



M.A.C.C.

AUGUST 1998

THE VIEW

VOLUME XXX, NO. 8

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

(334) 433-6951

Mobile Is a Great Place to Start a Business — New Cognetics Ranking Puts Mobile 10th of 134

Cognetics, a corporate and demographic firm out of Cambridge, Mass., recently released its annual study of "Entrepreneurial Hot Spots: The Best Places in America to Start and Grow a Company." The results - Mobile continues to move up in the rankings. This year the Port City advanced four places to no. 10 among small metro areas.

The Chamber's Vice President of Small Business Development **Norman Hill** says he's not surprised. "A few years ago we were ranked 87 and we jumped into the 20s, then to 14 and now we've earned a top ten position."

It's not just one or two things that contribute to Mobile's ranking according to Hill. He credits the quality and variety of resources available to entrepreneurs as well as the unique cooperation between city and county governments as the main reasons for our favorable business climate. "The resources committed by the city, county and the Chamber to small business development says loud and clear, Mobile values the role small business plays in our economy."

Only four of the 134 small metro areas considered in the study remained in their previous positions. "Change is definitely the rule of thumb; and in some instances it means big change," the report states.

Savannah, Ga., jumped 32 spots to no. 7. Pensacola, Fla., ranked at no. 8 for the past two years, fell to no. 22.

The top five large metro cities were Phoenix, Az.; Salt Lake City-Provo, Utah; Birmingham-Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Atlanta, Ga. and Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

The study assigns a growth index to each city based on pure small business statistics - the number of firms started in the last 10 years that employ at least five people today, as a percentage of all firms; and their employee growth.

Although the economy is not a determining factor, you can't ignore Mobile's vibrant economic trend believes **Larry Jackson**, Gardnyr Michael Capital, the Chamber's vice chair of small business development.

"We've seen that a diverse economy prospers. That prosperity promotes small business development. Small business development leads to innovation which leads to an even greater diversity," explains Jackson. "The economy has to be factor, at least in Mobile."

Hill agrees, "Mobile's larger businesses have provided excellent opportunities for small business development. These companies don't have to go outside the community when the expertise is right here."

Top 10 Small Metro Areas that are Good for New Business Development

1. Las Vegas, NV
2. Sioux Falls, SD
3. Huntsville, AL
4. Fort Wayne, IN
5. Lincoln, NE
6. Austin, TX
7. Savannah, GA
8. Springfield, MO
9. Boise, ID
10. Mobile, AL

Focus on the Future: New Superintendent to Lead Mobile County Public Schools

This summer will bring a change to public education in Mobile County. Recently, the Mobile County School Board selected **Dr. Harold Dodge** — former school superintendent in Cumberland County, Va. — as the new superintendent to lead Mobile's public schools into the next century. Dodge began his leadership role August 1.

Dodge has a 30-year history in public education and has served as a classroom teacher, a principal and an assistant superintendent for school systems in Missouri and Virginia. His professional accomplishments include: being appointed to the Governor's Council on Professional Staff Development; implementing new business and education partnership programs; initiating grade-point standards for athletes and developing the first ever five-year plan for instructional improvement in both districts. In 1993, Dodge was selected as one of the country's "Top 100 Educators" by



Dr. Harold W. Dodge
Mobile County Public School System Superintendent

the education publication *Executive Educator*.

With a true spirit of cooperation and realizing the critical role the business community plays in public education, the school board allowed the Chamber to invite business and community leaders to meet with all the candidates.

The group had a chance to ask education about his previous experiences and what his goals and objectives

would be if he assumed leadership of the state's largest school system. Feedback was forwarded to assist the selection committee with its final decision. Those who met Dodge felt he possessed many of the qualities they would want in leaders in their own organizations.

The following are some key questions about the future of education in Mobile County and Dodge's answers:

Q What will be your top priorities for the 1998-99 school year, and what are your long-term goals?

A My immediate priorities include: raising student test scores, and in particular, addressing the schools on caution and alert status; changing the way resources are allocated; communicating with the media and the public by increasing the access the public has to the central office staff and myself; and increasing public school funding.

My long term goals will involve working to ensure there is a good relationship as well as communication between the board and myself, and implementing a comprehensive plan for staff development.

Q How will you deal with the unique challenges of leading the largest school system in Alabama?

A The challenges to any organization, regardless of size, are communication, collaboration and a commitment to excellence. I have to surround myself with good staff, including principals and teachers. I have a history of letting people do their job,

▶ See FOCUS ON THE FUTURE, Page 8

Marking Progress

◆ Benchmarks created for Envision strategies.

What's the current drop-out rate? How many people live below the poverty line? What community services are available? A new report consisting of current statistics will provide answers to these and many other questions for those involved in completing the Envision Mobile-Baldwin strategic plan.

"Knowing where you're starting from is the only way we can accurately gauge our success," said co-chairman **John Davis**, Mobile Gas.

Progress Indicators for Coastal Alabama provides essential benchmarks in 62 categories for Mobile and Baldwin counties. Every benchmark is tied to an Envision strategy, and offers status reports in the areas

of education, quality of life (social services, drug-free communities, crime and safety, environment, etc.), infrastructure, economic development and government.

The benchmarks will be used to measure progress in specific areas. For example, the current drop-out rate for grades 9-12 is 21.9 percent in Mobile and 21.1 percent in Baldwin County. Both counties will now be able to see their future success in reducing these percentages by comparing them against current statistics.

"Expect all students to graduate from high school ready to go to college, continue training at a two-year college, or go immediately into the workforce," reads one strategy from the Envision document addressing this issue.

"This is an incredible resource for us," Davis added. "It's also a great tool for anyone who needs local statistics on a variety of topics for research, grants, proposals and plans."

The initial study was conducted by G.

David Johnson and Jennifer Teason with the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at the University of South Alabama. Results were

compiled and presented by Mobile United and Baldwin County United, with assistance from the Sybil Smith Charitable Trust and the City of Mobile.

"Hundreds of volunteers who worked on the report are to be commended for the critical role they served in collecting and compiling this data," emphasized **Gigi Armbricht** executive director of Mobile United. "No two municipalities collect data the same way and there's an opportunity to improve the collection and reporting process. I think this project has brought that to everyone's attention."

Education-Related Indexes

- ◆ The Graduate Outcome Index, a combination of the graduation rate and average college board scores, was 78 in Mobile County in 1996 (national average is 100) and 116 in Baldwin County.
- ◆ SAT scores for Mobile County in 1996-97 averaged at 53 (three points above the national average) and 61 for Baldwin County.
- ◆ The percentage of students passing the high school exit exam in reading on the first attempt was 81.7 in Mobile County and 89.7 in Baldwin County (1996-97).
- ◆ The number of teachers with advanced certification in Mobile County was 49 percent and 51.7 percent in Baldwin County (1996-97).

Examples of benchmarks found in the report include: the percent passing high school exit exams on the first attempt, black/white residential segregation stats, child abuse and neglect reports, funds raised by United Way, attendance at Mobile area museums, passengers flying in and out of the Mobile Regional Airport, State Docks cargo tonnage, per capita income growth, room tax revenues, percent of population below the poverty level, chapter 7 & 13 bankruptcies and number of homicides. There are a total of 62 measurements in all.

"I'm grateful to everyone who participated in this report," Davis concluded. "I think it's another example of the extensive progress our area is making and plans to make in the future."

To get a copy of the full report, call **Ginny Russell** at 431-8618.



“Yo Quiero Taco Bell”

Five local advertising agencies were ranked in *Business Alabama Monthly's* Top 50 Ad Agencies in the state. Positions were determined based on the number of employees, as well as fees and retainer account billings.

Rank	Agency	Headquarters
1.	Intermark Group	Birmingham
2.	Lewis Communications	Mobile
3.	Slaughter Hanson	Birmingham
4.	O2 Ideas	Birmingham
5.	Martin Advertising	Birmingham
8.	Townsend Barney & Patrick*	Birmingham
12.	Sullivan-St. Clair	Mobile
17.	Denson Reed Marketing	Mobile
20.	Bob Holberg Advertising	Mobile
29.	Kreger White Edeker & Platt	Mobile

*Has a Mobile office.

Source: *Business Alabama Monthly*

Time Over Money

It's true. More people would rather have paid time-off than time-and-a-half overtime pay, according to a survey by the Employment Policy Foundation and Penn+ Schoen Assoc.

Of the employees working 40 hours or more per week and getting overtime pay, 57 percent said they would prefer paid time off, at least some of the time. Only 36 percent responded they would always choose extra wages.

Women more than men were more interested in paid time off—73 percent of women vs. 44 percent of men.

Source: *Long's Human Resources*

Anonymous Ideas

Nothing has replaced the good-old-fashioned suggestion box. The best ideas for lowering costs, increasing revenues, improving efficiency or quality, come from employees, according to a professor at Wichita State University in Kansas.

