equity

Contact: Phil Norris, Baldwin, (251) 928-8133  
or Ron Martin, Mobile, (251) 434-5621

Envision strategies in this group are devoted to supporting the rights and entitlements of citizens to representation, equality and opportunity. They develop opportunities and more access for the people in the region to careers, education, cultural enrichment, social leadership and recreation – and equality among race, gender, geography and age.

Equity Team focus areas include:

- 1) Increasing access to technology;

- 2) Increasing affordable housing;
- 3) Facilitating equal employment opportunities;
- 4) Increasing minority representation on civic and governmental boards;
- 5) Including the Hispanic and Asian populations in community activities;
- 6) Increasing the number of community mediation programs; and
- 7) Increasing language instruction.

## Economy

Contact: Bob Mullican, Baldwin, (251) 990-3849  
or Terry Harbin, Mobile, (251) 690-1595

These Envision strategies contribute to the economic development of the region and strive to create wealth in the area. They provide more high quality jobs and create a stronger workforce. These strategies support Coastal Alabama in being a competitive region in the global economy by proactively developing and marketing unique resources in technology, environment, education and human capital.

Economy Team focus areas include:

- 1) Forming a venture capital funding group to help develop or expand businesses that foster the Envision mission;
- 2) Developing a “Smart Growth” plan for Coastal Alabama;
- 3) Building a grassroots ground swell for promotion of regional tourism;
- 4) Encouraging comprehensive regional planning;
- 5) Supporting workforce and vocational training through an excellent K-12 system;
- 6) Coordinating regional recruitment of environmentally sound new businesses;
- 7) Seeking a new Alabama constitution;
- 8) Fostering infrastructure development; and
- 9) Seeking regional coordination of business regulations.

## Education

Contact: Cindy McBrearty, Baldwin, (251) 990-8653  
or Carolyn Akers, Mobile, (251) 476-0002

Access to quality education is the overall goal of these Envision strategies as well as creating a diverse range of educational options. Most importantly, however, citizens want to create a passion for learning and the opportunities to do so at any age.

Education Team focus areas include:

- 1) Identifying and recruiting cooperation among the players involved in effecting positive change for teachers;
- 2) Promoting awareness through a series of public forums at the local and state level;
- 3) Developing an assessment tool for evaluating pre- and post results of actions;
- 4) Developing a statewide vision through legislative and local awareness of what it takes to produce a highly qualified teacher; and
- 5) Serving as the education connection for community involvement and engagement locally and regionally.

## Envision Coastal Alabama is All About



# Landmark Joint Meeting of Leadership Mobile and Leadership Baldwin Focuses on Regional Collaboration

Leadership Mobile and Leadership Baldwin teamed up in November for a landmark first in the history of the two organizations. The current leadership classes in both counties convened for a joint seminar with regional collaboration expert Ted Hershberg presenting the keynote address.

The diverse group of more than 70 leaders and future leaders from Mobile and Baldwin counties spent the day together at the International Trade Club in Mobile discussing issues as they relate to the four E’s of Envision – economy, education, equity and environment. The group covered each of these from the perspective of regional goals, Mobile county goals and Baldwin county goals.

Many goals overlapped, demonstrating the importance of regional collaboration. For example, regional tourism, constitutional reform and envi-

ronmental issues such as improving water quality and conservation of natural resources were listed as regional, Mobile and Baldwin goals.

Response from seminar participants was overwhelmingly positive, with resounding support for future joint seminars. One Leadership Mobile participant wrote, “The seminar opened my eyes to a broader vision of a community that extends

beyond the small limitations and borders that I had inherently placed upon the area I exist.”

The idea for the joint meeting originated at an Envision steering committee meeting last summer. Steering committee members Katherine Phillips of Leadership Mobile and Linda Garrett of Leadership

Baldwin met and agreed that a joint seminar would be an excellent addition to the leadership class curriculum and a ideal extension of Envision’s regionalism focus. Phillips and Garrett will encourage continued collaboration between the two leadership organizations.



Leadership Mobile and Leadership Baldwin participants recently attended a joint seminar.

**Envision Success Story**

# Businesses Recycle Thousands of Electronics

How many volunteers does it take to collect more than 35,000 pounds of electronics waste? At Keep Mobile Beautiful's recent Electronics Recycling Event, 82 volunteers took in thousands of monitors, CPUs, televisions, VCRs, copy machines, printers, phones and other electronics that would have otherwise been dumped in a landfill.

In today's technology-driven world, businesses are constantly upgrading computer systems, fax machines, telephones and more, to keep their operations efficient and successful. Businesses must then decide how to dispose of their electronic waste. Most people put used electronics out for garbage collection without knowing other options exist.

