

***The ultimate business supplement  
for a new generation.***



**MOBILE AREA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

## ***2009 Annual Report***

### ***From the Chairman***

Reflecting back on the past year as chairman of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, I turn to remarks that I made in closing last January's annual meeting. In summarizing what I had hoped we could accomplish during the year, I said, "If we will stick together and work our plan, in years to come another chapter will be written about the history of Mobile. God willing, it will read, "During the 2008 and 2009 economic crisis, Mobile was a great place to be."

Despite a bleak national economic picture during 2009, the Chamber led an effort to recruit Ryla Inc. to Saraland, and with it the commitment of more than 1,200 jobs, with nearly 500 of them coming within months of the announcement. The phones are still ringing in economic development, and we are seeing ever-increasing interest in sectors such as aerospace, maritime, oil and gas exploration and transportation/distribution.

Internally, areas that remained a priority for us in 2009 were workforce development, and the successful implementation of the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council's program of work; enhancing Mobile's infrastructure and advancing the need and support for an I-10 bridge over the Mobile River; and growing our business retention and expansion outreach to enable more local companies to grow right here in Mobile.

***If we stick together and work our plan, in years to come another chapter will be written about the history of Mobile.***

This year hundreds of entrepreneurs and small business owners were counseled by the Chamber to help fine-tune business plans, launch a new business or locate the tools and partnerships needed to move from "dream to action."

Without a doubt, 2009 is one for the record books. While many companies I'm sure are ready to turn to a new chapter – one without looming fear of decreased production and a shrinking workforce, I am confident the lessons learned by our business owners and managers over the last 18-plus months, will have a long-term positive impact on all of us in the future. It has been an honor to work for you the last year, and thank you for your continued support for me personally, but most especially for your support of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

Best wishes,

William S. Stimpson, Executive Vice President  
Scotch & Gulf Lumber LLC and  
2009 Chairman of the Board of Directors,  
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce





# Economic Development

**2009** was known as the Year of the Ox in China, and according to Chinese custom, the ox is supposed to endure hardship without complaint and achieve prosperity through patience and hard work. This could well be Mobile's mantra. While many area companies undoubtedly felt the recession, the strength of the previous successes helped to soften the blow. And economic experts predict there is good news ahead for the area.

Mobile has grown in the past four years due to businesses like **ThyssenKrupp** and **Northrop Grumman's** bid for the U.S. Air Force aerial tanker contract and these companies continued to bring positive press. Named Site Selection's top project of the year in 2008, TK is one of the nation's largest private investment projects with \$4.6 billion for the state-of-the-art carbon steel and stainless steel processing facility. More than \$1 billion in contracts were awarded to date to Alabama companies. TK is expected to generate 2,700 permanent jobs when the facility opens in 2010 and 30,000 to 52,000 indirect jobs in a 20-year-period. The project, along with other investments by international companies, helped identify Mobile "as an example of American cities wooing foreign investment," according to a July 2009 article in *The Economist*.

## Mobile Declared Cost Effective

Mobile was recognized in *fDi* magazine for being among the top five in "Best Cost Effectiveness for Small Cities" in North America. Mobile was the only Alabama city to make any of *fDi's* top five rankings in any category. The cost effectiveness was based on eight factors, including office rental fees, industrial rental costs, labor rates, and average gas and electricity costs.



Since the Georgia-based company announced it would open a new facility and regional headquarters in Saraland in April 2009, Ryla has held its official grand opening and hired nearly 600 employees.

## Mobile ♥ Forbes



Forbes.com recognized Mobile as one of the "10 Best Cities for Recession Recovery" in 2009. Forbes used projected gross domestic product data from *Moody's Economy.com*, an independent provider of economic analysis, unemployment figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Association of Home Builders' home prices, income and affordability. *Moody's Economy.com* predicted Alabama would be among the first states to exit the recession.

## Looking Beyond the Recession

An article in *The Economist* political magazine was headlined "Optimism in Mobile." The author discussed the area's optimistic business outlook, as well as that of the state of Alabama, despite a down economy. Local economic development highlights were mentioned, including Austal, Mobile Container Terminal and ThyssenKrupp. The article also included the area's most prestigious ranking – Mobile County was named as the No. 1 mid-sized metro area for projected economic growth from 2008-2012 by *Moody's Economy.com*



## Local Businesses Named Finalists

Competing against nearly 1,000 other economic development projects, Austal USA and SSAB Alabama, two Mobile-based companies, were named among 15 finalists for the CiCi Awards presented by *Trade & Industry Development*. The magazine spotlighted both companies because, according to editors, they were, "investing, locating and building relationships with the community." The finalists were determined by using three key factors: capital investment, job creation and job retention, according to editors.

## What the Panama Canal Expansion Means for Mobile

*US Industry Today* magazine featured the Alabama State Port Authority in an article on the expansion of the Panama Canal, to be completed in



2014. The expansion will meet shippers' high demand for larger vessels and cut current transit costs and is projected to increase traffic at Mobile's port significantly.

## Chamber's New Quarterback

In January, Troy L. Wayman CECD (certified economic developer) joined the Chamber as vice president of economic development. Wayman is also currently serving as president of the Economic Development Association of Alabama, and was previously on the economic development team with the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce.

## Ryla Inc. Selects Mobile County

In April, Ryla Inc. expanded its Georgia-based company to include a call center, data center and regional headquarters in Saraland, located in north Mobile County. This announcement was one of the year's largest economic development projects in the state of Alabama. The company hired more than 500 full-time workers by the time it officially opened its doors in the summer of 2009, and was well on its way to a peak employment of 1,200 workers by the end of the year. Ryla is an outsourced call center that has international contracts with Fortune 500 companies to provide services such as customer care.

Ryla looked at more than 2,600 applicants in the first wave of hiring, and partnered with Alabama Industrial Development Training, the state's workforce training program, in the screening process. AIDT assisted Ryla by running help wanted ads, conducting customer service training and pre-testing applicants for basic computer skills.



## Maritime Gets Job Training Boost

The Alabama Industrial Development Training Maritime Science Center broke ground in October, and is constructing an education and training facility designed to transform students into workers with skills area shipyards need. The Maritime Center will house welding shops, training labs to meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) specifications, classrooms, and computer and electrical labs and is expected to open in 2010.

## Bringing it Home to Mobile

Aker Solutions announced plans to create 30 new jobs and invest an additional \$2.3 million in its Mobile Middle Bay Port Operations. Jobs once outsourced are now moving back to Mobile. Aker is a leading provider of engineering and construction services, and manufactures umbilicals and other sub-sea equipment used to extract oil and gas from beneath the ocean floor.

## Evonik Degussa Corp. Brings Local \$10 Million Expansion Online

Creating 26 new jobs in Mobile, Evonik Degussa Corp. opened a \$10 million ROHACELL rigid polymethacrylimide foam production plant and is the first one to open outside Europe. It enables the company to reduce delivery time and enhance customer service. The innovative material is used in applications ranging from wind turbine blades to satellite-launch-robots to snow skis.

## Traffic Increases at Mobile Container Terminal

Maersk Lines, one of the world's largest networks of container ships with 460 vessels, announced transatlantic service from Mobile to Northern Europe, UK/Ireland, and Scandinavian and Baltic destinations. The transatlantic service is located at the Mobile Container Terminal and began in 2009.

## Steel Spiral Pipe Plant Opens

Berg Spiral Pipe Corp. officially opened its doors in 2009, and achieved its American Petroleum Institution (API) certification, a national trade association representing America's oil and natural gas industry. A division of Europipe, based in Germany, the company announced in March 2007 it would expand U.S. operations and create a spiral pipe manufacturing facility at the former International Paper site that previously sat vacant for a number of years. The area's five class-one railroads needed to transport the pipe were a significant draw, as were dock facilities, water access, two major interstates and proximity to SSAB Alabama.

## Local Shipyards Receive \$6.3 Million in Federal Grants

The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded 70 grants totaling \$98 million for American shipbuilders and repair facilities as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009. Five local shipyards, Austal USA, Horizon Shipbuilding Inc., Master Boat Builders Inc., Offshore Inland Marine & Oilfield Services Inc. and Steiner Shipyard Inc. collectively received more than \$6.3 million in grant money for various capital improvement projects.

## ST Aerospace Mobile Expects to Hire 200 Additional Workers

ST Aerospace Mobile expects to add 200 new employees to its aerospace operation after announcing it won a new airplane maintenance contract. Company employees will be working on both Airbus A320 and Boeing 767 planes as part of this announcement. It is estimated the value of this three-year deal will be \$90 million with an option for an additional two years.

## Airbus NA Military Expands Bates Field Presence

EADS North America expanded its Mobile presence with the opening of a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul Delivery Center at Mobile Regional Airport. The center will support the company's tactical multi-mission aircraft. The 30,000-square foot facility is in addition to the planned EADS production site at Mobile's Brookley Complex, should Mobile win the bid to build aerial refueling tankers for the U.S. Air Force. A \$6 million investment, the expansion increases EADS training, spare parts and customer support operations first opened in Mobile in 2005 to support military and civil operators, including the U.S. Coast Guard located in the U.S. and other customers in Canada and Mexico.

## Murtha Adds Momentum for Split Tanker Contract

The chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, Rep. John Murtha, visited Mobile in April and toured the potential site where Northrop Grumman would build the next generation of aerial refueling tankers for the U.S. Air Force. Rep. Jo Bonner and Rep. Arthur Davis arranged for Murtha to visit Mobile, as he is a pivotal decision-maker on defense spending issues.

