

THE VIEW

SEPTEMBER 2000

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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The Road to Recovery

◆ Racer Computers Increasing Production

In the three years since Racer Computers announced it was moving to Bayou La Batre in September 1997, the company has gone through the natural cycle of highs and lows of this brutally competitive industry. At one time, Racer had three retail stores in Mobile and Daphne and 180 employees. When the company lost its contract with CompUSA in 1998, because of a buyout, it was forced to close two of its three retail operations and scale back to 70 employees.

The company is riding the crest of another wave of success thanks to aggressive expansions in Europe and an exclusive contract to produce computers for seniorexplorer.com, a California-based Internet provider targeting seniors, according to **Sam Habib**, vice president of Racer Computers.

Racer recently partnered with a European distributor and opened branch operations in Spain and France. The company is working with Microsoft to build and program computers with Spanish and French operating systems. The company's first shipment of 300 computers left the Port of Mobile in late-August.

"We have lots of things in the works," added Habib. Including another contract pending with a Canadian firm. Racer already has an established relationship in Canada with Ingram Micro, one of the largest distributors in the U.S. and Canada.

"We're good at tailoring computers," Habib said. "We sell to either resellers like Ingram, corporations or individuals."

In November 1998, the company achieved ISO 9002, the international certification for quality control. "Racer has more hands on its computers than some of the big names you might recognize. We're striving for the lowest rate of failure."

Habib predicts the company will be up to producing 500-600 computers a day in no time and, within the year, hopes to build the workforce back to 180. "We are synchronizing orders and staff so we do not have to go through this (downsizing) again."

For more information log on to www.racerpc.com, the company's Web site for corporate customers or www.raceronline.com, Racer's site for individuals.

Mobile Area Cultivates Movement to Demand a New State Constitution

Alabama's 1901 Constitution is almost 40 times as long as the U.S. Constitution and almost 12 times as long as the average state constitution.

Intrigued? Here is another interesting fact gathered by the Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform (ACCR), a new public advocacy group aiming to modernize the state's antiquated constitution. The current Alabama Constitution has 310,300 words and 665 amendments. The U.S. Constitution has only 7,842 words and 27 amendments.

"There is something we can do," said **Ginny Russell**, the Chamber's director of community development. "The Governor is looking for a groundswell to convince him that the people want a new constitution. We intend to show him we're serious."

On Sunday, Oct. 22 there will be an old-fashioned political rally in an effort to assemble concerned citizens interested in updating Alabama's outdated and poorly-structured constitution.

The topic of a new state constitution is not new to the area. In 1997, local citizens called for a plan to "revise and update the Alabama State Constitution" when it created Envision Mobile-Baldwin, a long-range strategic plan outlining initiatives to improve the bay-area communities

and ensure a strong future. The local rally is a project of Chambers in both Mobile and Baldwin counties and is being backed by other Chambers and organizations around the state.

Reformers have long pointed to the deficiencies of the 1901 Constitution. "For example, it does not allow local counties to govern themselves at a time when many fast-growing urban areas are sprawling into the countryside, creating traffic congestion, pollution, disjointed planning and other issues," according to **Bailey Thomson PhD** at the University of Alabama and one of the organizers of ACCR. "Local officials must ask their legislative delegations for authority to address even the most mundane matters, because counties often lack the power to pass needed ordinances."

This restriction on local government has led to some bizarre amendments.

Amendment 482, for example, authorizes Limestone County's Commission to dispose of dead mules. Under amendment 520, Madison County got permission to charge for excavating human graves. And amendment 497 prohibits the overgrowth of weeds in Jefferson County.

According to many constitution scholars, the 1901 Constitution also reflects a dark and racist era

of Alabama history. Its framers had one main goal in mind and that was to disenfranchise the state's black voting population. Through the poll tax and other restrictive means, the Constitution removed most black citizens from voting lists, along with even more poor whites. This injustice was not rectified until the 1960s, when the federal courts intervened and Congress passed the Voting Rights Act.

"People sometimes say they are reluctant to change the Constitution," said **Thomas Corts PhD**, ACCR Chair and president of Samford University. "With 665 amendments and 47 more to be on the ballots this Fall, the Constitution already is being changed in the poorest way possible."

While plans are not complete and speakers have not been confirmed, organizers are expecting hundreds of rally-goers. The gate opens at 1 p.m., Oct. 22 and festivities begin at 1:30 p.m. at Battleship Park. There will be food, music, activities for the kids and much more.

For more information on the upcoming Constitutional Rally or the topic in general, contact **Ginny Russell** at 431-8618 or **Jodi Swiderek** at 431-8645 or log on to www.constitutionalreform.org.

Part One of the TeleVox Story

In 1992, **Fran Smith** and **Neil Armentrout**, husband and wife team, camped on Mobile Bay to plan their next move. Armentrout had recently left Condé Systems, a company he started with **David Gross** in 1985.

The plan they developed eight years ago to remind people about their dentist appointments, is today a multi-million dollar company with plans to go public in the next 12-24 months.

After Hewlett Packard and Apple Computers offered Armentrout positions, the couple decided their roots in Mobile were stronger than any job offer. Smith is a Mobile native and Armentrout moved here when his father was helping build the Degussa plant in 1976. He stayed to attend the University of South Alabama.

As an executive with QMS, he witnessed the turbulent technology scenario when hardware was outdated before the majority of the stock left the warehouse and consumers were beginning to buy computers and printers at places like Wal-Mart, Circuit City and Sam's. Armentrout viewed software as "dream technology." Meaning, "it was clean, required no inventory, national in scope and had high gross margin potential," he said. And so, the company TeleVox Software Inc. was created.

For two years the couple toted a 10-ft. booth display promoting TeleVox at medical trade shows marketing their HouseCalls™ product to dentists. But it seemed at that time, not too many dentists were ready to incorporate high-tech programs into their practices. "You have to remember, this was before the Internet and cell phones were so prominent," said Armentrout.

"Things really kicked off in 1994," said Armentrout. "That's when we finally hit the right market," added Smith. "We got 50 orders out of the blue at an ophthalmology show."

Now, fast forward to 2000. "Doctors will stand in our booth and tell other doctors how great our product is," said Smith. "They will find us and say, 'I want the next thing you have.'" In addition to Housecalls™, the company's flagship messaging



system, TeleVox expanded services to include on-hold phone messages, test result inquiry software, e-mail and Web-based message delivery, electronic dictation and transcription services, on-call scheduling, paging and more. The TeleVox team handles all facets of implementing their systems from installation and training to technical support.

The company has more than 80 employees, a new 15,000-sq. ft. building and a worldwide presence in more than 3,000 practices, clinics and hospitals in the U.S., Canada, Australia and Europe. Clearly, this Mobile-based company is a proven leader in doctor-to-patient communication solutions.

TeleVox was named the Chamber's Small Business of the Year in 1997 and has been recognized as a fast-growing company at the Chamber's Future 30 awards for the last four years.

Smith feels the foundation of the company's success is customer service.

"Sixty percent of our new business is referrals from the medical industry, and the first thing they ask is, 'How's the service?'"

Initially, Smith said, we were almost embarrassed to say, "We're a high-tech industry in Alabama." Then she realized they could capitalize

The TeleVox marketing team uses a colorful display with a zebra-looking carpet to grab the attention of potential clients.

on the location boasting of "Southern service and traditional values."

"Our goal is to exceed our customers' expectations for excellence, value and service," added Smith.

Driven to build the biggest company he could, Armentrout began looking at the next step for TeleVox. "In our case, I felt we had pioneered a market, plowed the ground, sowed the seed, and we were the ones who deserved to reap the harvest," he told an audience at a recent venture capital forum.

To ensure success and avoid another company taking its market share, Armentrout knew he had to find a way to move into larger metropolitan markets. "Either eat or get eaten."

It was this realization that began his quest for venture capital. A process he describes as "daunting."

Editor's note: In the October issue of The View, the TeleVox's journey from start up to going public will be continued as Armentrout and Smith outline their pursuit for investors.

New Regional Business Journal Publishes Daily News On-line

Looking for a news stand that can offer a regional look at business news? Editors who can provide information your business needs and wants to know? Then log on to GulfCoastCommerce.com, a new innovative Web site dedicated to business news covering the regional economy.

In addition to continuous news updates, browsers will have at their fingers a regional reference section, home to a statistical digest on individual communities in Coastal Mississippi, South Alabama and Northwest Florida. The site also hosts dozens of links to other critical sites including universities and colleges, chambers of commerce and economic publications. And four times a year, editors publish a quarterly edition delving into common issues and trends.

"We do not see our publication as a replacement for television, radio or newspapers, but as a valuable adjunct," said David Tortorano, publisher of GulfCoastCommerce.com.

"We provide an overview they (readers) cannot obtain from any other source. We're don't have the constraints of space or time — we're in cyber space. We carry 20 to 25 pages of business news a day," added Editor Dave Casey.

Editors rely on a New York-based content wire service, Screaming Media, that forwards stories from a host of national and international news organizations including the *Financial Times*, Associated Press, the New York Times Syndicate, *USA Today* and other numerous U.S. newspapers. Tortorano and Casey screen each story accessing its value to the Gulf Coast business community before it is featured on the Web site. Correspondents throughout Mississippi, Alabama and Florida cover local news. The Web site also offers a summary of business news stories with links to the region's daily publications: *The Biloxi Sun Herald*, *Mobile Register*, *Pensacola News Journal* and *Northwest Florida Daily News*.

The free service is supported through advertising and sales of the news service to other media outlets. WEBY-AM, Pensacola's talk radio station, features a GulfCoastCommerce.com news segment twice each morning at 6:20 a.m. and 7:20 a.m. Tortorano added they are considering a TV news feed as well as other arrangements with newspapers.

On-line only a few short months, word of mouth is helping the popularity of the site, which is averaging 15,000 hits a week.

Tortorano has called the Gulf Coast home since 1985. The 23-year journalism veteran spent seven



David and Gloria Tortorano are two of the five partners bringing regional, national and global business and economic news to the Central Gulf Coast through an interactive Web site, www.GulfCoastCommerce.com

years with the *Mobile Register* covering business and regional news. He found his passion when he headed up the *Register's Business Quarterly*, a first attempt to take an in-depth look at the Central Gulf Coast communities. In the Spring of 1999 the newspaper had a new editor who wanted to redirect the focus of the business staff to the daily product, and the Quarterly was discontinued.

