

# THE VIEW

APRIL 1999

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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## Chamber Chase 1999 – The Next Generation

Heading into the new millennium, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's 1999 total resource development campaign – Chamber Chase – kicks off with a breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on April 22 at the Mobile Convention Center. BellSouth Mobility, BellSouth and BellSouth The Real Yellow Pages are sponsors of the kickoff breakfast.

Chamber Chase is a 14-week campaign in which volunteers from local businesses and corporations collect goods such as soft drinks, boxed lunches and office supplies, services including car rentals, airline tickets and computer courses, sponsorships, advertising and new members for the Chamber. This year's goal has been set for \$750,000 after last year's volunteers brought in over \$718,000 in new members, cash, goods and services. More than 30 teams are expected to sign

on for the 1999 campaign.

Chamber Chase Campaign Chairman **Scotty Waters**, vice president of **Financial Resource Inc.**, said he's looking forward to the challenge of leading this year's campaign.

"What better way is there for Chamber members to interact with others than immersing themselves as a campaign volunteer," he said. "Chamber Chase keeps people plugged into what's going on at the Chamber and they meet and work with key business contacts throughout the campaign."

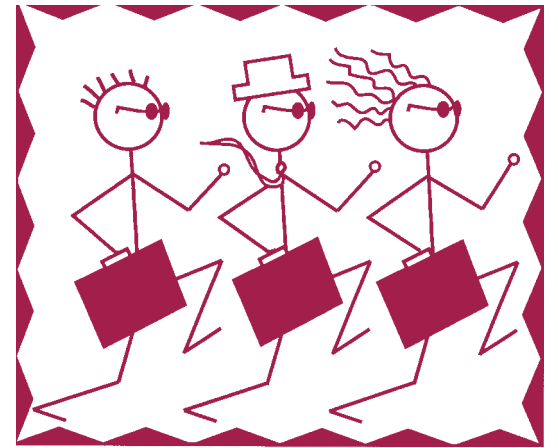
His main goal this year will be to bring in more members to the Chamber. He was surprised that every company in the region is not a member of the Chamber and believes that every organization,

whether it's a one-person operation or a major corporation, can benefit by Chamber membership.

Waters is also excited about the hard-working, talented volunteers signed on to be division chairs. They are: **Mark McWilliams**, Whitney Bank; **Eliska Roe**, Office of Sonny Callahan; **Mary Courtney Cane**, Dauphin Realty; **Leonard Wyatt**, AmSouth Bank; and **John Delchamps**, Sealing and Waterproofing Specialties.

**Carolyn Golson**, vice president of Membership, said the campaign not only provides the Chamber staff with more opportunities, but members as well. "Through Chamber Chase, we're able to step up to the plate and provide our members with more programs, seminars and activities throughout the year."

If you are interested in participating in the



## CHAMBER CHASE '99

campaign by organizing a team or contributing door prizes, please call the Membership Department at 431-8622.

Be sure to attend to kickoff breakfast. There is no cost, but reservations are required. Call 431-8638.

## The Bottom Line: Mobile County Schools Need Millions of Dollars to Prepare Students for the Workforce

At publication date, it is still not certain whether citizens in Mobile County will have an opportunity to vote on increased funding for public schools. In the meantime "We Care," a grass-roots organization of citizens, businesses and organizations, is moving forward with its campaign to promote the referendum.

Below are some of the most frequently asked questions about the referendum.

**Q** How much will this increase cost me?  
**A** The request is for a 10-mill increase. One mill is equivalent to \$1 for each \$1,000 of property's value. So, if your property is worth \$50,000, the tax increase would be \$50 per year. If the value is \$100,000, the increase would be \$100 per year, etc.

**Q** What about the recent tax reappraisal?  
**A** The 1998 reappraisal in Mobile County increased funding to the public schools by about \$5.4 million per year. The 10-mill tax increase would generate a needed \$22 million per year for schools.

**Q** How would the statewide lottery benefit our schools?  
**A** If approved, no lottery money would be available for new schools or renovation and maintenance. Lottery money would

be earmarked solely for college scholarships, preschools and the purchase of computers for grades K-12.

**Q** Why can't we just tax something else for schools, like soft drinks or gasoline?  
**A** Not enough revenue will be produced from these sources. Also, these items are not stable funding sources. Since sales amounts change annually, the schools could not count on a set amount.

**Q** How will the 10-mill tax increase affect elderly citizens on a fixed monthly income?  
**A** If you are over 65 years old and/or totally disabled, with an annual income of less than \$12,000, your increase will be lower or you may be tax exempt.

**Q** How can I be sure my money will be well spent?  
**A** During the past four years, the school system has provided a detailed analysis of the system's expenditures for public review. In addition, it produces an annual report and a Citizen's Review has been established to review the system's building plan and make public reports.

## FALLING Crime Rate

Crime rates are declining across the country. Recently released statistics for 1998 show that the Southeast had a 7 percent drop – and Mobile tripled that decline in violent crime with a 21 percent drop.

To emphasize how much of a reduction the 1998 figure represents, Mobile Police Chief **Sam Cochran** explains that this drop follows a 15.5 percent decrease in 1997. Violent crimes are listed as murders, rapes, robberies and homicides. "In the last two years, 36 percent or 1,079 fewer people have been victimized." Cochran expects this downward trend will continue for 1999.

There are several factors Cochran attributes to Mobile's falling crime statistics. "We've changed the philosophy of the Police Department from catching criminals to preventing crimes. We know 80 percent of the crimes are committed by 10 to 20 percent of the criminals." Cochran also says his force is working harder to keep the criminal in jail.

The cameras peering down Dauphin Street have served the community well according to Cochran, either deterring criminals or ensuring a quick apprehension. Cochran expects that cameras slated for Government Street and around the Civic Center will further reduce crime in the downtown area.

The new electronic transmission system between the police station and area pawn shops is also cutting down crime and its impact will be seen in the 1999 statistics, he projects. Police are recovering six to eight times the amount of property with the new system, allowing police to check whether the equipment or property

has been reported stolen, as well as run a check on the person trying to sell it. Previously police couldn't run those checks before the item was sold.

The Truancy Center created in 1997 had an immediate affect that continued through 1998, increasing school attendance and subsequently decreasing the number of kids walking the street. One in seven arrests are juveniles, which translated into approximately 3,000 juvenile arrests last year, according to Cochran.

### Mobile Needs More Blue

As for personnel, Cochran says he hired two cadets who completed Williamson High's program last year and one student went to the Mobile Fire Department. Currently, he's looking to fill 50 positions, and there are only 40 trainees at the Police Academy. He added, it takes 10 months to get a new officer hired and trained.

Cochran believes Mobile must raise the minimum starting salary and knock out the bottom two steps of the pay scale. On average he says Mobile loses four to five officers a month, and "these are experienced personnel. You have to be careful about diluting your force with less experienced personnel."

One answer has been federal dollars that have underwritten three-fourths of an officer's salary for the first three years of service. With a total of 15 new officers, that adds up to \$1.3 million in savings for the city.

Nevertheless, Mobilians must be encouraged by the success the Police Department has had this past year.



## Mobile Named One of Top 50 Motorcoach Destinations

Ever drive past what seems like dozens of tour buses on Interstate 65 or 10 and wonder where in the world the tour group is headed? Chances are they're on their way to Mobile, according to *Byways Magazine*.

*Byways*, a publication of the National Motorcoach Network, ranked Mobile as the 39th top destination in the country based on tourist attractions and travel trends. The Port City was the only one in Alabama listed in the 1999 results.

The publication praised Mobile for its "world-famous Bellinger Gardens and the Battleship USS Alabama Memorial Park." It mentioned the grand opening of downtown's Exploreum and IMAX Dome, many historical museums and the long-awaited 350-passenger Cotton Blossom steamwheel (coming soon) as reasons tour groups should travel to Mobile.

Brenda Scott, president/CEO of the Mobile Convention and Visitors Corporation believes Mobile's motorcoach market makes perfect sense for tour groups looking for a unique experience of culture and history. "Mobile's charm and Southern hospitality will capture the heart and soul while discovering 300 years of America," she said.

Washington, D.C. took top honors of this year's ranking, followed by Branson, Mo., Nashville, New York City, Orlando, Myrtle Beach, S.C., Williamsburg, Va., Pidgeon Forge, Tenn., Niagara Falls, N.Y. and Boston. The only other city in our region to be listed was Biloxi, Miss., which was ranked 36th.

So the next time you drive past a tour bus on the Interstate, just wave and holler, "Welcome to Mobile!"

## The Truth About Mobile's Air Quality

Though Mobile is currently facing the risk of being designated "non-attainment" for ground-level Ozone, it is important to note that the community's overall air quality meets or exceeds all of the other National Ambient Air Quality Standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). That means Mobile is in compliance with standards related to carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> - matter smaller than 10 micrometers), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and lead (Pb).

"We have to be very careful that our air quality situation isn't misrepresented leading to a general panic," said Chamber Economic Development Vice President Jim Apple. "It could

**"The fact is, our air quality has held steady for the past 10 years despite our significant growth."**

be very harmful to this community if we started shutting out new industries and jobs based on a false perception that our air is the worst in the U.S. or that we are not in compliance. The fact is, our air quality held steady for the past 10 years despite our significant growth and yet people are being frightened into thinking it's worse."

Two things were working against Mobile last summer that put it at risk of being designated non-attainment for Ozone - an unusual weather system and new, more stringent rules in measuring Ozone.

"Mobile County has met the old Ozone standard for 20 years and is currently in attainment," said Ron Gore, chief of the Air Division for the Alabama Department of

Environmental Management.

