



M·A·C·C

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THE VIEW

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A MONTHLY BUSINESS PUBLICATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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New Cargo Service in Mobile Links Shippers to Central Mexico

Alabama has a new gateway to Mexico. A weekly shipping service began this month between Mobile and Veracruz, Mexico through the Port of Tuxpan. Veracruz is one of the largest industrial manufacturing Mexican states and Mexico City is just hours away from the Port.

Gulf Bridge Ro-Ro is a weekly roll-on, roll-off trailer ferry service, providing time and cost efficient alternatives for exporters in both countries. The company is a joint venture between Trans Gulf Intermodal Freight Inc. (TGIF) of Houston, Texas and UniShipping of Paris, France. It's 555-ft vessel, *M/V Dolores*, has a capacity of 85 over-the-road trailers, along with a large number of vehicles, rolling stock and containers.

The new service began its maiden voyage the same week *The Journal of Commerce* reported a "traffic-choked Union Pacific Railroad is asking other railroads to consider halting all U.S.-Mexican rail ships at Laredo, the busiest border crossing for north-south trade."

Union Pacific issued a release addressing the widespread delays and congestion, reporting that as many as 5,000 carloads are backed up. It's a situation that has cost shippers billions of dollars.

One company representative interested in the new Gulf Bridge Ro-Ro service



Premier Stevedoring helped load and secure the first cargo on *The Dolores*. From Mobile to Tuxpan, Mexico, the new Gulf Bridge Ro-Ro service will depart every five days.

asked the rhetorical question, "How do we measure lost sales because last month's shipment hasn't arrived and so we can't make a sale this month."

Not only are there hold ups in the rail system, the infrastructure isn't there to handle trucks as well, explains **Mike Lee**, president of **Page and Jones**. "It could

take one day or four or five to get a shipment through."

Company officials tout the advantages of this "straight shot" to Mexico's largest industrial and retail area as a way to reduce border costs and delays, load direct from the manufacturer's facility, shorter transportation times, faster

customs clearance, through Bills of Lading, increased security and consistent departure and arrival dates.

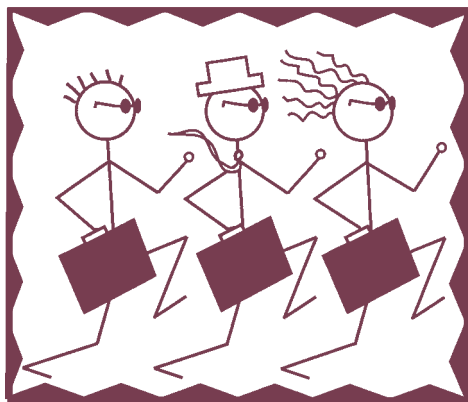
The average shipment from Birmingham to Mexico to the Port of Mobile is 238 miles, compared to the 949 miles to the Port of Laredo.

John Norsworthy, with **Landstar Logistics**, said under normal conditions rail takes 15 to 20 days, although lately 45 days is not unheard of. Norsworthy also estimated trucking could take more than 135 hours for a single driver. He projects this new service will cut at least two days off of trucking transport and as much as two to three weeks off rail, estimating 77 hours from Mobile to Tuxpan.

Competitively, pricing is slightly higher than rail, but less expensive than trucking. Norsworthy expects shippers using trucking as their primary mode of transportation will save between 10-20 percent. For those using rail, he sees the real savings is in time for "just a little bit more."

Savings are best for shippers east of the Mississippi River. "If you follow the Mississippi River up to St. Louis, over to Chicago and then to the east coast, that's our target area," explained Norsworthy.

▶ See NEW CARGO SERVICE, Page 8



CHAMBER CHASE '98

On Your Mark

It looks like another magnificent line up for this year's Chamber Chase, the Chamber's total resource development campaign. Last year's Dream Team of volunteers, you may remember, led a group of more than 200 volunteers to a resounding victory, exceeding a \$500,000 goal of cash, goods and services. They also added 244 new members to the Chamber team.

"We're just as excited about this year's event," says **Carolyn Golson** the Chamber's director of resource development and team manager. "We've recruited **Indy Erling Riis** with **Lyon, Fry, Cadden Insurance Agency**, as our team captain, chairman of this year's \$650,000 campaign."

Riis explained this was a natural opportunity to get involved. "I've always wanted to be more active with the Chamber, especially since they've taken an aggressive approach to marketing Mobile and Mobile businesses."

Thirty teams will hit the Chamber Chase '98 trail to recruit new members, sell advertising and sponsorships, as well as collect a wish list of items including office equipment, computer training and contributions to economic development efforts.

Still feeling the momentum of last year's campaign, Riis explained this is a fresh and exciting approach to resource development that has ignited a new enthusiasm in the volunteers.

"There's a tremendous commitment to seeing the Chamber succeed. But this campaign has gone beyond business and community involvement—it's personal. Everyone who participates is a winner and that's what will fuel us to the top!"



Corporate Services

▶ See ON YOUR MARK, Page 8

Capital Investments & Job Growth Earn Mobile Top State Ratings

The Mobile area again led the state in capital investments and ranked second in job growth for 1997. Figures just released from the Alabama Development Office and the Alabama Dept. of Industrial Relations statistically prove the Port City had another profitable year.

Alabama had a total of \$2.8 billion in capital investments last year and the Mobile-Baldwin area was responsible for nearly 20 percent of that growth with \$537 million. Birmingham MSA ranked second with \$153 million and Huntsville MSA came in third with \$138 million.

The Alabama Development Office (ADO) measures only new manufacturing investments and existing industry expansions. A few of the area companies that helped earned Mobile the no. 1 distinction for the third year in a row are **Racer Computers**, **PhenolChemie** and **Kimberly Clark**. New or expanding companies like **West Teleservices** and **John Fayard Fastway Systems** contributed to Mobile's no. 2 job growth ranking.

Birmingham led the state in job growth with 18,900 new jobs reported last year. The Mobile area followed with 11,780 jobs and Huntsville had 7,060.

The Mobile MSA has consistently ranked either first or second in both capital investments and employment growth for the last five years.

There are several reasons the Mobile area continues to stay on top explained **Ritchie Hurt**, the Chamber's Director of Research and Information. "We don't rely on any one industry," he said. "We have consistency in the pulp and paper industry, continued new product lines in our process industries, our U.S. shipping companies have a better foothold on that market and we're seeing a gradual increase in north-south trade."

"Our central Gulf Coast location is Mobile's biggest asset particularly with the potential for moving goods up and down the Tombigbee Waterway, along I-10 and I-65 and through the Port of Mobile," Hurt added. Hurt was referring to the new Gulf Bridge Ro-Ro service designed to roll on tractor trailers in Mobile and roll-off shipments in Tuxpan, just hours away from Mexico City. (See related story on page 1.)

Match this with existing "quick delivery" services like **Federal Express**, **UPS** and **DHL**—it all adds up to a bigger jewel in Mobile's crown of tremendous resources, Hurt illustrated.

Costa Rica Is Promoting Mobile!



Air transportation. New markets to the Central and Southeast United States. Better Prices. Excellent ground transportation and only 45 minutes to get through customs. These are just a few of the advantages listed in a new ad running in a Costa Rican publication in an effort to re-route exports through Mobile.

Less than two months ago, the Costa Rican Chamber of Agriculture opened a service and trading company (PAISAL) in the Brookley Complex to beef up USA exports to Costa Rica and get Costa Rican products to their customers faster.

"This new route is also an opportunity to gain new customers for our products," says **Belinda Henderson-Blackman**. She is the manager of the local export promotion office of PAISAL—a direct result of an agreement of cooperation to promote international trade signed last year between the **Mobile Airport Authority** and the Costa Rican Chamber of Agriculture.

"Bringing PAISAL to Mobile is a significant step in our continuing program to build an efficient, cost-effective trade corridor between Mobile and Latin America," said **Bay Haas**, executive director of the **Mobile Airport Authority**.

PAISAL was established in 1996 as a result of the privatization process of the Costa Rican Consejo Nacional de Produccion (National Organization of Production).

The Chamber's Vice President of Economic Development **Jim Apple** saluted the Airport Authority's efforts to open the door to Costa Rica for Mobile businesses. "The Airport Authority has played a primary role in this new partnership by taking the initiative to identify key partners and begin the discussions leading to this opportunity."

Current efforts at the local PAISAL office are focused on building relationships between potential customers in both countries explains **Brian Dekle**, Mobile Airport Authority. He adds, "We expect PAISAL to be an important customer for the Authority's air cargo service."

Tony van Aken, the Chamber's director of Trade and Technology, has worked with the group to set up meetings with potential U.S. customers along the Gulf Coast.