"I believed in the Quarterly," Tortorano said. "It makes sense to have a publication dedicated entirely to business."

"Despite state, county or city lines, we're tied together as an economic unit. We compete, we

cooperate, we fear the same hurricanes. We're in the same regional family," said Tortorano.

Gloria Tortorano, David's wife, a former business owner and stringer photographer for United Press International, began developing the idea for an Internet-based publication. David left the *Register* in April to concentrate on bringing the publication on-line. Gloria is the company's president and chief financial officer.

The husband and wife team, say not since they worked together at United Press International (UPI) have they had so much fun. They compare the immediacy of the Internet to their days at UPI when, as soon as you got the story, it hit the wire and was carried around the world.

A second husband and wife team are also partners in the privately held corporation based in

Gulf Breeze, Fla., GulfCoast Commerce.com Editor Casey has worked in news reporting and

governmental affairs for 27 years and made the same commute as Tortorano did from the Pensacola area to downtown Mobile to cover business and maritime news for the Register for seven years. Lisa Casey, Dave's wife, is the marketing and creative director. She has owned her own agency and taught graphics and photo design at a regional art institute.

The fifth partner is Mohan K. Menon PhD, a professor and director of the E-commerce Program at the University of South Alabama who oversees e-commerce marketing activities.

To reach the team at GulfCoast Commerce.com, submit news or inquire about advertising opportunities, call 1-800-798-4853 or e-mail them at info@gulfcoastcommerce.com.

"Despite state, county or city lines, we're tied together as an economic unit. We compete, we cooperate, we fear the same hurricanes. We're in the same regional family," said Tortorano.

Bishop State Preparing Employees to Meet Business IT Needs



The technology industry is growing and advancing at warp speed. Want a faster computer — done. Need a new software program to make your electronic gadgets talk to each other — done. Chances are in the technology arena, if someone has thought it — it's either in the works or already on the shelf. And the consumers can't seem to get enough.

There are 1.6 million job openings nationwide for information technology workers in the private sector. Unemployment is almost at an inconceivable low, dipping recently to the lowest percentage in more than 20 years. So Bishop State is moving in.

Enter the new Information Technology Computer Training Institute at the community college formed to address the corporate demands for an information technology-savvy workforce in Alabama. This Spring, Bishop State formed partnerships with Out-of-the-Box Solutions, a Microsoft-certified training education center headquartered in Los Angeles, The University of Alabama and Alabama State University.

Realistically, because the technology industry is growing so fast there are very few programs that can prepare employees for today's workplace needs. "If there was," said Rachel Lunsford, the Chamber's coordinator of the Center for Workforce Development, "the need would only change tomorrow. Employers are looking for workers who understand the basics and programs that can customize training."

"So what it comes down to is we, like every other city in the U.S., have businesses developing technology and a shortage of workers," added Lunsford.

Conrad Smith, the director of Continuing Education and Economic Development for Bishop State, said Mobile has great potential in the

information technology industry. That is also the belief of other decision makers at Bishop State. The Southeastern states and more specifically Mobile and its Gulf Coast neighbors could become the next hotbed for IT Technology, Smith said.

The IT Training Institute will be facilitated with state-of-the-art computer labs with up-to-date computer equipment, first-class certified instructors, training materials provided for each student to keep, and an individual computer for each student to use in class. In addition, the Center has the latest in video-conferencing capabilities.

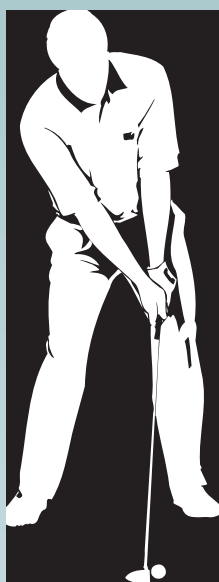
The Institute can meet the special needs and requirements of individuals, businesses, industries and nonprofit organizations with tailored training and programs. These programs include entry-level training network technology, which includes installation, configuration and administration.

The training program will include instruction in network essentials, administering Microsoft Windows, Web master foundations, Web master design fundamentals, as well as with other courses in networking and Web design.

Registration is underway for Fall classes. For more information about courses or customized IT training for business, contact Kathy Morris at 690-6836, Brent McKinley at 690-6837, or contact the IT Institute by e-mail at itraining@bscc.al.us.

13th Annual Fall Golf Tournament

Friday, September 22



Registration, Breakfast and Shotgun Start - 8:30 a.m.
Magnolia Grove Golf Course

Hole sponsorships \$800
Individual tickets \$150

(includes green fees, cart fees, continental breakfast, range balls, tee favors, complimentary beverages and post-tournament reception)

Prizes include:
1st, 2nd & 3rd place
Closest to the pin
Longest drive
Hole in One

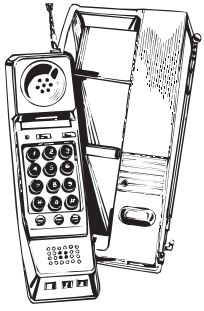


Great door prizes!

Post tournament reception sponsored by Naman's Catering

For more information on sponsorships and tickets, call Pratt Vereen in the Chamber's Membership Department at 431-8638.

Sign up to play. This tournament sells out quickly!



Surprising Feedback Gathered in Statewide Poll



Understanding just what Alabamians want and need is vital to not only economic developers across the state, but also to area industries and small business owners. Recently one poll has done just that.

Earlier this year Harris, DeVille and Associates conducted a statewide survey polling 600 self-professed Alabama voters over the course of a week. The firm wanted to assess opinions on a wide variety of topics including the overall condition of Alabama government, job performance, business importance, job opportunities across the state, and how well state and local economic developers as well as business are doing in attracting new industry.

Survey results have been released to groups and individuals in an effort to make them aware of what needs to be done to improve the overall business climate, as well as the attitudes of Alabamians.

(7 percent) or that the state had the best chance of recruiting them here (0 percent).

"It really shows us that while most people want computer companies, few think there's much chance of bringing them here," Perry added.

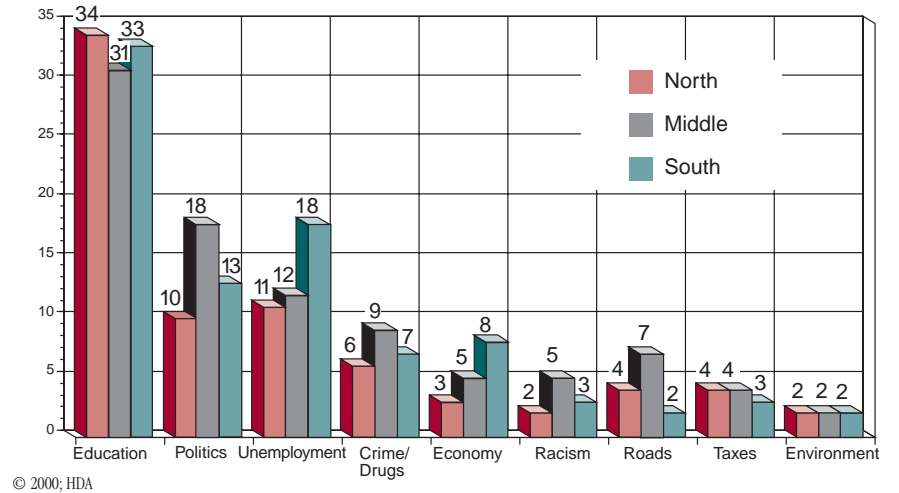
While most voters believe the way of the future is technology companies, Jim Apple, vice president of economic development for the Chamber, believes there are many other types of industries the Mobile area will set its sights on in the future.

"The Mobile population has people with skills of all levels, so we need to continue recruiting at all levels," said Apple as he explained why the

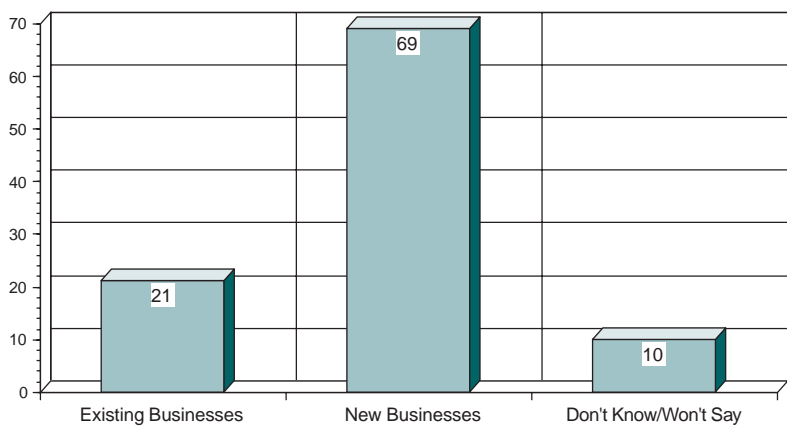
Chamber's economic development department recruits companies with employee salaries ranging from \$8 to \$9 an hour as well as \$12 plus an hour jobs. "To increase how much earnings an individual

...71 percent of those polled believe the state government should give financial incentives and provide tax incentives to attract new businesses to build in Alabama.

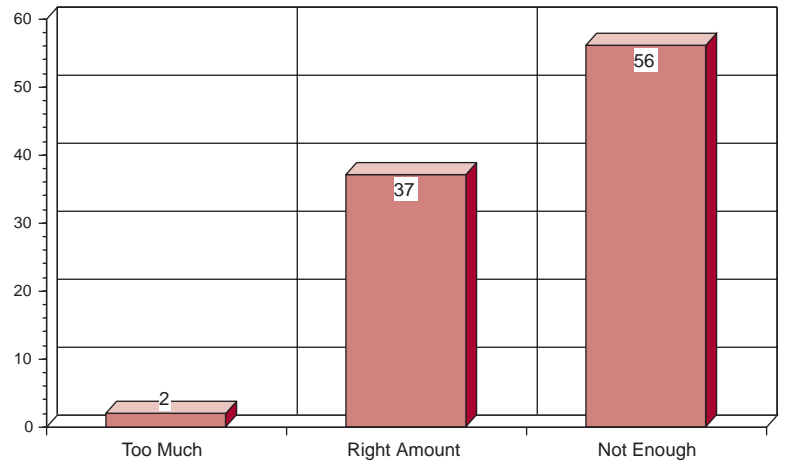
What would you say are the main problems which keep Alabama from being a better place to live? (Up to two responses per person)



Do you think most future jobs will come from an expansion of existing businesses already in Alabama or from new businesses moving into the state?