"It is likely that, after Ozone data is gathered in the summer of 1999, Mobile County will fail to attain the new, more stringent standard of 85 parts per billion (on an) eight hour average."

According to Gore, because of the new Ozone standards, Mobile will be given a transition period to improve. Currently the Chamber, in anticipation of the non-attainment designation, is working with several local representatives and organizations to develop a strategy to reduce ground level Ozone. The plan will include citizen as well as industry participation.

"If we work on this situation together, we can beat this Ozone problem and bring us back into compliance with all air standards," Apple concluded. "But if we start thinking we're in some kind of crisis and start cutting out new jobs, we're shooting ourselves in the foot."

## The Workforce Investment Act - Not Business As Usual

### ◆ New Department of Labor legislation creates the first education and training system based on business community needs

In the summer of 1998, a largely unnoticed event took place in the nation's capitol, signaling a new era in workforce development and representing a substantial victory for the business community.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 was signed into law, ending a series of federal training programs that began in 1912 - the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) and the Job Training Partnership of Alabama (JTPA) - that have received billions of dollars and have not achieved intended results.

The workforce development system becomes the umbrella for all K-12, post-secondary and adult education, and training programs, and ensure seamless training for individuals as well as more effective marketing and communication efforts.

WIA, which becomes a mandated workforce development system for all states in April 2000, eliminates the duplication of current federal education and training programs and creates a customer driven system to meet the needs of local employers.

All training funded by the federal government has been consolidated into block grants to be awarded to each state. Each state will allocate the funds to communities for local disbursement to qualified training programs. Vouchers will also be given to help underwrite the cost of training for those individuals who need financial assistance.

Under the new law, the Governor appoints a State Workforce Development Board to create a statewide vision and set criteria for the creation of local Workforce Development Boards. Local elected officials have the authority to manage local Workforce Development Boards, including making local appointments and setting policy.

Both state and local Workforce Development Boards must be chaired by a member of the business community and have at least 51 percent business representation. In addition, the business community will

- ◆ create industry-recognized standards for training programs;
- ◆ certify training program standards (all programs that fulfill these standards will be added to the approved trainer list); and
- ◆ remove training providers from the list and take away the funding of those programs not meeting the standards.

Public entities will have to compete with the private sector for funding under WIA, which states that private companies can be eligible training providers.

"The Workforce Investment Act is the first "customer" (business community) driven education and training legislation we have seen from the federal government," said Chamber Director of Education/Workforce Development Barbara Estes.

"This law sets up a system that is a tremendous economic development tool. Any company thinking about re-locating to our area calls one number, the Local Workforce Development Board, gets an immediate needs assessment and is ensured of an available, well-trained labor pool," she added.

A cornerstone of the WIA is the One-Stop Career Center. The One-Stop is a high-tech, physical structure where citizens who need to build or update skills can access all education, training and placement services. One-Stops are staffed with trained professionals who provide advice to individuals on navigating the system, conduct skills assessments, and offer referrals and registration to training and education services.

One-Stops also provide services to the business community, including accurate labor market information, access to qualified workers and training providers, customized training for employees, initial screening of job applicants and best-practice information on human resource issues.

Alabama has until April 2000 to submit the state plan to draw down federal funding. Currently, under the leadership of the City and the County, Mobile's Private Industry Council is making the conversion to a Workforce Development Board in hopes to present its plan to the Governor to use as the "model" plan for all of Alabama.

**On Wednesday, April 21, at 7:30 a.m. at the Trade Club, the Mobile Chamber will host a workforce development breakfast, "The Time Is Now: Workforce Development Business Summit" to train the business community in how to take an active role in guaranteeing its future workforce. The cost of the breakfast is \$7. Please call Angela Erwin at 431-8621 for reservations.**

*For more information on business community involvement in the Workforce Investment Act, contact Barbara Estes in the Education/Workforce Development Division at 431-8630.*

### The Workforce Investment Act in Action

Here are two examples of how WIA works:

Company X spends \$1,600, on average, per year per person in job readiness training. In a single year, this company spends \$500,000 on this kind of training. Under WIA, the Local Workforce Development Board trains employees, to Company X's specifications, and the company can re-direct monies into marketing, expansion, etc.

Due to national cutbacks, Company Y is forced to layoff a portion of its workforce. During these layoffs, Company Z locates a plant in Mobile. Under WIA, federal monies are used to re-train displaced workers to meet the needs of Company Z, resulting in a win-win for everyone.

### Why Is the Workforce Investment Act Not Business As Usual? Employer Participation is the Key

- Business chairs state and local Workforce Development Boards
- Business comprises 51 percent of state and local Workforce Development Boards
- Business establishes rigorous standards for quality of services
- Business ensures the selection of top training providers
- Business designs a workforce development system that is accountable for results
- Business sets up labor market information systems for One-Stop Career Centers

### To learn more about the Workforce Investment Act, access the following web sites:

www.nab.com  
www.usworkforce.org  
http://usworkforce.org/wia/wiasummary.htm  
www.nga.org/Workforce/SummaryHR1385.htm

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## Mark Your Calendar for Insurance Savings



Current Chamber members have the opportunity to investigate cost saving health and dental insurance starting this month. Health Partners representative Jonathan Byrd will be in the Chamber's Bender Room Friday, April 30; Friday, May 7 and Friday, May 14, from 8:30 to noon.

For information and details by phone for dental or health insurance, contact Donald Herman, Financial Resources at 1-800-543-3153.

Open enrollment for either program is slated for May and June, which is available only to Chamber member organizations.

# The Key to Customer Service



## Service Mediocrity: The Reasons Behind the Customer Service Crisis

According to Alf Nucifora, “service quality” has been replaced by “service mediocrity.” *Chamber Executive* (an American Chamber of Commerce publication) spoke with Nucifora, a strategic marketing consultant headquartered in Atlanta.

### The Decline in Customer Service

“By every available benchmark and every available standard, we’re seeing a continuing decline in customer service treatment that transcends all business categories from the consumer sector to business-to-business to industrial,” says Nucifora. “It really doesn’t make much difference where you look – there is continuing decline and erosion in the delivery of customer service.” Statistical data and trend analysis confirm that the quality of customer service is steadily deteriorating.

“There are three reasons it’s getting worse. Number one, it’s expensive to provide customer service and unfortunately most corporations still see customer service as a one-time cost rather than a long-term investment,” explains Nucifora.

“Second, there simply are not enough organizations that have a fanaticism about the subject. The companies that tend to surpass [in the area of customer service] are those that have a definable corporate culture that verges on the fanatical.”

Nucifora isn’t swayed by the fact that most companies claim that customer service is a priority. “Most corporations ‘talk the talk’ but the reality is that it is nothing more than a mission statement on a plaque. It doesn’t get translated out into the field.” The final reason for the decline? Lack of training. “We train, but we don’t train the right way and we don’t train enough,” he says.

### Listening is Critical

One of the keys to delivering quality customer service is listening to what the customer wants. “Listening to customers is important for several reasons. First, we’re not a nation of good listeners. In our own arrogance we’re used to telling people what to do,” he explains. “We’re not listeners, we’re tellers.”

“The only way you’ll be able to know what the customer wants it is to ask. And not just ask but to listen very carefully to the response,” he says. “We do a lot of superficial research – we do quantitative and qualitative surveys and all that stuff – but in many cases we don’t ask the right questions, and secondly, we don’t do much with the data when it comes back. We say we do,” he adds, “but we don’t.”

### Trouble on the Front Line?

Nucifora has written about the “crisis in the front line” in his syndicated “Shoestring Marketing” column. “In retail it is the \$6 an hour people who interface with your customer. That’s the portal person touching the customer for the first time,” he says. “Yet these are the people who are traditionally underpaid and under-trained.”

The front line therefore represents your point of greatest vulnerability. “It doesn’t matter how many good managers you have in the back room or how

many computer systems you have if the person answering the phone doesn’t know how to treat the customer,” he says. “First impressions count. They count in dating and they count in business.”

Nucifora doesn’t blame the front line employees for the problem. “It’s not their fault. It’s not what they have to do, it’s what they have to be trained to do and therein lies the problem,” he points out. “We’re simply not spending enough time with our frontline people. We’re not telling them what the expectation level is and we’re not giving them the training mechanism to guarantee the results we need. They are only as good as we enable them to be.”

### Are You Obsessed?

Nucifora has also suggested that businesses must be obsessed their customers. “It goes back to the old adage that the customer is always right,” he explains. “It used to be a fundamental immutable law of the universe that the customer was always right.” Companies’ attitudes have changed, though, and he sees that as part of a larger problem. He says that companies must have a fundamental respect for their customers.

“That’s the price you pay if you want to run an organization that will be successful,” he says. “You make allowances for the weaknesses of the other party because ultimately you want everybody to be happy. It’s not a matter of right and wrong; it’s a matter of good treatment or bad treatment.”

### Be a Fighter Pilot

One area in which most companies can improve their customer relations is in the way they address complaints. The key, he says, is to make decisions “like a fighter pilot.”

“When handling customer complaints, you have to make a decision instantly. There can be no room for negotiation,” he says. “In the normal course of events, by and large you should seek to get an answer immediately and instantaneously.” Yet in most organizations that takes time and many companies don’t have a customer resolution department or formal system to deal with customer complaints.

### The Pay-Off

It’s the companies that offer value-added components such as outstanding customer service that will succeed in the future, says Nucifora. “The bottom line is that our customers nowadays have been taught to expect more for less,” he says. “At the same time that the customer service is deteriorating, customer expectations are increasing. Customers are becoming tougher, more cynical and more jaded. They have to work harder for their dollar and they want more for their dollar.”