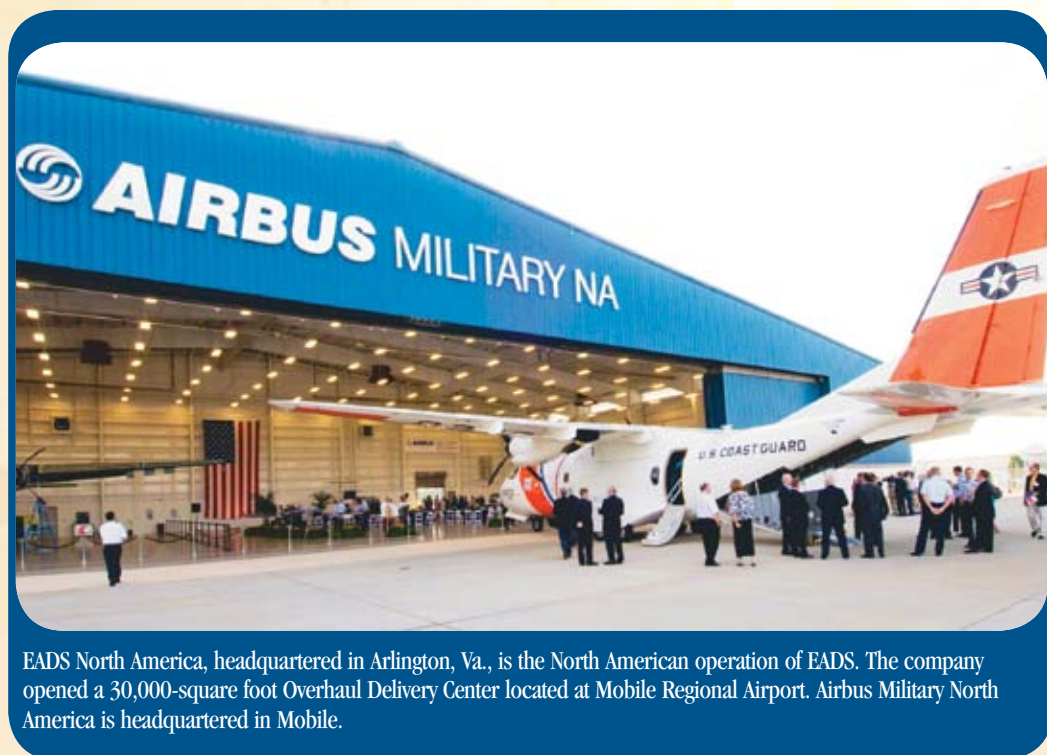
At stake is the estimated \$40 billion contract to buy 179 new aerial refueling tankers to replace the U.S. Air Force's aging fleet over the next 15 years. If Northrop Grumman wins the contract again (it first won the tanker contract in February 2008 but Boeing protested, and the government review panel found problems with the bid), Northrop will retrofit the tankers for the military EADS A330 cargo planes in Mobile at Brookley Industrial Complex.

## All About Aerospace

The Chamber, in partnership with other chambers of commerce along the I-10 corridor met to discuss the region's emerging aerospace corridor and other issues shared by chambers along the northern Gulf of Mexico from New Orleans to Pensacola. Issues discussed included workforce, property insurance and Go-Zone extensions. From this the Aerospace Alliance was created to present a unified voice in Washington D.C. to support Northrop Grumman's bid to build U.S. Air Force aerial refueling tankers.

## Mobile in Paris

Alabama delegates, including Gov. Bob Riley, Sen. Richard Shelby and Rep. Jo Bonner, joined nearly 40 local elected officials and business leaders in attending the Paris Air Show in support of area aerospace companies, and to solicit support for Northrop Grumman and EADS in their bid to build aerial refueling tankers and cargo aircraft in Mobile. The Alabama delegation hosted several well-received receptions attended by aerospace industry leaders. The Chamber's economic development team met one-on-one with potential supplier industries for the tanker contract and others that could successfully expand operations in Mobile.



EADS North America, headquartered in Arlington, Va., is the North American operation of EADS. The company opened a 30,000-square foot Overhaul Delivery Center located at Mobile Regional Airport. Airbus Military North America is headquartered in Mobile.

Photo by Tad Denson - MyShotz.com



# Economic Development

## Outlining Economic Development Resources

The Chamber's economic development and small business departments hosted a day-long workshop for more than 45 business owners in north Mobile County at the request of Mobile County Commissioner **Merceria Ludgood**. The seminar included information on industry recruiting efforts, updates on economic development projects in north Mobile County and explanations of sources for small businesses assistance.

## Record Population Growth

Of the 67 counties in Alabama, Mobile and Baldwin were among the Top 10 for growth last year, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's July 2008 population projection figures. Mobile County ranked No. 7 in increasing, with a population of 406,309. Baldwin County ranked No. 3 in increasing, with a population of 174,439.

## 93.7 is Mobile's Magic Number

According to the American Chamber of Commerce Research Association Survey's latest report (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2009), Mobile's cost of living is consistently one of the lowest out of the 80 largest U.S. metropolitan area. The latest statistic available shows the Mobile area at 93.7, compared to the national average of 100. This index measures regional differences based on six major components: housing, utilities, grocery items, transportation, healthcare, and miscellaneous goods and services.

## An Economic Developer's New Best Friend

Working to better meet the needs of site selectors responsible for researching potential sites to locate a new industry, and sharing real-time data about Mobile and the counties surrounding it, the Chamber launched [www.mobilebayregion.com](http://www.mobilebayregion.com). This site is a supplement to the Chamber's website – [www.mobilechamber.com](http://www.mobilechamber.com), but presents more information that is specific to economic development. Funding for the site was underwritten by Partners for Growth investors.

## Enhancing the Area's National and International Marketing

The Chamber refined its successful "Mobile Bay. On the Water. On the Move." brand in cooperation with Lewis Communications.



Campaign enhancements included a short video overview of Mobile and six testimonials by company executives who have recently located

operations in the area. Executives included in this campaign are: **Dave Trent**, Airbus North America Engineering; **Dr. Uli Albrecht-Frueh**, ThyssenKrupp Stainless USA; **Bob Browning**, Austal Ltd.; **Marc Quenneville**, Aker Solutions; **Mark Wilson**, Ryla Inc.; and **Brian Clarke**, Mobile Container Terminal. A new website – [www.whattheyaresayingaboutmobile.com](http://www.whattheyaresayingaboutmobile.com) was embedded into the Chamber's established economic development site – [www.mobilebayregion.com](http://www.mobilebayregion.com).

## Business Retention and Expansion

*The Chamber's business retention and expansion program was created to nurture success of those companies that call Mobile home.*

## We're Listening to Business

The Chamber's Business Retention and Expansion Committee (BRE) surveyed 15 percent of membership to gauge critical local business needs. Responses confirmed what the Chamber thought to be true – 93 percent of companies said the national economy was impacting business. Other issues included: the financial market, increasing costs and expenses, workforce resources and government regulations.

The survey also asked if the Chamber could "influence any area impacting your company in the next six months." Responses were encouraging. The majority of respondents felt the Chamber's existing programs and initiatives could positively impact their businesses.

## Oil and Gas Task Force Creates Website

A Chamber-sponsored, newly-created oil and gas task force – Offshore Alabama – worked with Red Square Agency to develop a logo and identity brand for the committee and its new website – [www.offshorealabama.com](http://www.offshorealabama.com). The site includes a company directory and helps educate the industry on what services the area can provide to support offshore oil and gas operations.



## 2009 Manufacturer of the Year

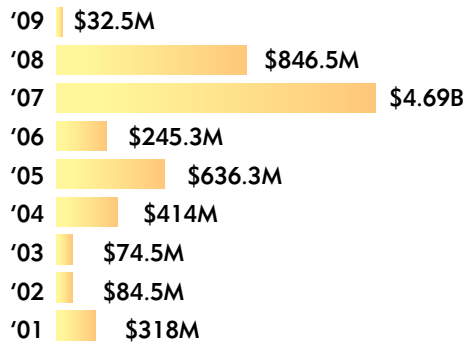
Since it opened its pipeline fabrication spoolbase in 2001, Technip's Theodore facility has become one of the most important offshore construction facilities on the entire Gulf Coast and has completed projects for more than 15 operators in the Gulf of Mexico, Brazil, Egypt and Angola. In 2009 Technip developed in excess of 60 percent market share of subsea fabrication/installation projects in the Gulf of Mexico. Technip was fortunate to buck the national and international trend by having one of its busiest years on record. The 140 employees on the spoolbase enjoy pay rates above the national level. Technip is also the owner of a fleet of offshore vessels. The reel lay vessel Deep Blue with more than 120 crew members is the largest vessel of its type in the world.

## 2008 Manufacturer of the Year Honored by State of Alabama

Aker Solutions was honored for being the Medium-Sized Manufacturer of the Year by the Business Council of Alabama and the Alabama Technology Network, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama and the National Association of Manufacturers. Aker is a global provider of engineering and construction services and produces subsea steel tube umbilicals and other equipment used by the offshore oil and gas industry. The Chamber nominated the company for the state award after being named the Chamber's 2008 Manufacturer of the Year.