Do you think Alabama is doing too much, about the right amount, or not enough to attract new industry?



Specifically, the poll asked voters to rank the state as a place to live, major problems to overcome, specific types of industry they'd like to see coming in to the state, the overall economic outlook, and the needs for incentives and trust with government agencies. While most feel many of the results are typical views of Alabama voters, some of the feedback was surprising.

"One of the most interesting results of the survey is how Alabama voters feel about technology, specifically computer companies in the state," noted Steve Perry, executive director of THE FORUM. Voters said they wanted more computer industries located in the state (40 percent) because computers are the way of the future (according to 60 percent). However, not many agreed that computer industries created the most jobs (8 percent), were a stable business (4 percent), provided the best paying jobs

will command, the person must increase what they can contribute to the company's earnings. In Mobile, for example, good paying career jobs are available at many different places such as Mobile Aerospace, IPSCO Steel and the technology companies."

But what most polled do believe is that the state is doing a great job providing incentives to companies and industries wanting to expand into Alabama. In fact, 71 percent of those polled believe the state government should give financial incentives and provide tax incentives to attract new businesses to build in Alabama. Additionally, 76 percent of those people polled think more businesses would build in the state if there were more incentives and tax exemptions offered.

"Basically people see more new business as a positive and want the state government to do

anything to bring in more jobs," explained Renwick DeVille, whose company designed and developed the poll. "In fact, they also believe the state gains more in the long run by offering financial incentives and tax exemptions than it spends."

Another positive testament to economic developers across the state, including the Alabama Development Office, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama and the Chamber's economic development department is how well Alabama voters view the economic conditions of the state. Only 10 percent of persons polled believe things are worse off than before, while an overwhelming 86 percent believe things are either the same as before or getting better.

Overall, DeVille believes Alabama voters are on the same page as other cities and states across the

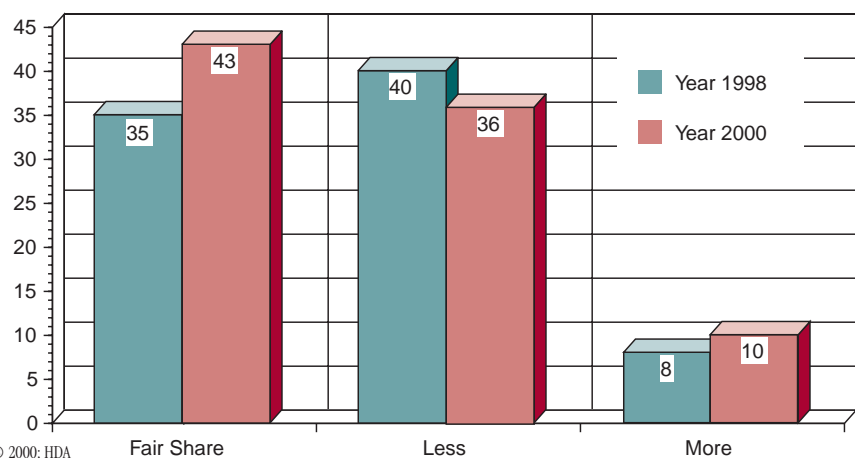
Gulf Coast. He predicts Alabamians will continue supporting new industry in the area, but warns that existing companies and industries must do more to have the public understand the value and size of their expansions, spin-off companies and increases in workforce. DeVille believes it's not only their job, but also that of economic developers across the state.

Apple agrees, but added that big new announcements like IPSCO and Honda get so much of the media's attention that often times regular expansions unfortunately get pushed by the wayside.

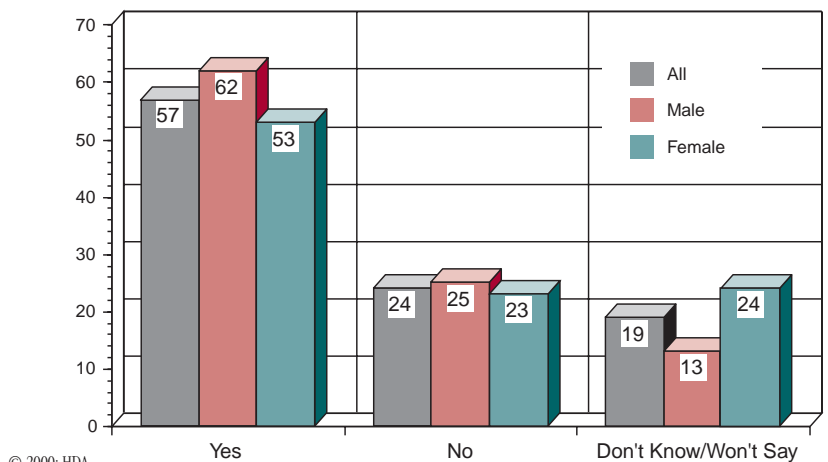
"The Chamber spends considerable staff resources helping Mobile companies expand and create new, local jobs," he said.

To learn more about the results from the poll, contact Harris DeVille and Associates at 473-3090 or 225-344-0381.

In your opinion, do business and industry pay more, less or about their fair share of taxes?



Do you think the state gains more than it spends on financial incentives and tax exemptions?



New Power Generator Ensures Ample Supply While Other Areas Are Struggling



National headlines and network news stories have recently explored the nation's strained demand on power. According to *USA Today*, the number of new homes and new businesses born out of years of economic prosperity are all using a "myriad of electronic appliances and gadgets." The result for a number of states is that usage today is nearly double over earlier projections – but that's not the case for Alabama Power customers.

"We began planning for this a long time ago," said **Bernie Fogarty**, external affairs manager for Alabama Power. "Good planning has helped us avoid what other companies are experiencing right now."

In July, the company completed Unit 6, a 540-megawatt capacity generating unit, in north Mobile County at Barry Steam Plant. Alabama Power is also constructing another new unit expected to be up and running in June 2001, both using the most efficient, environmentally advanced technology available today.

Unit 6 is the first system in the state using combined cycle generation and natural gas to create electricity, as opposed to coal, nuclear or water, the other sources employed by the power company. It will produce enough electricity each year to serve the needs of more than 175,000 homes.

The new unit, through state-of-the-art technology and natural gas fuel, generates electricity with the lowest possible air emissions. It is equipped with a selective catalytic reduction system helping reduce NOx emissions that are linked to ground level ozone, thus making the unit's emissions rate one of the lowest in the Southeast.

Company officials also assert Alabama Power has reduced emissions by 10,000 tons, or 25 percent, at Barry Steam Plant by adding low-NOx burners onto its five coal-burning units. "We have reduced emissions while demand continues to grow on our system," said Fogarty.

Most new generators being built will use the same technology employed at Barry Steam Plant in

Alabama Power's Unit 6 at Barry Steam Plant is the first in the state using combined cycle generation, a cleaner, more efficient way of producing electricity.

Mobile. "The cost is going to be less to build, but operation will be a little bit more," explained Fogarty. "We had the opportunity to ask for a rate increase when we built Unit 6 but chose not to."

Alabama Power is allowed to request a rate increase when it builds new generation plants. The company will ask for a rate increase to help cover the costs of building its next generator.

"Alabama Power and Southern Company (Alabama Power's parent company) work hard to ensure that the citizens of Alabama continue to enjoy reliable, affordable electricity, and we're proud that our rates are 15 percent below the national average," said Alabama Power President and CEO **Elmer Harris**.

"We think Unit 6 is good news for our community because one, it serves to meet growing demands and two, it is more environmental friendly. It's the best technology available at this time, just like those others (coal generating units) were the best available at their time," said Fogarty.

Unit 6 and 7 are designed to operate by combined-cycle generation, a process that is more efficient as well as cleaner.

Combined-cycle generation is built in units called blocks. The block at Unit 6 has two combustion turbines and one steam turbine. The combustion turbine combines natural gas and compressed air producing hot exhaust gases that rotate an electric generator. The combined cycle then uses the waste heat from the exhaust gas to heat water and produce steam. The steam is then directed to a steam turbine, causing the turbine and the electric generator to rotate, producing electricity.

Alabama Power serves 1.3 million customers in the lower two-thirds of Alabama.

Leadership Class '00 Completes Program

Leadership Mobile's class of 2000, after eight months of training, graduated with a new sense of commitment to setting the pace for community growth and progress.

"Leadership Mobile shapes local individuals willing to enhance their skills and opportunities for involvement and develops a network of relationships to learn more about the leadership problems facing the Mobile area," said **Sandi Forbus**, director of the organization.

This group participated in day-long training exercises, seminars and civic projects offering the opportunity to solve actual community problems. The class splits up into groups to focus on local problems and find potential solutions that correlate with the Envision Mobile-Baldwin long-range strategic plan.

"Great strides are made when participants of Leadership Mobile teams chose to include Envision strategies in their projects. This group was focused on making progress and addressed several critical areas outlined in Envision," said **Ginny Russell**, the Chamber's director of Community Development.

Each team presented executive summaries of their projects and offered a viable community approach to implementing their strategies.

Participants focusing on education concentrated their efforts are creating a safe place for kids after school that would provide instructional and educational programs at three local schools. The group worked with Mobile County School officials, teachers, principals and a number of area community programs to write a grant that, if awarded, will provide a very ambitious after-hours program.

Scott Posey, the Chamber's vice president of Governmental and Military Affairs and graduate of the class of '00, said Leadership Mobile was an enriching experience.