Make your suggestion system effective by:

- Making one person responsible for the operation;
- Deciding if comments should be reviewed by individual departments first;
- Reward employees for ideas implemented;
- Promote and publicize the suggestion box;
- Make it known that management really considers all suggestions;

Bring back the wooden box or create a computer-based messaging program and find out what your employees are thinking.

Source: *Nation's Business*, published by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Healthy Future

HealthSouth, based in Birmingham, is the first healthcare provider to establish facilities in all 50 states.

In 1984, with \$50,000, Richard Scrushy and his partners founded the company to create a transitional environment between the hospital and home. Today, HealthSouth has a market value of approximately \$11 billion and is the largest provider of out-patient rehabilitation, ambulatory surgery and comprehensive sports medicine in the nation.

Source: *Partners*, published by the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama.

When to Delegate

You're ready to delegate a task if you can answer “yes” to these statements:

- I can explain the task's objective.
- I can identify the end product the task will produce.
- It's possible to complete the task in more than one way.
- I'm ready to let someone else handle this task.

Source: *Communications Briefings*, Streetwise Managing People.

Marketing Mobile

When a new business begins or an existing one expands – it could do so anywhere in the world. So why then, do businesses like Racer Computers and Mitsubishi choose Mobile?

“Good question, but there's more than one easy answer that explains it all,” responds **Chad Newell**, the Chamber's director of business development.

Mobile has a tremendous number of resources that are great selling points – it's a port city centrally located on the Gulf of Mexico at the base of I-65 and along I-10; there is a tremendous small businesses network; a diverse economy; and we are a community with proactive city/county and Chamber leadership.

“We try to get the word out that Mobile is a terrific place to do business and we encourage them to consider our area as a potential site.”

Trade shows, industry tours and meetings with site location consultants are three ways the Chamber markets Mobile and looks for new businesses that will complement existing ones.

“Many recruitment projects begin with a consultant's request for a proposal and it's

important that the consultants know your city's strengths and are updated regularly on new developments,” Newell added. The Chamber uses a computer software program to keep in constant contact with all of its prospects.

The Chamber's economic development team has taken their show, “doing business in Mobile,” on the road regularly. Sometimes they go solo, but often they team up with representatives from Baldwin County's Economic Development Alliance, the

Alabama Development Office and Alabama Power Co.

On The Road

Here are the highlights of this year's agenda. This Spring in Chicago, **Jim Apple**, the Chamber's vice president for economic development and Newell attended the National Manufacturing Week Trade Show and met with several big-name consulting firms like Arthur Andersen, Deloitte & Touche and Semradek Consulting.

In Toronto, Canada, earlier this year, Apple and Newell attended “Expand to the USA,” a unique seminar geared

toward Canadian companies considering operations expansions in the U.S.

While in Canada, the two visited Premdor headquarters, a company that makes mobile home doors and has a manufacturing and warehouse/distribution center in Mobile. They also met with one of Canada's largest plastics companies that produces mini-blinds, vinyl siding, plastic pipes, and believe it or not, plastic office buildings and homes (with a little help from concrete and steel bar producers).

In July, Apple and Newell gathered the key infrastructure and site requirements that must be in place for Mobile to be considered for a chip plant during a trip to San Francisco and San Jose' Calif. and Portland, Ore.

There are several additional recruitment trips planned for 1998 including Georgia, Florida, Texas and New York.

“Given the competitive nature of recruiting businesses, one way we try to stay ahead of our competition is by having a better working knowledge of the prospect's business needs. Attending trade shows and meeting with consultants is a big part of accomplishing this,” said Newell.

Thanks to Mobile In Motion (the Chamber's economic and community development marketing program) and its investors, the resources are available to keep Mobile as a prominent choice for business locations. Contact **Chad Newell** directly at 431-8648 or **Jim Apple** at 431-8650 with any questions or comments.

Racer Goes Retail With DigiMart Merger

Within two weeks of its one-year anniversary, Racer Computer Corp. made a bold move to increase its retail marketshare. The company announced a recent merger with DigiMart Computer SuperStores, a major retailer on the Gulf Coast, and plans to open 40 factory outlet stores throughout the Southeast in the next two years.

“We know the customer and the service aspects of the business. Racer knows computers. I am confident this will be a good match,” said **Tilmon Brown**, former president and CEO of DigiMart. Brown will head up Racer's newly-formed retail division.

In July 1997, Racer Computers, a subsidiary of NIENEX Inc., announced it would manufacture computers in the former Lee Jeans facility in Bayou LaBatre and hire 40 workers. In just a year, Racer has become a global distributor of service, parts and complete computer systems for Apple, Compaq, IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Acer, Packard Bell, AST, Toshiba and of course, Racer. To date, the company has

hired 165 employees and Brown expects that number to grow with increased sales and additional outlet stores.

Racer Factory Outlets will sell both pre-manufactured and custom-built Racer products as well as products from other manufacturers to the public. In addition, the stores will offer computer service and repair as well as discounts on special factory-offered merchandise.

“The retail consumer will be able to shop in a pleasant atmosphere, get questions answered,

receive service and purchase computer-related products at reduced prices,” said Brown.

“We are confident the synergy between the two companies will help lead Racer's aggressive growth strategy,” said Racer President and CEO **Mike Mahmoodi**.

By adding 40 new stores in the Southeast at an average of two stores per month, Racer Factory Outlets will be one of the fastest growing computer outlet store chains in the country. Initial expansions are planned along the Mississippi and Florida Panhandle Gulf Coast region, and in Montgomery and Dothan, Ala.

For three consecutive years, *Inc. Magazine* listed NIENEX (formally known as N.I.E. International) in its top 500 fastest growing privately-held companies in the U.S. In the April 1998 issue, *PC World Magazine* listed RacerPC in its top 20 power desktops.

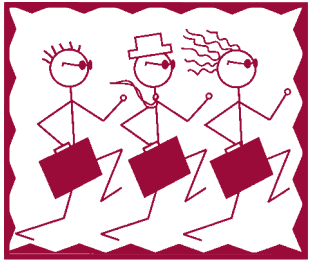
“Technology-related companies are a target market for our area. Racer's extraordinary success in Mobile and this new merger could encourage other high-tech companies to move here,” projected **Jodi Swiderek**, the Chamber's vice president for communications and community development.



DigiMart's Tilmon Brown highlights the customer's advantages of Racer Computer Corp.'s new merger with his company.

Colonial Bank Ad
from June

Chamber Chase News



CHAMBER CHASE '98



After an exciting and exhausting 13-week membership drive and fundraising campaign, participants in the annual Chamber Chase celebrated with a party on July 23.

As of press time, Chamber Chase had raised \$601,676 and reached 93 percent of its goal.

Entertainment and food were bountiful as the 200 Chamber Chase volunteers celebrated a successful 1998 campaign. **Carolyn Golson**, director of resource development said, although the campaign is over, volunteers will have through August to bring in their outstanding leads and deliver plaques and certificates to new members. Everything collected in August will count toward individual and team goals.

"It's not too late to still be a part of the campaign," said Golson.

This year's chairman **Erling Riis III**, Lyon, Fry, Cadden Insurance Agency, dedicated weeks of service to the Chamber as a volunteer. His enthusiasm, creativity and weekly "pep talks" were a definite inspira-

Taking part in this year's Chamber Chase were AmSouth Bank and Paulk's Moving. On Wednesday, July 8, a truckload of furniture donated to the Chamber by AmSouth Bank was delivered by Paulk's Moving.

Dozens of items, such as desks, chairs and artwork were given to the Chamber to use in each department. We appreciate both Paulk's and AmSouth for their generous donation of goods and services!

tion in helping volunteers reach their goals of memberships, goods and services.

Weekly newsletters and meetings recognized teams and individuals who met and exceeded their goals.

"Constant communication," Riis said as he explained why there were weekly meetings. "You have to keep volunteers involved, motivated and up-to-date on the overall campaign progress."

Alabama Companies Increasing International Trade: Still Room to Grow

In an effort to promote the importance of international trade in Mobile, **Carol Conway**, director of International Programs for the Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB) visited several area facilities, including the Alabama State Docks in June.

Conway took the opportunity while she was here to meet with Chamber president

Win Hallett and members of the Mobile Register editorial board to discuss the purpose and goals of the SGPB and the Southern Technology Council.

The council was formed to link U.S. Southern states to Latin America, educate the business community and general public about international trade, and create trade development systems in every Southern state.

Conway is studying "best practices" programs that are building strong international alliances, have developed successful tracking systems and expand their own current capacity.

While she is encouraged by South Carolina's \$1 billion commitment to the Port of Charleston and its five-year development plan, they've only completed two phases of the study. She believes, however, there is untapped potential in Alabama. The state is behind the curve of the Southern average and Conway believes several factors contribute to the current state of international trade in Alabama.