### Capital Investment Growth

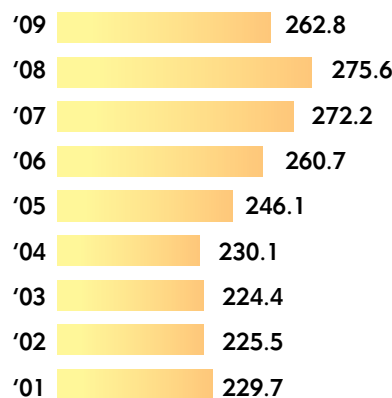
Manufacturing investment and expansions in the Mobile metropolitan statistical area including Baldwin County.



Source: Alabama Development Office  
Capital investment data is collected by the Alabama Development Office with figures from local developers and the Alabama Department of Revenue, and is limited to manufacturing investments and expansions.

### Mobile Area Employment

Number employed in increments of 1,000



Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations



## Gulf Coast Technology Council

With the state's new incentive for non-manufacturing jobs, the role of the Chamber's Gulf Coast Technology Council (GCTC) is poised to grow. Its mission is to foster long-term growth of the technology sector and position the Gulf Coast region as a global leader in technology-based jobs.

### Innovation and Technology-Based Summit

The Gulf Coast Technology Council, a networking group of area high-tech companies, co-hosted the annual iTenWired Summit event in April with the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance. With more than 155 people in attendance, the summit was created to promote innovation and technology-based entrepreneurship within a five-county region from Mobile to Okaloosa County, Fla. Topics discussed included innovation, technology-based economic development and entrepreneurship, university collaborations and access to capital.

### GCTC Pledges \$1,000 for USA Scholarship

GCTC made a two-year scholarship commitment totaling \$1,000 to the University of South Alabama's (USA) computer and information sciences department. The contribution is closely aligned with the goals of the GCTC scholarship fund, and will endow additional scholarships to recruit technology students to USA.

The scholarship fund grew to \$19,000 in 2009 and is funded by local companies in an effort to retain and grow the pool talented students majoring in technology-related fields.

### 2009 Innovator of the Year Selected by Gulf Coast Technology Council

Ecovey LLC is the 2009 Gulf Coast Technology Council's Innovator of the Year. In today's economy, it is important to salvage every resource, even those considered no longer critical. Ecovey was founded in 2008 and recently moved into a new facility located in Loxley.

Through its process, the company recovers valuable and reusable materials such as copper, aluminum, gold, silver and plastics from automotive and electronic waste — materials (some dangerous to the environment) that would until recently be thrown in a landfill.

Ecovey started the year with a moderate 10-employee workforce. Since then, the metal and electronics recycler increased employment by 150 percent, now employing 25 workers.

Processing capacity also increased, jumping from approximately 160,000 pounds per month to exceeding 1 million pounds per month. Scrap come from nearly every U.S. coast and numerous areas in between, and mills, foundries and smelters are the customers of the reusable materials.



The Gulf Coast Technology Council presented several scholarships to area students in 2009. Pictured here at the scholarship presentation are: (front row) Todd Hassel, Prism Systems; John Strobe, Dogwood Productions; James Chad Piece, University of South Alabama and scholarship recipient; Pashopati Shrestna, University of South Alabama and scholarship recipient; Angela Ashely, Remington College and scholarship recipient; and Steve Backman, Remington College. Back row: Louis Erikson, BitWizards; Chris Morton, MCG Business Solutions; Dean Parker, Callis; and Mahir Butts, Mobile Area Water and Sewer System.

## Center for Workforce Development

*From identifying the top 40 high demand, high-paying jobs to helping unemployed and underemployed individuals market themselves, the Chamber's Center for Workforce Development (CWD) revitalized and restructured its focus in 2009. By collaborating with labor market information officials to improve collection efforts, the center poised itself to meet the economic realities of today while assisting to accurately forecast future business growth needs.*

### Southwest Alabama Workforce Efforts for Job Growth

Alabama Department of Industrial Relations reported nearly 70,000 skilled jobs will be added by 2016 in District 9, consisting of Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Choctaw, Clarke, Monroe, Conecuh and Escambia counties. In addition, the next seven years could yield 32,000 additional jobs, bringing the job total to 100,000 for the region.

With this expected prosperity, the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC) Region 9, of which the Chamber is a key investor, had several significant accomplishments. SAWDC secured involvement of local business, industry, community, education and elected officials; influenced change in education at the local and state level; piloted a program for nearly 1,200 displaced workers affected by local plant closures by offering free job search seminars; created an online resource guide for employers, jobseekers and students; and launched its website — [www.sawdc.com](http://www.sawdc.com).

The council received financial commitment totaling more than \$380,000 from the eight Region 9 counties, the city of Mobile, the Mobile Area Chamber, Mobile Works, foundations and businesses.

### International Business Diversity Grows in the Port City

A new Hispanic-American Business Association was created in partnership with the Chamber to promote economic and business development, cultural ties and networking for the area's Hispanic professionals and businesses. The Hispanic American Businesses Association of the Gulf Coast (HABAGC) hopes to position Hispanic leadership, contributions and voice in the community; contribute to the economic and workforce development efforts by attracting more Hispanic professionals and businesses to the region; provide networking and professional development activities; and market Hispanic services and goods. The association raised funds for scholarships and funded a workforce literacy program for 80 construction and manufacturing workers.

### Investing in the Future Workforce

Area high school students had the opportunity to learn about careers in healthcare as part of the annual Summer Scrubs program and the Health Occupations Career Fair. Nearly 200 students from Mobile and Baldwin counties participated in a week-long internship at area hospitals and healthcare facilities during the July's Summer Scrubs program.

In November, a record 900 students from 28 Mobile and Baldwin County schools attended the hands-on Healthcare Occupations Career Fair where they followed "accident victims" through healthcare services, practiced CPR, worked with physical therapy and observed a mock surgery.

Both programs are an initiative of the Bay Area Healthcare Coalition, organized and managed by the Chamber to introduce students to various careers in healthcare.



# Economic Development

## Supporting Vital Link

The Chamber hosted 10 students and counselors from Mobile County middle schools as part of the Vital Link program. Students and their counselors spent a week learning about day-to-day Chamber operations, attended a Mobile City Council meeting, met with Mayor Sam Jones and took a walking tour of downtown Mobile to explore career options in the heart of the city. VitalLink is sponsored by AT&T and organized by the Mobile Area Education Foundation. More than 200 students participated and were hosted by 23 area businesses.

## Working to End Homelessness

The Chamber's Center for Workforce Development is represented on the board of Housing First Enterprises, a division of Housing First, working with a training and job placement program to prevent and end homelessness in the Mobile area. A staffing business enterprise was developed to generate funding for two local programs that emphasizes workforce development and creates reliable housing options for people in danger of becoming homeless.

## Job Strategies

To help jobseekers transition into a new career and thrive in the current economy, the Chamber hosted a four-part seminar on new strategies to finding a job. More than 135 people registered for the free program, whose outcome was to provide valuable job-related information, training and opportunities available in the region.

## International Trade

*The Chamber's international trade division helped sponsor eight trade missions in 2009 to Australia, Colombia, Cuba, Germany, France, Mexico and Thailand. Participating local companies increased sales and new business by \$26 million. More than 200 people attended representing 159 companies.*

## Chamber Receives State Trade Excellence Award

The Chamber was one of eight Alabama organizations honored by Gov. Bob Riley with the Trade of Excellence Award at the state capitol in 2009. This annual award is given to Alabama companies in recognition of outstanding contributions to the state's economy through exports and includes large, medium and small businesses. The award is part of the state's "Export Alabama" initiative created under Riley's administration to increase Alabama's exports. Chamber member N-TRON also received a trade award as the "Industrial Network Company" in North America. The company develops, manufactures and markets industrial network products for industrial, marine, utility, rail, traffic control and military applications.

## Exporting Workshop

With the Small Business Administration's (SBA) local office, the Chamber hosted a workshop for small business owners on exporting and export financing. The workshop provided participants with an overview of available SBA tools to help small business owners grow their export market, SBA and U.S. export-import bank financing options and local trade programs currently available to exporters. More than 40 Chamber members took advantage of this workshop.

## Trade Mission to Vietnam

During 2009, the Chamber's trade division worked to recruit local companies to participate in a Vietnam trade mission, slated for March 2010. Patrick Santillo, regional director for east Asia and the Pacific for the U.S. Department of Commerce's U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, traveled across Alabama to promote the Chamber's mission to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. It is expected that about eight Alabama companies will participate in this trade mission.

## Chamber One of Seven Selected for Thailand Trip

At the invitation of the Thai government, the Chamber, along with six other chambers from Canada, the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, was invited to participate in a trip to identify possible synergies and export/import opportunities for the respective regions. Industries of focus include: automobile, processed foods, jewelry and fashion, universities hospitals and healthcare, investment, and leisure and tourism.

## Discussing TWIC

The Chamber's Maritime Affairs Committee convened to discuss the newly implemented Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) regulation and recent funding of Alabama maritime infrastructure from the stimulus package. TWIC was established by Congress through the Maritime Transportation Security Act and is administered by the Transportation Security Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard. TWICs are tamper-resistant biometric credentials issued to workers who require unescorted access to secure areas of ports, vessels and all credentialed merchant mariners.

## World Trade Conference

The World Trade Conference "Connecting the Gulf to the Global Community and Sustaining Business Development Through Trade" was held in the spring. More than 100 companies from Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Florida participated. The Chamber is a partner in the annual conference.



Photo by Robbin Cooper

Chamber staff members Tony van Aken, left, and Bridgette Clarke, right, are presented a trade award from Gov. Bob Riley.