Posey served on the Cultural Diversity team. The group revamped the annual Cultural Diversity seminar held for Leadership Mobile participants, expanding the program to cover an even more diverse agenda. "If people leave a cultural diversity workshop feeling comfortable, then the subject



Leadership Mobile's Cultural Diversity team: seated (r-l) Lisa Young, Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Wince Brandon, University of South Alabama. Standing (r-l) Scott Posey, Mobile Area Chamber; Jerome Shannon, Mobile Opera; Gilda Hodges, University of South Alabama; Joe Bonner, Office of Sonny Callahan; Debra Heath, Degussa-Huls; and Sharon Lavendar, Mobile County Dept. of Human Resources.

matter wasn't covered adequately. We felt it was important to develop a program that would be more inclusive and that other organizations could borrow."

Other projects addressed by Leadership Mobile participants included: Human Resources' – marketing plan for Mobile CAN, the Community Alliance Network of the United Way; Health Services' – no-smoking program for K-12 schools and Sustainable Community – Martin Luther King Jr. Day of volunteer service.

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Small Business of the Month Rayco Supply Inc.

Tinkering in the garage is a favorite past time for many Americans and has turned into such success stories as Microsoft's Bill Gates and Mobile's own Ray and Kathy Thompson.

September's Small Business of the Month, while not a multi-billion dollar company, shares the genesis of its operation, the garage, and an interest in electronics and in fixing things.

While employed at a local law firm Ray worn many hats, one of which was maintaining computer equipment. "It fascinated him that someone could take a throw-away product like a toner cartridge, save it from a landfill and turn it back into a useable product," said Kathy.

Ray thought he could do it better. So in 1989, he and his wife Kathy started Rayco Supply Inc.

Turns out, not only was he right, the Thompson's entered the market at the perfect time and came up with a product reasonably priced under their competitors, explained Kathy.

The business has grown from re-manufacturing toner cartridges into selling new and remanufactured supplies for printers, fax machines and copiers. The company also offers its customers network cabling.

The re-manufacturing business helped move Rayco into the printer service industry and the company is an authorized Hewlett-Packard service provider for products both in and out of warranty. Ray said the company's listing on the HP Web site, www.hp.com, gets them at least two calls a day. They've even had someone drive all the way from Hattisburg, Miss., to have their printer repaired.

Customer service and quality workmanship is very important to the Thompson's. A locally-owned and operated business servicing the Mobile area almost exclusively, the owners believe in quality products and quality service.

The couple also knows the importance of investing in necessary training to keep employees



The Rayco team: Kathy Thompson (left), Dan McMillan (standing on left), seated from left to right are: James O'Rourke, Keri Williams and Ray Thompson, standing on right is Rita Mims and down in front is Mike Howard.

and technicians up-to-date in this fast-changing, high-tech service sector. Rayco's staff of seven includes technicians certified by HP, and who also have A+ certification and on-line training.

"We've got the best staff ever and we are very fortunate," added Ray.

To contact Rayco Supply Inc., call 476-2224 or visit them at 2409 Government St.

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

Volunteers Hit 2000 Chamber Chase Goal



Volunteers celebrated the end of the Chamber's total resource development campaign in late July. And while many volunteers, satisfied with their efforts, went back to their previous lives at various offices around the city, a handful continued through August to follow-up on prospective members and pitch remaining sponsorships.

To date Chairman Kinnon Phillips, Lewis Communications, and 150 volunteers representing 27 companies have raised \$842,526, exceeding the campaign's \$825,000 goal. BlueStar Communications (BlueStar.net), Colonial Bank and The Mitchell Company sponsored the event.

The grand total along with the team totals will be printed in next month's issue of *The View*.



Chamber Chair Dianne Irby, Strategic Services, congratulates volunteers and Kinnon Phillips, Lewis Communications, Chairman of this year's Chamber Chase campaign at the Victory Celebration in July. Edward "Bubba" O'Gwynn III, Colonial Bank, shares in the excitement.

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Local Guidance Counselors Recommend Community-Wide "Character Counts!" Program

What professional wouldn't want to work with or hire individuals with certain character traits such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Some see these qualities as fading in our society, yet they are important traits in any workplace.

This fact prompted the Chamber to bring attention to a national school curriculum called Character Counts!, which is based on the six "pillars" of character listed above. It was developed in 1992 in Aspen, Colo., by a diverse group of educators, youth leaders and ethicists who felt these ethical values could transcend cultural, religious and socioeconomic differences.

Within the program, the six pillars of character each have subgroups further defining them. For example, trustworthiness includes traits such as integrity, honesty, reliability and loyalty. Respect includes the Golden Rule, tolerance, acceptance, nonviolence and courtesy. Responsibility is defined by duty, accountability, pursuit of excellence and self-control. Fairness includes justice and openness. Caring requires concern for others, and charity.

And, citizenship means doing your share in a community and respecting authority and the law.

Recently, thanks to sponsorships from the Alabama Power Foundation and Councilwoman Bess Rich, the Chamber was able to send three local guidance counselors to be trained in the Character Counts curriculum. The program is a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics in California. It has evolved into a partnership of nearly 400 national and regional organizations and local school districts.

One of the most noted partners is the state of Texas, which has launched the nation's largest and most comprehensive program using the Character Counts values. Led by Gov. George W. Bush, the initiative is being used to reduce youth violence, crime, teen pregnancy, sexually-transmitted

diseases and other anti-social conduct.

"Yes, we want our children to be smart and successful. But even more, we want them to be good and kind and decent," said Bush. "Yes, our children must learn how to make a living. But even more, they must learn how to live, and what to love. 'Intelligence is not enough,' said Martin

Luther King, Jr. 'Intelligence plus character — that is the true goal of education.'"

"On a personal level, I have a renewed spirit to actively pursue issues of integrity," said local participant **Cathy Batts**, a guidance counselor with Hamilton Elementary School.

"Character education is about teaching young people to know, accept and live up to their moral duties and obligations," said **Wanda Conner** who counsels at South Brookley Elementary School.

As part of their training, each guidance counselor agreed to return to Mobile and train their peers as well as other teachers and principals. However, their enthusiasm for the program has transcended the original agreement and now they have unanimously recom-

mended that Character Counts be implemented community-wide with involvement from Mayor Mike Dow, the city council, school board, county commission, Police and Sheriff's departments and others. Their premise is that good character must start at the adult level so youth can have role models.

"The seminar has helped kindle within me a spark of hope and excitement that collectively, we can do something to make Mobile a safer, happier, healthier place in which to live and grow," Batts concluded.

Anyone interested in participating in the Character Counts program, or any company wishing to help purchase training materials for the classroom, can contact **Michele Rumpf** at the Chamber at 431-8630.

“

"Yes, we want our children to be smart and successful. But even more, we want them to be good and kind and decent," said Bush. "Yes, our children must learn how to make a living. But even more, they must learn how to live, and what to love. 'Intelligence is not enough,' said Martin Luther King Jr. 'Intelligence plus character — that is the true goal of education.'"

Gov. George W. Bush

”

Mobilian Named One of Alabama's Unforgettable Faces

In full Mardi Gras costume, **Gordon Tatum** has welcomed literally thousands of visitors to the Port City. He's one of the first faces many tourists see when they come to Mobile, and his commitment to making everyone's visit to Mobile memorable and his extensive knowledge of our city's rich 300 year-history, made him a natural section as one of Alabama's Unforgettable Faces.

Recognized by the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, Tatum is the City of Mobile Museum's public relations director.

"He's a perfect blend of all that our city has to offer," said **Brenda Scott**, president and CEO of the Mobile Convention and Visitors Corporation, MCVC. "And a perfect epitome of the Southern gentleman, with an unbelievable passion and love of Mobile and its history.

MCVC nominated Tatum for the award, given to only 12 throughout the state. He will be featured in the *2001 Alabama Vacation Guide* and *Alabama Vacation Calendar*, two publications encouraging tourism.

Mark Berson, director of the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel said, "(Tatum) makes a positive statement about the kind of people tourists may expect to meet when they visit our state."

Another regional resident, **David Worthington** of Magnolia Springs was named an Unforgettable Face. Worthington owns the majestic Magnolia Springs Bed and Breakfast and was recently featured on Bob Vila's *Restore America*.



Gordon Tatum

Photo courtesy of the Alabama Bureau of Tourism/Denise Madley

Other recipients include: Joanne Bland of Selma; Richard and Carol Dickson of Ozark; Tim Edwards of Fort Rucker; Martha Hawkins of Montgomery; Scott Hoyland of Birmingham; Jan Jones of Opelika; Royle Lowery of Georgiana; William McDonald of Florence; Shane Smith of Bridgeport; and Janie Torrell of Attalla.

For more information on the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, or to receive a vacation guide, call 1-800-ALABAMA or go online to www.touralabama.org.



Exporting goods and services throughout the world is big business in Mobile. International trade opportunities might be available for your company. To see what the Chamber can do to help improve your business profits, visit

www.mobilechamber.com

A TEST OF CHARACTER— What would you do?

Your eldest child is about to enter high school. The local public high school that he will have to attend based on your residence has a poor academic reputation and is known to have a problem with drug use on campus. Your sister lives in an adjoining district with a much better school. She is willing to let your child use her address as if it were your residence. You know other people who have done the same. In order for this to work, you would have to tell your child to say he lives at your sister's address even though this is not true. Though you could afford private school, it would be financially difficult and you don't want to move to another district. You would:

- _____ Use your sister's address since it is not wrong to do so. Schooling is very important and it isn't your fault that the school in your district is not a good one.
- _____ Use your sister's address since the rule is stupid and unfair.
- _____ Use your sister's address, as long as there was no specific law against doing so. If the state wanted to prevent this, they would have made it illegal.
- _____ Discuss the matter with your child, explaining the importance of school but that he would have to lie about his residence; then let him decide.
- _____ Not use your sister's address since it would be wrong to lie about your child's residence and to put your child in a position where he must lie. However, since schooling is so important, you would make the financial sacrifice to either send him to private school or move to another district.
- _____ Not use your sister's address since it would be wrong to lie about your child's residence and to put your child in a position where he must lie. However, since the cost of private school tuition would require a financial sacrifice and moving is such a difficult process, you would send him to the local school and make the best of it.

If you selected 1-4, you picked an answer where you had to lie. The Character Counts program encourages adults to always tell the truth regardless of the outcome and your children will follow suit.