Having commercial relationships with many producers, PAISAL is providing agricultural, processed and industrial product producers with export and marketing services. PAISAL USA is offering not only direct purchase of a wide variety of products coming from Costa Rica, but also direct access to that market by U.S. companies.

Dekle agrees, saying that "San José, Costa Rica, is the most significant business center in Central America."

Because of Mobile's Central Gulf Coast location, it is the most convenient place to establish this effort. But additional benefits including a diverse transportation system and hassle-free customs, make Mobile the ideal location to get Costa Rican products to their Central and Southeastern U.S. markets, and in particular, their Latin American markets in Atlanta, Houston and

New Orleans.

Tropical flowers, ornamental plants, foliage, tropical fruits and hot sauces made from those fruits, seafood, coffee, fresh tubers, natural herb teas, banana paper and wood furniture are the main products **Henderson-Blackman** hopes to bring through Mobile.

She also sees a need in Costa Rica for U.S. products such as canned food, electronics, computers, medical supplies and many others.



Belinda Henderson-Blackman, PAISAL Manager, poses with Costa Rican products she's hoping to promote in the U.S. Most unique is a recycled paper made with banana stems that were once an ecological nuisance.

To contact PAISAL in Mobile, call **Belinda Henderson-Blackman** at 438-5050 at 1994 Broad St., Brookley Complex, or **Brian Dekle** at the Mobile Airport Authority, 438-7334.

Census Data Says Mobile's Percentage of Employment Growth Leads State

According to the latest U.S. Bureau of Census data, the Mobile Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which includes Mobile and Baldwin Counties, had the highest percentage increase in the state in the number of persons employed by business from 1990-1995.

To the right is a summary of business activity and growth in Alabama during those five years.

Our area was also second in the state in terms of increase in the number of business establishments. From 1990 to 1995, Mobile MSA's number of businesses increased by 13.3 percent. Only the Huntsville MSA was higher with a 15.4 percent increase. Overall, the state increased an average of 11 percent.

"Though the Census information is a little dated, we continue to collect statistics indicating our economy is strong," said Chamber Research Director **Ritchie Hurt**. "For example, Manpower recently released their Employment Outlook Survey which showed 27 percent of employers in the Mobile area plan to recruit additional workers during April, May and June. Only 3 percent plan to cut back on staff, which in real terms is virtually no one. We also continue to do well when compared to other Alabama cities regarding job growth and capital investments." (See related story on page 1)

He pointed out, however, that many economic "insiders" remain nervous about the future. In the March 6 issue of *The Kiplinger Washington Letter*, editors caution, "Everything looks rosy now ... But don't go overboard in your planning for spending and expansion and hiring

new people, counting on clear sailing in the next few years."

"I guess there's a chance that things can backfire," Hurt concluded. "But I also recall a story about a character named Chicken Little."

METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED			
	1990	1995	% Change
Birmingham (Blount, Jefferson, St. Clair & Shelby)	362,742	417,364	15.1%
Mobile (& Baldwin)	149,868	183,669	22.6%
Huntsville (Limestone & Madison)	114,446	131,213	14.7%
Montgomery (& Autauga & Elmore)	104,272	117,566	12.7%
Tuscaloosa	48,523	59,308	22.2%
Decatur (Lawrence & Morgan)	40,810	47,202	15.7%
Florence (Colbert & Lauderdale)	42,548	49,026	15.2%
Dothan (Dale & Houston)	48,092	52,776	9.7%
Anniston (Calhoun)	33,433	38,500	15.2%
Gadsden (Etowah)	31,219	34,060	9.1%
State of Alabama	1,342,993	1,553,309	15.7%

37th Position—Good News for Mobile Area

Over the past year, a number of publications and organizations have ranked Mobile among the top communities regarding job growth and other economic indicators. Another has joined the list.

LaSalle Advisors, a global real estate investment manager which also conducts market analyses, forecasts and strategic studies, named Mobile among the **Top 40 U.S. economic growth areas** in its 1997 fourth-quarter Regional Economic Growth Index. The index ranks economic strength in 112 U.S. metro areas. It is based on factors such as forecast employment and population growth, as well as momentum and risk factors including volatility, diversity and business costs.

"Atlanta, which has held a Top 3 position since the index was created two years ago, is the top ranked area in the South," the report states. Mobile is in the 37th position. Birmingham was the only other Alabama metro area to fall in the Top 40, coming in at no. 38.

"We continue to be one of the leaders in the state in terms of job growth and capital investment. I'm glad people outside our state also recognize our growing economy," said Chamber Economic Development Vice Chairman **Dianne Irby** of **Irby Strategic Services**. "Diversity is another one of our strengths here. Over the last couple of years we've announced such companies as **Racer Computer, West TeleServices, Mitsubishi Materials, PhenolChemie, Tuscaloosa Steel and Financial Collections Agencies**. It's a real advantage for a community to have different types of companies so a downturn in any one industry doesn't affect our economy."

Irby added her thanks to the Chamber's Mobile In Motion investors who have invested funds beyond their Chamber dues to help Mobile compete for jobs in the world-wide economic arena.

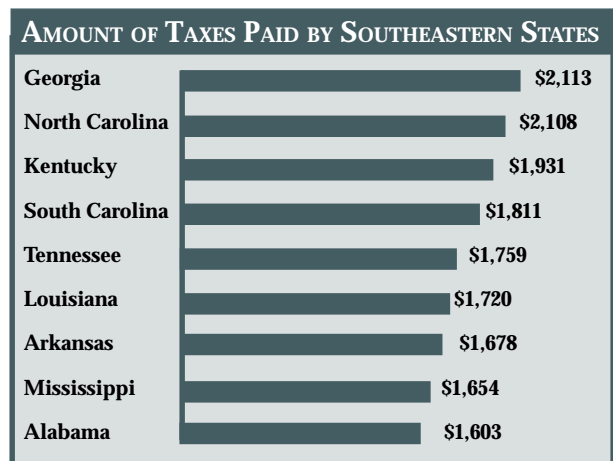
Alabama Taxes Rank Lowest in Southeast

Alabamians pay the lowest state, county and city taxes in the U.S. according to a study released by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA). Results show that the state and local tax load for an average person in Alabama is \$1,603 or two-thirds of the national average. Florida leads the region with an average of \$2,184 paid by a resident.

The PARCA report also criticized Alabama's tax structure for being regressive because low-income citizens pay a higher percentage of their incomes in taxes. Alabamians making less than \$15,000 in 1994 paid 9 percent of their incomes in state and local taxes, while those making more than \$100,000 paid about 7 percent.

The study also cited the need for more flexibility in the allocation of those tax dollars, noting that in Alabama, seven of every eight dollars is earmarked.

Source: The A+ Weekly Report



Chamber Seeks Clean, Diverse Industry

Editor's note: The following is a letter that was mailed to key contacts at all member organizations from Chamber President Win Hallett.

The location of PhenolChemie in the Theodore Industrial Complex in South Mobile County has drawn the attention of a group of area citizens. The Chamber, in particular its economic development program, has been criticized for working with the chemical industry to expand this community's economic base.

First, I'd like to explain that, in 1996, the Chamber in partnership with the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance, conducted a study to determine the types of businesses we should be recruiting to our area. One of the major goals of our economic development program is keeping a diverse economy so we can avoid impacts from downturns in any particular industry. (As an example, when Mobile lost Brookley Field in the 1960s, tens of thousands of jobs vanished). We identified such business groups as computer-related equipment, medical instruments and supplies and aerospace as our target markets and we are currently pursuing these groups aggressively.

Diversity is evident in the industries we've announced over the last few years. You may already be familiar with Racer Computer Corp., West TeleServices Corp., Mitsubishi Materials, Tuscaloosa Steel and Financial Collection Agencies to name a few. As you can see, we are not focused on chemical or any other single industry.

Another vital element in bringing companies to Mobile is sustaining our area's quality of life which of course includes our air and water quality. When the PhenolChemie project was presented to us by its sister company Huls, we investigated it thoroughly. All companies we work with must be permitted by the Alabama Depart-

ment of Environmental Management (in compliance with national EPA standards) to begin construction in Mobile. Additionally, firms such as PhenolChemie are located in industrial areas that were designated for industrial development at least 25 years ago. These areas represent a substantial part of Mobile's economic base, supporting literally tens of thousands of jobs with direct and indirect economic impacts.

During this same 25 years, investment and employment in Theodore and Axis have increased by more than one billion dollars and one thousand people respectively. Despite this growth, water quality in Mobile Bay continues to meet all state and national standards. In fact, experts report that the true threats to water quality, such as when the oyster beds are shut down or fishing is curtailed, have been linked to individual pollution, not industrial.

For your information, we are printing a summary of Mobile County air emissions from monitors where we could collect data for eight consecutive years to establish trends. It is important that we base our conclusions regarding the development of our economy on factual data taken in context.