"Only about one-fourth of companies who could export do so," she said. "It's a goal of the council to make the other

companies aware of the benefits from exporting."

Additionally, she believes that with a few exceptions, Alabamians focus their attentions on recruiting business, rather than growing their own businesses.

"It shouldn't be an either/or situation, but a balance of both," she said.

In the past decade, however, Alabama has seen significant growth in companies involved in importing and exporting. Currently there are approximately 1,500 companies (21 percent of the total Alabama businesses) in the importing/exporting market.

The Chamber's trade and technology department is working with several countries in an effort to increase the amount of importing/exporting in Mobile. For example:

- ◆ Paisal, an export promotion office of the Costa Rican Agricultural Chamber of Commerce recently opened in Mobile, and is working with the Chamber to promote Mobile as a hub city to import and export products to Central and Southeastern United States.
- ◆ Through extensive marketing efforts and working with several organizations, Gulf Coast Ro-Ro cargo service began exporting automobiles from Mobile to Tuxpan, Mexico.
- ◆ Meetings were held with the Economic Commissioner of Israel, Consul General of Great Britain and a delegation from Espirito Santo, Brazil.



TEA-21 Is Sweet For Alabama

◆ New federal highway bill increases Alabama's share by 60 percent.

So much of the success of any community depends upon its transportation system. Whether it's the ability of a company to get its products to market by ship, rail or air, or the ability of people to move back and forth from their jobs to their homes — a region's economic growth and prosperity is directly related to the quality of its transportation system.

After months of debate, the largest transportation bill in U.S. history cleared Congress in May by wide margins ending the controversy over how billions of U.S. dollars will be spent between now and 2003.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) succeeded 1991's Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)

when Congress approved a record-setting \$204 billion funding package for the nation's roads, bridges, rail and transit projects. The TEA-21 spending plan will be funded by the federal Highway Trust Fund, which receives more than \$20 billion a year in taxes on sales of gasoline, diesel fuel and tires.



Most of the controversy surrounding the debate on this issue was the result of how the new bill would spend the federal transportation money available and which states would receive how much of it. Fights broke out between "donor" states like Alabama, which under the '91 ISTEA received only 86 cents for every dollar in gas taxes it sent to Washington, and

"donee" states, clustered mostly in the Northeast and West, which got back more money from the feds than they actually paid into the Highway Trust Fund.

While Alabama will continue to be a "donor" state under the new funding formulas of TEA-21, the bill did guarantee that all states would

receive at least 90.5 cents in highway aid for each dollar in fuel taxes. For example, from 1992 until 1997, Alabama received around \$332 million in federal transportation dollars from the fund. Under the new bill, the state will receive over \$530 million — a 60 percent increase of \$200 million dollars.

Coastal Safe and Lock Ad

Key Elements of TEA-21:



Authorizes a minimum of \$204 billion over six years, including \$165 billion for highways, \$36 billion for mass transit



The new funding will be based on Highway Trust Fund receipts with guarantees that money won't be diverted to non-transportation purposes



The new funding formula assures all states will get at least 90.5 cents in transportation aid for each \$1 paid in fuel taxes (Alabama received 86 cents for every \$1 under ISTEA)

One of Mobile's Top Firms Celebrates its Centennial



Managing Partner Broox Holmes, along with Kathy Miller, David Bagwell and E.B. Peebles III.

Armbrecht, Jackson, DeMouy, Crowe, Holmes & Reeves recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Former Chamber president and Mobile U.S. Attorney under President Theodore Roosevelt, William (Will) H. Armbrecht established his own legal practice in 1897. Around the turn of the century, law suits against railroad companies were extremely common. Armbrecht defended railroads when their trains hit a farmer's cow or mule and assisted in land purchases for a growing transportation system.

Over the years, the firm has included many prominent Mobilians in the legal profession such as Francis and William Inge, Charlie Hand and John McConnell, who left the firm to run the Peace Corp in Africa in the '60s.

From a single practice to one of Mobile's largest law firms with nearly 100 employees today, the company still holds up integrity, common sense and modesty as essential values the company was founded on. According to partner **David Bagwell**, "These days, with the help of computers and the Internet, we operate more efficiently. We've moved successfully into the age of technology and are passing the time

savings we gained onto our clients."

With 28 members (formally called partners), there is quite a diversity of legal issues that can be addressed by Armbrecht, Jackson et.al., making them unique from other law firms. They primarily work with companies on employment relations, pension, securities, anti-trust, real estate, oil and gas, banking and more.

Their client base extends beyond Mobile's city limits to Pensacola, Mississippi and other counties throughout Alabama.

As a long-time Chamber member, Armbrecht, Jackson, DeMouy, Crowe, Holmes & Reeves plays an active role in the Mobile community. The firm contributes to the Chamber's Mobile In Motion economic development fund and many of the firm's lawyers donate a very important asset of the profession - their time. Lawyers like Bagwell and Kathy Miller, one of the firm's top female partners, have served as legal counselors to the Chamber and various organizations in the area.

Located in the Riverview Center in Downtown Mobile, Bagwell believes this firm will continue to serve area businesses with legal expertise for the next 100 years.

Small Business of the Month Mail Boxes Etc.

It's taken a great deal of hard work, an open mind and a desire to see a small business grow, but **Brad Saint**, owner of Mail Boxes Etc. has enjoyed every minute of it.

The Chamber's Small Business of the Month specializes in a wide-range of business services such as full-service digital color copying, finishing, postal services, business printing, packing and shipping.

"By encompassing all commercial services into one location, we're providing our customers a way to streamline their day-to-day printing needs by using only one vendor," Saint said. "Office managers, for example, can get used to working with one person in our store rather than traveling to sometimes eight or nine locations."

Providing quality customer service and a good product keeps customers coming back to Mail Boxes Etc. Whether it's listening to a customer, greeting them by name or even offering them a cookie while they're waiting, Saint believes the service his employees provide sets Mail Boxes Etc. apart from competitors.

Two years ago this summer, Saint began acquiring the Mail Boxes Etc. franchises in the Mobile area. In that short amount of time, his company has expanded to three locations - University Boulevard, Airport at Schillinger Road and Old Shell at McGregor Avenue.

Saint has a strong community commitment. As an active volunteer for the Chamber, he serves as a Diplomat and is participating on one of the Chamber Chase teams. In addition, Mail Boxes Etc. serves as a drop-off location for the Toys for Tots program, and annually sponsors a local "T" Ball team.



Brad Saint is proud of the service he can offer his customers.

"I grew up in Mobile and left for eight years," he said. "When I returned the quality of life here had improved so much. I believe the Chamber played an active role in that. Now as a business owner and Chamber member, I believe that I have an obligation to my customers to give back to this community."

Guidelines for the Small Business of the Month selection:

- ◆ Current Chamber member
- ◆ Fewer than 100 employees
- ◆ Apparent solid financial base
- ◆ Considered successful by peers
- ◆ Expanding number of employees
- ◆ Sales growth and/or profit growth
- ◆ Outstanding public service contribution
- ◆ In business a minimum of a year
- ◆ New product line

Developing the New Russian Economy Benefits U.S. Companies

Supporting the transition to a free-market economy in the former Soviet Union, U.S. companies have trained more than 1,200 Russian managers, engineers and scientists.

The Special American Business Internship Training Program (SABIT) was created by the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1990 to nurture the economic restructuring of the New Independent States (NIS).

"While SABIT is aimed at creating leaders who will encourage and manage a free economy, it stands to reason that these relationships will create a cadre of influential business people in the NIS who are in favor of doing business with the United States," explains **Ilona Shtrom**, international trade specialist for SABIT.

To date, the benefits for the 300 U.S. host companies have been impressive. More than 70 percent of the businesses continue their relationship with SABIT interns through trade, joint ventures and distribution and purchasing agreements.

After training three interns from a private Russian firm, an Illinois-based equipment company now uses the firm as its official distributor in the NIS. The partnership, established in 1995, has helped the U.S. company more than triple

its equipment sales in the NIS over the course of only one year.

Last summer, grants became available to offset some of the costs associated with the two types of training programs. The Grant Program, for NIS individuals who speak English, focuses on management training and commercial application of research and development. It can last anywhere from three to six months.

The specialized SABIT programs bring groups of 15-25 to the U.S. for six weeks of industry-specific training at a variety of companies and sites across the country. Through this format, the trainees become familiar with a U.S. industry sector and its regulations, establish valuable business relationships, learn about innovative technologies, equipment and services, and explore market-based business concepts.

"The majority of host companies are small firms," says Shtrom, "but all U.S. corporations, associations and organizations are eligible and encouraged to participate."

If your business is considering entering or expanding into the Russian market or you have an interest in supporting the program, contact Ilona Shtrom at (202) 482-0073, shtrom@usita.gov.

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An All-America City Puts On An All American Show

What an impression Mobile made on the organizers and community delegations that attended the 1998 All-America City competition held here in June!