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Mobile Wins Bid to Host Three National Sporting Events

Running and rolling – the USA Track & Field Fall Cross Country Championship and the USA Track and Field Convention set for 2001 and the Women's Southeastern Bowling Tournament slated for 2002 both announced Mobile as their next site location in late July.

Referring to the USA Track and Field (USATF) events, 2001 Meet Director Steve Schoenewald said, "This is a wonderful opportunity for Mobile to showcase itself to an Olympic organization known as the world wide leader in track and field. "Many of our developing athletes will be testing their abilities at this Fall Cross Country National Championship as these are the aspiring athletes for

the 2004 Summer Olympic Games," he added. Mobile is the first smaller, or second-tier city, to win the competition scheduled for December 1, 2001 at USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park. Other host cities have included Boston, San Francisco, Orlando and Los Angeles.

With about 1,000 teams traveling to Mobile in the summer of 2002, the Women's Southeastern Bowling Tournament (WSBT) is expected to also have a tremendous impact on the city. The event will be held over the course of six weekends at the AMF Florida and AMF Camellia Bowling lanes.

For more information, contact Danny Corte at 208-2505.

12th Annual Do Dah Day Celebration

Dress up the dog and costume the cat for the annual Do Dah Day Celebration!

On Sunday, Oct. 29 at Mobile's historic Bienville Square, the Mobile Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) will host its Do Dah Day Celebration with fun family activities, information booths, lots of food and ice-cold refreshments.

Activities begin at 11 a.m. and will feature The Revolution Mobile, a 25-foot long, 15-foot high, 7-ton vehicle displaying a larger than life dog and cat with a head that turns. Pets, with or without their owners, can compete for prizes in 10 categories such as: prettiest pet, look-a-like (pet and owner), "CAT" egory (feline only), biggest sports fan and celebrity look-a-like.

Sponsored by WEAR TV3, Buffalo Rock-Pepsi, Lite Mix 99 and other area and national businesses,

and supported by the City of Mobile, the parade starts at 1:59 p.m. Following the parade, more than \$5,000 in cash and prizes will be given away to contest winners.



A nonprofit, volunteer and humane organization, the Mobile SPCA uses proceeds from this event to implement important projects including humane education in schools, cruelty investigations and prosecutions, spay-neuter assistance, pet placement, nursing home visitation and numerous other animal and

people programs. The registration fee to walk in the parade is \$5 and entrants must present proof of their pet's rabies vaccination. For more information and pet restrictions, contact Janine Woods at the Mobile SPCA at 476-SPCA (7722), or by e-mail at jw@zebra.net.

Business Spotlight of the Month Gourmet Galley



Flying around the world, tasting the local food and fare, then bringing it all home to share with her friends is what Shari Webster loves to do. She opened the Gourmet Galley in November 1999 to do just that – share her love of fine wines and gourmet foods from around the world with Alabama's Gulf Coast.

The Gourmet Galley is a specialized food market striving to give customers a taste for hard-to-find cheeses, oils, wines, beers, champagne, fine imported candies, chocolates, coffees and teas. "I want to introduce the curious person to things that they wouldn't normally find in Mobile," Webster says.

Webster, who is a self-taught wine expert, learned the world has a lot to offer in the way of food and wine while working as a flight attendant for the last 13 years. She still loves to fly and it shows. Webster maintains both careers by flying twice a month and she is constantly looking for new things to bring home while abroad.

"You'll find lots of good things in the Galley," she says. She stocks her Mobile shop with everything from Spanish truffles and German coffees to French wine and Cajun Bloody Mary mix. Rainbow Trout pate' and Belgian chocolates can also be found in stock. While the unique selection is remarkable, it's the customer service that keeps people coming back.

Webster recalls, "A lady came in looking for a certain wine she had at a recent anniversary dinner. She loved it and wanted to relive the experience, but she couldn't remember the name of the wine. Not only were we able to figure out

Shari Webster makes a toast and welcomes you to the Galley.

what kind it was, but we had it in stock and the Gourmet Galley was the only place in Mobile that did."

The Galley hosts several specialized promotional tastings throughout the year so customers can get to know wines. Recently she headed the "Introduction to the World of Wines," at Gus' Azalea Manor. The Galley will also host private wine and beer tastings tailored to any customer's needs.

Webster's shop also specializes in gourmet gift baskets. Customers select several items and the staff will expertly combine them, or when time is of the essence, there are ready-made "theme" baskets. When companies or schools plan special promotions, they can custom print logos on food packaging and ship or deliver them.

The Gourmet Galley, located at 6808 Airport Blvd., across the street from Providence Hospital, is open daily from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. For more information, call 343-3555 or log on to www.gourmetgalley.com.

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

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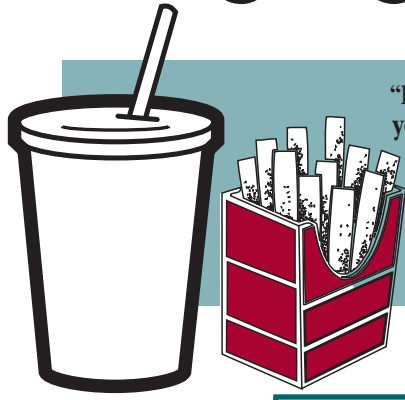
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Staying Economically Fit – Chart Outlin



“Every time you buy fries and a drink you support the restaurant operation and the people who work there. The employees, in turn, spend that money earned somewhere else. And so it goes.”
Ritchie Hurt

Mobile's economy continues to thrive. In between significant job announcements by new and existing companies such as Hertz (more than 300 jobs) MAE (100 new jobs) and IPSCO (450 jobs), are the mainstay of economic prosperity – small, retail and construction businesses adding jobs – one, or even 10, at a time.

The recently updated chart below outlines the economic impact of a newly created job in the Mobile area and identifies its contribution to the various sectors based on average earnings. Jobs are separated into four broad divisions, along with the industry's average salary, including manufacturing, retail, services and construction.

For example, the annual purchases of food and drink by one new manufacturing employee translates into a \$9,383 impact to area related businesses. In addition, \$239 of annual taxes are injected into state and local schools.

Economic Impact of New Employees on the Mobile (on an annual basis using multipliers)

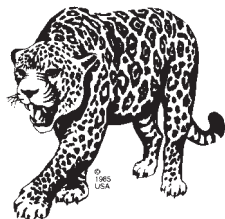
JOB CATEGORY/ AVERAGE SALARY	Number of Employees	Food/Drink	Housing/Utilities	Apparel/Services	Transportation	Health Care
MANUFACTURING (\$39,952)	1	9,383	20,429	3,660	13,242	3,926
	10	93,830	204,290	36,600	132,420	39,260
	50	469,150	1,021,450	183,000	662,100	196,300
	100	938,300	2,042,900	366,000	1,324,200	392,600
RETAIL (\$20,233)	1	4,052	8,822	1,580	5,718	1,695
	10	40,520	88,220	15,800	57,180	16,950
	50	202,600	441,100	79,000	285,900	84,750
	100	405,200	882,200	158,000	571,800	169,500
SERVICES (\$32,180)	1	6,407	13,951	2,499	9,043	2,681
	10	64,070	139,510	24,990	90,430	26,810
	50	320,350	697,550	124,950	452,150	134,050
	100	640,700	1,395,100	249,900	904,300	268,100
CONSTRUCTION (\$34,023)	1	7,857	17,107	3,065	11,089	3,288
	10	78,570	171,070	30,650	110,890	32,880
	50	392,850	855,350	153,250	554,450	164,400
	100	785,700	1,710,700	306,500	1,108,900	328,800



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es Impact of Area Job Announcements

The Chamber uses this data when new and existing companies talk about adding local jobs to demonstrate the impact. "This is a quick audit to help us understand how additional employees promote our area's economy," said Ritchie Hurt, the Chamber's director of research and information.

"If an organization is thinking about an expansion they, too, could use this chart to upgrade the significance of their announcement. The impact of jobs on the community is another way to describe what their business means to the community," added Hurt.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Analysis Division, develops the basic multipliers for this chart for Mobile County. The average annual wages are determined based on the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract.

For more information about this chart, call Hurt at 431-8654.

Community Economy

Direct Impact of New Employees On Mobile Community Taxes

Entertainment	Personal Care Reading/Education Smoking	Insurance Pension Social Security	City of Mobile (sales, general sales, restaurant, auto, gas, property)	Mobile County (sales, auto, gas, property)	State Tax (income, sales, auto, gas, property)	School Tax (local and state - 80%)
3,194	4,325	5,856	651	374	1,957	239
31,940	43,250	58,560	6,510	3,740	19,570	2,390
159,700	216,250	292,800	32,500	18,700	97,850	11,950
319,400	432,500	585,600	65,100	37,400	195,700	23,900
1,379	1,868	2,529	349	194	794	121
13,790	18,680	25,290	3,490	1,940	7,940	1,210
68,950	93,400	126,450	17,450	9,700	39,700	6,050
137,900	186,800	252,900	34,900	19,400	79,400	12,100
2,281	2,954	3,999	532	303	1,489	192
21,810	29,540	39,990	5,320	3,030	14,890	1,920
109,050	147,700	199,950	26,600	15,150	74,450	9,600
218,100	295,400	399,900	53,200	30,300	148,900	19,200
2,675	3,622	4,904	560	320	1,596	203
26,750	36,220	49,040	5,600	3,200	15,960	2,030
133,750	181,100	245,200	28,000	16,000	79,800	10,150
267,500	362,200	490,400	56,000	32,000	159,600	20,300

Source: Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Research and Information Division

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Is the Customer Always Right? Advice from SCORE

"We all know your customer can be wrong," says Bob Kirby, counselor and former chairman of the Senior Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE). However, the customer's point of view is the view-point business managers and owners need to see. Be sensitive to the customer.

During his years with the Better Business Bureau (BBB), Kirby found that most complaining customers want to tell their story and have their complaint responded to quickly.

He urges small business owners to develop an operating principal and decide in advance how employees will address a customer's complaints. Develop a written customer service policy to help all your employees cope with customer complaints.

And don't think you don't need one, warns Kirby. "No matter how good your product or service, customers may have difficulties or complaints."

View complaints as positive input for improvement, advises Kirby. A properly treated customer complaint can change a dissatisfied customer into a satisfied customer. It takes patience, diplomacy and an honest willingness to meet the customer halfway to effectively resolve disputes.