Seeking balanced and sustainable growth is a priority of our organization. Last year, we invited area citizens to help shape our future by developing the Envision Mobile-Baldwin regional plan. The document articulates many of the goals we have in place related to economic development and its impact on the quality of life we've worked so hard to develop here. If you would like to be more involved in the implementation of the Envision plan, please call Ginny Russell at 431-8618.

Again, please call **431-8610** and let me know if you have any further questions or comments.



Engineer Project of the Year Goes to Mobile Gas

Mobile Gas Service Corp. has won the Mobile Area Council of Engineer's Project of the Year Award for the design and construction of its pipeline to serve Tuscaloosa Steel's new DRI facility on McDuffie Island.

Mobile Gas could not have attracted Tuscaloosa Steel without significantly expanding its current operating system.

The pipeline construction within the city presented an engineering challenge. The most viable route from Mobile Gas' existing high capacity system to the DRI plant was through congested city streets in highly populated areas.

To minimize the impact of construction, it was decided that the traditional open cut pipeline installation on some city streets would not be used. Instead, Mobile Gas elected to install those sections by using a horizontal drilling technique called directional boring. Two directional bores were performed totaling 4,863 feet in length placing the pipeline 40-50 feet below the street.

Directional boring is not new to the pipeline industry, but is usually cost prohibitive. However, this method turned out to be more economical because of wet soil conditions.

"Mobile Gas had to come out of the box and explore nontraditional methods to meet the needs of Tuscaloosa Steel," said **Ritchie Hurt**, director of research and information for the Chamber. "This is exactly the kind of



Mobile Gas expanded operations to meet the needs of Tuscaloosa Steel's new DRI facility.

cooperation and commitment by local companies that keeps Mobile's economy moving forward one project at a time."

President of Mobile Gas, **John Davis** said, "Mobile Gas is proud to have had a part in pricing its rates to attract a company like Tuscaloosa Steel that is dedicated to being a good corporate citizen in Mobile. This plant's importance goes far beyond its financial impact on Mobile Gas."

This decision among others allowed Mobile Gas to complete the project on time and, more importantly, under budget.

Tuscaloosa Steel (a subsidiary of British Steel) transferred its Direct Reduced Iron facility from Scotland to Mobile, completing a \$100 million investment that employs 75 people. Availability of natural gas along with rail and barge transportation were convincing factors in selecting Mobile.

A Look at Air Emissions in Mobile County

PM - 10 (Particles 10 microns or smaller)

Since 1987, PM-10 has become the standard for particulate matter measurements. This measures all particles in the air less than 10 microns in diameter. (A micron is a unit of length equal to one-millionth of a meter.) In 1997, at both the Chickasaw and Bel Air monitoring stations, PM-10 was measured at 27 and 31 respectively. That is only about 60 percent of the maximum allowable particulate matter of 50 ppm.

Monitor	Year	Mean Values
Iroquois/Azalea (Chickasaw)	90	26
	91	29
	"	27
	"	28
	"	27
	"	24
	"	23
	"	27
WKRG Station (Bel Air)	90	29
	91	33
	"	33
	"	32
	"	31
	"	32
	"	27
	"	31

SULFUR DIOXIDE

According to the 1996 Air Quality Report published by ADEM, Sulfur Dioxide at the Axis monitor station was measured at 21, or about 25 percent of the allowable amount.

Monitor	Year	Annual Arithmetic Mean
U.S. HWY 43 (Axis)	90	22
	91	24
	"	26
	"	23
	"	29
	"	24
	"	24
	"	21

* NOTE: The monitoring stations shown were used because they were able to show data over a 8-year period of time to determine the trends.

OZONE

Ozone is classified or graded every quarter. The single highest reading for that quarter is then listed. If there is a reading over .125 then it is called an "excedence." A community is allowed 3 excedences in a 3 year period. Should 3 excedences be recorded, the area becomes a non-attainment area for 3 years. In 1997, the Axis monitor station measured .099 and the Chickasaw monitor station measured .119. In the last eight years, Mobile has only once exceeded the .125 reading (1990).

Monitor	Year	Mean Values
U.S. HWY 43 (Axis)	90	.096
	91	.087
	"	.112
	"	.089
	"	.093
	"	.112
	"	.100
	"	.099
Iroquois/Azalea (Chickasaw)	90	.126
	91	.111
	"	.121
	"	.104
	"	.099
	"	.112
	"	.111
	"	.119

**NOTE: Note in the diagrams that though we have had significant increase in industry and population over the past 8 years, mean values for these emissions have remained well below allowable standards.

1995 MOBILE'S FUTURE 30

Join the
Chamber's Small Business Department
and the
University of South Alabama's Small Business
Development Center
in recognizing the Mobile Area's
30 fastest growing small businesses.

Tuesday, May 12
at the
Mobile Convention Center
Reception begins at 5:30 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Keynote Speaker:
William E. Haynes, Chairman, CEO and President
Innovation Valve Technologies Inc. of Houston, Texas

Cost to attend is \$35 per person or \$300 for a table of 10.
To make reservations call Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607.

Mobilian Receives State's Top Trade Award

Michael Lee, a Mobile shipping executive, recently received the Alabama World Trade Association's "Service Person of the Year" award for 1997. The Alabama World Trade Association is a statewide organization of companies and individuals involved in international trade. Each year the association recognizes a person of the year from the service sector and the manufacturing sector for outstanding achievement in the development of international trade.

Lee is President of **Page & Jones Inc.**, one of the nation's oldest international shipping and transportation companies, founded in Mobile in 1892. Page & Jones provides logistics services to import and export firms on both ocean and air transport, as well as representing ship owners through its agency division.



Michael Lee

WANTED: Innovative Ideas

Has your company come up with a new procedure that has dramatically improved operations or saved a great deal of money? Has an employee developed a new product or service, or suggested changes that have made a huge difference?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, the Chamber's Small Business Development Dept. wants to know!

Mobile has long been recognized as an entrepreneurial hot spot. The area has earned several distinctions based on the number of high growth companies, the number of new companies and available resources for small businesses. The Chamber wants to dig a little deeper and identify the companies that are shifting paradigms and developing breakthrough innovation methods.

At a minimum, the plan is to profile the top creative companies in future issues of the Chamber's monthly newsletter, *The View*. Although several other ideas to publicize Mobile's innovative companies are being discussed, final plans will ultimately depend on the number of responses submitted.

By April 17th, please send your company's name with a description of the idea(s) in 100 words or less. The more results-oriented data you can include, the better the chance your submission will make it to the top of the list. Also be sure to include your name, title and phone number in case we need to reach you. Fax your response to the Small Business Development Department at 431-8646. Call **Walter Underwood** at 431-8652 if you need more information.

Personal Vision Ties To Work Productivity

Seminars conducted by Dr. Kent Welsh with the Highlands Program target high performing individuals whose leadership, commitment, productivity and vision are critical to their company's continued success and growth.

Participants may be at any level of the organization from potential supervisors and managers to senior executives in the company. The Highland principles apply to large and small companies, retail establishments, doctor and dental offices or any business organization.

There are eight critical success factors that directly and profoundly impact an individual's performance and satisfaction in their work and in their lives as a whole.

This Net Gain seminar will allow participants to articulate, integrate and experience all of these factors and use them to create a personal vision.

Set for Tuesday, **April 21** from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Chamber's McGowin Room. The cost is \$15 and includes lunch. For reservations call **Jacqueline Jones** at 431-8607.



NET GAIN
SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK

Small Business of the Month Port City Glass & Mirror Inc.

The decision to go into business was clear as glass for **Ronnie Hinote** and **Tommy Wray** with **Port City Glass**, the Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

Both men had extensive training and experience in the industry before hanging it up to go on their own. With two trucks and their spouses as their only employees, they began their residential and commercial glass and mirror business more than a decade ago.

Today, Port City Glass & Mirror is a reflection of total success with annual sales exceeding \$2 million and 15 full-time employees. A few years ago the partners expanded to a 2,000 sq. ft. office and showroom with an attached 10,000 sq. ft. warehouse-fabrication facility.

Hard work, commitment and previous experience are what they both listed as reasons the business is where it is now. "Not everyone works as hard as we do," says Hinote. "The ones that do are successful. It takes hard work."

Port City Glass & Mirror serves the Miss., Ala. and Fla. Panhandle areas of the Gulf Coast. From the commercial standpoint, the company specializes in storefront,



Partners Tommy Wray (left) and Ronnie Hinote stand outside of their new showroom and warehouse.

window and glass installations and replacements. Some of their most recent projects are easily recognized like the new Colonial Bank Center on I-65 and the Beltline and the new addition to Springhill Memorial.

On the residential side, Wray says he works with builders installing vanity mirrors, mirror walls and shower enclosures. "A growing side of the business is the remodeling work people are doing to update their homes, as well as glass replacement," he explains.

