



Envision Launches New Brand, New Leaders to Boost Area's Regionalism



Envision Coastal Alabama action team co-chairs unveil the new logo at the press conference held at Ed's Seafood Shed. Pictured left to right are: Phillip Norris PhD, Ron Martin, Terry Harbin, Cindy McBrearty, Carolyn Akers, Charlotte Cabaniss and Bob Mullican.

Community leaders from Baldwin and Mobile counties unveiled a new name, logo, direction and leaders for the two-county regional vision program last month at Ed's Seafood Shed on the causeway.

Envision Coastal Alabama: Charting our Future logo and tagline (formerly known as Envision Mobile-Baldwin) comes as the program reaches a distinct milestone – its five-year mark. The launch of the new brand is the culmination of an effort to review the program's strategies and tactics as well as preview new goals that will ensure future success.

The original blueprint for action created by the community in the last five years was also revamped under four new compass points pointing to economy, equity, education and environment. Tasks were prioritized to facilitate action.

"In the past five years, Envision has had the privilege of shedding light on the tremendous work

of our coastal community's leaders and organizations who have been making our blueprint for the future a reality," said Envision Coastal Alabama Chair Gigi Armbrrecht with BellSouth.

"I feel confident that under the leadership of these new compass point leaders and with the new priorities that have been established, our coastal community is ready to achieve results in the next five years on the blueprint actions which still desperately need our attention," said Armbrrecht.

The new brand is the result of interviews with a diverse array of Baldwin and Mobile community leaders who have been both engaged in – and notably absent from – the Envision program over the past five years.

Research highlights that impacted the branding include a general consensus that:

- Regional efforts are critical to Alabama's coastal counties' competitiveness, increasing public, financial and political support in this day of global trade and communications. Increased public, financial and political support will allow us to continue building the quality of life.

- A shared, diverse leadership of the coastal area's effort is critical to making progress on regional competitiveness.

- Among the widely diverse demographics both within and between the two counties, the fact is, water is the element that most binds the area together and will serve as a common bond while embarking on regional efforts together.

- The program's role – to build awareness for and support individuals' and organizations' efforts (both past and future) in building the coastal community's vision based on the "blueprint" – needs to be more clearly communicated.

- The blueprint is a tremendous achievement of a community effort.

- The blueprint needs to be revamped to be more focused and ready for action.

"We have not been without struggles in the process, but this is not uncommon for visioning programs," says Linda Ingram, the Chamber's director of community and governmental affairs. "Our next, immediate goal needs to be ensuring action on the blueprint."

In 1997, more than 1,000 citizens from Mobile

and Baldwin counties spent a year developing a long-range strategic plan to provide a framework for their vision. The resulting document contained over 150 strategies for success in six focus areas of education, economic development, infrastructure, quality of life, government and community leadership.

This year, Envision began a regional re-visioning process that further refined these strategies by collapsing the existing focus areas into four foundations of sustainability – environment, equity, economy and education. During the process a new name and focus for the organization was developed.

The Junior League of Mobile, Whitney National Bank, BellSouth, Waste Management, Mobile Gas Service Corp. and Alabama Power Co. underwrote the financial costs of the strategic planning effort, and along with efforts of the volunteer steering committee in numerous meetings and workshops, made these achievements possible.



Mobile County Commissioners Freeman Jockisch and Sam Jones join Mayor Mike Dow in a symbolic meeting on the causeway with Baldwin County Commissioner Joe Faust, Daphne Mayor Harry Brown and Spanish Fort Councilman Joseph Thomas. Fairhope's Mayor Tim Kant was also in attendance.

Charting a New Direction

Below are the four Envision Coastal Alabama's focus areas with a brief description and the Mobile and Baldwin county leaders:

Environment

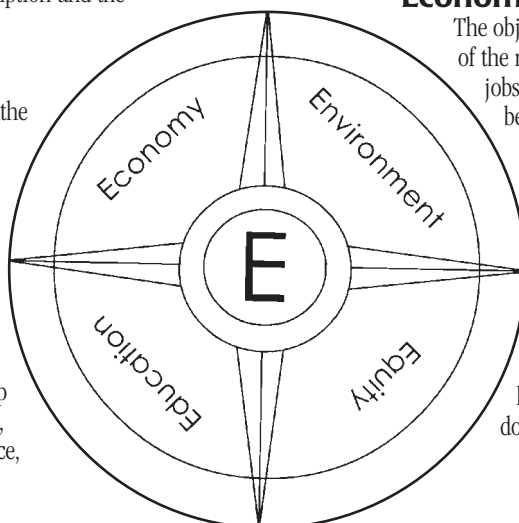
These strategies focus on protecting, restoring, maintaining and conserving the natural resources of Coastal Alabama as we build, grow and expand the infrastructure of the region with strong emphasis on the continuing improvement of water and air quality plus endorsing issues of sustainable land use.

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

Equity

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.

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



Economy

The objective of these Envision strategies is to 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 the unique resources in technology, environment, education and human capital.

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

Education

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.

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

Envision Leaders Plan a New Direction for Coastal Alabama

Cindy McBrearty and Rosemary Butler (pictured at right) are members of the Envision Coastal Alabama Steering Committee who participated in a leadership workshop held to involve leaders from Baldwin and Mobile counties as work began to chart the future of the region.

Below is Larry Jackson, Sgt. Phillip Garrett and Wendy Allen during a table talk on assigned strategies as other members of the steering committee are likewise involved.

The interaction from leaders in both counties will result in collapsing the strategies from the original focus areas adopted in 1997 to the sustainable foundations of environment, equity, economy and education.



Envision Success Story

Federal Grant Expands Area Youth Services



Danny White and Cynthia Ramos, health educators for the Right Choices Program of Crittenton Youth Services, work with students at Mae Eanes Middle School.

each year," said Clare Geary, assistant coordinator for the CYS program "Project Plan Right Choices."

"We currently reach 15,000 students each year, but this increase in federal funding would allow us to educate more than 42,000 students each year. Students need information on the life-long consequences of risk behaviors, so they can make the right choices," said Geary. Crittenton speakers present week-long classes in area middle and high schools to educate youth on risk behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use and premarital sex, and the lifelong consequences of such behavior. The education programs promote an abstinence-only philosophy and focus on building self-esteem as a

key to avoiding risk behaviors. CYS presents their "Project Plan Right Choices" education program free of charge to public, private and parochial schools in Mobile and Baldwin counties. "United Way funding and grants are our only source of income, so this federal money is crucial for the expansion of our services," said Geary. Using the federal planning grant funds, the coalition organized a series of focus groups to identify key problems facing teens and possible solutions. Researchers have already held focus groups with educators, business leaders, teens and churches. A parent focus group chaired by Mobile Councilmember Connie Hudson was held Nov. 7. In addition to participating in group discussions about key issues, focus group participants completed an anonymous opinion survey about issues in their community. Results of the opinion surveys will be compiled demographically to identify the most important issues within several communities in the Mobile and Baldwin county area. For information on attending the parent focus group or CYS education programs contact Crittenton Youth Services at 479-8585.

Teen pregnancy. Alcohol use. Drug abuse. Sexually transmitted diseases. These are just a few of the serious issues facing young people nationwide. A federal grant awarded recently may help Mobile and Baldwin county youth get the information and guidance they need to tackle these tough issues. A community coalition between Crittenton Youth Services, University of South Alabama Children's and Women's Hospital, Baldwin County Public School System and Mobile County School System was awarded a federal planning grant to fund a needs assessment for improving youth services in the two counties.

Results of the needs assessment will be submitted in January in a separate grant application and could secure a substantial federal implementation grant to expand education programs addressing teen risk behavior in both counties. The federal implementation grant would be the largest grant Crittenton Youth Services (CYS) has ever received and would allow CYS to almost triple the number of students they reach in a year.

"This grant would be a tremendous leap for us, allowing us to revamp our services, hire more presenters and increase the number of students we see

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