**The Chamber's small business development department assisted more than 1,900 entrepreneurs in 2009 through counseling, training and professional development seminars aimed at helping support the increased demands on small business services.**

## Big Opportunities for Small Businesses

More than 200 participants took advantage of a number of business skills workshops and the Executive Roundtable meetings that invited member small business owners to learn more about cash flow management, legal issues facing small businesses, export and financing, improving productivity in the workplace, detecting and preventing accounting fraud, and many other topics.

One of the largest workshops, "Analyzing the Stimulus Package and Its Impact" helped Chamber members better understand the federal stimulus plan. With 125 participants, **Jeffrey Brooks** with Adams and Reese, and **Brent McMahan** with the Small Business Administration, addressed the stimulus' impact on business through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act.

Additional training opportunities offered in 2009 included "Action Oriented Leadership: Linking People, Goals And Accountability To Drive Results" presented by Dale Carnegie.

## Boost Business 2009

The Chamber's small business development department held its annual day-long professional development Boost Business seminar. **Christine Corelli**, best-selling author, speaker, trainer, consultant and facilitator, provided sound advice for "Powering Up for Prosperity." Participants learned what smart businesses are doing to prepare for the inevitable turnaround in the economy and why cost control, competitive excellence, and superior sales and service teams are critical.

## District by District

The Chamber assisted Mobile County elected officials in presenting small business workshops for individuals doing business or interested in doing business in the county. Topics included revenue and licensing taxes, planning, permitting, zoning, code administration, public safety and community business resources. Workshops were held in each of the three Mobile County Commission districts, and attended by more than 90 people.

## SCORE Receives Performance Award

The Mobile Chapter of Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) counselors attended a regional conference and received the Performance Excellence Award. SCORE Online Counselor and Chamber Director of Small Business Development **Danette Richards** was a featured speaker at the conference. During 2009, SCORE counseled 370 entrepreneurs and small business owners, and added a new counselor, **Lynn Mitchell**.



Mobile Cookies by Design Franchise Owner Leah Brown and Shop Manager Paul Brown display a batch of spring cookies in the Sugar Mill Village located at Airport Boulevard and Hillcrest Road.

## And the Winner is...

Each year, the Mobile Area Chamber recognizes five minority-owned businesses by presenting Eagle Awards to companies that have shown significant growth and promoted community activities. Winners are selected based on a set of criteria including being headquartered in Mobile, Baldwin or Washington counties with a solid financial base producing increases in revenue or employee growth. During the awards dinner, the keynote address was presented by **John Cawley**, COO of Music World Entertainment and **Nichelle Poindexter**, Senior VP Music World Entertainment's music division, Music World Music. More than 250 people attended this year's event.

Winners were:

- Crosby Catering
- Hixardt Technologies Inc.
- Small's Mortuary Inc.
- Turner Distribution Co.
- Water & Waste Specialties LLC

## Minority Business Advocate Award – White-Spinner Construction

The Minority Business Advocate Award recognizes companies that show a commitment to supplier diversity by supporting minority-owned businesses. This year's winner was White-Spinner Construction Inc., a general contracting, design build and construction management company. The company is committed to working with minority-owned businesses and has hosted meetings to match minority businesses with large companies in the area. They have also partnered with minority firms as prime contractors and subcontractors to pursue multi-million dollar construction projects.

## 2009 Small Business of the Month

Featured each month in *The Business View*, Small Business of the Month winners are selected by a volunteer task force. Criteria for the award include a growing financial base, outstanding reputation, community involvement and employing fewer than 100 people.

Winners named in 2009 include:

- Armbrecht Jackson LLP
- Bayside Dinners
- Bay Paper Co. Inc
- Cookies by Design
- Creative Catering Inc.
- Don's Café and Catering Service
- A Gathering of Jewels
- K.Z. Corp.
- L.U. Landservice
- Prudential Cooper & Co., Commercial Division
- Walks and Wags

## 2009 Small Business of the Year

JF Pate Associates and Contractors Inc. was selected the 2009 Small Business of the Year. Founded in 1927, and currently employing 37 people, the family-owned company has a variety of clients and projects, including churches, hospitals, office buildings and residential facilities. According to the volunteer committee bestowing the award, J.F. Pate's commitment to provide the highest quality of excellence in the construction industry while meeting clients' demands was a deciding factor.



# Small Business Development



2009 Eagle Award winners are (from left to right) Michael Hicks with Hixardt; Irene Small with Small's Mortuary; Dale Turner with Turner Distribution; Derek Gillis with Water & Waste Specialties LLC; and Bruce Crosby with Crosby's Catering. John White-Spunner (right) with White-Spunner Construction Inc. was named Minority Business Advocate at the event.

Photo by Dennis Photography

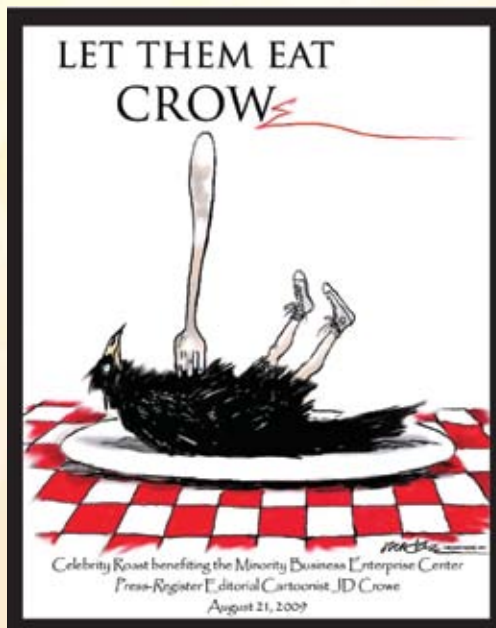
## Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Center

The Chamber assisted the Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Center in October 2006 to assist minority-owned businesses. The program is funded by a federal grant from the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency and match-grant funding from the city of Mobile.

In its three years of operation the MBEC had a goal of securing \$22 million in procurement contracts. MBEC not only met this goal, it nearly tripled that amount, by securing contracts worth \$65 million for its clients statewide. The center and its team have assisted more than 200 clients, helping them create 143 new jobs and increase sales by more than \$8 million.

## MED Week Celebration Roasts Editorial Cartoonist J.D. Crowe

MBEC's annual MED (Minority Enterprise Development) Week activities ended on a high note in August when award-winning *Press-Register* editorial cartoonist J.D. Crowe was the target of some good-natured fun by his *Press-Register* colleagues and area political leaders at a roast in his honor. More than 75 people attended this event. MED Week activities recognized the achievements of minority-owned businesses, focused on fostering innovations, competitiveness and included professional development workshops.



## MBEC Hosts Hope VI Conference

MBEC held a Hope VI Pre-Bid Conference in conjunction with the Mobile Housing Board in the spring, as well as two business-to-business roundtables to match local minority business enterprises (MBEs) to specific companies. Ten MBEs were given advice on how to use matchmaking events to their advantage when meeting with procurement officers and buyers.

## Regional Company Wins the Right to Bid on Naval Contract

The MBEC assisted Pensacola-based, Hixardt Technologies Inc., was selected to achieve prime contractor status on a multi-billion dollar contract with the Naval Sea Command. To increase Hixardt's marketability for competing on task orders for this massive contract, the MBEC with two regional minority business development agencies hosted a strategic partnership and contract opportunities matchmaker in Biloxi, Miss. As a result Hixardt gained 20 strategic partners/subcontractors and expanded the firm's ability to compete in every category of the contract.



**2009** was perhaps the busiest year in more than a decade when it comes to governmental affairs. The Chamber and its volunteers focused on numerous issues critical to small businesses, such as unemployment benefits, healthcare and permitting challenges. In addition, the Chamber supported the passage of non-manufacturing and film production incentives, helping the state compete more effectively for white-collar and high-tech jobs, as well as the movie industry.

Continuing the fight for a fair process in determining who will build the next fleet of aerial refueling tankers for the U.S. Air Force, the Chamber, state and local legislators voiced their support and kept a watchful eye on the \$40 billion opportunity.

## Legislative Session Promotes Economic Development

Several statewide and local bills were passed in the Alabama Legislature that helped maintain a more positive economic climate for southwest Alabama, and were on the Chamber's 2009 Community Agenda. Two laws in particular will greatly enhance economic development. The first, Entertainment Industry Incentive Act of 2009, will provide tax credits and rebates to companies involved in making qualifying film/entertainment productions in the state.

The second is the expansion of current economic development laws to include incentives for non-manufacturing companies to boost the state's competitiveness in recruiting more white-collar jobs.

## Sometimes "No" is the Right Answer

The Chamber's State Governmental Affairs Committee was active throughout the Alabama Legislature's 2009 session. Chamber staff and committee members worked with area legislators to identify and support those issues necessary to maintain south Alabama's strong business climate. In addition, the committee successfully advocated defeating a bill that would have increased unemployment benefits at the expense of area businesses, as well as an immigration bill that was potentially damaging to the legal supplemental workforce in Alabama.

## Against Card Check

The Chamber is a member of Alabama Alliance of Business Against EFCA (Employee Free Choice Act), better known as "card check." The Chamber was outraged and actively lobbied against card check's passage because it would do away with the secret ballot in union elections. It is believed that the legislation would allow union bosses to pressure workers to vote "yes" to a union presence. Principles of secret ballot are sacred to the U.S. democracy. Not only does the Chamber feel these provisions hinder economic growth and recovery, but it is in violation of the principles of international labor law.