Wray and Hinote invite you to visit their showroom at 1242 Montlimar Dr. or give them a call at 414-5858.

Common Sense Helps Maintain Financial Control

Starting a new business or expanding an established one means having a thousand things to do and not enough time to do most of them.

Obviously though, you must take the time to install and maintain tight financial controls on both income and expenses or you risk having your funds fritter away. According to **Bob Kirby**, chairman of **SCORE** (Service Core of Retired Executives) in Mobile, "Our volunteer counselors find that firms experiencing problems too often lack needed records, budgets and income/experience controls."

You can never do enough to prevent customer's checks from being presented with insufficient funds to cover them. To help give you the information you need to follow-up when this does happen, make sure on personal checks to always require personal identification and get the customer's home and work telephone numbers. For all checks you receive, keep a record showing the name and address of the customer, telephone number, amount, date of the check and the bank on which the check was drawn.

Every check should be deposited no later than 10:00 a.m. the following day to start its clearance quickly. Charging a fee for a returned check helps ensure that you're not imposed upon by customers when they're short on funds. You might consider subscribing to a check service company to help reduce the number of returned checks your business has to handle.

If you sell to businesses, you generally have little option but to offer credit. Be sure you check out the firm's credit and payment record with credit references before extending your own. If you sell to the public, it is best to avoid any direct personal credit. Stay with bank cards only, closely following the checking procedures required or suggested. If yours is a business where credit is

common and you carry accounts receivable, these will require considerable care and attention. Many customers will test a new business to see how long they can go before paying.

Budget controls

The new business must summarize at least weekly to make sure spending is under control. Monthly reviews may come too late to make critical corrections. The weekly review requires accurate record keeping for some expenditures, but it is well worth the extra effort.

Overhead is one area that can cause problems for an inexperienced business owner. Simply stated, overhead is all continuing costs (not goods to be sold) that are paid on a recurring basis. Some, such as rent, are paid monthly. Some, perhaps insurance, are paid quarterly. But each week must bear its fair share of these continuing costs, whether or not they happen to be paid during a given week.

Budgets are vital for a new business. The business plan is the basis not only for the budget, but for the future of the business. Like it or not, if a budget has not been prepared and estimates are not made when the bills are due, there will be unpleasant surprises and a sudden financial crisis.

Many new businesses collapse because the timing of cash flow is off. It doesn't help to know that cash will be coming in at the end of the month when employees must be paid next Friday.

Budget weekly, and carefully, to make sure cash flow meets cash outgo. For more help preparing a realistic budget for your business, make an appointment with a SCORE counselor to review your figures. Located in the Chamber, with office hours of 9 a.m. - noon, Monday-Friday, SCORE may be reached by calling 431-8614.

Driving Home A Point Chamber Pushes Road Funding Equality

The Chamber's Governmental Affairs Department called a meeting of representatives from the road building industry and the Mobile and Baldwin counties' governments to discuss the area's transportation needs and ways the region's business community can work with the public sector to see that the needs are met.

Several weeks ago, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission released figures showing that the Mobile and

Baldwin County area received far less state road funding than other, less populated areas of the state.

Chamber staff and volunteers feel a regional transportation task force consisting of mayors, county commissioners and business organizations could better focus attention on needed projects through regional coordination. The task force will meet quarterly.



The Mobile-Baldwin crowd was impressive at the first reception highlighting the Bay region for State legislators. Pictured from left to right are: Charley Story, Degussa; Tom Damson, Long's Human Resource Services; and Senator Steve Windom.

New Director Spotlight

In January, the Chamber's Executive Committee and the Board of Directors were profiled in *The View*. This month we'd like to feature **Margie Wilcox**, president and owner of **Mobile Bay Transportation**. She has recently been elected to the board and executive committee and will serve as vice chairman for Governmental Affairs during 1998.

Wilcox has been both an Alabama delegate and chair of the Capital Formation for the White House Conference on Small Business. Wilcox also serves on the boards of the Business Council of Alabama, the Mobile Convention and Visitors Corp., the Alabama Women & Handicapped Business Council and is past president of the National Association of Women Business Owners.

Mobile Bay Transportation was named the 1994 Woman-Owned Business of the Year by the University of South Alabama Small Business Development Center. Her company is also a Chamber Future 30 award winner, recognizing the company as one of the 30 fastest-growing small businesses in the area during 1995.



Margie Wilcox, Vice Chair, Governmental Affairs

Regional Success in Montgomery A Toast From the Coast

Wednesday, March 10 marked the first joint legislative effort between Mobile and Baldwin Counties when together they hosted a "Toast from the Coast" reception honoring the State Senate and the State House of Representatives and their staffs.

Buses carrying more than 100 members of the Mobile and Baldwin business communities traveled to the RSA Plaza in Montgomery to represent our region.

More than 100 legislators and elected officials turned out to visit and network with the local business delegation. Above the sounds of a Mobile jazz band, conversations revolved around politics and policies including tort reform, tax reform and bond issues.

Legislative receptions are notorious for unpredictable turnouts with many groups and associations vying for the legislators' time. "Our presence made an impact," said **Scott Posey**, vice president of governmental affairs at the Mobile Chamber. "When you can get 100 busy business men and women to ride a bus to Montgomery for 2 1/2 hours on one of the most boring drives in the state lawmakers remember."



Mobile County Commissioner Gary Tanner and Lt. Gov. Don Seigleman grab a minute to discuss important issues.

The evening was a success and many seasoned lobbyists and lawmakers commented on the large attendance and festive atmosphere. "With the growing sense of regionalism sprouting from the recent Envision Mobile-Baldwin project, this reception demonstrated our region's solidarity in spite of county lines," added Posey.

Donna Watts, President of the **South Baldwin Chamber**, said "We're pleased that Mobile and Baldwin counties had the opportunity to draw attention to South Alabama and the economic impact our region has on the state. We're looking forward to making this an annual event."

KEEPING UP WITH LEGISLATIVE NEWS

If you are interested in tracking a particular bill or issue, the Chamber's Governmental Affairs Department subscribes to the Alabama Business Network (ABN.)

ABN is updated every night and allows you to get the latest info on any bills.

Call Shelly Mattingly at 431-8612 for an update or more information.

(News clippings and voting records are also available.)

Coast Safe & Lock Ad

A very special thanks to our region's sponsors:

- Alabama Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce
- Alabama State Docks
- Atlantic Marine
- Baldwin County Legislative Delegation
- Bayou La Batre Chamber of Commerce
- Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce
- Citronelle Chamber of Commerce
- Dauphin Island Chamber of Commerce
- Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce
- Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mobile County Legislative Delegation
- Mobile Gas Service Corp.
- North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce
- Saraland Chamber of Commerce
- South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce
- South Baldwin Regional Medical Center
- Tillman's Corner Chamber of Commerce
- TransAmerica Waste

Diplomat of the Month Sheila Murphy

After being named the 1997 Diplomat of the Year, **Sheila Murphy** is still working hard bringing in new members for the Chamber—an effort that has again earned her the **Diplomat of the Month** award.

After all, as the new vice chairman of the Diplomats and the chairman-elect for 1999, Murphy has to keep up the good work.

Murphy, a commercial account representative for **Hunter Security**, has received the Diplomat of the Month award on three different occasions during the eight years she's been involved in the program. In her "spare time," she sells a variety of security equipment and services, such as burglar and fire alarm systems and close-circuit TV, to keep businesses and homes secure. Also Hunter Security is now offering business telephone systems.

"Receiving the Diplomat of the Year award at the Chamber's Annual Meeting was one of the most exciting and frightening times of my life," Murphy said. "After serving as a Diplomat for eight years, I felt I had earned the award and that made it even more meaningful." Murphy is also active with the Bay Area Tips Club and the Associated Builders and Contractors.



Business Spotlight

Gulf Coast Financial Assoc.

Sometimes businesses need a helping hand when it comes to accounts receivable. Since 1984, **Gulf Coast Financial Associates (GCFA)** has helped businesses recover past due accounts by taking over the problem and collecting.

Don Kennedy, president of GCFA, and his staff of 21 are focused on producing profits in health-related fields such as hospitals and ambulance services in addition to non-health affiliated clients including banks and universities. "What we do to produce results and how we do it for our clients sets GCFA in a class by itself," Kennedy said. "When it comes to our clients money, there is no room for second-best."

Using GCFA can pull a company out of trouble caused by unsatisfied accounts. The

company's efficient, professional staff specializes in recovering payments and assisting business owners in numerous ways which results in a high success rate.

GCFA serves Gulf Coast businesses helping them stay in business and keep what they have worked hard to earn. The office is located at 1835 Old Shell Road.



GCFA serves Gulf Coast business owners in numerous ways.