Here are a few suggestions from Kirby on what your policy should include:

- Listen to each complaint and consider it seriously. Never mind how foolish it may sound, most people will not complain unless they feel they have a legitimate gripe.

- Try to take the customer's point of view. If you were in that customer's place, how would you feel? Would you feel upset or angry if the incident happened to you?

- If an investigation is necessary, do it while the customer is present if at all possible.

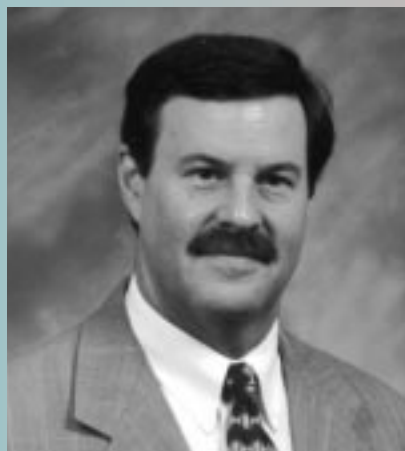
- If the investigation shows the customer is right, admit it at once. Apologize and offer to make amends then and there. An open and honest response brings you from conflict to common ground.

- Should the complaint turn out to be baseless, try to let the customer save face. Tell him or her that the feedback has helped you evaluate and improve your service.

- When a complaint comes to you through an agency such as the BBB, reply in writing as soon as possible.

If you would like to discuss consumer-focused selling customer service or dispute resolution, contact SCORE, which offers free and confidential small-business counseling and mentoring. Call 431-8614 for an appointment. SCORE is located at the Chamber.

Diplomat of the Month



Gary Adams

The featured Diplomat of the Month is a consistent winner. Gary Adams has been named Diplomat of the Month seven times, and in 1998, was recognized as Diplomat of the Year for his outstanding service as a Chamber representative at functions such as ribbon cuttings and grand openings.

"Being active as a Diplomat is very rewarding," Adams says. Events like First Friday, Business After Hours and Marketing Meetings are great for networking and meeting new business contacts."

Adams, senior account manager with OEC Office Plus, the largest locally owned company specializing in office products and furniture, is also very active in Chamber Chase, the annual total resource development and membership drive. For the last three years, he was the leading recruiter of new memberships. During this year's effort, Adams has brought in 12 new Chamber members, bringing his three-year total to 47.

Donating his time is very important to Adams and volunteering with the Chamber is just one of many ways he gets involved in the community. He also works actively with the local Builders Club, a middle school service club, and the Key Club, a high school service club, is a long time member of Kiwanis, sings with a gospel recording quartet known as the "Messengers," and is very active in his church.

"Getting involved with the community helps me to realize how fortunate I have been," Adams said. "There's no feeling like the one you get when you help someone."

Doobie Brothers, Travis Tritt to Headline BayFest 2000

From classic rock to rhythm and blues – everyone's favorite music will be featured at BayFest 2000 set for October 6, 7 and 8 at Bienville Square.

Headliners for the sixth annual event are the classic rock band The Doobie Brothers, rhythm and blues star Gladys Knight, the modern rock band Blues Traveler, and country singer Travis Tritt.

Festival hours are: 6 p.m. - Midnight on Friday, Oct. 6; 11 a.m. – Midnight on Saturday, Oct. 7; and Noon – 10 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 8.

Advance weekend passes are \$25 and may be purchased at AmSouth Bank, Godfather's Pizza, Food World and Bruno's. Tickets are also available at Ticketmaster outlets, The Goldmine, Peaches,



Other featured stages include eclectic, gospel, the "launching pad" that will host up-and-comer-type bands, a family and children's stage, plus an extensive activity area.

More than 100 national and local acts will be set up in a 14-block area centered around Bienville Square and bordered by Dauphin, Water, Congress and North Conception Streets, all closed for the weekend festival.

Northside Check Exchange, and by phone at 434-0033 or ticketmaster.com.

A one-day pass may be purchased at the festival gates for \$20. Children under 12 will be admitted free with a ticket-holding adult. Special corporate rates are available for groups of 25 or more.

For information on the music schedule, contact the Mobile Office of Special Events at 470-7730.

Test yourself

◆ How Are Your Customer Relations?

Delivering superior service is easier when you view customers favorable. Unfortunately, many organizations perceive customers as annoyances. Take this test:

How do you describe customers when you refer to them?

Suggested action: If you routinely label customers as "pests," you're bound to treat them poorly. Choose positive words instead. Example: Rather than calling someone "picky," say he has "high standards."

Do you speak up when you hear co-workers complaining about customers?

Suggested action: If colleagues cast aspersion on customers, don't join in. And don't criticize your co-workers. Instead, explain why it's in everyone's interest to regard buyers with respect.

How does your job affect customers?

Suggested action: You may have a vague idea of your service role, but don't stop there. Specify how you influence customers' satisfaction. Write a sentence that summarizes your contribution to customer service. Refine it by asking, "How does that help customers?" until you've uncovered your most direct impact.

How do customers react to you?

Suggested action: By noticing how buyers respond to you, you'll want to please them rather than just meeting their minimal expectations. If a customer asks directions and you pull out a road map, make a copy and highlight the route to take, you'll undoubtedly see a delighted, appreciative customer... who'll come back again.

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Chamber Hires New International Trade Program Manager

The Chamber recently hired Deborah "Debbie" Dorta as international trade program manager in the Trade & Technology Division of the Economic Development Department.

Dorta has an extensive background and education in the field of International Studies. Having graduated from the University of South Alabama, she has worked with the Catholic Social Services Refugee Program, participated in the Studies Abroad Program in Xalapa, Mexico, and most recently, worked with the International Trade Center in Mobile.

According to Dorta, her interests in International Trade began early in life, and she concentrated on finding a position that connected her to her passion of international cultures.



Deborah Dorta

"I've always been interested in other cultures and international affairs. This position is just what I've been looking for."

The Trade department helps local companies expand their business through international trade and investigates foreign markets and investments.

"Debbie is a great addition to our team and we are very excited about having her extensive knowledge and experience on board to assist Chamber members," said Tony van Aken, director of Trade and Technology at the Chamber.

Dorta is fluent in Spanish. She spent time studying in Xalapa, and experienced the country's lifestyle first hand.

She can be reached at 694-0702 or debbie@mobilechamber.com.

Saints Saturation – No Way!

◆ It's Mobile Day in the Superdome on Nov. 5



Photo by Michael C. Hebert/New Orleans Saints

Mobilians saw the New Orleans Saints practice in 90+ degree weather at Ladd-Peebles Stadium last month. They have a new opportunity to buy tickets locally through the Mobile BayBears. And now they've been invited to New Orleans for Mobile Day with the Saints. Is that Southern hospitality or what?

The New Orleans Saints are offering Mobilians tickets for \$25, that's \$15 off the regular \$40 ticket price, to the Saints vs. San Francisco 49ers game on Sunday, Nov. 5. The game starts at noon in the Superdome.

Tickets, available on a first-come, first-served basis, are reserved in the lower portion of the terrace and are available on just about any yard

line. Families of four or more who want to watch the game alcohol-free can request seats in the south end zone.

Fans are excited about having Coach Jim Haslett back in New Orleans. He was the Saints' defensive coordinator in the early 90s before leaving to be defensive coordinator with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

According to Saints' staff, the team has a very favorable schedule, and the 49ers game promises to be good one for Saints fans.

For ticket information call 504-731-1857. Orders can be faxed to 504-731-1834 or e-mailed to schexnaydrek@saints.nfl.com.



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Plans Underway for 2001 Membership Directory

◆ Directory proof on its way to members

It's time to start thinking about your business' listings in the Chamber's annual Membership Directory. One of the Chamber's most popular publications, the Directory is distributed each winter to members and extra copies are available for sale to nonmembers.

Each member company is listed in alphabetical order, by contact name in the Who's Who section and then again, by business category.

The 2001 directory will also feature businesses' Web site addresses and e-mail addresses. This is an added benefit to Chamber members that will provide yet another avenue to advertise their company.









Soon members will receive a proof of their current listing with the option to add additional listings and offering opportunities to make a member's company stand out among others. For \$75, businesses can list themselves in bold lettering. To make an even greater impression, businesses can be listed in red and bold type for \$150.

By popular demand, a new page is being added that will feature coupon ads for those interested in offering member-to-member discounts. Other ads are still available in the business category section ranging from \$495 to \$1,895 depending on size and number of colors.

For more information about highlighting your business in the upcoming directory, contact Pratt Vereen in the membership department at 431-8638.

Comparative Economic Indicators

June '00 vs June '99

Unemployment Rates	 4.8% June '00
	 5.2% June '99
Business Licenses	 315 June '00
	 241 June '99
Homes Sold	 470 June '00
	 446 June '99
Air Passengers From Mobile	 35,492 June '00
	 30,531 June '99

Riding The Line for United Way

On Sept. 25, employees of the Williams Company will attempt the biggest bicycling fundraiser in the U.S., embarking on a 2,000-mile trek from New York City to Houston to raise \$10 million for United Ways along the route. Once complete, Williams' 2000 Riding the Line will be the largest single fundraising event in the United Way's 113-year history.

Nearly 100 employees of Williams, an international energy and communications firm based in Tulsa with a presence in Mobile, will leave New York on Monday, Sept. 25 and arrive in Houston on Tuesday, Oct. 3. Along the way, the team will roughly follow the path of Williams' Transco natural gas pipeline and telecommunications network, traveling through New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana before finishing in Texas.

"These are not professional cyclists. These are average people challenging themselves to make a difference in the lives of people in need," said Cuba Wadlington, president and chief executive officer of Williams Gas Pipeline. "No, it's not easy, but that is what makes it so meaningful."

The group, divided into 10 teams, expects to average 60-70 miles a day, covering the distance relay-style. To participate, each team member was required to raise at least \$2,500 in pledges for

United Way. Williams will match each contribution dollar-for-dollar.

Williams will also match the contributions of local individuals and corporations interested starting at \$2,500 in co-sponsoring the event up to \$200,000.