"People really want to do more than put their televisions on the street, and Keep Mobile Beautiful was pleased that the event was such a spectacular success," said KMB director **Bob Haskins**.

"We had been interested in sponsoring electronics recycling for some time, but the event is cost-prohibitive without a grant or major sponsor. We hope to secure future funding to sponsor an annual electronics recycling event," Haskins said.

Recycled electronic equipment is sent to a recovery center that reuses many components and disposes the remainder responsibly. Most televisions and monitors contain hazardous materials, such as lead in the cathode ray tubes, which should not be



Volunteers help unload old computers during Keep Mobile Beautiful's electronics recycling event.

dumped in landfills. KMB and its sponsors covered close to \$12,000 in costs for transporting the used electronics to the de-manufacturing facility and for the de-manufacturing fee.

The recycling day was sponsored in part by Southern Waste Information Exchange Inc., Keep Alabama Beautiful, the Alabama Recycling Coalition and grants from the Environmental Protection Agency and Legacy Inc. Electronics recycling addresses important strategies from Envision's equity and environmental foundations.

Keep Mobile Beautiful welcomes any input from businesses interested in partnering with KMB to host future electronics recycling events. For more information contact Haskins, 208-6026.

# Constitutional Reform Advocates See 2003 as Pivotal Year



Left to right: ACCR board members Jimmy Knight of Mobile and Cathy Golden of Fairhope; ACCR board president Thomas Corts PhD, president, Samford University; ACCR field director David Perry; Citizens' Commission on Constitutional Reform member Julius Thrower of Mobile; and ACCR board member Jack Edwards of Fairhope

Constitutional reform made headline news recently with the January release of the "Report of the Alabama Citizens Commission on Constitutional Reform," and Gov. Bob Riley's subsequent appointment of a constitution commission.

Reforming Alabama's 1901 constitution is a pressing issue for Envision as the impact of this outdated constitution is felt within the four sustainable foundations of education, equity, economy and environment.

Riley's first executive order as governor was to create the Alabama Citizens' Constitution Commission, and advocates for reform are hopeful that significant constitutional changes are on the way.

"We are in a position of having a governor who is very serious about reform and wants to bring together reform-minded individuals who have been involved in the reform process and listen to their recommendations. I think this is a huge step forward," said **Cathy Golden**, ACCR (Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform) board member and member of Riley's constitution commission.

Former Secretary of State **Jim Bennett** released the final report, which is the result of six months worth of statewide research by the Alabama Citizen's Commission. (The report is available on-line at [www.constitutionalreform.org](http://www.constitutionalreform.org).)

ACCR Chairman **Thomas Corts PhD** praised the Alabama Citizens Commission saying, "Their report is an invaluable resource for serious proponents of reform. ACCR has always maintained that substantive constitutional reform must address the issues of local democracy, debt and taxation, education, government organization and economic development. The commission's work on these areas provides a solid foundation for future reform efforts."

Now that the final report has been submitted, ACCR and the local chapter, Southwest Alabama Committee for Constitution Reform (SWACCR), continue to be resources for the public, press and elected leaders on meaningful constitution reform. Corts recently spoke to SWACCR, stressing the continued importance of working hard to educate Alabamians on the benefits of constitutional reform.

SWACCR's video, *Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform: A Brighter Future*, is now available for business, community and education groups to use to increase support for changing Alabama's constitution. The video highlights the need for constitution reform and how Alabama's outdated constitution detrimentally affects the state's education system. To obtain a copy, call **Linda Ingram** at 431-8628.

## Did You Know?

- Mobile Bay Watch, a local environmental advocacy group, recently secured a \$150,000 federal contract to establish a database that monitors water quality and water pollution levels in Mobile County. By next summer, it should be much easier to make sure your summer fun takes place in clean waters.

- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) selected Mobile-Prichard as one of only five areas in the country to establish a pilot program for their Integrated Drug Enforcement Assistance Project, known as IDEA. DEA representatives, including former administrator **Asa Hutchinson**, held a Drug Summit in Mobile in November to establish a strategic plan for implementing the IDEA program. The program focuses

on law enforcement working together with community groups and grass-roots coalitions to battle nationwide drug problems. In addition to Mobile-Prichard, IDEA programs are being developed in Allentown, Pa.; North Charleston, S.C.; Portsmouth, Va.; and Springfield, Mo.

- In 2002, public water and wastewater providers from Mobile and Baldwin counties attended a water quality roundtable discussion. Former Congressman **Sonny Callahan** organized the roundtable and invited members of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to speak on their successful regional coalition. The speakers stressed the importance of working regionally when seeking Federal assistance to fund local water and wastewater projects.

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