Coast Safe & Lock Ad
from March View

A Giant Boost for Better Education in the Making

Citizens for Better Education (CBE) and the Mobile County Board of School Commissioners have reached an agreement and approved a new compromised version of the legislation designed to provide additional revenue to the Mobile County Public School System for infrastructure and educational improvements. The two school funding bills introduced in February into the Alabama Legislature by both the CBE and the School Board will be withdrawn by their respective sponsors in favor of promoting the success of the compromised version.

In a special called meeting, the Board voted 5-0 to sponsor the newly proposed constitutional amendment.

The CBE/School Board Legislation was introduced into both Houses of the Legislature on Tuesday, March 17, by State Senator Vivian Davis Figures and State Representative Yvonne Kennedy.

Connie Hudson, co-chair of the CBE wants to encourage all Mobile citizens to support this legislation. "It is the best opportunity we have had in a long time to help our schools and our children."

The School Board, County Commission, CBE and the Mobile County Council PTA can all agree on one thing—that this is going to be a great benefit to the children of the Mobile County Public School System. All have the main goal of ensuring a better education for all our children. School Board President **David Thomas** said, "It has been a compromise on all sides within the county to find better education for our children. Now we have joined hands in order to work together."

Mayor **Mike Dow** called the legislation a "stronger bill because both views have come together. There is no compromise in the quality of this bill."

The amendment provides for a new 15 mill ad valorem tax to fund capital improvement and operating expenses. The new tax would be in lieu of a similar increase of 15 mills to the existing 3.5 mill special district tax requested earlier by the Board. The vote will be in the form of a special election to be held in the Spring of 1999, with an exact date to be decided by the local legislative delegation.

Money raised by the new tax, if approved, would be applied solely to capital improvements, maintenance and renova-

tions and school-based operations, excluding central office expenditures. The Board plans to construct \$325 million in needed capital improvements identified in a recent David Volkert and Associates study. It will also provide money to operate and conduct programming for these facilities.

The tax would continue at the initial rate of 15 mills, or \$1.50 for each one hundred dollars of assessed value, for a period of 15 years, after which it would automatically be reduced to 7.5 mills, to continue to fund the costs of operating existing facilities.

The Board also agreed to establish a team of 11 citizens to assist in reviewing capital improvement progress and provide input on such matters as the capital budget, project plans and locations, health hazards, removal of portable classrooms and preventive maintenance. The team will be composed of individuals appointed by the School Board, County Commission, County legislative delegation, the Mobile Area Education Association, Citizens for Better Education and the Mobile County Council PTA.

Through the adoption of a constitutional amendment, the Board is able to restrict the use of the proceeds. This was not possible by increasing an existing tax because the proceeds must essentially be devoted either to general school purposes or only to capital expenditures. As a result, no monies could be raised to operate the facilities once they were built. This new approach will hopefully receive wide support from the community.

County Commission President **Sam Jones** said, "We thought we needed community consensus on the tax increase, so the Mayor and I encouraged dialogue between the School Board and CBE. We're obviously pleased that they did."

This legislation is being supported on all sides. **John Turner**, Whitney Bank, and the Chamber's vice-chairman of education, also believes this is in the best interest of the students. He stated, "This legislation is pro-kids. Both groups (CBE and the School Board) support a tax increase and have joined together. The School Board is making a lot of improvement, but because there's so much to do, it's been a little at a time. This new legislation, along with hiring a competent superintendent, will bring significant advances."

Need a Ride?

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is developing and implementing the car pool component of this program. Car pooling is a convenient, reliable way to travel to and from work, and to reduce the cost of driving a vehicle. SARPC has contacted Mobile's largest employers and has distributed surveys to those employees interested in the car pool program.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission was organized in 1964. Today, SARPC's work program covers a range of activities including transportation and land use planning, community and economic development, environmental management, programs for the elderly, and geographic information services.

SARPC is responsible for conducting the administrative and technical aspects of the Mobile Area Transportation Study on

behalf of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which coordinates the use of federal funding for transportation projects in the area. The MPO's RideShare Program encourages shared transportation as an alternative to driving alone. It is intended to improve the quality of life in the community by

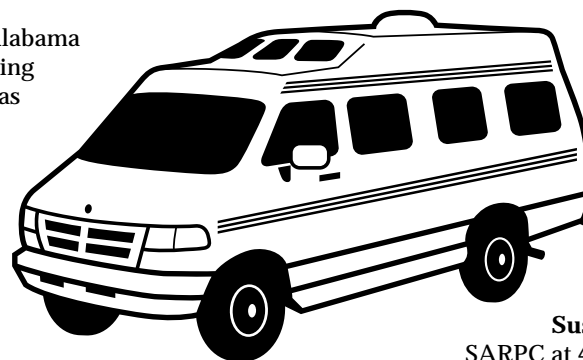
reducing traffic congestion and subsequently air pollution and energy consumption.

If you or your employees have not had this opportunity, please call

Susan Schreibman at

SARPC at 433-6541 to obtain surveys and other information.

SARPC will enter the information into the data base and provide the names and phone numbers of other interested car pool participants to any of your employees with similar commuting patterns.



Forum Alabama Presenting Tom Donohue

The U.S. Chamber's new President **Tom Donohue**, is a nationally-recognized advocate for the business community. The New York based *Journal of Commerce* called him "... one of the strongest industry representatives in Washington... he's been highly effective because of his knowledge, personality and energy."

Donohue will speak Tuesday, **April 21** at *Forum Alabama*, a program designed to build awareness for significant business-related issues and raise the profile of the Mobile-Baldwin region.

Succeeding Dr. Richard Leshner who retired last fall after 25 years, Donohue was unanimously elected as the new U.S. Chamber president. Prior to his election, Donohue was the president and CEO of the American Trucking Association (ATA) for 13 years where he effectively fought against unnecessary taxes and regulations, won major legislative victories including greater funding for highways, more than tripled ATA's revenue base and increased membership by 100 percent.

He's no stranger to the Chamber. From 1976 to 1984, Donohue served as group vice president for development at the U.S.



and a master's in business administration from Adelphi University. He also holds a honorary doctorate degrees from St. John's and Marymount Universities.

The U.S. Chamber is the world's largest business federation of companies, local and state Chambers of Commerce and trade and professional affiliations. Donohue is interested in learning more about what is happening at the grassroots level, and will provide useful information on how to get involved with the U.S. Chamber.

Come and gain knowledge that can ultimately help your business on Tuesday, **April 21**. Sponsored by **Alabama Power**, the luncheon will be held in Room 204 A&B at the Mobile Convention Center at noon. Call **431-8638** for reservations. Tickets are \$20 per person or \$160 for a table of eight.

ALABAMA POWER

A SOUTHERN COMPANY

Chamber. During his tenure, he was instrumental in the considerable growth realized by the organization.

In addition to ATA, Donohue has served in senior positions with the postmaster general's office and with Fairfield University in Fairfield, Conn. Donohue earned a bachelor's degree from St. John's University

Chamber Publications Win Awards

The Chamber's monthly newsletter, *The View*, won a national Award of Excellence recently at the American Chamber of Commerce Executives conference in New Orleans. *The View* competed in the category of "tabloid newsletters" and was judged along with publications from Chambers around the country for this honor.

In addition, the Chamber's annual report titled "Impacting Mobile's Future" won an Award of Merit.

"It's important that we be reviewed by people outside of our community," said Communications Vice President **Jodi Swiderek**. "That way we can keep up with the latest trends and have our writing evaluated."

She added, however, that member feedback is the most important measurement of the newsletter's effectiveness. She said the newsletter should serve as an information source for a variety of things, including business news and events. It also highlights volunteers in the organization and can be a valuable resource for businesses selling their products or services. She added that more than 90 percent of Chamber members read *The View* on a regular basis according to a recent survey.

"We're always open to suggestions for all of our publications," Swiderek said. "We want them to be as valuable as possible and the only way to achieve that is through feedback."



American Chamber of Commerce Executives

THE ONLY NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION FOR CHAMBER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

Clean=Pride 11th Annual Bag-a-thon



Interested in a high rate of return on your investment? Looking for an easy way to increase business and make customers happy? Want to share in the rewards of enhanced economic development? Then join **Keep Mobile Beautiful** for the 1998 GLAD Bag-a-thon, Mobile's largest organized litter cleanup event of the year slated for **April 18 - 25**.

There are two direct benefits of the Bag-a-thon. First, by cleaning up the area around your business, you'll look better; and second, you and your employees will enjoy the feeling of having participated in a project benefiting the entire community.

Many experts in the field of urban planning, government and sociology see a strong relationship between a badly littered neighborhood and a crime-ridden one. For example, "the broken window theory" developed by political scientist James Q. Wilson and criminologist George L. Kelling describes how neighborhoods and business areas can deteriorate from only one broken window left unrepaired. This pivotal event causes a chain reaction.