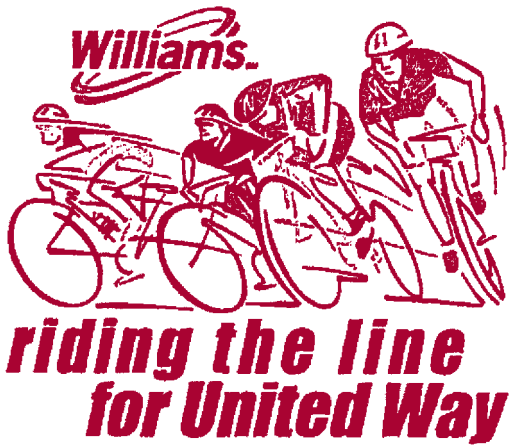
Locally, the United Way of Southwest Alabama has the opportunity to raise up to \$400,000 for this year's campaign that kicked off earlier this month. The cyclists are tentatively scheduled to be in the Mobile area on Sunday, Oct. 1.

"This is an exciting opportunity our local United Way," said Randy Delchamps, United Way's campaign chairman. "Thanks to

Williams' matching gifts, individuals, corporations and foundations can double the impact of their United Way contribution this year, by participating in this singular event."

Last year, the 1999 Line Bike Ride started as an idea by two Williams' employees who wanted to help raise money for the United Way. After three months of planning and a goal of only \$100,000, the event grew with more cyclists and more volunteers than they imagined and eventually raised more than \$2 million dollars.

For more information regarding Williams' Riding the Line, call Steve Pickering or Jason Holmes at 433-3624 or visit the ride Web site at www.ridingtheline.com.



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New Members

Continued from back cover.

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Mobile, AL 36606-2503
(334) 476-8078
Paving & Road Building Contractor

Lyle-Stover Engineering Inc.

Carolyn Robe
1000 Hillcrest Rd., Ste. 210
Mobile, AL 36695-3916
(334) 634-1110
Engineers-Civil, Structure, Mechanical

McKean & Mizell

Investment Consulting Group of First Union
David W. McKean
3658 College Ln.
Mobile, AL 36608-1240
(334) 345-1142
Consultant

Charles N. McKnight,

Attorney
Charlie McKnight
250 Congress
Mobile, AL 36603-6481
(334) 433-2009
Attorneys

McNeil Specialty Products Company

David Sorg
RR 2 Box 16M Industrial Rd.
McIntosh, AL 36553-0239
(334) 944-6265
Food Ingredient Manufacturer

Chris Mitchell Marketing

Chris Mitchell
1250 Henckley Ave., Ste. 205
Mobile, AL 36609-3014
(334) 343-9295
Internet Services, Marketing Consultants

Mobile Area Crimestoppers Inc.

R. W. (Curly) Davis
2407 Airport Blvd.
Mobile, AL 36606-1709
(334) 208-1924
Nonprofit Crime Prevention Organization

Mobile Realty

John Stikes
7320 Hitt Rd.
Mobile, AL 36695-4436
(334) 639-0543
Real Estate-Residential

Payless Car Rental

Burt Taylor
1175 S. Beltline Hwy.
Mobile, AL 36606-3106
(334) 471-6141
Automobile Renting & Leasing

Pickett Contracting Inc.

Robin O. Hillman
363 Flint St.
Mobile, AL 36604-1911
(334) 478-0567
Contractors - General & Residential Builders

Real Estate & Oil Investments

(HM Baldwin)
Howard M. Baldwin
6963 Kali-oka Rd.
Saraland, AL 36571-9500
(334) 675-0375
Real Estate

Sergeant Majore Construction Company

Burl W. Sumlin Sr.
474 Bay Shore
Mobile, AL 36607-1528
(334) 471-1186
Contractors-General

Shane's Automotive & A/C Repair Inc.

Mary J. Kukuchi
270 Hillcrest Rd. #585
Mobile, AL 36608-5377
(334) 476-1999
Air Conditioning Equipment & System Repairing

The Sharbrough Law Firm

John Sharbrough
156 Saint Anthony St.
Mobile, AL 36603-6436
(334) 432-1413
Attorneys

Southern Gun & Pagers

Robert W. Grantham
5630A Hwy. 90 W.
Theodore AL 36582-1660
(334) 653-5520
Paging & Cellular & Sporting Goods

Southern Light LLC

Manager
1301 Azalea Rd., Ste. 501
Mobile, AL 36693-4703
(334) 662-1170
Fiber Optics Equipment & System

T.G.I. Friday's

Calvin Clay
6945 Airport Blvd.
Mobile, AL 36608-3711
(334) 633-4332
Restaurants

T.W. Cable Sales Inc.

Doye Turner
8733 Moffett Rd.
Semmes, AL 36575-5303
(334) 645-3727
Satellite Equipment/Systems

Universal Glass Company Inc.

T.E. Blankenship
1305B Springhill Ave.
Mobile, AL 36604-3202
(334) 433-5960
Scrap Metals & Glass Glazing Contractors

Veillon & Veillon Inc.

Jane Ankeron Veillon
12815 Dauphin Island Pkwy.
Codon, AL 36523-2861
(334) 973-0102
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N. Waller & Associates Consulting

Nathaniel Waller III
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CALENDAR VIEW

September 12 Member Breakfast and Briefing

Time: 7:15 - 9 a.m.
Place: Chamber McGowin Room
Cost: FREE
Call: Pratt Vereen at 431-8638

September 19 Noon Marketing Meeting

Time: Noon
Place: Chamber McGowin Room
Cost: \$6 and includes lunch
Call: Pratt Vereen at 431-8638

September 20 How to Market Your Business

Time: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Place: Chamber McGowin Room
Cost: \$15 and includes lunch
Call: Brenda Rembert at 431-8607

September 22 Fall Golf Tournament

Time: 7 a.m. registration 8:30 a.m. tee-off
Place: Magnolia Grove Golf Course
Cost: Hole Sponsors \$800/Individual Tickets \$150
Call: Pratt Vereen at 431-8638

September 26 E-Commerce

Time: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Place: Chamber McGowin Room
Cost: \$15 and includes lunch
Call: Brenda Rembert at 431-8607

September 28 Business After Hours

Time: 5:30 - 7 p.m.
Place: Whitney National Bank/25 S. Beltline Hwy.
Cost: \$2 for members/\$5 for potential members

COMING IN OCTOBER

October 6 Business At Breakfast

Time: 7:45 - 8:45 a.m.
Place: Bienville Club, AmSouth Bank Building
Cost: \$10 and includes breakfast
Call: Pratt Vereen at 431-8638

How to Market Your Business

Join Andrea Anderson and Margaret Hollinger of Crowne Investments Inc. on Wednesday, Sept. 20 as they take a comprehensive look at marketing. The *How To Market Your Business* seminar will be held in the Chamber's McGowin Room from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Topics covered will include the fundamentals of market research, evaluating and developing promotional campaigns, identifying and qualifying sales prospects and the importance of customer service in today's marketplace.

For reservations, contact **Brenda Rembert** at 431-8607. The cost of \$15 includes lunch.



Member Breakfast and Briefing

On Tuesday, Sept. 12, come meet the Chamber staff and learn more about the different departments at the Member Breakfast and Briefing. Breakfast will be served before and after the briefing on Chamber activities. This event is also an opportunity to market your company.

The cost is free, but reservations are required. Call **Pratt Vereen** at 431-8638.

Business After Hours

Enjoy an evening of networking at September's Business After Hours Thursday, Sept. 28 sponsored by Wilmer Hall and held at the Whitney National Bank, 25 North Beltline Hwy. Take advantage of this opportunity to develop new business contacts, and bring business cards to share among the crowd.

Reservations are not necessary. The cost to attend is \$2 for members and \$5 for potential members.



Maximizing E-Commerce Opportunities

The holiday shopping season is right around the corner and a record number of consumers are already surfing the Net for their gift-giving needs. The E-commerce seminar, held in the Chamber McGowin Room on Tuesday, Sept. 26, will feature BlueStar.net representatives who will demonstrate how Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) technology can speed up sales through high-speed Internet access. In addition, learn to conduct business safely and securely over the Internet.

This seminar is a good opportunity to get connected in the fast-growing and highly profitable E-commerce business. The cost is \$15 and includes lunch. Call **Brenda Rembert** at 431-8607 for reservations.



Noon Marketing Meeting

Brush up on marketing skills at the Noon Marketing Meeting sponsored by the Women's Yellow Pages of the Gulf Coast and held in the Chamber's McGowin Room. Attendees will have the opportunity to give a two-minute presentation on their company's product or service during the meeting. Bring brochures, flyers or other marketing materials to distribute during your presentation.

Cost to attend is \$6 and includes lunch. Reservations are necessary, call **Pratt Vereen** at 431-8638.



Business At Breakfast

On Friday, Oct. 6, the Bienville Club will host First Friday's "Business at Breakfast." The event will be held at the Bienville Club in the AmSouth Bank Building from 7:45 until 8:45 a.m. Steve Walker, director of Historic and Downtown Redevelopment, will speak on the future of downtown Mobile.

Reservations are necessary, and can be made by contacting **Pratt Vereen** at 431-8638. The cost to attend is \$10 and includes breakfast.



Golf Tourney – Sept. 22

Plan to treat clients, customers and employees to a day of golf on Friday, Sept. 22 at the Magnolia Grove Golf Course. Registration begins at 7 a.m. and breakfast will take place until tee-off at 8:30 a.m.

Hole sponsorships are available for \$800 and individual tickets cost \$150.

To inquire about sponsorship opportunities or to make reservations call **Pratt Vereen** at 431-8368.



CHAMBER ANNIVERSARIES

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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

WHO'S NEW?

James B. McWilson rejoined Minolta-QMS Inc. as vice president of North American sales and marketing. Prior to his employment with Genicom Corp., which began in 1992, he was executive director of U.S. sales for QMS. Minolta-QMS is a developer, manufacturer and supplier of document printing products.

Wilkins Miller announced three new additions to its staff. Claude Warren is director of technology services and J.T. Murray is a consultant in the technology services group. Both Warren and Murray are Certified Public Accountants with experience consulting in financial management software packages and are responsible for the firm's partnership with Great Plains, a global business solutions provider. Wilkins Miller partnered with Great Plains in 1998 to offer a variety of business solutions ranging from project accounting to payroll and human resource management suites.