Chamber Board Chairman Sandy Stimpson penned an editorial on the Chamber's position that appeared in the *Press-Register*.

## The Insurance Conundrum

*The Business View* examined the issues and challenges facing insurance reform in south Alabama. The Chamber supports advocates of insurance reform and continues to work with the Mobile-Baldwin legislative delegation to find a solution to the insurance conundrum. One key piece of reform is the restructuring of the Alabama Underwriting Insurance Association, better known as the "wind pool." Under the proposed structure, companies have less of an obligation to the pool's deficits if more policies are written in the at-risk coastal zones, creating an attractive case for companies to write more coastal policies.

## Chamber Addresses Key City and County Issues

The Chamber's Local Governmental Affairs Committee, in coordination with the Downtown Mobile Alliance, worked with Mobile city officials to address common developer challenges within the city's permitting and development review process. Ben Cummings of Cummings Architecture Corp. served as the Chamber's representative to the recently-formed Development Hurdles Task Force in discussing these issues. In addition, the Chamber's committee forwarded a letter to the Mobile County Revenue Commission requesting revisions to the annual property tax bill statements and changes to the tax evaluation appeal process.

In November, the Chamber was successful in lobbying the Mobile City Council's finance committee to postpone imposing a new formula for city business licenses, which would have resulted in increased business taxes for many retail establishments.

## Chamber Speaks at U.S. Department of Interior

The Chamber participated in a regional meeting of the U.S. Department of the Interior held in Mobile. The meeting included a discussion on the future of offshore energy exploration and production in the nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) from 2010 to 2015. The Chamber's Director of Business Retention and Expansion, Steve Russell, spoke on behalf of expanding leasing on the Gulf of Mexico's OCS.

## To the Capitol

Area business leaders and local government officials traveled to Washington D.C. for the annual "Washington Fly-in." During the two-day event, group members met with Sens. Jeff Sessions and Richard Shelby, and Reps. Jo Bonner and Arthur Davis to discuss the Chamber's 2009 legislative agenda and receive an update from Capitol Hill. In addition, the 20-plus member delegation met with representatives from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for a public policy briefing.

## Learning in Charleston

The Chamber held its 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Leadership Trip in Charleston, S.C. in 2009. The group of almost 90 Chamber members representing public and private sector businesses studied some of Charleston's most important issues and programs influencing the region, and how their success stories can be replicated in Mobile. Among other things the group learned about the process of transportation and infrastructure improvements, including Charleston's Cooper River Bridge. The group also looked at best practices in the areas of port development, workforce training, sustainable growth and youth development.



Left: One key topic for the 2009 trip to Charleston, S.C., was learning how Charleston businesses and residents worked toward a consensus for a high-rise river bridge. Pictured are: John Baker, Thompson Engineering; Goodman Ledyard, Piece Ledyard PC; and Randy Delchamps, Randy Delchamps Real Estate; and were among the 89 participants on the 2009 Leadership Trip.



Right: Keri Coumanis with Mobile Historic Development Commission and Mary Merchant with the city of Mobile chat with Mobile City Council President Reggie Copeland as they prepared to depart Mobile Regional Airport for Charleston.



Mobile Area Chamber members traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with Sens. Jeff Sessions and Richard Shelby, as well as Rep. Jo Bonner to discuss the Mobile business community's legislative agenda and priority items for 2009. Pictured here are participants in the Fly-In as they met with Sessions in his office. From left to right, front row - Ginny Russell, Mobile Area Chamber; Gigi Armbricht, AT&T; Michon Trent; Judith Adams, Alabama State Port Authority. Second row, Bob Chappelle, Mobile Area Chamber; Bill Sisson, Mobile Airport Authority; W.S. Stimpson, Gulf Lumber Co.; Sydney Raine, Mobile Works; Sen. Sessions; Win Hallett, Mobile Area Chamber; Jenny Lynn Summerall, Mobile County Commission; Mike Dean, Mobile County Commission; Happy Fulford, University of South Alabama; Herschel Vineyard, Atlantic Marine; and Preston Bolt, Hand Arendall LLC. Third row: Richard Davis, Mobile Airport Authority; Bruce Croushore, Bender Shipbuilding & Repair; Bill Pfister, Austal USA; Troy Wayman, Mobile Area Chamber; Mike Lee, Page & Jones; Jim McIngvale, Northrop Grumman; Jack Edwards, Hand Arendall LLC; Dave Trent, Airbus Engineering Center; Ritchie Hurt, Thompson Engineering; and Keith King, Volkert & Associates.

## Showcasing Mobile

Mobile welcomed two different groups of delegates from Columbus, Ga., and Tuscaloosa when they brought Leadership Trips/Intercity visits to Mobile in 2009. The Chamber's Community and Governmental Affairs department worked with Mobile area business executives and elected officials to ensure the groups saw the best of the region, including the Mobile Area Education Foundation, downtown Business Improvement District, CitiSmart, cooperative economic development and film recruitment. Columbus brought 100 participants and Tuscaloosa had 50 people on its trip.

## Strategic Planning for Mobile Bay

As a follow-up to last year's panel on community resiliency and sustainability at the National Corporate Community Investment Conference, Chamber President **Win Hallett** participated in a gathering of 300-plus officials from business, nonprofit and government sectors from across the country. The group met to showcase ideas on the role of business in revitalizing communities through economic and social development. More specifically, Mobile's InterCHANGE concept of a resiliency and sustainability tool for private development was showcased to corporate foundations interested in sustainable development. Mobile partners seek ways to work with government agencies and area organizations to push forward the development of a comprehensive tool that addresses both the area's natural and built surroundings.

## Fly from MOB

In early 2009 the Chamber's Air Service Task force joined forces with Mobile Regional Airport and Springdale Travel to co-host an event highlighting the status of air service in Mobile. "Air Service: A Driver of Economic Growth" was an informative session attended by 150-plus Chamber advisors and directors to welcome **Bill Sisson** as executive director of the Mobile Airport Authority and hear comments from a senior airlines executive.

Research with area travelers led to in-depth conversations with several airlines, including Southwest Airlines, on beginning air service to Mobile. Chamber Air Service Task Force members jumped to the call as more than 25 letters of support were written and received in a matter of days and more than 300 business leaders participated in the survey to help quantify Mobile's commitment to the low-cost carrier. In addition, comments from seven key community leaders were included in a persuasive video message to Southwest Airlines that was e-mailed to officials in the fall.

## Pork & Politics

City, county, state and federal politicians attended Pork and Politics in the Park in August at Battleship Memorial Park. The nearly 500 attendees used this event as an opportunity to network with elected officials and candidates for Mobile City Council to find out where they stand on key business issues.

## Honor Flight

Honor Flight South Alabama sent two flights to Washington D.C. to visit the World War II memorial in 2009. The organization's inaugural flight was on May 6 with 92 veterans and the second flight was Sept. 16 with 94 veterans. The Chamber supports this effort by coordinating the participants and volunteer registration. More than 1,200 people welcomed home the WWII veterans at rallies held at Mobile Regional Airport after both flights returned home. More flights are being planned for 2010.

## Military Affairs



Gov. Bob Riley



Dr. Barry Booth

The annual Armed Forces Day luncheon in May was a sell-out with more than 300 people in attendance. **Maj. Gen. Michael Sumrall** was the event's keynote speaker. The 2009 Veterans Day luncheon held in November, honored **Gov. Bob Riley** as Patriot of the Year and **Dr. Barry Booth** with Honor Flight South Alabama as Veteran of the Year. This event was also a sell-out with more than 700 people in attendance.



## Envision Coastal Alabama

Launched in 1997 with citizen input, *Envision*, the regional strategic plan, continues to be a platform for dialog and action between Mobile and Baldwin County leaders. This initiative works toward a variety of community goals from financial literacy to environmental sustainability with the help of 30 partners and 600 volunteers.



### In Good Hands

Donna Watts, president of the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, and Mike Hofto, chief financial officer with Leavell Investment Management, served as co-chairs for Envision Coastal Alabama in 2009. Other Envision chairs included economy co-chairs, Steve Walker, The Walker Co., and Ray Moore, Hutchinson Moore & Rauch LLC; education co-chairs, Dr. Rhonda Waltman, Waltman & Assoc., and Jim Kellen, Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council; environment co-chairs, Dr. George Crozier, Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Bethany Kraft, Alabama Coastal Foundation; equity co-chairs, Shirley Sessions, Regions Bank, and Chris Miller, South Alabama Regional Planning Commission.

### Coastal Economy Outlook Featured Nationally Acclaimed Economists

Envision supported the 2009 Coastal Economy Outlook, organized by the University of South Alabama Center for Real Estate Studies. The event featured two renowned economists – Dennis P. Lockhart and Dr. Martin Regalia. Lockhart, president of Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta; presented views on the current state of the economy and an analysis of post-economic recovery efforts. Regalia, vice president for economic and tax policy and chief economist at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, presented his assessment on current economic drivers and its impact on American business. More than 300 people attended this event.

### Bestselling Author Speaks at 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*, was the keynote speaker during Envision Coastal Alabama's annual meeting. Kotkin spoke on the future sustainability of the nation's cities and shared his perspective on the evaluation of urban life. He shared a similar message with the Chamber's board of directors during its October meeting. Kotkin rated Mobile as the 10<sup>th</sup> best mid-sized metro area for job growth in 2008, and 37<sup>th</sup> overall.