Mobile residents can make a difference in their community by pitching in to clean up during **Keep Mobile Beautiful's 11th annual GLAD Bag-a-thon**. Grab a bag and join your friends and neighbors who are doing their part to **Keep Mobile Beautiful** by calling **431-8619**.

Last year, more than 40,000 GLAD Bag-a-thon volunteers removed nearly 130,000 pounds of litter.

The same can be said of litter. Once litter begins, more accumulates and soon becomes a serious problem for everyone.

The Glad Bag-a-thon is a partnership between **Keep America Beautiful**, **First Brands**, **Keep Mobile Beautiful** and the volunteers who join the clean-up effort.

It's easy to help set the standard of community pride and ownership by joining forces to clean up the Mobile area, just select the site and time of your cleanup, then call **Keep Mobile Beautiful** at **431-8619** for registration information. They'll supply Glad trash bags and Bag-a-thon caps for all of your team members.



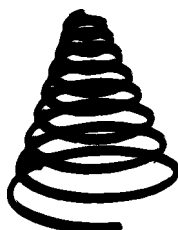
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Steve Hanes or Ron LaGrange
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(334) 432-5154 (334) 432-7644 Fax

April 14 Morning Marketing Meeting

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Place: Chamber's McGowin Room
Cost: \$5
Call: Karen Turner at 431-8638

April 21 Forum Alabama - Tom Donohue

Time: Noon
Place: Mobile Convention Center Rooms 204 A & B
Cost: \$20 per person or \$160 for a table of eight
Call: Karen Turner at 431-8638

April 23 Business After Hours

Time: 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Place: NBC 15/WJTC-UPN 661 Azalea Rd.
Cost: \$2 for members \$5 for potential members
 Reservations are not required.

May 12 Future 30 Awards Banquet

Time: 5:30 p.m.
Place: Mobile Convention Center One South Water St.
Cost: \$35 per person or \$300 for a table of 10
Call: Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607

April 21 Net Gain - Personal Vison

Time: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Place: Chamber McGowin Rm.
Cost: \$15 Includes a catered boxed lunch
Call: Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607

April 22 Chamber Chase Kick-off Breakfast

Time: 7:30 a.m.
Place: Mobile Convention Center East Ballroom
Call: Karen Turner at 431-8638

May 1 First Friday

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Place: Cimarron Ridge Apartments 6427 Grelot Rd.
Cost: \$2 for members \$5 for potential members
 Reservations are not required.

April Business After Hours

Get a bird's eye view of the six o'clock news and make new contacts for your business at this month's Business After Hours on Thursday, April 23. The event is co-sponsored by NBC-15/WJTC-UPN and Robert Thomas Securities Inc., and will be held at the NBC-15/WJTC-UPN studios, 661 Azalea Rd., from 5:30- 7 p.m.

Catch the behind-the-scene action of the evening news, find out the day's top stories and network with a large group of Chamber members. Hors d'oeuvres will be served. The cost is \$2 for members and \$5 for potential members. Reservations are not required.



ANNIVERSARIES

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Keith Harvey DMD PC.

10 YEARS

Bullard Management Corp. United Healthcare of Alabama

20 YEARS

Alabama Credit Corp.

5 YEARS

Dees Reality Inc.

15 YEARS

Bay Chevrolet Inc. First Securities Co. in Mobile G & K Services Inc.

May's First Friday

Check out the great facilities at Cimarron Ridge Apartments, located at 6427 Grelot Rd., while you start your day with breakfast and conversation at the May First Friday event. Join the Chamber staff and members for a delightful continental breakfast and beverages on May 1, from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. The cost for the event is \$2 for members and \$5 for potential members. Reservations are not required. We hope to see you there. Bring plenty of business cards.



New Cargo Shippers

Continued from Page 1

"Although there is still significant time savings for all shippers."

Among the expected export products from the U.S. are textiles, cotton, wood, paper, chemicals, autos, plastic products, film and office equipment.

Shipments traveling from Mexico are expected to be mostly produce, chemicals, textiles and seafood.

The interest on both sides has been good, said Norsworthy. The goal, if business warrants, is to launch a second ship between Mobile and Tuxpan, making the service every 3 days.

The new shipping company will locate its home office in Mobile, Ala. The City, Alabama State Docks, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and local businesses worked to recruit Gulf Bridge Ro-Ro like any other new business. Early on, the

company was looking at several Gulf Coast ports. Ultimately, it was Mobile's superior transportation infrastructure (including four rail companies, two interstate systems and 16,000 miles of navigable waterways) connecting to the Southeast and Midwest that convinced company officials to set up in South Alabama, according to Lee. "Mobile was aggressive enough to show them we could get them the business they need."

Last year in the U.S., Mexico replaced Japan as the no. 2 trading partner. In Alabama alone, there was an 86 percent increase in exports to Mexico in 1997.

Jorge Canavati, U. S. Representative for the Port of Tuxpan, said "It is clear that the true intermodal link between the NAFTA partners is the Gulf Bridge Ro-Ro service...We have been working diligently with the Alabama State Docks and the involved principals to bring this new service to fruition."

The Chamber has assisted in developing marketing strategies and identifying potential shippers for the new service. Representatives from the Chamber, the City and private Mobile businesses have made numerous trade missions to Veracruz to develop this new trading relationship.

Jack Ravan, director and CEO of the Alabama State Docks, said, "We are very pleased to have been chosen the U.S. Gulf port for this new service. We have been conducting an ongoing marketing program for the past two years in an effort to increase trade development relations between the United States and Mexico."

Page and Jones will be the shipping agent in Mobile, and in Mexico, the agent will be Agencia Naviera de Mexico of Mexico City. Landstar Logistics Inc. of Texas will be the sales agent.

Companies interested in rate information and bookings on the Gulf Bridge Ro-Ro service can call 1-800-533-1515.

Dock Reed Ad From March View

On Your Mark

Continued from Page 1

Who else is in the line up? Assisting Indy Erling in lane one is *Mad Dash Michael Pierce, MLK Redevelopment; Swift Sharon Roberts, Union Planters Bank; Daring David Brady, Anders, Boyette and Brady; Break Speed Bill Seifert, AmSouth Bank; and Rapid Rob Guthans, ServiceMaster Service.*

The gun sounds off on the morning of Wednesday, April 22 at 7:30 a.m. at the Mobile Convention Center. Sponsored by American Express, you won't want to miss the start of this amazing chase that is beginning with a breakfast of champions. And don't forget your Corporate American Express card. There will be special prizes to win.

The Chamber revolutionized its revenue development strategy by expanding its membership campaign last year. And with the resources recruited, there were a number of spectacular projects conducted. To name a few: Mobile won the bid to host the All-

America City competition this summer; *Envision Mobile-Baldwin*, the regional strategic plan was launched; and *The Leading Edge*, a directory of minority leadership was published and distributed.

"There are more than 2,500 member businesses involved with the Chamber today. Just think, if every one of these businesses participated in even a small way. From donating a door prize to supporting a team of employees to involving one more business associate - imagine what the Chamber could do with these resources," challenges Riis.

Mile Markers

Throughout the 14-week campaign, reward sessions will be held weekly at various sponsors' locations. The campaign will conclude with a victory celebration at the Chamber set for Thursday, July 23.

There's still time to put together a team to compete for rewards and prizes. The Chamber also needs door prizes. If you can help in any way, please call Karen Turner, 431-8638.

Featured Profiles

Advisors

Each month, the Chamber is proud to salute members of its Board of Advisors. These business leaders represent key businesses whose significant dues investment leads the way in funding the Chamber's programs and initiatives. For more information, please contact Katrina McCrory at 431-8611.

John C. Hope, III, executive vice president of Whitney National Bank, is responsible for supervising Whitney's operations in Ala., Fla. and Miss. He is a graduate of Duke University and has a MBA from the University of Alabama. Hope is a past chairman of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, and was United Way Campaign Chairman in 1995. He serves on the boards of Lerio Corp., Mobile Gas Service Corp., Mobile Infirmary Association and the Senior Bowl.



John C. Hope, III
Whitney Bank of Alabama

Jack E. Ravan is director and chief executive officer of the Alabama State Docks and is a member of Governor Fob James' Cabinet. He received his bachelors of science degree in engineering from the U.S. Military



Jack E. Ravan
Alabama State Docks

Academy. Ravan served four years as one of five U.S. Commissioners to the permanent Association of Navigation Congresses. He was twice regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region IV, Atlanta, and also served as an assistant administrator for water of E.P.A. where he developed and managed the Gulf of Mexico program involving five states including Alabama. Ravan was also president and chief operating officer for Rollins Environmental Inc., a New York Stock Exchange company. He serves as co-chairman of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and is a member of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority. He also serves on the boards of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the Japan-America Society of Alabama and the American Assoc. of Port Authorities.