Stephanie Sullivan is marketing coordinator, primarily responsible for the marketing of the firm's partnership with Great Plains. She comes to them from another local CPA firm.

Cardiology Associates announced the association of Erik A. Eways MD for the practice of clinical and interventional cardiology and Kenneth M. Burnham MD for the practice of clinical and invasive cardiology specializing in congestive heart failure.

ServiceMaster has awarded the following promotions: Jennifer Ikner, chief financial officer, Jennifer Pinson, corporate sales manager and Alicia Williams, operations manager.



Ikner



Pinson



Williams

BUSINESS ENDEAVORS

Danny Sirmon recently purchased House of Specialties from his father, Joe Sirmon, who started the company 30 years ago. Joe will remain an employee of the company to help serve local and national customers.

Savage Photo Lab & Gallery will offer C-41 color negative dip and dunk processing, custom enlargements and proof printing services this month. The new dip and dunk processor can handle 35mm, 120, 220 and 4X5" film. It is the only processor of its kind in operation in the Mobile area. For more information call 450-0007.

ITS Engineered Systems Inc. secured two contracts from Lukoil Oil Company, a major Russian corporation. The multi-million dollar contracts are for several custom-designed enhanced oil recovery steam generators and water treatment systems. ITS, a subsidiary of Offshore Tool & Energy Corp., also signed a protocol to form a joint venture for the manufacture of steam generators in Russia.

MEMBER NEWS

American Aero Cranes, also a subsidiary of Offshore Tool & Energy Corp., is in the process completing a three-crane order for Shell Offshore. The cranes are the largest model American Aero has produced to date for Shell Oil. The first unit will be delivered and installed this month. The remaining units will be completed by year's end.

Marian Myles is the branch manager of the Friendly Credit Union, recently opened at 2370-L Hillcrest Rd. The new office is the association's fourth and offers financial services including savings, checking accounts, CDs, IRAs as well as all types of loans to its members. Friendly has more than \$20 million in assets and serves thousands of members throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties.

WELL DONE!

Michael R. Holland was promoted to vice president commercial lending officer at Regions Bank. He joined the bank in 1992, working in the Private Banking and Management Training Program. Holland earned a bachelor's degree in Management from the United States Military Academy. He was a First Lieutenant in the 82nd Airborne Field Artillery and served in both Panama and Iraq. Holland also recently completed a three-year program at the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University.

Michele C. Manry was promoted to vice president commercial lending officer at Regions Bank. Manry received a bachelor's degree in Finance from the University of South Alabama and is a graduate of Alabama Banking School, University of South Alabama. She joined the bank in 1981 and worked primarily in the Credit Division before her transfer to the Commercial Loan Department in 1988.

Whitney Bank announced the transition of two bankers to the business banking department. Both will concentrate on meeting the financial needs of new and existing business customers. Patrick Ladd is an assistant vice president and has been with Whitney since 1995. He previously held the positions of branch manager and private banking officer. Melba (Bunny) Walker has been employed at the bank for 14 years and is also an assistant vice president. She has been a branch manager at Whitney for 11 years.



Ladd



Walker

The following community leaders are serving on United Way's 2000 Campaign Cabinet led by Randy Delchamps. Key volunteers and divisions are: Cheryl Thompson, pacesetters; Larry Fincher, Labor; Tom Hinds, board chairman; Gerald Friedlander, chair-elect; Scott Gray, James W. Turner and Charles Story, major industry; John Turner, major commerce; Hon. Rhondel B. Rhone, Clarke County; Col. J. David Norwood, Combined Federal Campaign; Ernest Ladd, general commerce; Kerry Weatherford, accountants, Charles E. Jackson Jr., insurance; Charles E. Bailey, stock brokers; John Saint, real estate; Marty Schweers and Robert Wilbank, general industry; Harold Dodge PhD, education; Jeff St. Clair, healthcare; Doug Anderson, lawyers, Dr. Gerry Phillips, doctors; Barbara Malkove and Sheriff Jack Tillman, public service; Tom and Sarah Damson, special gifts and Alexis de Tocqueville, giving; Michelle Mayberry and Emanuel Roberts, State Combined Campaign; Andy Wynne, United Way agencies; John Eads and Hon. Hilton Robbins, Washington County; Sydney Betbeze, communications; William Seifert, loaned executives; Russell Ladd, leadership giving; Mayor Mike Dow and Jim Apple, Horizons Division; and Mayor Mike Dow, luncheon sponsors.

Larson & McGowin Inc., a full service forest management and consulting firm headquartered in Mobile, announced recent promotions. L. Alexander McCall was promoted to vice president, Consulting Services Group. Jessica Little was elected secretary/treasurer. Jeffrey W. Ingram will serve as branch manager of the new office in Clinton, Miss. and Todd Corley will move from Huntsville, Texas to assume management of the Jackson, Ala. office.

Research conducted by Dr. James M. Cummings with the University of South Alabama Division of Urology was highlighted in the August issue of the *Journal of Urology*. The article describes the use of an artificial neural network to predict the probability of ureteral stone (kidney stone) passage.

Win Hallett, president of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, recently accepted the position of chairman of the Metropolitan Cities Council for the American Chamber of Commerce Executives during 2001. The Metropolitan Cities Council is a group of Chambers around the country whose annual income exceeds \$1.5 million, and whose populations exceed 500,000.

Thomas Hospital of Fairhope earned 10 awards from the Alabama Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Society. The Hospital received a Gold Award for its Norman Rockwell Exhibit/East Tower Opening in the Total Marketing/Public Relations Program category. The program also received two Judges' Awards for Creativity and Resourcefulness. The Women's Best campaign received a Gold Award in the Total Advertising Campaign category and a Silver Award in the Print Advertising category. The Hospital's quarterly publication, *Progress Notes*, received a Gold Award in the Ongoing Publications category. A brochure entitled *Birth Right*, won a Gold Award in the Special Publications category and a Judges Award for Creativity.

Mercy Medical of Daphne achieved accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. The Hospital demonstrated compliance with the Joint Commission's nationally recognized health care standards. The Joint Commission also conducted an on-site survey of Mercy Medical's Home Care Services and Integrated Inpatient Services.

The Council on Accreditation of Services to Families and Children named Joyce Collier, executive director of the Family Counseling Center, the Peer Reviewer of the Year for 1999. Collier served as a reviewer for eight years to the Council that accredits social services in the United States and Canada.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Camp Rap-A-Hope, an annual free summer camp for children with cancer held in Citronelle, Ala., hosted a record number of almost 60 campers from six Southeastern states. The camp, sponsored by Mobile County Medical Society, provides a summer camp experience for children who might otherwise be denied this opportunity because of their diagnosis or treatment. For camper and counselor applications or information about the camp and support opportunities, call 343-3042.

The Museum of Mobile was recently loaned a life size sculpture of an adult male African-American in chains on the Auction block titled "Slavery." Local artist Noah Turner worked on the sculpture for three years and completed it in the early 1990s. It is carved from the trunk of a cedar tree believed to have been planted by slaves before the Civil War and fell during Hurricane Frederic in 1979.

Turner's sculpture will be included in the new exhibits planned for the Museum when it moves to the 67,000 sq.-ft. National Historic Landmark building in downtown Mobile, the Southern Market/Old City Hall building.

The Better Business Bureau is urging online merchants to take time to review their obligations under the Mail Order Rule so customers can be better served during the upcoming holiday season. For more information on the Mail Order Rule, visit the Federal Trade Commissions Web site at www.ftc.gov.

The Alabama Power Foundation announced a \$500,000 gift to support a new scholarship program in the University of South Alabama's College of Engineering. This is the largest private gift in the history of the USA College of Engineering and one of the largest in the history of the University. The Alabama Power Engineering Endowed Scholarship Fund will be used to perpetually award eight academic scholarships in the College of Engineering and will cover the cost of tuition, fees and books.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

The Honor's Golf Classic Tournament benefiting Senior Citizens Services is set for Sept. 15 at TimberCreek Golf Course. The four-ball scramble has a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. For more information call 470-5224.

The 14th Annual Mercy Medical Meyercord Memorial Golf Tournament will be held Sept. 22 at 12:30 p.m. at Lakewood Golf Club, Marriot's Grand Hotel in Point Clear. Proceeds from the event benefit Mercy Medical's Patient Charity Care program. Reservations can be made by calling 621-4217.

The Mobile Museum of Art and the Arts Patrons League (APL) are sponsoring the 36th Annual Outdoor Arts & Crafts Fair on Saturday, Sept. 23 & Sunday, 24 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The fair features fine arts and crafts such as paintings, sculptures, turned wood, glass, pottery, photography and more. Cost for admission is \$2 for adults; children 12 and under are admitted free. Due to the construction of the Mobile Museum of Art's expansion, this year's fair will be held on the north side of the lake at Langan Park.

Proceeds go towards purchases for the permanent collection of the Mobile Museum of Art, and towards the APL's art beautification projects around Mobile. For more information call 208-5200.

A new era begins when the Mobile Symphony kicks off the 2000-2001 season Saturday, Sept. 30, with Russian Fireworks, a sampling including Tchaikovsky and Mendelssohn. Selected and conducted by the Symphony's new Music Director Scott Speck, the performance will also feature an appearance by violinist Philip Quint. For ticket information call 433-2787.

The Fall term of USA Special Courses begins this month. The University offers more than 100 non-degree classes and certificate programs in seven different areas. Registrations are currently being accepted. Call 431-6405 or visit www.southalabama.edu/specialcourses.

Springhill Memorial Hospital is hosting a free informational program, "Helping Your Teenager Make College and Career Choices," on Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. in the Gerald Wallace Auditorium. John Paul Taylor, MA, Med, CRC, Vocational Counselor and Ann Fillingim, MS, MED, Educational Consultant, will present the seminar. To RSVP, call 344-2762.

The Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind is offering three presentations on Friday, Sept. 22: "Understanding and Using the American with Disabilities Act to Your Advantage;" "How to Effectively Use an Interpreter;" and "Benefits of Hiring Individuals Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing." Call 432-7777 to RSVP.

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