Just because customers don’t tell you that they are unhappy with the service they’ve received doesn’t mean they are satisfied. “Customers are fundamentally non-confrontational, but they are gradually getting a thicker skin. If they don’t complain, at least they will take action,” he concludes. “And they won’t buy from you again.”

Reprinted from *Chamber Executive*, a publication of the American Chamber of Commerce.

## TIPS FROM YOUR PEERS

*In preparing this month’s feature section, Chamber members were asked what one thing they did to promote customer service and here’s what they said:*

We offer post-training support services to our students which not only allows them to call us anytime they have a question regarding subjects covered in class, but also allows them to re-take any course absolutely free!

**ExecuTrain of Mobile**

A manager calls customers within two days from their customers’ service date to ask if they are happy with the cleaning they received, would they use us again and if there was anything we could have done to give their service more “value.” This applies to EVERY customer we service.

**Coit Services Mobile**

We experience what our clients’ customers experience in order to make their marketing efforts more effective. We worked on top of a flatbed trailer quantifying wear and safety concerns for a trucking component manufacturer; went through a health program to understand first-hand how and why it worked; and went to the Cleveland Brown’s football training camp for ideas on how to turn around the Senior Bowl.

**Forward Consulting**

We have been in business for 47 years and we strive to meet our customers’ needs. Our construction coordinators and customer service department make every effort to satisfy our customers. The sales department listens closely to what our customers want and work to provide a design that meets their lifestyles and needs.

**S.S. Steele & Co. Inc.**

The focus of our customer service department is to make our clients look GREAT in the eyes of their customers. I believe the key to our success is “our associates treat each caller as though they are our only customer.” Equity serves as a “middle-man” between our clients in the Lease Finance Industry and their customers.

**Equity Technology**

Service must be the strength of any company before the product it represents will ever be accepted as quality. We believe that hiring service providers with an unselfish nature is the best way to genuinely offer unselfish service to the customer or the guest of the customer.

**Alec Naman Catering**

First we listen to our customers and make sure we understand their needs. Then we do our best to fulfill their needs. Customers are serviced with a smile, as well as prompt service every time.

**Reliable Janitorial Service Inc.**

## How to Satisfy Customers

Research International, a company that continually builds a body of knowledge about market research, shares these thoughts and directions on customer satisfaction.

**Service accounts** for almost 40 percent of a customer’s decision to buy from a specific home electronics retailer. Stores with managers who work at pleasing customers show a solid increase in profitability each year.

**Customer service** has to be improved by starting with the CEO’s office. Commitment from the top must be communicated to all employees.

**Carefully estimate** training time and make sure your people get it.

**Make sure** employees know what you’re trying to improve and know how to go about helping.

**If you’ve** improved your customer service, make sure customers know it. If a survey shows that people think it takes a week to get materials delivered, and you’re delivering them in two days, make sure you get credit for your new accomplishment. Run an awareness campaign.

Reprinted from *Communications Briefings*; Source *Marketing News*, Publishing Group of the American Marketing Association.

## The Difference is in the Details

More and more customers are expressing their dismay with the lack of customer service. As local businesses are combating amazingly low unemployment rates, tighter profit margins and nationally-owned competitions, good service is still a determining factor for many customers advises **Judy Marston**, Marston & Associates.

A national consultant on a variety of management topics, Marston picked out her favorite uncommon strategies from her book, *Strategies for Professional Excellence – Daily 31 Steps to Success*, to keep your business’ customer service top notch.

- Go one step beyond what needs to be done. Ask your customer “What more can I do to help you?”
- Call a customer you haven’t heard from in a while just to ask them how they are doing.
- Hand write a letter of thanks to a good customer.
- Find a way to say “yes” to a difficult customer.
- Make eye contact and speak to every customer within the first 20 seconds.
- Take customers’ anger professionally – not personally. Remain calm and objective.
- Answer the phone before the third ring. Give the name of your business, your department and your name.
- When you ask phone customers if they mind being placed on hold, wait for an answer before you do it.
- Show interest in your customers. Ask them questions about themselves. Remember the answers for the next time you see them.
- Uncross your arms when you are listening. It makes you appear closed to what the other person has to say.
- Call people by name. It makes them feel important.

Taken from *Strategies for Professional Excellence*, Judy Marston’s *Daily 31 Steps to Success*.

## What is a Customer

**Our Customers** are the most important people ever in this office, either in person or otherwise.

**Our Customers** are not dependent on us. We are dependent on them.

**Our Customers** are not an interruption of our work, they are the purpose of it. We are not doing them a favor by serving them, they are doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so.

**Our Customers** are not an outsider to our business; they are part of it.

**Our Customers** are not cold statistics — names on file cards or ledger sheets. They are flesh and blood human beings with biases, prejudices, feelings and emotions like our own.

**Our Customers** are not someone to argue with. Nobody ever won an argument with a customer.

**Our Customers** are people who bring us their wants. It is our job to fill them profitably – to them and to ourselves.

**Editor’s Note:** A few months ago a Chamber staff member used Enterprise Rent-a-Car when her vehicle was being repaired. She noticed on the wall, the company’s Customer Service Creed and from her experience, she named it a living document. We were also impressed by Enterprise’s unique and refreshing interpretation of the customer and thank them for allowing us to share it with our readers.

## Small Business of the Month The Brick Pit



Bill Armbrecht stands out front while taking in the lip-licking aroma of hickory bar-b-que at The Brick Pit located at 5456 Old Shell Road.

If you've ever driven down Old Shell Road near the intersection of University Boulevard then the aroma from April's Small Business of the Month, The Brick Pit, has undoubtedly tempted you to stop. One tasty benefit of living in the South is good ole' smoked bar-b-que. And if you've lived in Mobile for any time at all, you already know that The Brick Pit, is known for "serious bar-b-que."

Owner Bill Armbrecht said he wanted his restaurant to be unique in its field ever since the conception of his first business plan for the Brick Pit in 1993. "Our 'Big Red' smoker is one of a kind and is the award winning product that allows us to produce our superior bar-b-que." He also commented on the small smoker out front that they

stoke with hickory, onion and Brick Pit sauce to lure customers in.

Armbrecht and his wife Susan, make everything on their menu. "From our sauce to the cole slaw to the bar-b-que beans, they are all Brick Pit originals," the Armbrechts added.

The Brick Pit has achieved regional and national recognition in only five years of existence. An annual survey produced by *Mobile Bay Monthly* voted The Brick Pit *Best in Mobile* four years in a row. It was also listed as one of five best bar-b-que restaurants in the South in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* and was featured in the January 1999 issue of *Gourmet Magazine*.

### 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

SIPCO AD

## A Case for Regional Cooperation

Will metropolitan Mobile be better off in the global economy if the city, the core of the region, collapses? If you live in the suburbs (anywhere in Mobile/Baldwin counties outside of Mobile city limits), do you believe that what happens to Mobile is not significant to you and the community in which you reside? On a more positive note, are you interested in learning more about how the cities in our area can work together more effectively? Then don't miss "A Case for Regional Cooperation," a seminar presented by

Dr. Theodore Hershberg.

Dr. Hershberg was the keynote speaker at the Chamber's Annual Meeting held in January and is a professor of public policy and history. He serves as the director of the Center for Greater Philadelphia — headquarters for an eight-county regional activities center at the University of Pennsylvania.

In January, Dr. Hershberg pointed out the issue surrounding regionalism "is not whether the city and suburbs will be tied together in a regional economy — they already are." He adds, "Regional cooperation is the essential strategy to achieving



cohesiveness so that your region can solve problems and seize opportunities in a timely fashion. If your region has gotten its collective act together, it will be in a far stronger position to address the major challenges which the global economy poses to every region."

Delving into the specifics of the benefits of a regional "attitude," Dr. Hershberg is returning to address strategies outlined in the area's long-range plan, Envision Mobile-Baldwin, on

Wednesday, May 5 at 10:30 a.m. at the Mobile Convention Center in rooms 201 A & B. Registration begins at 10 a.m. The program is set for 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., followed by lunch. For ticket information and reservations, call Angela Erwin at 431-8621.

In addition, Dr. Hershberg will speak to other groups while he is in town. May 4, he will be the keynote speaker at the Mobile Area Education Foundation's Tribute to Education dinner, and on May 5, he will address a joint meeting of Mobile United's Race Relations Committee and the Chamber's Human Relations Task Force.

## State of the City/County Luncheon

Providing the highlights of 1998 and the goals for 1999 and beyond to a sold-out audience of more than 650 people, Mobile Mayor Mike Dow and Mobile County Commission President Sam Jones headlined this year's Second Annual State of the City/County Luncheon. Held at the Mobile Convention Center, the luncheon meeting was preceded by an informal reception surrounded by booths and displays featuring the city and county's architecture models, arts programs and community.

"We don't believe there is a better outlet for members of this community to get a concise overview of everything that the county and city has to offer," Scott Posey, vice president of Governmental Affairs said about the luncheon.

"There are so many people here who care about Mobile, but may not have the time to read every article in the newspaper, watch each evening's television news or attend all of the council and commission meetings. This luncheon gives us an opportunity to learn more about what our city leaders have been working on the past year, and we'll know where their future energies will be spent," he added.

### Some of the highlights mentioned during this year's State of the City/County Address included:

- The county has completed construction of 159 new roads during the past 12 months.
- The city is working with Historic Renovations Inc. and the Royal Sonesta to renovate the historic Battle House Hotel and other condominiums, apartments and retail projects downtown.
- Through the purchase of a new radio system, the county department, all cities within the county, the FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, school system, USA Police Department, State of Alabama and South Alabama Utilities are able to communicate on two-way radios.
- The Mobile Police Department reported a 21 percent decrease in violent crimes in 1998 — there was a 14 percent decrease in 1997.
- Fifteen ambulances are able to provide services in the county's unincorporated areas. The EMS also constructed three helipads in Semmes, Turnerville and Citronelle in 1998.
- The city constructed a new community center in Trinity Gardens, which included a swimming pool.
- City officials have negotiated a four-year performance contract to bring the Cotton Blossom — a newly renovated paddlewheel excursion boat from New Orleans to Mobile.