John R. Roeder is president and chief executive officer of Providence Hospital. He holds B.S. and MBA degrees from Arizona State and the University of Arizona respectively. Prior to coming to Mobile, Roeder served medical centers in Wichita, Kan. and Rock Island, Ill. He is a member (Diplomate) of the American College of Healthcare Executives and serves on the boards of Providence Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham, Home Health Care Agency of North Alabama and the Mobile Kiwanis Club. He is also a member of Mobile United, the Hospital Claims Committee for Mutual Assurance, and was 1995 chairman of the United Way of Southwest Alabama's Business and Industry II Division.



John R. Roeder
Providence Hospital

Dennis L. Shortridge, Jr. is executive vice president and administrator of Mobile Infirmary Medical Center. He holds a B.S. from the United States Air Force Academy and a Master's of Arts from Ball State University. He has completed the



Dennis L. Shortridge, Jr.
Mobile Infirmary

Wharton School Executive Course and is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. Shortridge has also served medical centers in Lakeland, Fla; Denver, Colo. and Salt Lake City, Utah. He is co-author of a book titled *Patients First, Experience of A Patient-Focused Pioneer.*

Envision—The Next Step

More than 300 businesses, government and civic organizations from Mobile and Baldwin Counties have signed on as Vision Partners, committed to making Envision Mobile-Baldwin a reality.

Now, the next step is for groups to identify a specific strategy to work on and list other groups they would like to collaborate with in the action phase.

Envision Mobile-Baldwin is a citizen-driven, long-range strategic plan for the two-county region identifying and creating projects to enhance education, quality of life, infrastructure, economic development, government and community leadership. The final document, published in the February 15 edition of the *Mobile Register*, outlines these categories with six visions and more than 150 strategies.

Envision co-chairman **John Davis**, president & CEO of Mobile Gas, addressed a group of 150 people recently at a partners meeting encouraging attendees to adopt a strategy. The other Envision co-chairs are Mobile Mayor **Mike Dow**, Mobile County Commission President **Sam Jones** and Baldwin County business woman **Wendy Allen**.

The co-chairs, along with the Envision Task Force expect the Envision plan to take

five to 10 years to complete and expect it will go through various changes in the process. Benchmarks are being created by Mobile United to measure the progress of each issue. When completed, these benchmarks will offer a valuable collection of data on issues ranging from school dropout rates to solid waste disposal tonnage. Regular progress reports will be presented to the Envision Steering Committee and to the community.

Dow explained organizations can still sign up as vision partners. "A Vision Partner is asked to do three things," he said, "support the vision statements, agree to pass along any reports on Envision to their members or employees and select one or more strategies for your group or organization to work on."

"Because we can't expect area citizens to buy-in to this process if they don't know what's going on, we'll be launching a quarterly newsletter to keep partners and the community up-to-date," Dow added.

Any business, civic, government, education or church organization interested in becoming a Vision Partner or receiving a copy of the Envision newsletter can contact **Ginny Russell** at the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce at **431-8618**.



Drugs In The Workplace: Are They A Problem?

Substance abuse is a serious workplace problem. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that approximately 68 percent of all illegal drug users are employed either full or part-time.

People don't check their substance abuse problems at the door when they enter the workplace. Workers who use drugs affect everyone. In fact, studies show that compared to drug-free workers, substance abusers:

- Are far less productive;
- Miss more workdays;
- Are more likely to injure themselves or someone else; and
- File more workers' compensation claims.

It is even more difficult to put a price tag on low morale and impaired judgement in decision making at work caused by substance abuse. Nor is it easy for an organization to figure the costs of pilfering, high turnover, recruitment and training.

No one knows exactly how much is being lost because of undetected or untreated substance abuse. The measurable dollar costs of workplace substance abuse from absenteeism, overtime pay, tardiness, sick leave, insurance claims and workers' compensation can be substantial. However, the hidden costs resulting from diverted supervisory and managerial time, friction among workers, damage to equipment and damage to the company's public image mean that workplace substance abuse can further cut profits and competitiveness.

Nobody wants to believe a friend or an employee has a substance abuse problem. Subtle changes in behavior may be written off or not recorded because no one knows how or wants to confront the problem. But when behaviors or attitudes that diminish work performance are ignored or excused, workers who are harmfully involved with drugs are allowed to continue to be at risk to themselves and their coworkers.

To dismiss all of these as "the cost of doing business" is to accept a norm that does not have to be accepted. Refusal to admit the possibility that drug use might exist at a worksite could also be a missed opportunity to help an employee. If there is a problem, ignoring it will not make it go away. Drug problems do not usually get better if left alone: they get worse.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor pamphlet, *What Works: Workplaces without Alcohol and other Drugs* (1994)

Eyes on Expansion for Library

Last year nearly 1 million visits were made to the library. Compare that with 380,000 BayBears fans and around 80,000 City museum visits, and you will see the quiet impact of this important community resource.

Mobile lags far behind state and national standards for the number of items required to meet customer needs. To address this problem, the Mobile Public Library board of directors have designed an extensive expansion plan that will total \$22 million. This project will be funded by the City, the Bill Gates Library Fund and a \$5 million fund drive by the Library.

This plan is divided into two phases. Phase one will expand the Main library to 65,356 sq. ft. from its present 20,000 sq. ft., and create a new 58,457 sq. ft. West Regional Library in Cottage Hill Park and a new Toulminville Branch.

Phase two includes the opening of five new branches and expanding the Tillman's Corner Branch to 6,000 sq. ft. The proposed new locations are: the Loop, Moffet Rd., and north, south and west Mobile County. Each branch will have access to the Internet.



"Location, location, location" is as critical to library use as it is to a retail outlet, said Library Director Dallas Baillio. The two-phased project is designed to meet the everyday needs of the citizens. "People understand the need to go further for specialized information. It's the difference between a full service store and a convenience store."

Diversity—A Competitive Advantage

Take a second and think about your customers. Are they male, female, black, white or a combination? Now, take another second and think about the makeup of your staff. Do the two match? At least somewhat?

Diversity has become a critical business issue. By having a diverse workforce, companies have found that they have a more well-rounded thought process in their daily activities, improved decision-making and programs that meet the needs of their entire customer base.

The Chamber recently published a brochure called "10 Ways to Promote Diversity in Your Workplace." This basic "how to" guide recommends such things as encouraging diversity on planning and total quality management (TQM) teams.

"In business, we often organize problem-solving teams with members selected according to job title," said Lisa Carroll, chairman of the Chamber's Human Relations Task Force. "We should also be sure our teams are diverse in other ways. This will insure the decisions made are well-thought out and different ideas have a chance to surface. That's how a company can have an edge on its competition. Diversity can result in 'out of the box' thinking which can in turn be the key to exceeding the expectations of your customers."

The brochure was published along with a new directory called *The Leading Edge—A Directory of Minority Leaders*. This publication lists more than 300 local minority leaders who have agreed to serve on task forces, boards and committees in Mobile.

You can obtain one or both of these publications by calling the Chamber's Community Development Department at **431-8621**.

Members That Drug Test

- Alabama Reference Labs
476-5449
- Drug Free Work Place Inc.
800-430-3782
- Employers Drug Program Management Inc.
341-6188
- Global Safety and Security
470-1778
- Puckett Laboratory
473-3838

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The Computer Broker, Inc. has been providing computer systems design and service to Mobile area businesses for over a decade. You can't be around that long without doing a lot of things right. We listen to your needs select the most cost effective solutions and provide uncompromising service.

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ATTENTION MEMBERS!

If you know of a company interested in benefiting from Chamber membership, please contact one of our account executives:

- Jeff Lambeth at 431-8627, pager: 582-1899
- Tom Lewis at 431-8629, pager: 582-2076
- Beth Tate at 431-8647, pager: 371-0562

Metro YMCA kicked off their Annual Community Support Campaign with a goal of \$145,500. Running from March 3-April 16, contributions will help fund scholarships to children, youth, adults and families who would otherwise be unable to participate in YMCA programs.

In other news, the YMCA renamed its downtown branch the Hearin-Chandler YMCA, after **William Hearin**, head of the Chandler Foundation, and the board chairman at the *Mobile Register* and *Mobile Gas*.



Hearin

Rescheduled from March, PrimeHealth and the Mobile Bay Area Chapter of the Red Cross will hold the PrimeHealth Red Cross Run Saturday, **April 18** at 8:00 a.m. There will be a 8-K run and a two-mile fun run/walk for all ages. Registration is \$13 in advance and \$15 the day of the race.