The National Civic League staff, based in Denver and coordinates the program, voted Mobile's Host Committee no. 1, showering kudos on the group for the excellent job they did. The entire project was planned and executed through the Mobile Chamber with the help of a volunteer task force.

Delegates from the 30 participating communities agreed wholeheartedly. "No city can compare to Mobile's genuine hospitality," said **Dave Vollette** of Piqua, Ohio. Piqua has participated in All-America City competitions for the past three years, so he is able to easily compare host cities.



All community finalists celebrated the opportunity to compete for the title of All-America City.

Other participants praised Mobile. The convention center was "the ideal setting for an event like this. The facility was well-layed out and convenient," said **Barbara Schoppman** of Fort Wayne Ind.

Karl Williams of DeKalb County, Ga. was highly impressed with the volunteers from Mobile. "It really says a lot about your city to have so many volunteers helping with this event."

"I am so proud of our people," said All-America City Host Committee

Chairman **Linda Ingram** with Keep Mobile Beautiful. "We had 18 committee chairmen

and hundreds of volunteers, each of whom did an outstanding job of organizing the mounds of details required to prepare for the event, and then making the people feel welcome when they came here."

Ingram went on to tell of "above and beyond" behavior by volunteers. One local helper, for example, took an 80-year-old woman fishing on the Causeway because she has a record of fishing in every city she'd ever visited. Another volunteer sat in the bus station for three hours waiting for a participant who had missed her city's chartered bus, and another hosted an entire city delegation at her beach house on Dauphin Island.

"You can't beat Mobile hospitality," Ingram concluded. "It's in our blood and it's what makes this place special. It is what sets us above the others!"



All-America City Mobile Host Committee



The All-America Host Committee would like to give a special thanks to the following for their in-kind donations of products and services to the All-America City Project.

Colonial Trailways
 McIntosh Charters and Tours
 Janet N. Scott
 Coca-Cola Bottling Co.
 Mobile Jaycees (Azalea Trail Maids)
 Tom and Thayer Dodd
 Perry Plauche
 Keep Mobile Beautiful Inc.
 Providence Foundation
 Mobile International Festival
 DiGiph
 BellSouth Mobility
 City of Mobile
 Robin Delaney
 J.W. Graphic Design
 Sir Speedy
 Lamar Advertising
 Lewis Communications
 Mobile Weed and Seed
 Mobile Police Dept.

Q-Zar
 Demeranville Floral Co.
 Margaret Ann's Florist
 Cleveland the Florist
 Zimlich Brothers Florists Inc.
 The Rose Bud Flowers
 The Flower Shop
 Hackbarth Delivery Service
 Mobile Convention & Visitor Corp.
 Mobile Convention Center
 Mobile Arts Council
 Adams Mark Hotel
 Barber Dairies Inc.
 Job Training Partnership
 Volunteer Mobile
 Mobile Metro Transit
 Mobile International Festival
 Junior League of Mobile
 Treadwell Ford



Former Senator Bill Bradley thanks Chairman Linda Ingram.



"Downtown Saturday" was a fun and festive event.

SIPCO AD
 FROM LAST
 MONTH

GWINS AD
 FROM LAST
 MONTH

Business Spotlight Magnolia Mortgage Co. Inc.

Less interest vs. less taxes, conforming vs. non conforming loans, A.R.M.S. vs. fixed. If these kind of home-buying decisions make your head swim, the professionals at Magnolia Mortgage Co. Inc. can help. The Chamber's Business Spotlight of the Month, Magnolia Mortgage offers a wide variety of financing options for the residential buyer.

"We can even finance 100 percent and 110 percent of a loan," says President **Tim Wilkes**, explaining a new option especially appealing to some home buyers. Available only since July, this particular loan gives first time home buyers the option to afford a home and furniture. Or if it's an older home that needs updating, this will allow a little extra to start the renovations.

Wilkes knows it is important to match the needs of customers and find out what suits them. "We are fairly unique because we have a variety of loans to offer, including non-conforming loans for those with less than perfect credit records or who have an interest in rural properties," he says.



Tim Wilkes explains loan procedures to Johnnie Taylor Jr., interested in terms for investment properties.

The company, while specializing in residential loans, also works with investment loans (rental or second homes) as well as light commercial loans.

Last month, the company celebrated its eighth year in business. With 13 years experience in the financing arena, Wilkes started the company with one other person. Today, he has a staff of 22 and three additional offices located in Foley and Gautier and Gulfport, Miss.

Magnolia Mortgage is located at 1550 S. University Blvd., 661-0833.

Don't Read This Sentence!

Gotcha! Subtle differences in ordinary typed copy draw attention to a product or company. At a nominal price, Chamber members can have the name of their business highlighted in the 1999 Chamber Membership Directory & Buyers Guide.

The directory is a popular resource here in the Mobile area for anyone wanting to quickly find information on local companies. Many members have said they use the directory to do business with other Chamber members.

For only \$75, businesses can list themselves in bold lettering. To make an even greater impression by catching the reader's eye, list a business in red type for \$150.

Spaces are still available in the directory for advertising. Rates range from \$495 for a 1/6-page black and white ad to a \$2,650 for a full-page, four-color ad. Advertising in the Chamber directory is a great way to reach thousands of readers for a low price.

For more information on highlighting a business or advertising in the directory, contact **Karen Turner** in the Membership Department at 431-8638.



Diplomat of the Month Karen Cross

Karen Cross, marketing director for **Seascope Furniture**, is a well-known volunteer with the Mobile Chamber. She was selected as this month's **Diplomat of the Month** because of her involvement and dedication to the Chamber as well as the community. Cross is a two-time winner of this award.

"People don't realize that if they just put a little into the Chamber, the rewards are unlimited," Cross said. "The more you're willing to put in, the more you get back. Community efforts definitely follow the rule of what goes around comes around," she added.

Cross has been with Seascope for the past three years and has lived in Mobile since 1990. Besides marketing for Seascope, Cross is also very involved in the community. Her activities include: the Mobile Area Apartment Assoc., the



National Apartment Assoc. and the Assistance League of Mobile. She also serves on the membership committee for the Bienville Club.

Employee Goals Can Advance Your Business

Most large businesses have staff to determine department and organizational goals. Small business managers, on the other hand, are so involved in a flurry of daily tasks, they rarely get around to setting goals for their employees or their business.

It's easy to make subjective decisions about performance or judge employees by how well they perform the duties included in their job descriptions. But does that tell you how that employee is really doing? Is it an accurate measure of their contribution to your company?

"Of course not," says **Bob Kirby**, chairman of Mobile's Chapter of SCORE (Service Corp of Retired Executives).

"How much of your success is realistically spelled out in a job description? Specific goals for each employee tied to objectives in your business

plan will not only help you realize the value of each employee, but it's an excellent way to advance your organization."

Traditionally people have worked by general job descriptions. For example, a credit manager's job description may simply read, "supervises credit operations for the company." By identifying and setting five or six goals you will achieve more noteworthy results. The description

could read: "increase credit sales sufficiently to support a 15 percent increase in overall sales within the next 12 months. Another might be to reduce delinquent accounts by 20 percent."

By asking each employee to submit their own goals, you may find their ideas and creativity will take your business to an even higher production level. Involving employees also builds enthusiasm and commitment.

Goals need to be written down, specific and reviewed often. They should address problem-solving skills, innovation and

development. Timelines for each step should be agreed on in advance. To be used effectively, goals must be measurable and expectations should be spelled out clearly.

Don't wait until the end of the year to

see if the goals have been met. Take the time to meet periodically with your employees to discuss progress, challenges and potential changes. Keeping the lines of communication flowing can almost ensure success.

To discuss your management objectives with a SCORE counselor, call 431-8614 to make an appointment during the hours of 9 a.m. - noon, Monday through Friday.



IRS Bill to be Signed into Law

◆ Taxpayers Get New and Expanded Rights

Thanks to the response of GAIN (Grassroots Action Information Network) participants and the U.S. Chamber's lobbying efforts in Washington, the *Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1997* (H.R. 2676) will soon become a reality. Both the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed the conference report on June 25 and July 9 respectively. The President has indicated his intent to promptly sign the bill into law.

H.R. 2676 will establish a governance board, made up of mostly private citizens such as business executives, professors and state tax administrators, to review various IRS functions and ensure it is effective, efficient and taxpayer-friendly. The bill also includes numerous provisions to allow the organization to focus on service, rather than regulations.

More importantly for taxpayers, the burden of proof will shift to the IRS in cases brought to court.

The taxpayer will, of course, still have to keep records and cooperate with the IRS.

There were several last-minute, unrelated measures added to the legislation. The bill would reduce the capital gains holding

period from 18 months to 12 months, and the designation of China as a "most favored nation" trading partner would be changed to a country of normal trading status in order to more accurately reflect trade policy.