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# Mobile Admirals Kick off Economic Boost

Think that professional football in Mobile only means something else for us to do on the weekends this spring and summer? Think again! Not only will the Mobile Admirals make history this month in Mobile as part of the Regional Football League, but they will also have a tremendous economic impact on the area economy, according to a study released recently by the League.

With an estimated economic impact of more than \$2.65 million during the 1999 season, the Admirals have projected the following as its analysis.



## Payroll Impact

16 Administrative and Coaching Staff Members .....	\$550,000
42 Players .....	\$1,200,000
Total Payroll .....	\$1,750,000

## Stadium and Tax Impact

Stadium and Projected Expenses for 7 Games .....	\$150,500
Estimated Stadium Concessions (Based on 140,000 attendance) .....	\$222,950
Estimated Parking Revenue (5,000 cars per game) .....	\$175,000
Sales Tax on 140,000 Paid Admissions .....	\$189,000
Sales Tax on Stadium Concessions .....	\$63,000
Total Stadium and Tax Impact .....	\$800,450

## Hotel and Restaurant Impact

Visiting Team Expenses in Local Hotels .....	\$35,000
Restaurant Caterers at Stadium for 7 Games .....	\$70,000
Total Hotel and Restaurant Impact .....	\$105,000

**Admirals Economic Impact                      \$2.65 million**

# Business Spotlight of the Month Southern TeleCommunications, Inc.

Southern TeleCommunications Inc. (STC), the Chamber's Business Spotlight of the Month, is a one-stop telecommunications company that can fill all of your business communications needs with one phone call.

Locally-owned, STC has been doing business along the Gulf Coast for 10 years. Ted Hooper, president of STC, attributes the company's success to customer service. "Our business was built on referrals. The best form of advertising is a satisfied customer."

The company started out selling business telephone systems, and expanded to include voice mail systems, computer network cabling, fiber optic cabling, computer network services, BellSouth voice and digital data services (such as ISDN, TI and Frame Relay) and long distance service. STC is also a GTE Authorized Wireless Agent, selling cellular telephones and service.

"We are a very team-oriented company and take pride in being the best at what we do," said David Domzalski, vice president of the Technical Division.



The team of southern Communications stands ready to assist you.

"There is not one person working at STC that is not committed to his or her job," said Chris Hooper, vice president of Marketing.

STC is located at 622 Azalea Rd., Suite 26, (334) 661-7400.

## Business Spotlight of the Month

is selected from a random drawing of business cards collected at the prior month's Business After Hours event.

# Calling All Innovators

Innovation is the key to success – whether it's creating new procedures that dramatically improve operations or save a great deal of money, or developing a new product or service.

The Chamber's Small Business Development Department wants to hear about innovations made at area companies within the last year to be considered for the "Innovator of the Year Award" that will be presented at this year's Future 30 banquet. The first award given at last year's event went to Jim Chappelle at Chappura Inc. for developing Microsoft Outlook, a Microsoft compatible organizing program for hand-held/pocket computers.

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.

**By April 20th, please send your company's name with a description of the idea(s) developed 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.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE



# Walk in now or roll in later

## Don't ignore your heart.

Many times, the real symptoms of a heart attack aren't what you'd expect. But if you know the early warning signs, chances are you can walk in for help instead of roll in helpless when a cardiac emergency has already occurred.

More than 60% of all heart attacks begin with early warning signs, but many people ignore them. Early care is the key. Time is heart muscle.

That's where the Chest Pain Center at Providence Hospital comes in. The health care provider you've trusted for close to 145 years now has Mobile's only full-spectrum emergency cardiac care to evaluate your situation before it gets worse. In many cases, we can even prevent a severe heart attack.

And if your heart checks out okay, you can leave in a matter of hours with peace of mind. That reduces days in the hospital, extra costs and time away from day-to-day activities.

So when the early signs of a heart attack appear, take a step into the Chest Pain Center. *White it's still your choice.*

**CHEST PAIN CENTER**  
**PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL**  
Emergency Entrance

\* American College of Emergency Physicians national guidelines

# 1999 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 18  
at the  
Mobile Convention Center  
Reception begins at 5:30 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

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

# Information At Your Fingertips

It's easy to let your fingers do the walking since the City of Mobile placed one of its information kiosks in the Chamber lobby. Now visitors can simply step up to the touch sensitive screen and get facts about three main topics: Mobile Attractions, Events/Entertainment and Government Services.

The "attractions" section lists details about the Battleship, Bellingrath Gardens, Fort Conde, historic homes and more. The "events/entertainment" area has information on things such as Mardi Gras, restaurants and hotels/motels.



And under the "government services section" there is even a trash pick-up schedule.

"We're extremely proud that the City selected the Chamber as one of its locations for the kiosk," said Reeda Taylor, director of Customer Service for the Chamber. "We have more than 1,000 visitors who walk into our lobby each year looking for ideas on where to go and what to do. This makes it easy for them to access their own information."

The City's goal of helping citizens access information through technology — such as by using these kiosks — was one reason it was selected as one of the most technologically advanced cities in the country by the University of Maryland.



# Envision Progress Area Strategic Plan Showcases Annual Accomplishments



**The Envision team of presenters.** Top Row, left to right: Pete Barber, George Krietemeyer, Mayor Mike Dow, Dave Johnson, John Davis, Commissioner Sam Jones, Karen Daughtry, David Little, Bob HASKins, Harris Oswalt, Richard Davis, Chris Lee  
Seated, left to right: Skeeter McClure, Marty Vignes, Wendy Allen, Merceria Ludgood, Kate Flynn, Denise D'Oliveira, Larry Merrihew

More than 200 vision partners, elected officials and citizens packed into the Pier 4 restaurant last month to hear about the progress made over the past year in the Envision Mobile-Baldwin process. Envision is a regional long-range plan that charts a course for the two counties over the next five to 10 years.

"Welcome to Baldwin County! I can't tell you right now if you're in Spanish Fort or Daphne, but I can sure welcome you to Baldwin," quipped Marty Vignes, president of the North Baldwin Chamber, referring to the question of which city the Causeway is located in.

According to Mobile County Commission President Sam Jones, the Envision process now has 348 businesses, churches, civic clubs and other organizations that have signed on as Vision Partners and agreed to work on the plan's 152 strategies. Fourteen groups reported on advancements ranging from a landscaping project in Bay Minette to School-to-Work initiatives in Mobile to a Transportation Task Force that's been formed between the two counties.

"I thought the program was great," said Paul Klotz with BCM Engineers. "It really gave me a broad prospective of what's going on in our area. I was amazed at the number of projects that were outlined."

One presenter, David Little with American Red Cross, explained how an Envision strategy calling for "a strategic alliance" (among social services)

was the spirit behind a move by the American Red Cross offices in Mobile and Baldwin counties to combine their operations into one.

Larry Merrihew with Regions Bank and representing the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance talked about the strategy that states the need to "maintain (a) well-funded and proactive regional economic development program..." He told the story of Ace Hardware which was looking along the Gulf Coast to place a warehouse distribution center. When they outlined their needs, the Mobile Chamber identified sites in the region. A site in Loxley was found to be the best in our area, and Mobile and Baldwin counties worked

together and eventually won the Ace project.

Mayor Mike Dow followed the reports by summarizing some of the upcoming challenges. He named such things as Mobile's pending status as non-attainment for Ozone, the local interest in passing "home rule" or self-governance legislation to make decisions locally, and the initiative to strengthen our School-to-Work program in our public schools as examples of the objectives still ahead.

"I'm proud of what I heard and I'm proud to be a part of this process," concluded John Davis of Mobile Gas who co-chairs Envision Mobile-Baldwin. "Let's stay the course and bring this plan closer to completion."

For a complete copy of the Envision annual report, contact Angela Erwin at 431-8621.



## The Final Countdown

You're pretty sure you have a handle on the Y2K problem, but you're still a little uneasy about whether or not you've covered all the bases. If this sounds like you, there's help.

The American Chamber of Commerce Executives Association (ACCE) has developed the *Year 2000 Survival Kit*. It is a comprehensive workbook that leads you through all of the steps in preparing for Y2K. The book opens with "What's Your Y2K IQ?" It then provides a detailed description of the problem, looks at legal issues and then goes through the steps to developing a program. Sample letters, notifications, budget worksheets and checklists are just some of the tools provided in this guide.

The cost of the workbook is \$35 and can be ordered by calling Jackie Richman at the Chamber at 431-8605.