Julie Danton, chairman and CEO of **SouthTrust Bank**, announced they have established a South Alabama Flood Relief Fund with a \$5,000 contribution to help victims of floods in several Southern Alabama towns. Contributions can be made at any SouthTrust Bank in Alabama through April 30. For more information, contact SouthTrust, the American Red Cross or call **1-800-HELP NOW**.

The annual **Gayfer's and Volunteer Mobile Charity Sale** will be held **May 2** from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Tickets will be available at the door and proceeds are split evenly between the participating community organizations. Ticket holders receive discounts and special sale prices on merchandise in each department throughout the store.

Mobil Oil contributed \$10,800 to the Alabama Oyster Harvest Board supporting a relief fund compensating unemployed oystermen to stockpile used shells. This effort is part of a plan to restore the oyster reefs damaged by Hurricane Danny and enhance future oyster production.

The Annual **Greer's - Easter Seals Charity Auction** will be held Friday, **May 1** at the Holiday Inn Historic District. Admission is \$10 per person or \$15 a couple. The organization is also sponsoring a golf tournament **May 2** at Magnolia Grove Golf Course with a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. Call **478-8582** for more information.



Zurfluh

Joseph Zurfluh recently returned to the **PrimeHealth** staff as Director of Network Development. Prior to two years of service with United Healthcare, Zurfluh worked in PrimeHealth's marketing department.

Crow & Shields, PC announced **Joseph M. Bailey** has become a shareholder of the firm, and the new name is Crow, Shields & Bailey, PC. The Mobile office also has a new location at 3742 Professional Pkwy. and the phone number is **343-1021**.

Ideal Technical Services has moved to a new location in the Union Planters Bank Building at 851 S. Beltline Hwy., Ste 900. The phone number remains the same, **478-3123**.

The Mobile Area Association of Realtors awarded 37 realtors the "Realtor Elite" award, and **ERA Marie McConnell Realty** received four. Congratulations to **Sandy Frost, Mike Perkins, Judi Wells and Dixie Simmons** for their accomplishments.

The **United States Sports Academy** held the 7th Annual Youth Sport Art Show in the American SportArt Museum and Archives on March 5. Thirty-four pieces, ranging from water colors, oil pastels and charcoal were submitted by students from eight high schools in Baldwin and Mobile Counties. Three pieces were recognized in the show and honored with the President's Choice award presented by Academy President **Dr. Thomas P. Rosandich**: **Kyle Brady**, Fairhope High School, was awarded the gold; **Ben Yawn**, Baldwin County High School, received the silver medal, and **Bailey Robinson**, Bayside Academy, won the bronze medal.

Travel House Corp. is moving! As of **March 1**, they will be in their new location: 4656 Airport Blvd. at the corner of Airport and University Blvd. Watch for specials on the new reader board. The phone number remains **344-6336**.

Datasync Internet service provider announces the opening of a new Mobile office. The new office is located at 450B Government St., across from the Chamber.

The **Alabama Association of School Office Personnel (AASOP)** will award six \$1,000 scholarships to any high school graduate who wants to enter the school of business in an Alabama college, university, an accredited business school or vocational school. Any AASOP member or their children are eligible for a scholarship. For application information, contact Mary Delle Hudson at Barton Academy, **690-8219**.

Spring Hill College played host to the 1998 Southeastern Journalism Conference. The conference brought in more than 250 undergraduate students and advisors from Mobile and all over the Southeast.

Ty Irby of **Irby Realty and Development Co.** attended the National Association of Realtors Land Institute Convention and was named Alabama Chapter President. The Realtors Land Institute is an affiliate of the 70,000 member National Association of Realtors.



Irby

University of South Alabama Knollwood Park Sleep Disorders Center has been granted reaccreditation for five years from the American Sleep Disorders Association (ASDA). Dr. William Broughton, medical director, and Dr. Michael Houston, co-director of the center received the award.

Compass Bancshares Inc. announced it has completed the acquisition in north central Florida of G.S.B. Investments Inc. with four Gainesville State Bank offices and one each in Alachua, Keystone Heights, Melrose and Micanopy. They also acquired First University Corp. and its subsidiary West University Bank, N.A., with three prime locations in Houston, TX.

Melinda Hicks of **Roberts Brothers Realty** was named "Rookie of the Year" for 1997. **Lydia Craft** was awarded her CRS (Certificate Residential Specialist).

The **Alabama Power Co.** Board of Directors elected **Cheryl A. Thompson** vice president of the company's Mobile division. Thompson will direct the customer service operations in the South Alabama area.

Bill Costarides, Tom Hendrich, Rusty Anderson and Rob Cook opened the third **Robert Thomas Securities** branch office. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Raymond James Financial Inc. The office is located at 717 Convent Ave. in Pascagoula, Miss. Their current address in Mobile is at 3812 Springhill Ave. The group plans to open a fourth office in Daphne.

The **Mobile Ballet Co.** announces the world premiere of *Dracula*. The production is choreographed by Winthrop Corey and features scenic designs by Homer McClure and Ron Barrett. *Dracula* will be playing at the Mobile Civic Center Theater April 25 & 26th. For more information, please call **661-2244**.

David Coppock has been named general manager of **Clear Channel Radio** and will be responsible for the management of six radio stations. He has 25 years of broadcasting experience and is president-elect of the Alabama Broadcasters Association.

Compass Bank recently hired **Andy Mecom** as banking center manager at the Spring Hill office, and promoted **Angela Gray** to community reinvestment officer.



Gray



Mecom

The **University of South Alabama** is offering USA Special Courses and Certificate Programs to help students improve their skills, learn a new hobby, seek different careers and enhance business performance. These non-degree courses are designed to provide for the needs of students through continuing education in the workplace and at home. For more information, call **431-6405**.

The **University of Mobile** Upper Room Dinner Theater will present "Big River" April 17, 18, 24 and 25 at 6:30 p.m. in Thomas T. Martin Hall. Tickets are \$20, including dinner. The public is invited. For reservations, call the University of Mobile Theater Department at **675-6990, ext. 383**.

Prudential Cooper & Co. Inc., Realtors announce their new associates. **April Lawrence** will be working out of the Azalea Rd. office, and **Sam Page** will be working out of the Hillcrest North office. Congratulations!

Norris Whitten of **Whitten-Harris Construction** was chosen as the 1997 Remodeler of the Year by the Home Builders Association. He is a local remodeler and has been in business for 28 years. As a past president, Whitten now sits on the board for the association.

Thomas M. Hinds, chairman and chief executive officer of **Regions Bank** announced the promotion of **Mariellen C. Herman** to vice president and branch operations officer.

Whitney Bank announces the opening of the new Schillinger branch on April 4. Located at 7700 Airport Blvd., it will offer full-service banking along with drive-thru services, an ATM and night deposit boxes. Whitney will host a grand opening celebration from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. with refreshments and family fun activities.

A 30-second television commercial written and directed by **Mark Johnson** of **Sullivan-St. Clair Advertising/Public Relations** and produced by **Vision Design**, won the Best of Show Award and a Gold Award at the American Advertising Federation Awards held recently in Pensacola FL. The commercial "Open Heart," was produced for Springhill Memorial Hospital and featured the health care facility's new open heart capabilities.

Asberry, Sweatt and Son, formally Asberry Upholstery is under the new ownership of **Sid Sweatt**. Sweatt has 20 years of experience and specializes in fine furniture. Call **479-2357** for more information.

David Houston Mull M.D., has joined the physicians of **Cardiovascular Associates P.C.** for the practice of cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgery.

"Wild About Plants" will be held Tuesday through Saturday, starting May 16 at the **Exploremuseum**. For more information, call **471-5923**.

The **BayBears Golf Tournament** to benefit **Senior Citizens Services** Wednesday, **April 29**, 1:00 p.m. will be held on Spring Hill Golf Course. Also, Mark Harmon Celebrity Weekend is scheduled for May 1-2 to benefit Senior Citizens Services. For more information call **478-3311**.

Frank J. Calagaz Jr., president of **Calagaz Photo Supply Inc.**, was re-elected to the Board of Directors of Photo Marketing International at their annual convention in New Orleans, LA. Photo Marketing is an international organization of over 18,000 dealers and manufacturers representing the Photo Industry.



Calagaz

Member News features Chamber member announcements, such as grand openings and relocations, or employee news, such as promotions. All Member News is due by the 5th of the month to appear in the following month's issue. If you have a news item, please send your information to: **Member News, The VIEW, MACC, P.O. Box 2187, Mobile, AL 36652-2187, fax to 431-8646 or E-mail to susan@mobcham.org**

Wanted Membership Sales Account Executives

The Chamber seeks professional individuals for membership sales positions. College degree and two years outside sales experience required.

Commission, health insurance, 401 (k) included in benefits package. Send resume to Carolyn Golson, MACC, P.O. Box 2187, Mobile, AL 36652.