### Inaugural Envision Mayors' Summit Promotes Regionalism

The inaugural Envision Coastal Alabama Mobile/Baldwin Mayors' Summit hosted by Envision's economy team sought to promote a spirit of cooperation and regionalism from mayors on both sides of Mobile Bay. Concerns included: creating economic diversity,

managing growth, lack of publicly owned industrial property and protecting quality of life. Mayors from Daphne, Dauphin Island, Fairhope, Gulf Shores, Magnolia Springs, Mount Vernon, Robertsedale, Saraland and Spanish Fort attended the meeting.

### Income Tax Assistance

In partnership with several local agencies, the Chamber and Envision Coastal Alabama hosted a training workshop for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) preparers. Fifty VITA workers were trained to provide free tax preparation services, tax credit education and general financial counseling for low- to moderate-income wage earners. During the past year's tax season, the VITA coalition processed more than 1,300 tax returns, and netted more than \$1.5 million in refunds for working families.

### "Green Streets"

Envision, in collaboration with the city of Mobile and Downtown Mobile Alliance, hosted Auburn University's Landscape Architecture design students to facilitate a public design charrette in Mobile. The intensive planning session engaged citizens and government and civic leaders in exploring opportunities for a Green Street initiative. An outcome from this study will result in the development of innovative planning and design techniques addressing the challenge of storm water management within the highly urbanized core of downtown.

### Internet Forum for Idea Sharing

The Alabama Conservation Forum was created to swap ideas, share resources and create potential partnerships for conservation among area conservationists. The Internet forum is part of the Envision environment team's 2009 project goals to provide a networking opportunity for conservationists in the two-county region and a platform to discuss a variety of environmental topics impacting coastal Alabama. The Alabama Conservation forum used Ning.com, a social networking tool for groups with similar interests, to link area conservation professionals.

### 2009 Corporate Community Service Award

American Equity Underwriters Inc. (AEU) was the recipient of the 2009 Corporate Community Service Award. Striving to make a difference in Mobile, AEU began a partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Alabama YMCA to provide one-on-one school-based mentoring to local at-risk youth. AEU's 48 employees are committed to donating their time to mentor and support youth in the Mobile area. Envision, Volunteer Mobile and the Chamber present the award annually.



The Envision Annual Meeting featured Joel Kotkin, an internationally recognized authority on global, economic, political and social trends and author of the critically-acclaimed book, "The City," who spoke to the crowd on the future sustainability of our nation's cities and share his perspectives on the evolution of urban life. From left to right: Win Hallett, Chamber president; Joel Kotkin; and ECA co-chairs Donna Watts and Mike Hofto.



# Membership

**F**or many businesses, being counted among the Chamber's membership was a key marketing strategy in 2009. More than 320 businesses joined the organization, helping to offset those who had to discontinue their membership, primarily for financial reasons. The Mobile Area Chamber fared better than average when compared to similarly-sized Chambers in member retention. The Chamber represents nearly 2,400 companies that employ 91,000-plus employees.

For as little as 83 cents a day, Chamber membership yields a return in: business assistance, professional development seminars and counseling, networking opportunities and advocacy aimed at protecting business interests.

## Because it Matters

Thirty-five companies joined the Chamber's board of advisors (BOA) in 2009, for a total of 249 participants. This group represents the Chamber's most generous supporters, and BOA membership provides chief executives, owners and managers an avenue for valuable input on critical Chamber and community issues. Additional benefits include advance information on Mobile's business progress and three-times-a-year meetings with the Chamber's governing board of directors.

## For the Record Books: Chamber Chase Eclipses Goals

Under the leadership of **Matt White**, president of White-Spunner & Associates Inc., Chamber Chase 2009 raised \$1.24 million in new member dues, sponsorships, donations and advertising contracts for publications such as *The Business View* and *Membership Directory and Buyers Guide*. Surpassing the 16-week total resource development campaign goal of \$1.23 million, more than 80 volunteers representing 48 Chamber member businesses worked to buck the sour economy. More than 75 new Chamber members were also recruited during this time.



Left to right: Cristi Evans, Janet Hope and Mark Allen enjoy Member Appreciation Day at the Chamber.



With more than 1,500 in attendance, the Chamber's Business & Technology Expo, the area's largest business to business trade show, included more than 200 business booths and restaurants serving specialty menu items.

## Getting Connected in 2009

With the goal of adding value to Chamber membership, the Chamber hosted Get Connected 2009, combining four events in one day. First was a "Get Connected Luncheon" featuring Chamber Vice President of Economic Development **Troy Wayman**, who discussed Mobile's economic development process for success. It was attended by more than 110 people.

Following the luncheon, the Business & Technology Expo and Business Resource Fair were held simultaneously. The expo included nearly 200 Chamber member businesses showcasing their goods and services. The resource fair, designed with small business owners in mind, put them face-to-face with local, state and federal agencies to help them with day-to-day operations. Attendance for these two events totaled more than 1,500. Finally Expo After Hours, completed a day of networking at the Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel with nearly 300 in attendance.

## Chamber Golf Classic

The annual Chamber Classic Golf tournament was held in March at TimberCreek. The tournament was a sell out once again with more than 200 players. In addition to a day of networking on the course and the awards ceremony, golfers participated in the following contests: chipping, putting and closest to the pin.

## Inaugural Member Appreciation Day

In April the Chamber hosted its first Member Appreciation Day. More than 300 Chamber members attended the day-long event that included lunch and door prizes. Chamber staff members hosted booths and were available to answer Chamber-related questions, provided details about upcoming events and shared information on how to make sure member businesses get the most out of their investment.

## Forum Alabama

The Chamber hosted two Forum Alabama luncheons in 2009. These luncheons are held periodically and feature important and timely topics and speakers. Both luncheons drew nearly 250 people. **Rep. Jo Bonner** spoke in February and **Sen. Richard Shelby** spoke in April. Both gave a Congressional update to our members.

## Unique Networking Venues

Whether early bird or night owl, the Chamber continues to offer numerous unique networking opportunities for its members, including Business@Breakfast, Business After Hours and Networking@Noon. More than 1,500 attendees participated at these events in 2009.

## Chamber Diplomats

There are more than 58 Chamber diplomats representing 53 member companies. The Diplomat of the Month is featured monthly in *The Business View*, and is based on participation of visiting members, attending member grand openings and working Chamber events. Diplomats participated in 46 grand openings in 2009.

Diplomats recognized as Diplomat the Month for 2009 were:

- Millie Sue Hawk, Welcome Friends
- Michelle Kerr, Chiropractic Life Center
- Dorothy May, A Gathering of Jewels Inc.
- Lloyd Meyers, University of South Alabama
- Sheila Murphy, Southern Tele-communications Inc.
- Ryan Perdue, Callis Communications
- Karen Presley, Army Aviation Center Federal Credit Union
- Diana Sturm, Legacy Financial Planning LLC
- Eric Walker, Impresario Promotional Concepts LLC
- Kay Watson, Adecco Employment Services
- Angela Williams, LifeSouth Community Blood Center

*\* Diplomats can be awarded this distinction more than one time annually*

## Diplomat of the Year

Each year Chamber diplomats compete for the coveted title of Diplomat of the Year. Millie Sue Hawk, owner of Welcome Friends, was named 2009 Diplomat of the Year. Hawk has participated in the program for six years. She has been recognized as Diplomat of the Month seven times. Hawk is often seen networking at Chamber events and meeting with members.



Millie Sue Hawk



***In the midst of a national economic recession, Mobile area projects, the economy, the port and even the area's optimism drew attention from national and international publications. From a monthly print magazine with a circulation exceeding 22,000, to a weekly online headlines and events e-newsletter, to social media posts, communication tools became more critical to sharing the Chamber and the local business community news in 2009.***

## National Media Eye Mobile

Articles featuring the Mobile area in 2009 were published in the *New York Times*, *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *fDi*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times* and *GlobeSt.com*. Topics included the area's growth during the national recession; the Retirement Systems of Alabama and how its investment in the Port city positively impacted downtown growth; the Port of Alabama and its potential for growth if Cuba opens up for trade. Rankings highlighted Mobile as having the "Best Cost Effectiveness for Small Cities" in North America, being one of the "Best Mid-Sized Cities for Jobs" and one of "America's 25 Next Recovering Job Markets."

Several of these articles were pitched and coordinated with the help of Development Counselors International (DCI), a national economic development public relations firm retained by the Chamber along with the Alabama Development Office, the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce and the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

## Keeping it Local

Over the course of 2009, the Chamber continued its public relations effort to share the area's business story with local media. Chamber Chairman **Sandy Stimpson** of Scotch & Gulf Lumber LLC, Chamber President **Win Hallett** and Vice President of Economic Development **Troy Wayman** met with several members of the *Press-Register's* editorial department and business staff to discuss a variety of projects, including Mobile's projected growth, the national economy and its impact locally, the I-10 bridge issue and Chamber legislative issues for the coming year.

Chamber staff also appeared on television and radio broadcasts such as Trinity Broadcast Network's show, "Joy in our Town," and radio shows such as Cumulus Broadcasting's weekly public affairs show and "Let's Talk Real Estate" on WNTM.