Interest netting was also included in the bill, which provides a fair method to net out the interest charged on both underpayments of tax liability as well as overpayments.

For more information, contact the U.S. Chamber's Congressional Affairs Division at (202) 463-5600.

Additional information on the U.S. Chamber's stand on policy issues affecting business may be found by visiting its web site at <http://www.uschamber.org>
Join the U.S. Chamber's Get-Out-the-Vote Campaign, its nationwide effort to make voters aware of the importance of electing pro-business candidates.

Contact **Richard McDonnell** of the

U.S. Chamber's Office of Membership-Grassroots Management for details at (202) 463-5604, or refer to the U.S. Chamber GOTV web page at <http://www.uschamber.org/gotv>

In addition, the Reform Act will:

- \$ Establish a five-year term for the IRS commissioner.
- \$ Expand taxpayer's rights by providing compensation in failed audits or trials.
- \$ Extend the privacy privilege to accountants and other tax preparers.
- \$ Make it more difficult for the IRS to seize or file liens on property.

The View to Feature Series on School-to-Work

Business leaders in Mobile are making the connection between school and career — making an investment in education results in better-trained workers and will ultimately increase a company's success and better the community.

To this end, the Mobile business and education communities jointly have begun implementing School-to-Work programs.

A national effort initiated by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor in 1994, School-to-Work is an unprecedented partnership between business and education to ensure students are trained to meet workforce demands.

In this series, "Learning to Earn," local School-to-Work programs will be profiled to give businesses the opportunity to learn about successful School-to-Work efforts in the community.

Mulching At Murphy

◆ School-to-work program teaches leadership and interpersonal skills for a special group of students.



Murphy High students battle Mobile's hot temperatures with continuous watering to keep the courtyard beautiful.

Not everyone chooses to go to college, nor is it the only way to be successful in today's world. Students that don't go on to a post-secondary school need skills to prepare them to enter the job market, and many industries need trainable employees.

School-to-Work uses applied, or "hands on," curriculum to make student learning relevant to today's workplace. Students learn by actually doing the work, not just reading about it from a classroom textbook.

One local program is sponsored by Murphy High School and made possible by a grant from the State Department of Education. "Project Learn & Serve" reaches a group of students normally overlooked for

employment — those students enrolled in special education classes.

In the Murphy School-to-Work program, special needs students learn gardening and landscape skills through program activities. The first half of the year is spent teaching students the basics of horticulture and how to care for flowers and plants. Students visit Bellingrath Gardens and Home and Shore Acres Plant Farm to see for themselves the types of jobs available in the industry. The last half of the year, students get their hands dirty as they work on projects themselves.

The Murphy group has cleaned and edged, weeded and seeded, mulched and fertilized and had numerous tips for the amateur landscaper. "Be sure to water your flower bed until it overflows in the hot summer months," advised one student. "If you use a special fertilizer, your flowers bloom earlier and have twice as many buds," explained another student.

The students along with teacher, **Robin Foster**, have grown and fertilized some accomplishments to be proud of, including creating a boxwood display in the shape of the Murphy "M," planting flowers on campus, and turning the once overgrown courtyard back into a peaceful retreat. The new courtyard has earned an award from Keep Mobile Beautiful.

The opportunity to serve came from the lawn of the Little Sisters of the Poor, a Catholic nursing home. The students worked together to brighten the lives of the elderly patients by weeding and planting flowers.

"All kids want to be independent and this experience gives this particular group of students a chance they might not ordinarily have to see that there is a job they can do," said Foster.

With the skills they learned in the Murphy program, students now have stronger tools to assist them in future careers and have a newfound confidence in themselves.

"The idea of business and education working hand-in-hand to ensure students are ready to go to work is critical to a community's success," said **Kathie Chumley**, Chair of the Chamber's School-to-Work steering committee (*Committee on Future Workforce*).

"Only a small percentage of our students go on for post-secondary training," added Chumley, Human Resources Director of Atlantic Marine. "We owe it to students, parents and the Mobile business community to ensure our youth are prepared for their futures."

Featured Profile Advisor

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.

Larry T. Myers is president and CEO of Warranty Corp., a company providing direct mail warranties for used car purchasers throughout the United States and Mexico. Myers spent most of his professional career as an executive with Bankers Life & Casualty Co. of Chicago. He was district manager for the company in Mobile when he decided 10 years ago to establish Warranty Corp. Myers holds a masters degree in Financial Science, is an enrolled agent to practice before the Internal Revenue Service, and is a chartered financial consultant as well as a chartered life insurance underwriter.



Larry T. Myers
Warranty Corp.

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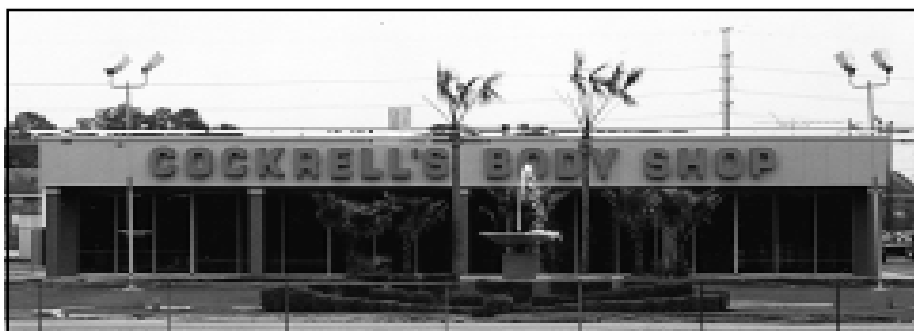
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Adults with two years of college are able to complete a bachelor of science in 16 months, attending class one evening a week. Classes meet on the UM campus or at the Bay Minette Middle School campus in Bay Minette.

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Will the Changing Transatlantic Market Place Affect Your Business?

◆ Seminar set for Oct. 14 will address many aspects of the new euro.

There are still many questions surrounding the European union between the 15 countries, and the new euro currency expected to make its debut in January, 1999.

The Journal of Commerce reports, "A weak euro against the dollar would make European goods more price competitive, reducing sales by U.S. companies and increasing the current \$17 billion U.S. trade deficit with the European Union. A strong euro would have the opposite effect."

"It's hard to predict what the value of the euro will be and that is a valid concern," believes **Tony van Aken**, the Chamber's director of trade and technology. "Regardless, we must get ready to deal with a different currency."

The Alabama District Export Council and the Chamber will sponsor "The Changing Transatlantic Market Place," a seminar featuring local and national financial experts on Wednesday, Oct. 14, from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Immediately following the presentations, a few of the speakers will stay through the afternoon to meet one-on-one with participants.

There are a number of questions facing U.S. companies who do business in Europe, such as the legal aspects, trade and investment implications and proposed time frames.

"Fused with the national currencies of some of the world's biggest exporters - Germany, France and Italy - the euro will become a powerful tool of international trade," reports the *Journal*. Greece, Britain, Denmark and Sweden are expected to adopt the euro within two years, and by doing so will create a single market consisting of 375 million consumers trading with one currency.

It's predicted that small and medium-sized U.S. exporters will reap the greatest benefits from the new system, however, large companies will see significant changes in their trading operations.

The September issues of the Chamber's *View* and *Calendar of Events* will provide more information on the upcoming seminar. Specific details regarding the agenda, location and costs are available by calling **Tony van Aken, 431-8636**.

UniversalCom Inc. Acquires Mobile-Based ST&T

From the sandy Destin beaches to the gumbo shops in Baton Rouge, ST&T (Sullivan Telephone & Telecommunications Inc.) customers now have a wider range of service since the company hooked-up with UniversalCom Inc.

ST&T, a Mobile-based telecommunications company with offices in Alabama, Mississippi and the Florida Panhandle was acquired by the Destin-based company, UniversalCom Inc., with offices throughout the Florida Panhandle and South and Central Louisiana.

"The addition of ST&T brings us closer to attaining our goal of becoming the one-stop shop for all business communications needs across the Gulf Coast," explained UniversalCom President Peter Bower.

The company's future plans for the ST&T market includes local and long distance telephone service, telecommunications systems and services; and Internet implementation and access services to commercial customers. ST&T's expertise in large-scale cabling and infrastructure projects will be applied to UniversalCom's existing markets, explained Bower.

Founded in 1981, Universal Com is controlled by Stewart Capital LLC, based in New Orleans, La.



Combined, the two companies serve 15,000 customers and employ approximately 200 workers. Offices will be located in New Orleans, Lafayette and Baton Rouge, La.; Mobile, Montgomery, Ala.; Jackson and Ocean Springs, Miss.; Pensacola, Destin and Panama City, Fla.

Founded in 1964 by Charles Sullivan, ST&T has become one of the dominant independent providers of business communications in Alabama and Mississippi through leadership of executives Joe Jefferson, Donald Pearman and Ronald Brazeli. After the transaction, Jefferson, Pearman and Brazeli will remain as key executives with UniversalCom.

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Continued from Page 1

trusting them and actually training them to take on more responsibility. I also work hard to establish team decision-making models.

Q What are your plans to move School-to-Work forward? (School-to-Work is an unprecedented partnership between business and education to ensure students are adequately trained to meet workforce demands).

A School-to-Work is an important program. As soon as I assume my new position, I will immediately identify one key contact person for the community to work with on this initiative.

Q Would you consider putting a system in place to benchmark the success of high school graduates who enter the workforce?

A Yes. The issue we must address is: Are students graduating with basic skills that any business would expect and are those skills coupled with the abilities needed for today's workforce? If not, we must ensure students have the necessary skills.

Q How will you address Alabama's recently adopted stricter graduation guidelines?

A This comes down to the allocation of resources - fiscal and human - to meet these new standards. The key to high school standard success, however, is in early preparation, beginning in kindergarden through second grade and extending through middle school.

Q What are your strategies for reducing the student drop-out rate?

A My strategies will include enhanced early (kindergarden through grade six) intervention programs. This will provide the long-term solution. Alternative programs at the secondary level are necessary, but often are a band-aid approach.

Q How do you plan on improving achievement in the schools placed on academic caution and alert status for low test scores?

A Through staff development, we can put in place a careful review of sets and sub-sets of test scores to identify weaknesses so we can immediately revise curriculum. I advocate teachers from successful schools, by subject area, working in these special

schools. I will move any and all resources available to these sites to solve problems. This issue is, however, deep rooted and long term.

Q What do you think is an accurate measure of student achievement?

A I look at how children perform on tests, considering their ability levels. Yet, these same students must still compete in a global marketplace and, eventually, their actual ability levels must be raised.

Q How will you improve parental involvement and community support for schools?

A Beginning immediately in August, I will constantly push for the central office staff and each school site to involve parents and the community in their schools. It will be part of this administration's normal operations.

Q Who will be the main spokesperson for the school system? What are your plans for communicating with the community?

A I am the spokesperson for the school system, but I will surround myself with a solid team of professionals who also have these skills. When we have clearly articulated district goals and points of emphasis, communication with the community by anyone will be simple.

Q What are your plans for establishing a positive working relationship with the school board?

A Communication - clear and concise. I have already met with each school board member and it appears that they simply want clear direction, positive recommendations and background information so they can make the best decisions possible.

Q What will you do to combat violence in schools?

A I have high expectations of students and school staff. The expectation that the discipline code will be enforced and students clearly understand ramifications for their behavior is imperative. The issue of serious crime now extends into both urban and rural America. This problem used to only face city superintendents, but in recent months the public is beginning to realize there is no pure immunity for any community.

I believe, however, that we often fail to remember that 98-99 percent of our students come to school daily and do a good job. In Mobile, our 65,000 students come to school 180 days of the year, work hard and behave. The math of 65,000 multiplied by 180 results is an interesting statistic. Sometimes we forget to focus on the positive.

Q What are your thoughts on site-based management?

A Site-based management ensures all parties are a part of the solution rather than part of the problem and is key to our organization. There will be 100 percent site-based management in schools and in other areas in our "company." Sited-based planning of district goals, with local decision-making on how to implement these goals is critical. The principals and site managers will have the power to make decisions, make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. Initiative is rewarded and expected. I will ask staff to identify problems and find solutions.

Q How will you develop leadership at the school level?

A I will strongly promote staff development, and expect principals to participate in programs like the Principal Leadership Academy. I will also plan to personally train staff in good decision making skills and clearly define my expectations. There already is a critical need for developing a pool of future administrators.

Q What is your plan for staff development?

A I have always set district goals for staff development, and I set the parameters for staff development plans so each school can work on case-specific needs. In reference to an earlier question of Alert schools - school "A" may need assistance with select math skills and school "B" may need help with reading skills, etc. District staff development may address global skills, but success comes with specific plans, site by site.

Q What is your experience with diverse groups of students like those found in Mobile's schools?

A My school experiences have been in very different districts in terms of socio-economic background and race.

University City (Missouri) schools were 86 percent minority. Diversity questions often revolve around well-trained, sensitive staff that hold high expectations for all children. Remember, the workforce still expects high quality regardless of any other condition.

Q What is your experience with school tax referendums and bond issues to fund public education improvements and what role will you play in local efforts?

A We passed a 50 percent tax increase in University City (Missouri) with a two-thirds vote. My role will be very active and supportive. I will also have a staff person assigned to assist in monitoring the possibility of passing a new tax to fund education.

Q Do you have strategies to form public-private partnerships to help schools in the district?

A Yes. Public-private partnerships are essential to the school system's success. In Montgomery County (Virginia) schools, I implemented the district's first business and education partnership program.

Q What can the business community do to ensure continuous improvement in the school system?

A First, I plan on meeting with the business community to establish ties, assess their needs and establish levels of support. I would like to talk with business leaders about local school support. I advocate business community involvement in support of academic success and good school attendance. I advocate peer models and adopting schools and individual children. My initial emphasis is in the support of children's basic needs first. I will look to the business community for hands-on involvement with the local schools to benefit all children.

If you would like to become more involved in education, School-to-Work and workforce development initiatives, contact the Chamber's Community Development Department at 431-8630.

CALENDAR VIEW

August 13 **Mobile's Venture Capital Forum**

Time: 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Place: Clarion Hotel
Cost: \$15 per person or \$110 for a table of eight and includes lunch
Call: Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607

August 18 **Morning Marketing Meeting**

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

August 20 **Net Gain: Safety Program Management**

Time: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Place: Chamber's Bender Room
Cost: \$15 and includes lunch
Call: Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607

August 20 **Business Writing Seminar**

Time: 8:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Place: Chamber's McGowin Room
Cost: \$15 and includes continental breakfast
Call: Jennifer Acosta at 431-8606

August 27 **Business After Hours**

Time: 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Place: Mobile Convention Center
Cost: \$2 for members; \$5 for potential members

September 11 **First Friday**

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Place: Instant Interiors
 6001 Grelot Road
Cost: \$2 for members and \$5 for potential members

September 17 **Member Reception & Briefing**

Time: 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Place: Chamber's Atrium and McGowin Room
Cost: None
Call: Karen Turner at 431-8638

Mobile Hosts Southeast U.S./Japan Conference

As one of Alabama's leading trading partners, more than 100 of Japan's top executives will converge on Mobile Oct. 4-6 for the 23rd annual Southeast U.S./Japan Conference.

Held every other year in the Southeast United States, Alabama only has the opportunity to host the event every 14 years. Birmingham served as the host city in 1984.

"This will provide our state's economic development and trade professionals the opportunity to showcase Mobile and the state to our Japanese guests," said Gov. Fob James at the media conference announcing Mobile as the 1998 site. He explained that representatives from both countries will have the chance to discuss key business issues and strengthen existing relationships.



Conference topics will focus on trade, economic development, tourism, joint space ventures, and the relationship between Japan and the Southeastern United States.

Easy Chamber Answers

Joining the Chamber gives you access to numerous services that help your business succeed. Learn more about them at September's Member Reception and Briefing on Sept. 17, sponsored by **World Omni**. Chamber staff will be on hand to answer questions and to highlight Chamber services and activities. New members will be especially interested in this event.

There is no charge, but RSVP to **Karen Turner at 431-8638**.



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Safety Pays!

Workplace hazards eat into profits and could even lead to fines and penalties. Learn how to prevent them at this month's Net Gain Seminar sponsored by the **Small Business Institute at Bishop State Community College**. The basic elements of safety program management will be discussed, and tips on creating a small business safety program will be given.

Set for August 20, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., cost is \$15 and includes lunch. For reservations please call **Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607**.



SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK

Venture Capital Could Help Your Business

Interested in learning about venture capital and how it works? Then attend the August 13 Venture Capital Forum, sponsored by Emerging Technology Partners in Birmingham. Mike Alder, the company's director, will speak about the venture capital process and its benefits to you.

Cost is \$15 per person or \$110 for a table of eight. To make reservations please call **Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607**.

September's First Friday

Working folks spend more (awake) time in their workplace than at home. Is your office cozy and efficient? Don't miss September's First Friday, sponsored by **Instant Interiors**. A representative will speak on decorating your office.

This event is the perfect opportunity to make new business contacts and gain helpful information at the same time. Join us September 11 from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Cost is \$2 for members and \$5 for potential members. No reservation is necessary.



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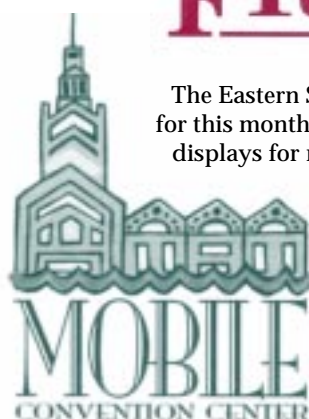
August Business After Hours

FRANCIA'S

Formal Affair and Bridal

The Eastern Shore Chamber will be joining the Mobile Chamber for this month's Business After Hours. There will be tabletop displays for members of both Chambers. Francia's Formal Affair will host a fashion show of formal wear and Fred Astaire's Dance Studio will provide us with a ballroom dance demonstration.

Don't miss this joint event on Thursday, August 27, from 5:30 - 8 p.m. The cost is \$2 for members and \$5 for potential members. Reservations are not required.



Give Your 2-minute Commercial

Spend a productive morning at this month's Morning Marketing Meeting sponsored by **Dees Paper Company**. A representative from your company has the opportunity to present a 2-minute commercial promoting your service or product to other members of the business community. Bring handouts such as brochures or flyers for Chamber staff to distribute during your presentation.

Plan to be at the Chamber on August 18 from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. for this opportunity. Cost is only \$5. Reservations can be made by calling **Karen Turner at 431-8638**. This event fills up fast, so save your seat today!



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Chamber's Fall Golf Tournament On Par

From the most experienced golfers to weekend amateurs and beginners, the 11th Annual Fall Golf Tournament is designed for everyone. The fun-filled day, complete with a putting contest, door prizes and a hole-in-one contest, will be held on Friday, Oct. 9, beginning with registration at 7 a.m. and tee-times starting at 9 a.m. at Magnolia Grove Golf Course.

GTE Mobilnet, Keith Mosley Construction and Nicholas Insulation Services are sponsoring this year's tournament. Prizes can be won for first, second and third places for both courses, as well as longest drives, and closest to the pin. A putting

contest, sponsored by Marriott's Grand Hotel will take place from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Only a few Hole Sponsorships are still available for \$800. These sponsors will receive four tickets to play in the tournament, shirts and a sign promoting the sponsorship at the hole. Individual tickets are available for \$150.

The golf tournament is a great way to promote your company to other Chamber members. This event will sell out in a hurry, so don't delay. Sign up now!

For more information call **Carolyn Golson** at **431-8622**.

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World Omni Financial Corp.

"Business Writing for the 90s" Seminar

Tired of wasting a good part of the afternoon staring at a blank sheet of paper trying to write a good letter? Discouraged because that "perfect" piece of direct mail costs a fortune but didn't bring any new clients to the office?

A "Business Writing for the 90s" seminar might just be the answer. The seminar will take place in the Chamber's McGowin Room on Thursday, August 20 from 8:15 to 11:30 a.m. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Cost is only \$15.

Panelists **Carol Mann**, APR, **David Mann** and **Patricia Mark** will introduce participants to effective steps to writing the perfect letter, developing a unique writing style and getting results from publications.

Carol Mann is an accredited public relations professional and is the director of public relations and publications at Spring Hill College. Formerly, she was the managing editor of Bay Area Newspaper Network (Azalea City News). She holds a BA degree from University of South Alabama in Communications Arts and is currently working on a master's degree at Spring Hill College.

David Mann has spent the past four years working as public relations director for America's Junior Miss. Prior to his work at AJM, he was a weekly newspaper editor and photographer. He earned a BA degree from the University of South Alabama in Communications Arts.

Patricia Mark, an assistant professor of Communications Arts at Spring Hill

College, teaches public relations and business communications courses. A former administrator in adult and continuing education studies at University of South Alabama and Spring Hill College, she earned her BA and MBA from USA and a Ph.D. in Communications from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Areas they will cover include: ways to stop procrastinating and get started, understanding the communication process, identifying strengths and

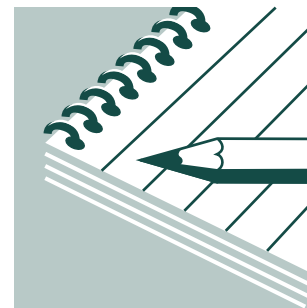
weaknesses in writing, proofing for perfection and using key words to sell an idea.

Designed to benefit everyone from marketing directors to secretaries to CEOs to accountants or lawyers, this seminar is not one to miss. Participants will walk away with the confidence and

resources available to write the perfect letter, press release, advertising announcement or special project.

The seminar has been approved for Continuing Education credit by the Alabama State Board of Public Accountancy. J. Lamar Harris, CPA accredited the course. Accountants wanting to take the course for CPE credit must provide the Chamber with an address, telephone number, social security number and date of birth when registering for the course.

To register for "Business Writing for the 90s," call **Leigh Perry** at **431-8623** or **Jennifer Acosta** at **431-8606** in the Communications Department.



All South Supply Inc.
Wholesale Distributors
Gene Griffith
158 Michigan Ave.
Mobile, AL 36604-1916
(334) 433-1671

American Aero Cranes LLC
Hydraulic Equipment/
Supplies
Kennon Waley
9500 Bellingrath Rd.
Theodore, AL 36582
(334) 973-0450

APCO Employees Credit Union
Credit Unions
Janet Gabel
150 Saint Joseph St.
Mobile, AL 36602-3915
(334) 694-2383

Azalea Mortgage
Mortgage Loans
Robert E. Emanuel
1459 Cambridge Ct.
Mobile, AL 36609-6023
(334) 342-7472

Bayleaf Realty Inc.
Real Estate
Alice Turner
19620 Third St.
Citronelle, AL 36522-2032
(334) 866-9262

Broadway Bagels Cafe
Restaurants
David Gaudin
5660 Old Shell Rd.
Mobile, AL 36608-3041
(334) 344-2144

CD Warehouse
Music-Retailer
Laura S. Crawford
3696A Airport Blvd.
Mobile, AL 36608-1623
(334) 343-1010

Coastal Wine Distributing
Wine
Tom Mack
1900A S. Broad St.
Mobile, AL 36615-1302
(334) 434-0009

NEW MEMBERS

Clip and add these to your Membership Directory.

Commercial Contracting Services
Contractors-Commercial
Sandy Chambless
576 Azalea Rd., Ste. 125
Mobile, AL 36609-1529
(334) 666-4456

Custom Security LLC
Security Systems
Jim Reaves
Dan McDaniel
7773 McKinley Ave.
Mobile, AL 36689
(334) 460-0093

Delta Zone Inc.
Marketing Consultants
Dawn R. Tillery
4324 Midmost Dr.
Mobile, AL 36609-5522
(334) 345-7992

DP Screen Printing Inc.
Screen Printing
Adrian Jones
3743 Industrial Park Dr.
Mobile, AL 36693-5642
(334) 661-7377

DRC Inc.
Disaster Cleanup
Robert J. Isakson
740 Museum Dr.
Mobile, AL 36608-1940
(334) 343-3581

Dynetherm Inc.
Temperature Controlled Packaging
David H. Gibson
5821 Rangeline Rd. #102
Theodore, AL 36582
(334) 443-6443

Endurotec Inc.
Shutters
Bob Cruthirds
6161B Rangeline Rd.
Theodore, AL 36582-5205
(334) 443-9411

Farnell Heating & Air Conditioning Inc.
Contractors-HVAC
H. R. Farnell Jr.
516 Holcomb Ave.
Mobile, AL 36608-1573
(334) 471-2674

Fast Tax
Income Tax Service
Jacinda Clanton/
Kathryn Irby
175 N. Schillinger Rd.
Mobile, AL 36608-5019
(334) 639-0191

Gary Finch Outdoors LLC
Marketing Consultants
Gary Finch
872 Hillcrest Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695-3909
(334) 344-7966

Godwin Real Estate Inc.
Real Estate-Commercial/
Development
John L. Godwin Jr.
2700 Dauphin St.
Mobile, AL 36606-4803
(334) 476-1800

Graham's Auto Sales
Automobile Dealers-
Used Cars
Graham Moore
5342A Highway 90
Mobile, AL 36619-4202
(334) 666-1220

Greater Mobile Physicians for Women PC
Medical Clinics
Ronald Clarke
1155 Hillcrest Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695-3921
(334) 666-9140

Gulf Bridge Ro/Ro LLC
Transportation Services
John Peterlin
261 Saint Michael St.
Mobile, AL 36602-2923
(334) 694-7002

Gulf Coast Inspection
Inspections
Gary E. Middleton
1120B Shelton Beach Rd.
Saraland, AL 36571-3016
(334) 675-0049

Gulf Coast Pump & Equipment
Pump & Irrigation Supplies
Dave Barber
7066 Howells Ferry Rd.
Mobile, AL 36618-3156
(334) 344-2980

Gulf Coast Shows
Promoters-Event
Don Miller
1608 Springhill Ave.
Mobile, AL 36604-1415
(334) 478-7469

Gulf Coast Title Co.
Title Insurance
Dianne Wacker
4623 Springhill Ave.
Mobile, AL 36608-5709
(334) 344-1662

J. Harris Electric Inc.
Electric Contractors
John E. Harris Jr.
4405 Halls Mill Rd.,
Ste. F1
Mobile, AL 36693-5652
(334) 661-8265