# SUNDAY BRUNCH

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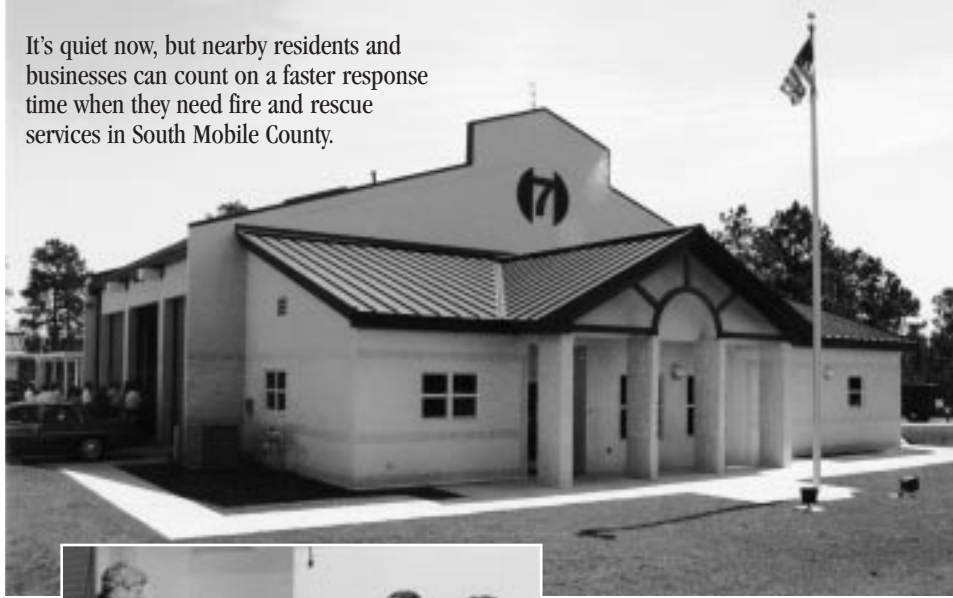
# Response Time Cut in Half

For residents in South Mobile County the sounds of sirens are closer than ever, thanks to the newly completed Fire-Rescue Station located right off Rangeline Road in Commerce Park.

The station will also serve the Cypress Shores/Tillman's Corner areas. Public officials projected that response time for these area residents could be cut in half from eight to 12 minutes down to three to four minutes.

The Chamber transferred the property deed for the station to the City in the fall of 1997. "In addition to immediate protection and rescue services, nearby residents and Park tenants could potentially save on their insurance premiums with the new proximity of a fire-rescue station," said Ritchie Hurt, the Chamber's director of information and research.

It's quiet now, but nearby residents and businesses can count on a faster response time when they need fire and rescue services in South Mobile County.



Fire Chief Ed Berger, Mayor Mike Dow and Mrs. Frank Seelhorst, widow of long-time Fire Chief Frank Seelhorst, cut the ribbon on the commemorative plaque that will be posted at the new fire-rescue station in South Mobile.

# Create a Profit-Building Website

It seems like every business card, every advertisement, every piece of mail, includes a company's web address. The fact is, there are a record number of businesses putting up websites these days. It offers customers more information than they can get on a 2 x 3 inch card or in 30 seconds or in a limited amount of print space.

Initially, the Web was for technically-savvy customers, but recent reports say Internet holiday sales have increased 800 percent! Customers love the convenience of being able to shop for the best prices, day or night, from their home or office.

NetGain website consultant Ron Rice offered these basic steps to set up a website for your business.

## 1. Define Your Business Objective

The main reason to build a website is to increase revenue, decrease expenses, make operations more effective, or any combination of these goals.

The six basic models for enhancing profits online are direct sales, subscriptions/membership, advertising, Internet-related services, cost cutting and enhancing other operations.

## 2. Design the Web Site

The power of the Web is its capacity to access information instantly. Done properly, a good Internet site can help people move through information in a way that's natural, comfortable and effective.

Invest a great deal of time thinking why customers will be logging onto your site, what information they will need and what questions they may have.

Also address your company's website objectives. What do you want the customer to see? What information do you want them to have? Carefully defining how that information will be presented and is linked together is critical to the success to your website.

The inside-out method is the most common way to design a website. Begin with your company's name or purpose, and move outward through what your business operations – products and services offered, including their features and benefits.

## 3. Develop the Web Site

Here's where you actually put the pages together, building links (shortcuts) to move the customer quickly from one spot to another.

When you've nailed down the flow and the format, the next step is test the site. Test the site by visiting it at various times of day, on both Macintosh and PC formats, and with various kinds of Web browsers. Be sure to test your site with the Netscape browser, which is the single most popular tool people use to explore the Internet. But also check it with the browsers from the commercial gateways like CompuServe and America Online as well as a variety of other browsers. Make sure every link goes where it's supposed to go.

## 4. Deploy the Web Site

Prepare a roll out strategy and examine how the site will be integrated with your other marketing and business materials. Encourage every employee who makes direct contact with buyers to tell people about the new website. It can even be the focus of a sales call.

Your site and your marketing materials should reinforce each other, i.e. the information and prices are the same. Put the website address (URL) on all collateral materials including stationery, business cards, stationary, brochures, etc. Consider mailing a special announcement postcard to customers and potential customers, encouraging them to visit your site.

Prepare a news release for the trade press and to send to key clients, prospects and friends. Don't forget to put up notices in appropriate newsgroups and forums where people who are both online and in the groups that you want to reach congregate.

There is a Quick Web Site Evaluation, on the Chamber's Small Business Development website at [www.netgain.cc](http://www.netgain.cc). Once you fill out a short form, it will be forwarded it to nationally known author and Internet expert, Wally Bock, so his staff can evaluate it and give you the results.

For more hands-on instruction, don't miss the Chamber's workshop on "Build Your Own E-Commerce Website," conducted by Ron Rice this month. See page 10 for details.

# Attention Business Executives...

## IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR:

- ▶ MORE WORKFORCE-READY JOB APPLICANTS
- ▶ A GROWING CUSTOMER BASE
- ▶ A HEALTHIER BOTTOM LINE
- ▶ AN EVEN BETTER PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK...

## THEN TAKE A SERIOUS LOOK AT...

**MILLENNIUM**  
*fund*

Investing in the Millennium Fund, the Chamber's \$6 million, five-year economic and community development initiative created to fuel our area's prosperity for the next century.

Your return on investment will be a stronger, more stable community and economic environment for your business. The Millennium Fund's volunteer campaign leadership is counting on every area business to be an investment partner in our shared future. Out of the \$6 million goal, there is only \$200,000 more to go.

During April, a special outreach team will be calling all members who have not yet been given the opportunity to invest. Look for a special announcement letter detailing the Fund's impact and the particulars of this telephone outreach. Or, call Ron Gwitt at 432-1240 or 431-8603.



## Roots of Leadership

Former chair Mike Fitzhugh, South Alabama Bank of Mobile, and Chamber President Win Hallett did a little dirty work recently for a good cause. This oak tree was donated by the city's Urban Forestry Department and planted in Spanish Plaza in honor of Fitzhugh's leadership in 1998.

# Connect to Business Opportunities

## ◆ Annual minority-owned business seminar slated for Mobile

A business card reception, seminars, workshops and a CEO Power Kick-off Breakfast are among the featured events at this year's Business Connections '99.

The South Regions Minority Business Council Inc. (SRMBC, formally the Alabama Minority Supplier Development Council) sponsors the annual event, set for Tuesday-Thursday, June 15-17, at the Adam's Mark Hotel.

Business Connections '99 provides an opportunity for business owners and suppliers in the Southeast to attend one the country's largest and nationally acclaimed conferences. Minority-owned businesses, major corporations, government agencies and representatives of education, health and professional services from across the U.S. gather to develop, expand or enhance business partnerships and participate in educational programs.

Providing services to Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, SRMBC is a nonprofit network of 3,500 corporations and 15,000 certified minority businesses established to promote business development opportunities.

Other activities include a Charity Golf Tournament and Partnership for the New Millennium Luncheon. For more information on attending or exhibiting at Business Connections '99 visit SRMBC's web site at [www.srmbc.net1inc.net](http://www.srmbc.net1inc.net) or contact Darlene Moore, South Regions Minority Business Council Executive Director at (334) 471-6380. E-mail requests can be sent to [srmbc@net1inc.net](mailto:srmbc@net1inc.net).



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# Chamber Awarded a \$50,000 Grant for School-to-Work Partnership

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and the Mobile School-to-Work Partnership have been awarded \$50,000 by the Utility Businesses Education Coalition (UBEC) for workforce development.

One of only 50 partnerships across the country, the grant will be used to provide a comprehensive site assessment of Mobile business involvement with School-to-Work (STW). Additionally, funds will be used to assist in establishing benchmarks for the program, compiling student data, recruiting more business participation, providing better training for businesses wanting to be involved, and training staff members in fundraising and strategic planning.

As part of the Envision Mobile-Baldwin area strategic plan, one of the highest educational priorities is expecting all high school graduates to either be ready to go to college, continue training at a two-year technical or trade school, or enter into the workforce. The UBEC monies will advance this mission.

Barbara Estes, the Chamber's director of education/workforce development, said it's a top



priority that all students are properly trained to meet an employer's needs. "This grant will allow us to assess and benchmark where we are in this process, and help to ensure we have a skilled labor force so we remain competitive in a global economy," explained Estes.

The participation of a local utility group in STW was a requirement of the UBEC grant. John Davis, CEO of Mobile Gas, Envision co-chair, and chairman of the Chamber, believes the School-to-Work program is critical to the success of Mobile's business community. Based on that belief, he signed up Mobile Gas as a grant partner.

"Mobile Gas is proud to partner with the Chamber to recruit and train companies in supporting programs that better prepare students for the world of work," Davis said.

For more information on the UBEC grant or workforce development contact Barbara Estes at 431-8630.

# The Great American Cleanup Comes to Mobile

◆ Curb Appeal – it's been said a million times – is good for business.

"If your business is attractive on the outside, it will encourage customers to come inside," says Bob Haskins, coordinator of Keep Mobile Beautiful. "Image IS everything!"



This month Keep Mobile Beautiful is helping launch the Great American Cleanup, a new massive national litter cleanup and prevention initiative. Building on the previous campaign, the GLAD Bag-a-thon, this new project is expected to rally more than 5,000 local volunteers.

"This is an even more powerful and far-reaching force to dramatize the urgent litter problem, educate the community about litter prevention and encourage individuals to take personal responsibility for their environment," said Judy Park, president of Keep Mobile Beautiful Inc.