## State of the City and County

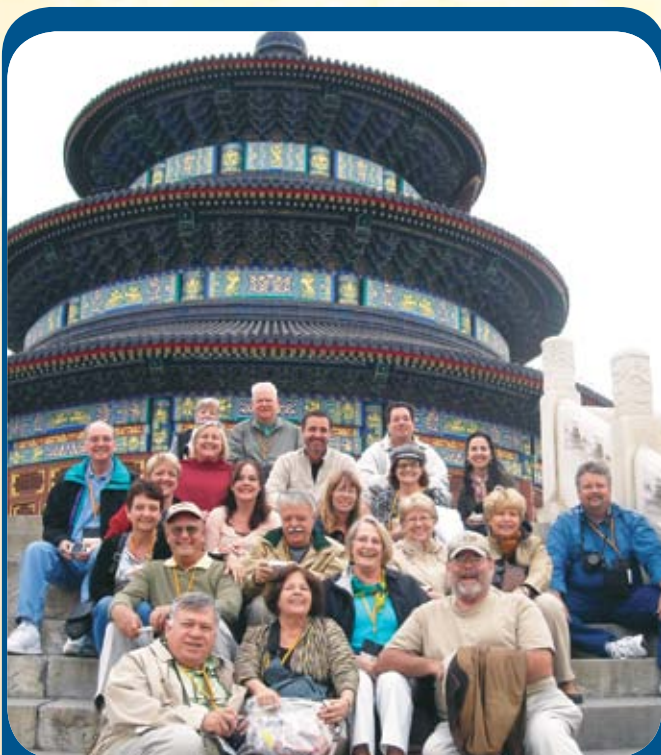
During the Mobile Area Chamber's 12<sup>th</sup> annual State of the City and County luncheon, city of Mobile Mayor **Sam Jones** and Mobile County Commission President **Mike Dean** discussed the local government entities' year in review and announced several future initiatives. Jones spoke about the success of Carnival's cruise ship, the *Holiday*, and the impact the *Fantasy* will have on Mobile. Dean encouraged attendees to support roadway projects through the \$136 million voter-approved Pay-As-You-Go program. The event was a sellout with more than 850 attendees.

## Touring China

The Chamber hosted a group of nearly 90 people for a nine-day/seven-night tour of Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou, China. This opportunity provided participants a very unique understanding of one of the world's fastest-growing economies. The trip was planned in coordination with CitsLinc International, a tour group that annually takes more than 60,000 Chamber members throughout the U.S. to China. The Chamber plans to host another group to China in October 2010, in time for the World Expo 2010.

## Media Bus Tour

Forty area public relations executives and small business owners participated in a Media Tour designed to give them an opportunity to learn more about the day-to-day operations, get a behind-the-scenes look at where reporters operate and hear from media representatives about the best way to pitch a story. The Chamber coordinated this trip that included a newsroom tour of the *Press-Register* and FOX10 and a keynote lunch speaker – **Dave Perry**, editor of the *Mobile Bay Business Journal*.



The Chamber took nearly 90 people to China in October 2009. Pictured here are local participants at the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, China.

## Strength in Numbers

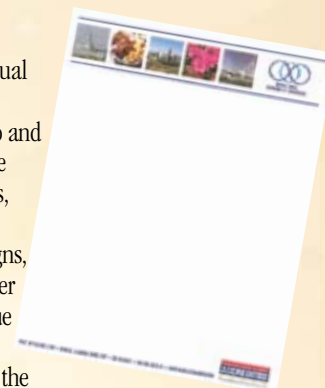
The Chamber continued its "Strength in Numbers" marketing campaign based on member testimonials. It is the campaign's third year and highlights six members and the benefit each values most. Print ads were again featured in such venues as *The Business View*, *Press-Register* and *Lagniappe*, and on Lamar billboards and signs in Mobile Regional Airport.

Featured in the 2009 campaign were:

- **W. Edward Dismukes Jr.**, Wilson-Dismukes Inc.
- **Leslie and Danny Fox**, Tanner's Pecan & Candies
- **Paula Jones**, Paula's Hair Unlimited
- **Brent Keith and Wayne Keith**, Keith Air Conditioning
- **Dee Lam**, Postmark Ink
- **Oliver Washington IV**, Shore Acres Plant Farm

## Showing Off

During the 2009 Annual Meeting, the Chamber launched its updated logo and new collateral pieces. The new stationary, envelopes, note cards, etc., were designed by Burton Designs, and provided the Chamber with an additional avenue to tell the story of Mobile – through images. All of the new stationary includes various images of Mobile – both its industry and tourist attractions.



## Tweeting, Blogging, Uploading

The Chamber expanded its online presence with a Twitter account and grew its usage of additional online communication tools with Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube and its own blog on its newsroom at [www.mobilechamber.com](http://www.mobilechamber.com). To find the Chamber's social media sites go to:

- Facebook.com: [groupmobileareachamberofcommerce](http://groupmobileareachamberofcommerce)
- LinkedIn.com: [groupmobileareachamberofcommerce](http://groupmobileareachamberofcommerce)
- Mobilechamber.com/chamberblog.asp
- Twitter.com/MobileChamber
- Youtube.com/MobileChamber

## The Value Symbol

In 2009, the Chamber took its role in publicizing positive business news and reinforcing member investment even more seriously. In *The Business View*, all Chamber initiatives were spotlighted with a COC symbol (∞) at the end of the story and a new column kicked off the magazine – News You Can Use. These small changes were made to help members better understand the value of membership, and how the Chamber is working on their behalf.



## Chamber Presents Alfred F. Delchamps Award

Dr. Stephen Dill was honored for his life and work as the recipient of the Alfred F. Delchamps Award, presented at the 2009 Annual Meeting. The award was established two decades ago to honor individuals who carry on the vision and principles of Alfred F. Delchamps Jr., who was a moving force in the community and the Chamber.

## Chamber Foundation Recognizes Robert Guthans, Ernest Todd

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation recognized two long-time board members, naming them emeritus members of its board of directors.

**Robert A. Guthans** was first elected to the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation board of directors to a three-year term in 1987. He was subsequently re-elected to the Foundation board in 1998, and became board chairman in 2001, where he has faithfully served since. Guthans also served as chairman of the board of directors of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce in 1985. He was the first recipient of the Alfred F. Delchamps Award. Guthans was named chairman emeritus.

**Ernest W. Todd Jr.** was a founding member of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, established in 1978. He has served faithfully and continually on that board for 31 years. Todd was president of the Headquarters Building Executive Committee, and was involved in raising funds and having the Chamber building at 451 Government St. constructed and



Ernest Todd (left) was named vice president/secretary emeritus for the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation in 2009. Pictured with Todd is Bestor Ward, president of Safe Archives and chairman of the Chamber Foundation.



Robert Guthans (right) was named as chairman emeritus for the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation by Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce President Win Hallett. Guthans was recognized for his more than 25 years of service and leadership to the Chamber and its foundation.

maintained for these past 28 years. In addition to his leadership of the Chamber foundation and building committee, he was chairman of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors in 1977 and 1978. Todd was named vice president/secretary emeritus.

## A Chamber Welcome

The Chamber held a reception for new CEOs in the Mobile area to introduce them to area business and community leaders at Space 301 this spring. More than 100 of the Chamber's board of directors, board of advisors and Partners for Growth investors attended. Approximately a dozen new CEOs were in attendance.

## Business Leaders Take the Plunge

In their October and November meetings, directors and advisors pledged their support of free enterprise by signing on to the U.S. Chamber's *American Free Enterprise. Dream Big.* initiative. U. S. Chamber vice president **Brian Gunderson** addressed the November meeting at Point Clear regarding the values of free enterprise - individual initiative, hard work, freedom of choice, and the free exchange of trade, capital and ideas - as the answer to the nation's current economic crisis.



Members of the Mobile Area Chamber's board of directors signed a pledge to support free enterprise. From left to right: John Baker, Thompson Engineering; Brad Beard, Beard Equipment Co.; Dave Trent, Airbus Engineering Center; Makeda Nichols, State Farm Insurance; Henry O'Connor III, IPC Capital Partners; Sandy Stimpson, Scotch & Gulf Lumber LLC; Herschel Vineyard, Atlantic Marine Alabama; and Owen Bailey, Infirmiry Health System.



## Chamber Staff

### Administration

Winthrop M. Hallett III, President: 431-8610  
 Robert L. Chappelle Jr. CCE, Executive Vice President: 431-8644  
 Katrina Dewrell, Executive Coordinator: 431-8611  
 Judy Winfield, Information Technology/Webmaster: 431-8626  
 Jackie Davidson, Administrative Assistant: 431-8605

### Communications

Leigh Perry-Herndon, Vice President: 431-8645  
 Ashley Horn, Director: 431-8623  
 Susan Rak-Blanchard, Senior Communications Specialist: 431-8641  
 Carolyn Wilson, Communications Assistant: 431-8606  
 René Eiland, *The Business View* Advertising Account Executive: 431-8635

### Community and Governmental Affairs

Ginny Russell, Vice President: 431-8618  
 Patty Howell, Director of Regional Affairs: 431-8601  
 Shayla Jones Beaco, Director of Local Affairs: 431-8628  
 Ailey Arrow, Administrative Assistant: 431-8621

### Economic Development

Troy L. Wayman CECd, Vice President: 431-8650  
 Shelly Mattingly, Coordinator: 431-8655

#### Divisions

#### Business Development

Jesse Quillen, Director, Washington County Initiative: 251-847-2810  
 Herman Tinsley, Senior Project Manager: 431-8657  
 Al Ruffin, Research Manager: 431-8656  
 Graham Jones, Project Manager: 431-8648  
 Christina Stimpson, Administrative Assistant: 431-8636

#### Business Retention and Expansion

Steve Russell, Director: 431-8654

### International Trade

Tony van Aken, Director: 431-8651  
 Bridgette Clark, Trade Promotions Manager: 694-0702