HCO Network Inc.
Health Care Services
Richard Shell
27880 N. Main St. #C
Daphne, AL 36526-7000
(334) 626-4666

Holiday Inn - North Mobile
Hotels
Melissa M. Armentrout
1111 Industrial Pkwy.
Saraland, AL 36571-3721
(334) 679-8880

Holiday Inn - Historic District
Hotels
Russell Block
301 Government St.
Mobile, AL 36602-2608
(334) 694-0100

Home Instead Senior Care
Home Health Service
Don Moore
Two Office Park, Ste. 205
Mobile, AL 36609
(334) 342-6655

Homestead Village
Retirement & Life Care
Community
Deanna Auner
924 Plantation Blvd.
Fairhope, AL 36532-2952
(334) 990-6132

ITB. Consulting & Services Inc.
Computer Consulting
David B. H. Chaffe IV
1301 Azalea Rd., Ste. 108
Mobile, AL 36693-4703
(334) 666-5482

Knollwood Point Assisted Living Community
Assisted Living
Cindy Johnson
5601 Girby Rd.
Mobile, AL 36693-3321
(334) 666-1005

J. Robert Lee & Associates Inc.
Real Estate Appraisers
Bob Lee
PO Box 850904
Mobile, AL 36685-0904
(334) 639-3810

MAB International Services
Exporting-General
Mike Vrettos
6040 Grelot Rd., Ste. 206
Mobile, AL 36609-3663
(334) 460-4106

Marshall Investment Inc.
Shopping Centers & Malls
John R. Hardin
PO Box 1628
Mobile, AL 36633
(334) 694-1473

► See NEW MEMBERS, Page 12

Dock Reed Ad
From May View

MEMBER

NEWS

MEMBER

ATTENTION MEMBERS!

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

- Tom Lewis at 431-8629, pager: 582-2076
- Clayton Smith at 431-8647, pager: 582-1899

Baccalaureate and master's nursing education programs at the **University of Mobile** are among the first institutions to receive preliminary approval from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the new accrediting agency of the American Assoc. of Colleges of Nursing.

The American Physical Therapy Assoc. has granted accreditation to the University's Graduate School of Physical Therapy, one of 162 graduate-level programs in the U.S. meeting national accreditation standards.

In other news, the Upper Room Dinner Theatre season kicks-off their 1998-99 season on August 28 and includes performances of: "Nunsense Jamboree," "Tuna Christmas," "Steel Magnolias" and "Fiddler on the Roof." For dates and times call (334) 675-5990 ext. 383.

Stephen E. Roth joined **Spring Hill College** as the new dean of students last month. He has a 25-year career in higher education and most recently served as the director of career planning and job placement for Canisius College in Buffalo, NY.

In other news, Spring Hill College has named **John W. Barter** chair of the board of trustees. The college also named **John Burke** to the board as a new trustee. Both will serve three-year terms.

The **Advertising Federation** of Greater Mobile honored **Scott C. Rye, Timbes & Yeager**, with the club's highest honor, the Silver Medal, at its recent 50th Anniversary celebration and installation banquet. The medal is given to members for exhibiting outstanding professionalism and commitment toward lending their talents to help better the community through civic involvement.

Atlantic Marine Inc. has been awarded the contract to upgrade the "G. H. Gallo-way," a 300-ft. jack-up drilling rig. This is the second jack-up project they have received this quarter, the other being from Diamond Offshore.

Southern Communications has changed its name to **Southern Linc**. They also have a new address for the sales office — 3656 Government Blvd., Ste. G (Corner of Government and Lakeside Dr.), 694-2335.

Springhill Memorial Hospital recently won several awards from the Alabama Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Society. The campaigns were written and produced by **Sullivan-St. Clair Advertising/Public Relations**.

The **Mobile Symphony** announced the new addition to their staff, **Laura McGill**, as marketing and public relations director. You may contact McGill at 432-2010.

Thomas M. Hinds, Chairman and CEO of **Regions Bank-Mobile**, announced the promotion of **Lawrence L. Merrihew** to senior vice president and manager-corporate sales and service.

Lee McCoy, Mobile Paint, has been chosen to be a member of the Order of International Fellowship, created to foster fellowship among all people in the world. Only 500 people internationally are invited to join.

Carl J. Schneider CIC of **Schneider Insurance Agency** has been awarded **Safeco Insurance Co.**'s highest honor, the Award of Excellence. Schneider received the award two consecutive years which is given annually to a small number of agents throughout the country. It is based on business growth, knowledge and excellent underwriting credit.

Watkins Engineers and Constructors announced the opening of a regional office in Mobile, located at 820 S. University Blvd. **Gary Winn PE**, has been selected to serve as the new office's Engineering Manager. Watkins offers full multi-discipline engineering and maintenance services to a variety of clients along the Gulf Coast.

Interim Personnel announces the opening of their new office located at 3725 Airport Blvd., Ste. 207 in the Mobile Festival Centre. A ribbon cutting celebration will be held on Friday, August 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The company provides staffing solutions, including temporary, temp to hire and full-time placement services. Owners are **Gary and Barbara Townsend**.

The **Public Relations Council of Alabama** will host a workshop on Thursday, August 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Holiday Inn-Historic Mobile. This year's workshop will feature presentations on motivating "Generation Xers," by **Judy Marston**, Judy Marston & Assoc.; and relationship building and negotiation skills by **Scott Posey**, Mobile Chamber. Communications on the Internet will also be covered. The \$25 cost includes lunch. For more information call **Elaine Henderson** at 478-8582.

In a recent merger, Advanced Detection Systems of Mobile and AALCO Security Inc. formed **Custom Security LLC**. The company will install, service and monitor residential and commercial burglar and fire alarms systems, in addition to specializing in television surveillance equipment and other home products such as intercoms, sound systems, home theater, electronic control systems and central vacuum cleaning systems.

Cardiology Associates announced **Dr. Brian D. Dearing FACC**, has joined the practice. Dearing specializes in invasive and clinical cardiology and peripheral vascular disease.

The **Mobile Symphony** welcomed the following people to the board of directors:

Lionel Alexander, Dr. Dietrich Arntz, Ernest Bulwinkle, Jerome Carter, Barbara Freeman, Helga Parr, Lyna Schnell and Bill Tidwell.

In other news, two current board members will be assuming officer positions. They are **David Sanders**, treasurer and **Dr. Richard Wilson**, secretary.

A new Gulf Coast Storm Alert Network has been created. Eight radio stations and two TV stations have joined forces to provide up-to-the-minute coverage. Media involved include: WPMI-NBC 15, WJTC (UPN 44), WKSJ-FM (95-KSJ); WKSJ-AM (AM-1270), WNTM-AM (NewsTalk 710), WDWG-PM (The Dawg), WMXC-FM (Lite Mix 99.9), WRKH-FM (96.1—The Rocket), WNSP-FM (SportsRadio) and WTKX-FM (TK101).

Barbara Higgins, Broker/Manager with **Prudential Cooper & Co. Inc., REALTORS** has been awarded the Accredited Buyer Representative (ABR) designated by the Real Estate Buyer's Agent Council (REBAC) of the National Association of Realtors (NAR). Requirements for this designation include a comprehensive two-day course, a written exam and practical field experience.

Dana McConnell Scott, vice president and general sales manager for **ERA Marie McConnell Realty** also recently earned the Accredited Buyer Representative designation.

In addition, the firm announced the association of new sales executives: **Audrey Wright Chamlee; Nancy Green Whitten; Connie Black; B. J. Castle; Larry Kennedy and Carleton Mallory.**

The **Better Business Bureau of South Alabama** warns that an appeal currently found on the Internet to assist Florida fire victims through a BBB post office box in Lady Lake, Fla., is not associated with the BBB as claimed. The BBB advises potential donors to carefully consider any charitable gift before responding.

Mayor Michael C. Dow declared July 7 as **George J. Roussos Day** in the City of Mobile in honor of his 81st birthday, celebrating him as Mobile's oldest independent restaurant owner.



ExecuTrain, the Chamber's June Spotlight of the Month featured from left to right: Lynda Fullerton, Amy Thompson, Karin Collier, Dee Ann Rutens and Andy Ralph.

A 'Return to Work' seminar will be offered by Mobile Staffing Service. Learn about employment trends and hear from people who have recently returned to work and a representative from a major employer. Set for Sept. 11 from 9011 a.m. at the Chamber, call 433-8686 to RSVP.

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**

Please make these changes to your membership directory.

Private Collection Jewelry/Jewelers
Margie Smith
4513 Old Shell Rd.
Mobile AL 36608-1955
(334)343-1205
Fax: 478-2203

Gin Co. LLC Cotton Gin
Beverly Thorburg
4405 Dawes Rd.
Theodore, AL 36582-9464
(334) 602-1828



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