Participants will be asked to select a litter site near their home, school, business or church and clean it up. Or they may select a site on a major thoroughfare that is an eyesore. To register for the Great American Cleanup – Mobile style – call Keep Mobile Beautiful at 431-8619.

## An Essential Checklist for Curb Appeal

Keep Mobile Beautiful (KMB), in its 14th year of operation, has won national awards for its programs including the Clean Campus Certification, recycling initiatives, No More Eyesore landscaping project and community partnerships that helped distribute and plant over 60,000 trees. As a result of KMB's success, Mobile is a documented 65 percent cleaner.



Bob Haskins, coordinator of KMB, explained that percentage is down more than 10 percent according to the latest analysis. "Surprisingly it's not the recent Mardi Gras celebration. We're seeing more litter in business parking lots and loading docks."

The following checklist highlights ways to enhance the curb appeal of your business, make customers more comfortable, and build customer respect. It also includes responsibilities outlined in Mobile's Litter Ordinance.

### Outside Area

- \_\_\_ Are the sidewalks swept and edged?
- \_\_\_ Is the parking lot picked up daily?
- \_\_\_ Are fence lines litter and weed free?
- \_\_\_ Are trash receptacles conveniently placed to prevent company packaging from becoming litter?
- \_\_\_ Are dumpsters or containers covered to prevent trash from becoming wind blown litter?
- \_\_\_ Are dumpster areas neat and clean?
- \_\_\_ Do scheduled dumpster pickups meet volume needs?
- \_\_\_ Are company trucks carrying loose materials securely covered to prevent spillage?
- \_\_\_ Is landscaping litter and weed free?
- \_\_\_ Are grass areas neatly mowed and edged?

### In-store Area

- \_\_\_ Is a routine maintenance schedule written and followed?
- \_\_\_ Are trash receptacles conveniently placed, and emptied regularly and promptly?
- \_\_\_ Are non-work areas (hallways, storage rooms, bathrooms, etc.) on the cleanup schedule?
- \_\_\_ Is packaging minimized to prevent throw-away litter?
- \_\_\_ Are disposables recycled?

### Awareness

- \_\_\_ Are employees aware of the City's litter ordinance?
- \_\_\_ Are trash containers properly marked?
- \_\_\_ Are employees assigned to maintenance jobs?
- \_\_\_ Is a maintenance checklist posted?
- \_\_\_ Are employees trained to clean up immediately?
- \_\_\_ Are anti-litter habits encouraged and rewarded?
- \_\_\_ Are reminders not to litter posted in all areas?
- \_\_\_ Are litter bags provided for company vehicles?

For more information about Keep Mobile Beautiful and how you can help call 431-8619.

## April's Diplomat of the Month Myrinda McCarron

The Chamber salutes Myrinda McCarron, Diplomat of the Month. McCarron has been involved in the program for one year and this is the second time she has been selected for this award.

McCarron is an account executive with Remedy Intelligent Staffing. "Being a Diplomat allows me the opportunity to meet new people and make contacts that I would not have made otherwise," she answered when asked why she chose to become a Diplomat.

A graduate of the University of Alabama with a marketing degree, her community activities include the Mobile Society of Human Resource Management and the Executive Women's Forum.

Diplomats are employees of Chamber-member companies who represent the Chamber at various organizational events throughout the community. For more information on the program, call Reeda Taylor at 431-8649.



## Board of 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.



**Thomas E. Keathley**  
Keathley Engineering Inc.

Thomas E. Keathley is CEO and president of Keathley Engineering Inc., an engineering company founded on the principles of maintaining safety, compliance with FARs, and customer satisfaction. Keathley graduated from the Navy Class A Avionics School

(1962), Navy Class C Wave Propagation School (1963), BSEE University of California Navy Extension Program (1966), Lockheed Avionics School (1978), and numerous other avionics manufacturers schools. Keathley Engineering is dedicated to the concept of using the latest digital technology to make the engineering process more efficient.

Dennis L. Kaiser is president and CEO of DiGiPH PCS. He was previously with Gulf Telephone Company where he had been employed for more than 30 years and served as its first vice president. Kaiser attended Pensacola Junior College, Faulkner and the University of South Alabama. He is married and has two sons, Christopher and Vincent, and one granddaughter, Emily Elizabeth.



**Dennis L. Kaiser**  
DIGIPH PCS



**Patti G. Hill**  
Colonial Bank

Patti G. Hill is president and CEO of Colonial Bank, Gulf Coast Region. Hill is a graduate of Louisiana State University School of Banking of the South, and earned a bachelor of science in Business Administration from Auburn University. She serves

on the boards of the American Red Cross, America's Junior Miss, the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and the Thomas Hospital Foundation. Hill is treasurer of the Foley Convention and Visitors Bureau, a Finance Committee member at Bayside Academy, and the Vocational Services chairperson for Fairhope Rotary Club. Hill was the 1998 co-chair for the YWCA's Bay Area Women's Conference and she is the 1999 chairperson for the Care for Kids Golf Tournament to benefit South Baldwin Regional Medical Center. Hill is a member of the First Baptist Church of Fairhope where she teaches 4-year-old Sunday School.



## If You Have the Vision We Have The VIEW

If your company wants to be seen by the Mobile area business community, look no further. *The VIEW* is sent to more than 3,400 Chamber members, and a recent survey indicates that 96 percent of all Chamber members read *The VIEW* consistently – a high percentage for any publication.

Call for discounted ad rates when you advertise for three months or more. Call **Susan Rak Blanchard** at 431-8641.



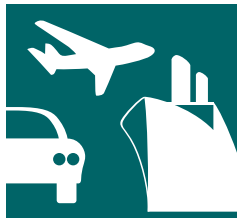
### Business License

When you're doing business with someone, make sure they have a business license. The City, for example, will not pay a vendor if they don't have a license. The license should be prominently displayed in each place of business. If you're planning to hire someone to do personal work for you such as paving your driveway or cutting down a tree, ask them first if they have a current business license. It's certainly one sign that they're legitimate.

### Favorite Tourist Spot

The Mobile area was well represented in the state's top tourist attractions and events compiled by the Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel.

The annual roster announces the Top 10 favorites in seven categories. Here's how the local regions did by category along with attendance figures for 1998:



**Admission Charged** – Bellinrath Garden's & Home, (no attendance number released); and USS Alabama Battleship Park, 270,211.

**No Admission Charged** – Mobile Museum of Art, 101,967.

**Natural Destinations** – Gulf Coast Beaches, 5,000,000; Gulf State Park Resort, 2,175,498.

**Sports** – Mobile Greyhound Park, 304,854.

**Events** – Fairhope Arts & Crafts Festival, 165,000; Bayfest, 200,000; Mardi Gras 1,300,000; National Shrimp Festival (Gulf Shores), 200,000.

**Fairs & Flea Markets** – Baldwin County Fair, 35,000; Greater Gulf State Fair, 344,000.

**Shopping Centers** – Riviera Center Factory Stores, 4,000,000; Christmas Town & Village, 50,000.

### Best Sellers

USA Today recently published its annual list of the Top 100 best sellers. The list is based on book sales for 1998.

Here are the Top 10:

1. *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* by John Gray
2. *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff... And it's All Small Stuff* by Richard Carlson
3. *Chicken Soup for the Soul* by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen
4. *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield
5. *Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution* by Robert C. Atkins
6. *In the Kitchen With Rosie* by Rosie Daley
7. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey
8. *The Rainmaker* by John Grisham
9. *Simple Abundance* by Sarah Ban Breathnach
10. *The Chamber* by John Grisham.

Other business-related favorites include: No. 39, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* by Deepak Chopra; No. 64, *The Nine Steps to Financial Freedom* by Suze Orman; and No. 73, *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman.

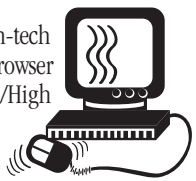
Source: USA Today, Feb. 11, 1998

### Useful Web Sites

For a list of Alabama high-tech companies, point your web browser to <http://backcharge.uah.edu/HighTech>. There you'll find the Alabama1998 High Technology Directory, published by the Science, Technology and Energy Division of the Alabama Dept. of Economic and Community Affairs and the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

The site offers an alphabetical listing of companies, as well as county indexes. Information is also available for some of the public and private high tech research institutions in the state.

Source: *Developments*, a publication of the Economic Development Council of Alabama.



## Chamber Hires New Project Manager



The Chamber is proud to announce a new addition to the staff, **Green B. Suttles III**. A project manager of business development in the Economic Development Department, Suttles' has a background in marketing and sales.

He is an active community volunteer and has been involved with United Way of Southwest Alabama and Habitat for Humanity of Mobile County where he currently serves on the Board of Directors.

Suttles is from Selma, Ala., and holds a bachelor of science degree in Adult Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of South Alabama. He will be working to recruit new industries to the Mobile area and assisting existing businesses in the area.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be working at the Chamber," Suttles said. "I definitely want to help and make a difference in this city."

## Business & Volunteering – It's a Win-Win

One only has to follow the news to get a sense of the challenges faced by today's business leaders – changing economic conditions, competition, hostile takeovers, new regulations and more. Beyond the headlines, however, are stories about Partners-in-Education who adopted a school or a business who is helping to protect the wildlife around their facility.

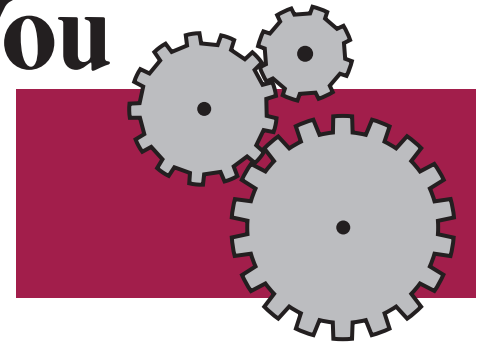
Companies are faced with an expectation to devote financial and human resources to the community. While there are many complexities occurring in companies of all sizes, an increasing number understand the value of volunteer programs.

Supporting corporate volunteer programs or allowing employees to use business hours to volunteer can contribute to the success of the company. It's one way for a business to respond to its employees' concern about the quality of life in their community. Also businesses can increase and reinforce employees' skills, particularly leadership and decision-making skills. Volunteer programs help address the public's expectation of its involvement in community problem solving and demonstrate moral leadership, "doing the right thing."

April 18 - 24 is National Volunteer Week. This is the one week out of the year that is set aside to recognize the millions of volunteers who give their time and support to community projects and agencies. It's because of these volunteers that many area human services are available. According to the latest available statistics, the value of volunteer time was estimated at more than \$201 billion (\$13.24 per hour) and about 25.6 billion people volunteered five or more hours per week.

If you or your company would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities in the Mobile area, call Volunteer Mobile, 433-4456.

# The Chamber At Work For You



### News Abroad

The Chamber used the upcoming trade mission to Costa Rica and Chile as an opportunity to submit information about Mobile and the group's mission to Costa Rican and Chilean news sources. The delegation leaves this month to learn more about export opportunities in Latin America.

### Capital Investment

The Chamber hosted a Venture Capital Forum meeting for small business owners and potential entrepreneurs. The speaker, Marc Braun, started a successful early-stage investment club in St. Louis, Mo., and shared his expertise with the group on how to present an attractive proposal to prospective investors.

### On Loan

The Ozone Task Force meets weekly to create and implement strategies addressing Mobile's pending non-attainment status. The Chamber recruited a loaned executive from Alabama Power Company, **Paul Lindsey**, to assist with the Ozone Campaign.

### One Voice

Nearly mid way through the Legislative Session, the Chamber's lobbyist (aka – vice presi-

dent of governmental affairs) has spent numerous days in Montgomery furthering the Chamber's legislative agenda.

### Supporting New Growth

The Diplomats attended a ribbon cutting at Knollwood Pointe Assisted Living Facility recently. This volunteer group represents the Chamber at various business and community events.

### Addressing the Need

Increasing philanthropic giving in the community is outlined in the quality of life section of the area's strategic plan, Envision Mobile-Baldwin. Chamber staff met with United Way staff and Bernie Fogarty of Alabama Power, to begin initial discussions on how to address this point. Plans are underway to submit a grant application later this year.

## Good News Bears Repeating

### ◆ Alabama School of Math & Science nationally recognized for ACT scores.

The 1998 graduating class of the Alabama School of Math and Science had the art of test taking down to near perfection. Recently, it was announced the school was recognized as eighth in the nation for its scores on the ACT, the American College Testing exam.

A total of 113 students, which includes last year's entire graduating class, took the test. Out of a possible score of 36, the school's average was 28.2. How does that add up when compared to other students? The national ACT average was 21. The state average was 20.01, and the average for Mobile County was 22.1.

**Mary Lee Conwell**, public relations coordinator for the Alabama School of Math and Science, said several of the students scored 35 points, which is also the highest score registered in Mobile County. Conwell also said the 1998 graduating class was offered a total of \$6.5 million in college scholarships around the country.

The Alabama School of Math and Science is a

Mobile-based public residential high school for students statewide who want to study advanced studies in Math, Science and Technology. Founded in 1989, the school is tuition free and completely funded by the state.

Conwell said the campus is run like a small college. "Our students have the same graduating requirements that all seniors have. The difference is our students have the opportunity to take a wide variety of courses most other students aren't offered until they get to college, such as Human Genetics, Scientific Visualization and Advanced Probability and Statistics." She added that most of the school's teachers are college professors with PhDs.

The students themselves are also given a great deal of credit. According to Conwell, "All the kids who come to school here love to learn and are highly motivated. They don't want to just learn about math and science, they want to know about everything!"

# CALENDAR VIEW

April  
**19**  
**FORUM**  
**Alabama**  
with Congressman  
**Sonny Callahan**

**Time:** Noon - 1 p.m.  
**Place:** Adam's Mark Hotel  
**Cost:** \$20  
**Call:** 431-8612

April  
**20**  
**Net Gain:**  
**Life and Career**  
**Planning**

**Time:** 11 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.  
**Place:** Chamber McGowin Room  
**Cost:** \$15  
**Call:** 431-8607

April  
**21**  
**Workforce**  
**Development**  
**Business Summit:**  
**The Time is Now**

**Time:** 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.  
**Place:** International Trade Club  
**Cost:** \$7  
**Call:** 431-8621

April  
**22**  
**Chamber**  
**Chase '99**  
**Kick-Off Breakfast**

**Time:** 7:30 a.m.  
**Place:** Mobile Convention Center  
**Call:** 431-8638

April  
**26**  
**Net Gain:**  
**NETiquette**

**Dates:** Monday April 26, 27, 28 or 29  
**Time:** 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Bishop State Community College  
**Cost:** \$20  
**Call:** 431-8607

April  
**29**  
**Net Gain:**  
**Negotiation Skills**

**Time:** 1 - 4 p.m.  
**Place:** Chamber McGowin Room  
**Cost:** \$10  
**Call:** 431-8607

April  
**29**  
**Regional**  
**Business**  
**After Hours**

**Time:** 5 - 7 p.m.  
**Place:** Aircraft Pavilion  
**Cost:** No charge

## COMING IN MAY

May  
**5**  
**World**  
**Trade Expo**

**Dates:** Wed. and Thurs. May 5 and 6  
**Time:** 9 a.m. - 9 p.m./ 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
**Place:** Hampton Inn, Pensacola Beach  
**Cost:** \$125/\$175  
**Call:** 800-320-8108

May  
**7**  
**First Friday**  
**Presents: Business**  
**and Breakfast**

**Time:** 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.  
**Place:** Bienville Club  
34th Floor of AmSouth Bank Building  
**Cost:** \$10  
**Call:** 431-8649

## NETiquette Seminar

If you want to learn the basic steps in building your own small business website or marketing over the Internet, then this seminar is the ticket. The "NETiquette" program will provide training and technical assistance and will be the launching point for a Virtual Small Business Directory linked to your new or existing website. The seminar is made possible by a grant from BellSouth.

It is repeated each of the four days, so choose one between April 26-29 at Bishop State Community College from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. The cost to attend this seminar is \$20 and includes lunch. Call Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607 for reservations.

## NetGain: Negotiation Skills

Sharpen your marketing skills and learn how to make a deal from John Venetch, a specialist in human resource development who will outline the basic steps to being a successful negotiator at this Net Gain Seminar on Thursday, April 29 from 1 - 4 p.m. in the Chamber McGowin Room. Mr. Venetch has an extensive background in business and has also worked with nonprofit organizations.

The cost to attend this seminar is \$10. For reservations, call Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607.



## NetGain: Life and Career Planning

Now is a great time to look back over the last year and gain some perspective on where you've come and what you've accomplished at this Net Gain seminar on Tuesday, April 20 from 11 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. in the Chamber McGowin Room. Dr. Kent Welsh of the Highlands Program, a nationwide process for life and career planning, will highlight questions you need to ask yourself to get the direction and balance you want and need in your life.

The cost for the seminar is \$15 and includes lunch. For reservations please call Jacqueline Jones at 431-8607.

## First Friday Presents: Business at Breakfast

Join business associates and colleagues as you learn valuable information about Mobile at First Friday Presents: Business at Breakfast on May 7 from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. at the Bienville Club. Come hear Director of the Mobile Film Office Eva Golson discuss the importance of the film office and how making movies in Mobile can be lucrative for the community.

The cost to attend is \$10 and includes a breakfast buffet. Call Reeda Taylor at 431-8649 for reservations.



## World Trade Expo

The World Trade Council of Northwest Florida and the Mobile Chamber invite you to the 1999 World Trade Expo on Wednesday and Thursday May 5 & 6 at the Hampton Inn in Pensacola Beach, Fla. A regional North Gulf Coast initiative for north Florida, southern Alabama and southern Mississippi, the expo will focus on trading with the regions of Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. The two-day event will feature seminars and technical sessions on international trade and will give participants an opportunity to meet with trade representatives.

You can make reservations by calling 800-320-8108. Registration fee for non-members of the World Trade Council is \$175 and \$125 for members including all meals, an international reception, breaks, seminars and an expo packet.

## Regional Business After Hours

Come and join the Chambers from across our region at April's Regional Business After Hours on Thursday, April 29 from 5 - 7 p.m. at the Aircraft Pavilion at Battleship Park sponsored by: Bel Air Mall, BellSouth The Real Yellow Pages, Joe Bullard Luxury Cars, Compass Bank, DiGiPH PCS and Xerox.

Sample hors d'oeuvres by: Andree's Wine Cheese and Things, Calabria Italian Restaurant, Mango's and Calypso, Uptown Down South, Katy's Katering, Joe's Crab Shack, Lassere's Catering and Kenny Roger's Roasters. There is no charge to attend.



## 1999 FORUM Alabama

Join U.S. Congressman "Sonny" Callahan at the 1999 FORUM Alabama luncheon on Monday, April 19 at the Adam's Mark Hotel from Noon - 1 p.m.

Congressman Callahan will update attendees on the 106th Congress, sponsored by Alabama Power.

Tickets are \$20 per person, or you can purchase a table of 8 for \$150. Call Shelly Mattingly at 431-8612 for reservations.

## Workforce Development Business Summit

Is record low unemployment making it difficult for you to find workers? Is your company dissatisfied with the skill level of your employees? Is your business spending valuable time and money training and re-training workers? Then the Time is Now...for the workforce "customer," also known as the business community, to take an active role in guaranteeing its future. Join hundreds of Mobile companies on Wednesday, April 21 from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. at the International Trade Club as they learn from fellow business people and workforce development experts how to improve the quality of their workforce.

The cost for the breakfast is \$7. Please call Angela Erwin at 431-8621 for reservations.

## ATTENTION MEMBERS!

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

- Melody Lipscomb at 431-8627 pgr.: 371-9634
- Tom Lewis at 431-8629/pgr.: 582-2076

Whitney National Bank announced the promotion of **Cheri Ortiz** to assistant vice president. Ortiz worked as Whitney's regional training manager for 14 months prior to her promotion.



Ortiz

Lockwood Greene announced **Leonard Burns** has been named as the new business unit manager for the company's Mobile office. Burns is a 25-year veteran with the company.

**Allen H. Ladd, Thames, Batre', Mattei, Beville & Ison Insurance**, was awarded the professional insurance designation Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU). Presented by the American Institute for CPCU, an independent, nonprofit educational organization, individuals must complete 10 courses and national essay exams, and meet its ethics and experience requirements.



Manning

The University of **Mobile Alumni Council** named **Rhoda Manning**, director of nursing for the Mobile County Sheriff's Department, the 1999 Alumnus of the Year. She is a 1991 master's graduate of the University with a degree in nursing administration. Manning has achieved numerous accomplishments, including being issued a patent for a cast cover in 1993. She has also served on the Governor's Medical Advisory Committee for the Alabama Department of Corrections.

**Huey G. McDaniel MD** joined **Diagnostic and Medical Clinic PC** recently as a staff endocrinologist. Dr. McDaniel is board certified in endocrinology and metabolism. He retired earlier this year from the University of Alabama at Birmingham where he was a professor of endocrinology for 29 years.

The 50th Annual Blessing of the Fleet will be May 1 and 2. On Saturday, May 1 the golf tournament at Bay Oaks Golf Club begins at 1:00 p.m. and the Fleet Blessing Mass for Workers begins at 5:30 p.m. at Saint Margaret's Church. Sunday festivities include the 11 a.m. Official Fleet Blessing Mass celebrated by Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb, the land parade and crowning of the Fleet Queen. Festivities will conclude with a boat parade and actual Blessing of the Fleet. For more information call 824-2415.

Greer's/Easter Seal Golf Tournament will be held Friday, April 23 at Magnolia Grove Golf Course. The four-person scramble will begin with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start. Entry fee is \$110 per player. For additional event details and sponsorship opportunities, call 478-8582.

Pig Out at the Point, a bar-be-que with both live and silent auction benefiting **Easter Seals** is set for Friday, April 23, at 6 p.m. at "Clearwater," 761 County Rd. 32. Tickets are \$25. For more information call 478-8582.

Parents of newborns delivered at USA Children's and Women's Hospital are now able to share the news and photos of their baby with friends and family members across the world hours after the birth. The first such service in the Mobile area, the web nursery can be found on the hospital's website at [www.southalabama.edu/usacwh/](http://www.southalabama.edu/usacwh/).

**Baker High School** won first place in the Internet Search Division in the 1999 Computing Olympiad sponsored by the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. More than 50 schools from across the State participated with three member teams. Baker's team included seniors, **Ryan Golightly** and **Jason Thrash**, and freshman, **Keith Butler**. Each student received a \$500 scholarship, which can be used at Bishop State University, the University of Alabama or Alabama State University, a plaque and a laptop computer.

## MEMBER NEWS

A fund was set up to cover repairs not covered by insurance at John Will Elementary School. The school sustained considerable damage from a late night storm last month. Those interested in contributing to the fund are asked to bring their donation to any Compass Bank or John Will Elementary.

The new Calloway-Smith Middle School was dedicated in February, honoring Dr. Samuel Tipton Calloway Jr. and Bishop William Milton Smith. The school is located at 350 N. Lawrence St. Lee Saad Construction Co. was the contractor for the project and the architect was John Dendy and Associates.

In other news, the "Satchel" Paige Baseball Field adjacent to LeFlore High School was also dedicated in February, in honor of the late Leroy Robert Paige. Paige was the first black pitcher in the American League for the Cleveland Indians, and was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1971.

**Regions Bank-Mobile** announced the promotion of **Lea N. Stokes** to employee benefits trust officer for Regions Financial Corporations Trust Group. Stokes has worked in the employee benefits record keeping section of the trust department since 1996.

**ERA Marie McConnell Realty** announced the association of the following members to its sales team: **Jimmy Brower, Molly Taylor** and **Dianna Morgan**. The new associates can be reached at 343-7777.

All interested artists and craft persons who would like to participate in Art Patrons League and **Mobile Museum of Art** annual Outdoors Arts and Crafts Fair should call 343-2667 for an application form. The fair is set for Sept. 25 and 26.

The museum also announced its next exhibit will be "All-Stars: American Sporting Prints from the Collection of Reba and Dave Williams." The exhibition featuring the works of American artists famous for the depiction of sports is on a nine city tour and will be on view in Mobile April 9 - June 6.

The **Mobile Admirals** recently added several players to its roster: former Dallas Cowboy defensive back **Kenneth Gant**; former Auburn tight end **Andy Fuller**; former South Carolina running back **Cleon Jones Jr.**; former Valdosta State wide receiver **Rodney Brown**; former Miami Hurricane quarterback **Frank Costa**.

The University of **South Alabama** Department of Conference Activities and Special Courses will present a Mind Golf Seminar focusing on the mental skills needed to be successful at the game on April 17, from 9 a.m. - noon or 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the USA Brookley Campus. The cost is \$29 per person or \$25 per person for a parent and child attending together. For more information, contact **Danielle Ludlow** at 431-6411.

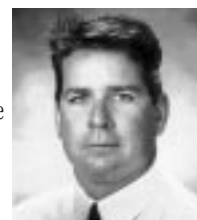
Also available is the annual walking tour of old Mobile. Take a stroll through Church Street East April 24; see historic Ashland Place April 17; visit the Oakleigh Garden District April 10; and see Magnolia Cemetery April 18. Tours are \$10 per person. To register or for more information on this course or others offered, call 431-6405.

Mobile Infirmity Medical Center and Babies 'R' Us have teamed up to provide mothers-to-be with information and education at free monthly seminars beginning at 7 p.m. The seminars will be held at Babies 'R' Us, 3680 Airport Blvd. For upcoming topics and additional information, contact **Tonya Spattel** at 304-0950.

The Diabetes Resource Center at Mobile Infirmity Medical Center is also offering free monthly informative seminars and educational support groups for individuals with diabetes and their families. For more information, call 435-2785.

**Interstate Printing** and Pre-press has opened a full-service mailing center, CMS, Corporate Mailing Service. For more information on the mailing service or to make an appointment for a representative to call on your business, contact **DeLayne Jones** at 473-2023.

**Sullivan-St. Clair Advertising and Public Relations** recently named **Brian Jenkins** as its Creative Director. Prior to coming to Sullivan-St. Clair, Jenkins worked as a creative consultant in New Orleans, La.



Jenkins

The newest interactive traveling exhibit at the Gulf Coast Exploreum is **SPORT!** featuring a wide range of activities from rockwall climbing to sitting in the Olympics judges seat. The exhibit will here through May 31. Area schools interested in seeing the exhibit should call the Exploreum's school reservation coordinator at 208-6880.

**Sissy Turner Cunningham** recently joined Senior Citizens Services as the development coordinator. Cunningham is a graduate of the University of South Alabama in Public Relations.

Also, the "Mark Harmon Celebrity Weekend," benefiting Senior Citizens Services, is scheduled for April 30 through May 1 at Magnolia Manor on Springhill Avenue. Mobile Infirmity Medical Center and Mobile BayBears have joined to host the event. For ticket and schedule information call 470-5224.



Pierson

**Mike Pierson**, owner and broker of The Buyer's Agent of Mobile Inc. has been appointed to the Board of Directors for the Mobile Area Association of Realtors. He has also recently been awarded the Gold Achievement Award for exceeding client savings of \$100,000 in the past year, and the Career Silver Achievement Award, presented for exceeding client savings of \$250,000.

**TAG/The Architects Group Inc.** announced **Jeffrey S. Alpha** joined the design team as an intern architect. Alpha is a graduate of Louisiana State University and has over eight years experience in his field.

The Alabama Association of School Office Personnel (AASOP) will award six \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors interested in entering the school of business in an Alabama college or university, an accredited business school or vocational school. The scholarships will be awarded on the basis of scholastic record and financial need. To receive an application or for more information, contact **Mary Delle Hudson** at 690-8219.

**Spring Hill College** will present Birmingham novelist, **Vicki Covington**, as the 1999 Boyle Lecturer. Covington will speak April 19 at 8 p.m. in the Gautrelet Room. Admission is free and open to the public.

**Gulf Distributing Company of Mobile** recently acquired the assets of **Crawford Beverage** and **Crawford Trucking** companies. Henry Crawford operated Crawford Beverage for 31 years and founded the trucking company in 1980.

**Springhill Memorial Hospital** announced **Greg A. Bizette MD** of Springhill Cancer Associates has recently been certified as a Diplomate in Medical Oncology.

**Compass Bank** announced **Charles E. McMahan** has been named vice chairman of Compass Bank. McMahan heads corporate banking and community banking for Compass as well as acquisition activities. He previously served as chief executive officer of Compass Bank of Texas before its merger into Compass Bank.

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@mobcbam.org](mailto:susan@mobcbam.org)

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