### Workforce Development

Leida Javier-Ferrell, Director, Center for Workforce Development: 431-8631  
 Carol Lambert, Project Manager, Center for Workforce Development: 431-8619

### Finance and Operations

Joseph A. Mareno, Chief Financial Officer: 431-8624  
 Charlotte Buffington, Director: 431-8625  
 Chani Johnson, Senior Finance Assistant: 694-0701  
 Donna Ikner, Finance Assistant: 431-8609  
 Jackie Davidson, Administrative Assistant: 431-8605  
 Ballery Johnson, Custodian: 431-8634  
 James Smiley, Security: 431-8658

### Membership

Carolyn Golson, Vice President: 431-8622  
 Kim Perrone, Director, Customer Service: 431-8649  
 Julie Luker, Events Coordinator: 431-8640  
 Heather Bell, Senior Account Executive: 431-8627  
 Rebecca Milam, Account Executive: 431-8647  
 Quandra Thomas, Membership Service Representative: 431-8617  
 Cynthia Clement, Help Desk Receptionist: 433-6951

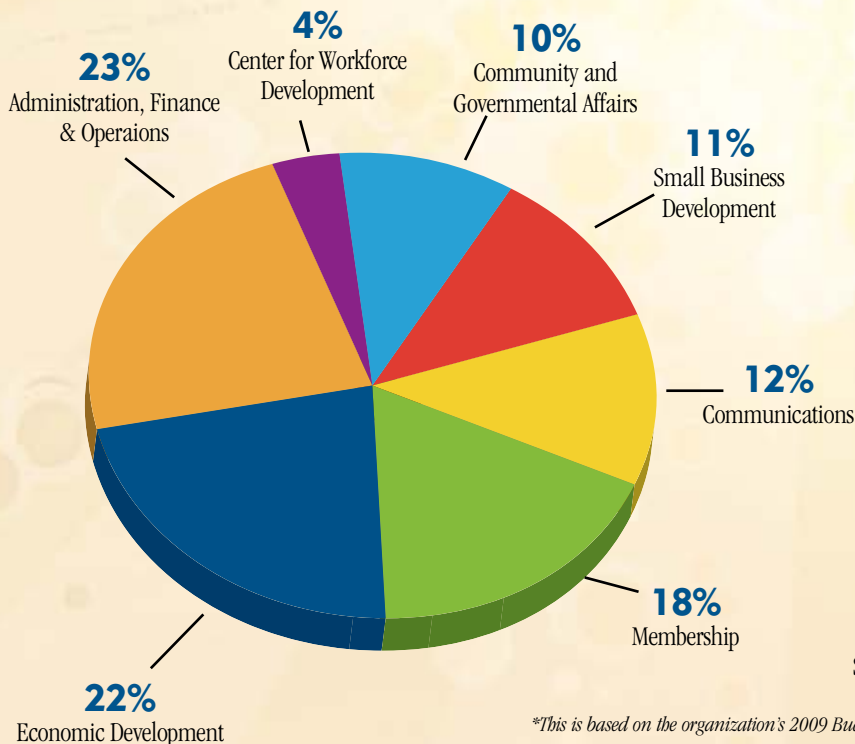
### Small Business Development

Darrell Randle, Vice President: 431-8615  
 Danette Richards, Director: 431-8652  
 Brenda Rembert, Administrative Assistant: 431-8607

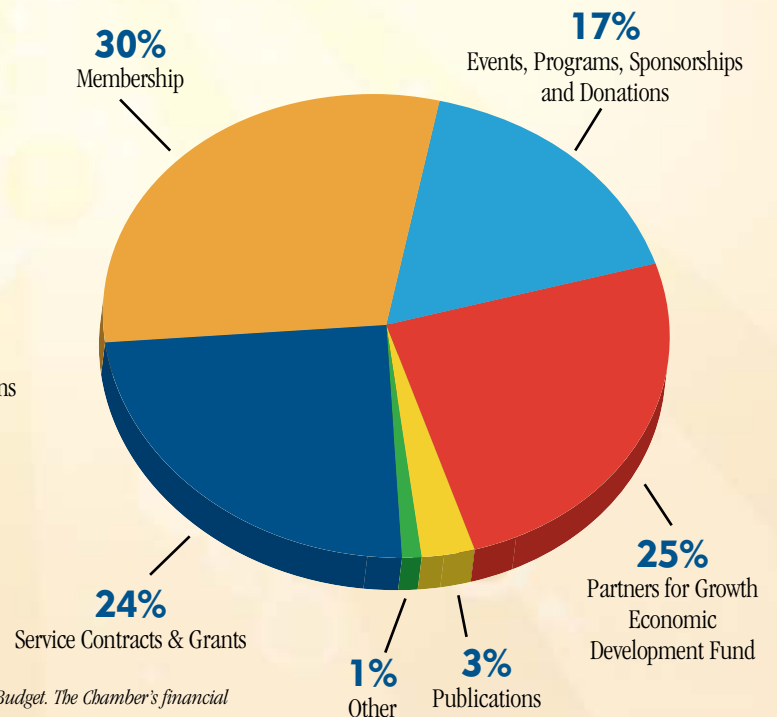
### Minority Business Enterprise Center

Pamela Ramos, Director: 433-2276  
 Machele Leslie, Business Consultant: 433-2250

## 2009 Expenses



## 2009 Revenue



*\*This is based on the organization's 2009 Budget. The Chamber's financial statements are audited annually by McKean and Associates.*



# Volunteers

## 2009 Executive Committee



**William S. Stimpson**  
*Scotch & Gulf Lumber LLC*  
Chairman of the Board



**Sumner G. Adams**  
*Norton Lilly International*  
Maritime Affairs



**Conrad P. Armbrecht**  
*Armbrecht, Jackson LLP*  
Legal Counsel



**Owen Bailey**  
*Infirmiry Health System Inc.*  
Governmental Affairs



**Brad Brightman, BG, ANG (Ret)**  
*University of South Alabama*  
Military Affairs



**Sam W. Covert**  
*Alabama Power Co.*  
Workforce Development



**Monique Rogers Henley**  
*Bay Security Co. LLC*  
Community Development



**Gregory R. Jones**  
*Hand Arendall LLC*  
Trade



**Melissa Morrissette**  
*LLB&B Inc. Real Estate*  
Membership



**Makeda Nichols**  
*State Farm Insurance*  
*Makeda Nichols*  
Small Business Development



**Michael H. Payne**  
*Gwin's Commercial Printing*  
Communications



**William R. Seifert II**  
*Regions Bank*  
Immediate Past Chairman



**Dr. John W. Steadman**  
*University of South Alabama*  
Economic Development



**John Strope**  
*Dogwood Productions Inc.*  
Technology



**David L. Trent**  
*Airbus North America Engineering Inc.*  
Chair-Elect of the Board  
Finance & Operations



**Winthrop M. Hallett, III**  
*Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce*

### In addition to the Executive Committee, serving on the 2009 Board of Directors were:

**Celia Mann Baehr**  
*Celia Mann Baehr CFP*

**Scott Delaney**  
*Delaney Development Inc.*

**Hon. Jamie Ison**  
*Alabama House of Representatives*

**Andy Newton**  
*Southern Light LLC*

**Steven M. Solberg**  
*PCH Hotels & Resorts Inc.*

**John H. Baker III**  
*Thompson Engineering*

**W. Edward Dismukes Jr.**  
*Wilson-Dismukes Inc.*

**Erik L. Johnsen**  
*International Shipholding Corp.*

**Joseph Ng**  
*ST Aerospace Mobile Inc.*

**Robert P. Soulliere**  
*ThyssenKrupp Steel USA LLC*

**Brad Beard**  
*Beard Equipment Co.*

**Patricia W. Esfeller**  
*Esfeller Construction Co. Inc.*

**Keith A. Jones**  
*Prism Systems Inc.*

**Henry O'Connor III**  
*IPC Capital Partners LLC*

**Herschel T. Vineyard Jr.**  
*Atlantic Marine Alabama LLC*

**Dean Brown**  
*Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic PC*

**Ralph A. Hargrove**  
*Hargrove Engineers + Constructors*

**Christopher Lackinger**  
*ThyssenKrupp Steel USA LLC*

**Richard Perry**  
*DuPont Agricultural Products*

**Matt White**  
*White-Spinner & Associates Inc.*

**Bob Browning**  
*Austal Ltd.*

**Cedric J. Hatcher**  
*RBC Bank*

**Frank Lott III**  
*Heritage Homes of Mobile Inc.*

**Beth McFadden Rouse**  
*McFadden Lyon and Rouse LLC*

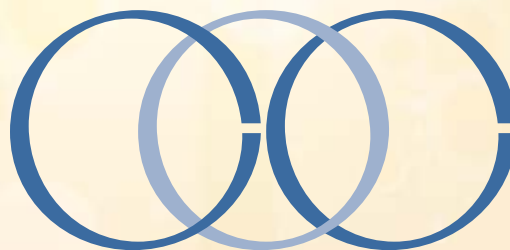
**Ellen Praytor Wingard**  
*Lewis Communications Inc.*

**Lynda Burkett**  
*Marshall A. McLeod PLS LLC*

**Bree A. Hayes**  
*The Hayes Group*

**Dr. James Lowe**  
*Bishop State Community College*

**Frank S. Seltzer Jr.**  
*Superior Masonry Inc.*



## MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE