

THE BUSINESS VIEW

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MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Local Legislature Rated Above Average

When it comes to small business legislative issues, it's good to know that someone is keeping score. The voting records of eight out of Alabama's nine legislators were recently recognized by the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB), a small business lobbying group with offices in Washington DC and all 50 states.

The group tallies votes on pertinent issues to small businesses. During the 107th Congress, key votes were taken on 13 bills addressing tax relief, ergonomics, pensions, medical malpractice

damage awards and more. To be named a "guardian of small business," senators and representatives must vote with small business at least 70 percent of the time.

Alabama's Republican legislators all earned a perfect score of 100 percent – Sen. Richard Shelby, Haleyville; Sen. Jeff Sessions, Mobile; Rep. Sonny Callahan, Mobile; Rep. Terry Everett, Enterprise; Rep. Bob Riley, Ashland; Rep. Robert Aderholt, Haleyville; and Rep. Spencer Bachus, Vestavia Hills.

Democrats Rep. Bud Cramer, Huntsville, earned an 85 and Rep. Earl Hilliard, Birmingham, a 15.

In Mississippi, four of seven earned the award; in Louisiana, six of nine; and Florida, 16 of 25.

Earlier this year Alabama's congressional contingent was recognized for its support of small business issues by the Small Business Survival Committee (SBSC), a Washington DC-based advocacy group. Listed eighth out of 50 states, Alabama earned 87 percent of a 100 percent scale.

"Small businesses provide the bulk of innovations, goods, services and jobs in our economy. And while

practically all members of Congress say they support small businesses, their voting records

sometimes reveal a different story," said Raymond Keating, SBSC chief economist.

Idaho was first on the SBSC list; with Alaska at number two; Kentucky, three; New Hampshire, four; and Oklahoma, five. Louisiana tied with George and Tennessee for the 14th position with 73 percent; Mississippi ranked 18th with 69 percent; and Florida tied with North Carolina and Texas for 24th position with 60 percent.

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Reviving an 85-Year Tradition

In these days of copious business mergers, occasionally things don't go as planned and bigger isn't always better. Shortly after Mobile-based Lerio Corp. merged with its chief competitor based in Florida in 2000, the majority of Lerio employees learned they would be facing a lay-off when the local facility was closed.

After 24 years, former Lerio plant manager Darrell Davis found himself without a job and with no idea of what he would do next. "This is all I know," says Davis referring to his work with Lerio, a family-owned company that manufactured plant containers from 1915 to 2000.

With courage and determination, Davis is rebuilding his career. He and Melvin Miller, former Lerio vice president of sales and marketing, and a small group of investors incorporated Global Thermal Technologies (GTT) in August 2001. Miller passed away this summer, but his son Jonathan joined the company and serves as comptroller and manages sales.

The new company started producing and shipping its plastic plant containers last month and is test-marketing an innovative design for temporary roads.

It was Ronnie Davis with RDA, a Citronelle-based service company, who prompted Darrell to start the business. Ronnie, also a GTT partner, was looking for a solution to prolong the life of a lumber mat he patented. The two discussed how the same material and a similar process for plastic plant containers could translate into plastic logs and spacers that form a temporary road mat.

The oil, timber, pipeline, construction and environmental industries currently use these mats. The new design allows water to drain easily, maintains its traction, and is reusable and recyclable. GTT is also finding additional markets in the recreation arena, using the mat for boat launches and patios for motor homes.

To fund this new venture, GTT had to find something that people wanted, and people wanted flower containers, says Ronnie. "So we're starting with the flower containers and hope to soon produce the road mats."

"That's what got us back in the container business," adds Darrell.

Scraps and the leftover materials from the plastic sheets and pellets used to make plant containers can be blended and recycled into the new material for the roads, explains Ronnie. The company secured several patents for the new mat



Darrell Davis (left) and Jonathan Miller pose with the plant containers manufactured in south Mobile county.

design and has several more pending.

GTT introduced its new and improved plant container products at a notable industry trade show held in Mobile in January 2002, and attended another large show in Atlanta this summer, and the orders are pouring in.

"It's tough to break into this market. Our advantage is that people know us. Lerio customers were extremely happy and we expect to perform to that same level of customer satisfaction," says Darrell.

The company is in the process of hiring additional employees to step up production. Starting with 15 key personnel, many former Lerio employees, GTT expects to have as many as 40 within the next few months.

In a year's time, Darrell expects to carve out GTT's share of the plant container business, begin exporting his product and be well into production on temporary road products.

The Chamber's economic development team helped Darrell put Mobile back on the map for plant containers, reviving its previous 85-year history as a top supplier to nursery distributors throughout the U.S. "The Chamber held my hand through all phases – building, logistics, transportation, even advice on a business plan," says Darrell.

Chamber Advocates Repealing Out-of-County Gross Receipts Tax

Rarely has the Chamber fielded so many telephone calls from concerned members as it did two years ago after the Mobile City Council voted to begin collecting a 2 percent out-of-county gross receipts tax. While the tax had been "on the books" since the 1950s, it wasn't until the city began searching for additional revenue options that it was once again enforced.

On Oct. 10, the Chamber's executive committee approved a policy statement requesting Mayor Mike Dow and members of the city council to once again repeal the tax, which has been driving some businesses outside the city to avoid being penalized for operating inside the city limits.

"Members of the Chamber have increasingly expressed concern about the damaging impact of the two percent out-of-county gross receipts tax to their businesses and our city," Chamber Chairman Mike Lee of Page & Jones wrote in an open letter to the Mayor and council. "We strongly urge the council to work together with the mayor on this issue and agree on a path forward."

The tax is placed on some businesses operating in the city limits and selling products outside the city's police jurisdiction. Hundreds of companies have applied, and were awarded, exemptions because 50 percent of their sales were to other licensed businesses.

Initial projections estimated the tax would generate \$12 million a year for the city. Last fiscal year the amount collected was \$3.4 million according to the city's revenue department, well short of its projections.

In asking the council to again repeal the tax, the Chamber and its members are aware another funding source must be identified. It appears there is a consensus among elected officials that the tax needs to be repealed. The concern for the mayor and city council is replacing the lost revenue, and they are looking for possible solutions.

"We've opened our doors for frank dialogue with our members, some city council members, the mayor and other business owners who are

interested in seeing this tax again repealed," explained Chamber President Win Hallett. "One of our greatest strengths is the ability to bring different groups of people to the same table to find a solution, and this tax is no exception. We're committed to finding an end-product everyone can be happy with."

Official Position of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

There is mounting evidence that the collection of the 2 percent gross receipts tax on out-of-county sales is driving businesses to relocate outside of Mobile and Mobile County. From a practical standpoint, the tax penalizes local firms, making it more difficult for them to compete, and becomes an incentive for them to leave the city. Moreover, actual tax revenues have not met annual projections and have continually declined.

Therefore the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce respectfully calls upon the mayor and the city council to repeal the present 2 percent out-of-county gross receipts tax.

The Chamber advocates a business environment that gives members the best opportunity to compete and be successful. We offer the mayor and the city council the involvement and assistance of the membership of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce in efforts to address this issue and to create a more positive business environment for Mobile's very best future.

Approved by the Chamber's executive committee Oct. 10, 2002.

Recent Trade Mission Brings Home Orders for Mobile Companies

Before a group of Mobile delegates returned from a Chamber-sponsored trade mission to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, one participant secured a new order and another had a lead that could expand business operations overseas.

Chamber staff coordinate trade missions each year to help local companies begin or boost exports. With assistance from U.S. Commercial Services housed in American embassies, the group of 14 representatives visited a number of business contacts in London, Amsterdam and Rotterdam last month.

Another focus of the trip was to increase Mobile's visibility in the cruising industry. Following a meeting with senior editors of *Sea Trade*, an industry publication, Mobile was featured on its Web site and a more in-depth story is expected in the next quarterly issue. Members of the delegation toured cruising facilities in Amsterdam that have been honored as the best-designed terminal in the world.

This was the second trade mission for Greg Guzman, vice president of sales and marketing with AIRINC, an aircraft maintenance company based in Fairhope. He was part of a humanitarian delegation to Cuba last year.

After Sept. 11, repair maintenance is down in the U.S., according to Guzman. His goal was to make contacts that would bring aircraft maintenance contracts to the Fairhope-based company. Not only did he have a purchase order before he left Scotland that he expects to lead to additional business, Guzman met with key decision makers of airlines based in the Netherlands.

First-time participant Shawn Hunter with Industry Services went on the trip to identify a company to partner with or purchase in order to move into the United Kingdom and Netherlands



Members of the recent trade mission pose for a photo near the London Tower.

markets. The company, based in Mobile, sells and installs material that is used in the aluminum, chemical and pulp and paper industries, and both countries are prime markets for expansion.

Both Guzman and Hunter felt like they met the right contacts and brought home potential client information. "The Chamber does the leg work for a small business owner. Everything is set up when you arrive. Your time is spent on a productive visit rather than weeding out prospects," says Hunter.

The United Kingdom and the Netherlands both fall in the Top 10 list of countries that buy Alabama products. With commodities such as transportation equipment and computer and electronic products, the state exports \$442 million to the United Kingdom and \$214 million to the Netherlands.

The Chamber's next mission is scheduled to China (see related story on page 14). For more information, call Bridgette L. Clark at 694-0702 or bridgette@mobilechamber.com.

Chamber Bears City and County Budget Cuts

Commitment to Excellence Continues

Amid claims that "times are tough" and budgets must be cut, the Chamber lost close to \$110,000 in money used to recruit new industry, assist existing industry to expand and develop programs to assist local businesses in selling their products worldwide. The monies were lost when the City of Mobile and Mobile County cut performance contracts for fiscal year 2003, beginning Oct. 1 of this year.

"The impacts will be both immediate and mid-term," explains Jim Apple, vice president of economic development for the Chamber. Already, his department has slowed down outreach efforts, like hosting site location consultants so they can become more familiar with Mobile and the area's available buildings, sites and infrastructure.

In addition to eliminating a few current programs, Apple is concerned about the long-term implications of the budget cuts, such as hindering the Chamber's ability to compete for projects with other cities across the country, within the region and in the state of Alabama.

Mobile has been traditionally viewed as a "business-friendly" area for new job growth, with much of that driven by the Chamber's recruiting efforts. While budget cuts will not impact incentives, companies might not learn about Mobile in the earliest planning stages of opening a new branch or facility.

"We'll have to cut back on marketing Mobile," Apple adds.

The city and county budget cuts will also affect

the Chamber's community development and small business development efforts. Traditionally the Chamber used a portion of the city and county funds to implement new small business programs such as entrepreneurial training and support its outreach to foster developing minority-owned businesses. Also Envision Coastal Alabama, the two-county-area's long-range plan, housed at the Chamber, has in the past been partially supplemented by the city and county contract.

Ginny Russell, vice president of community and governmental affairs, says the Chamber has not yet decided the specific programs and services it will eliminate from this division. Russell feels sure the cuts will affect the citizens her department serves because program cuts are inevitable.

"We will keep an open line of communication with these two governments over the next year," Russell adds. "They must know what we do for the community, and how the loss in funding will impact our efforts."

Currently the Chamber staff is developing the 2003 Plan of Action and is looking for ways to minimize the effects of the cuts.

Apple encouraged Chamber members to learn more about what the organization does to increase funding by the city and county. One example is by contacting city and county elected officials to let them know how important it is to prime the economic pump, especially when the nation is projected to experience an economic upswing in 2003.

New Social Security Administration Building Under Construction



A new building for the Social Security Administration System is going up on Government Street next to Mobile County Public School's central office, Barton Academy. The office building, estimated at \$10 million, is expected to be complete next May and will be approximately 50,000 square feet plus an attached parking garage.

The owner of the building is Mid-South Development Co. out of Bowling Green, Ky. The company develops governmental properties throughout the Southeast.

Mobile-based Williams & Associates is the architect on the project; Barter & Associates, structural engineering and design; and Rester & Coleman, civil engineers.

Don't miss the largest business event of the year!

Attracting 1200 people, the Annual Meeting is the single largest business event in the Mobile area each year. What other event in town gives you a positive pep talk on our city, the chance to hear a thought-provoking, business-related speech, a great dinner, a chance to make important key contacts, and still have time to interact and get to know other movers and shakers in the community? Make plans now.

**Tuesday, Feb. 4
5:30 p.m.
at the Mobile Civic Center
Tickets are \$40.
Tables of 10 are \$375.**

The following restaurants and caterers will be providing food for the event:

Alec Naman Catering • Atlanta Bread Company • The Bienville Club
Carrabba's Italian Grill • Copeland's of New Orleans
Creative Catering • Justine's at The Pillars • Lassere's Catering
Michelle's Family Restaurant • Rousso's Seafood Restaurant
Ruth's Chris Steak House • Tyner's Catering

From the Editor

In an effort to better serve our members and reduce mailings, a Chamber staff committee has been working to identify ways to combine communications.

We've revised our weekly e-mail as *The Business View Weekly* — a resource for significant news from Chamber members and achievements of the business community. It is not intended to take the place of the popular Member News column in the monthly printed version of *The Business View*. New staff, promotions, business endeavors, kudos, community news and events will continue to run. Currently this e-mail publication is sent to more than 2,000 individuals at Chamber member companies. Individuals

can be added to the mailing list by e-mailing Judy Winfield at judy@mobilechamber.com.

A recent focus group endorsed earlier research findings that *The Business View* is consistently read and routed throughout member offices and is a prime source for information impacting the local business community. With a strong following, it makes sense to include publications that were before mailed separately. In this month's issue we are including the quarterly *Envision* newsletter, and in January we'll include the Chamber's annual report.

As always, we want your feedback on this new process. Please forward comments to Susan Rak Blanchard at susan@mobilechamber.com.





101 Things To Like About Mobile

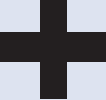

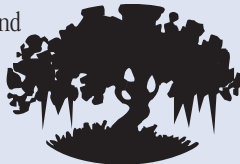







As we wind down Mobile's tricentennial year, this is the perfect time to review what makes Mobile a terrific place to work and play. Let us quickly say this is not an official ranking or listing. Most everyone could add at least 25 more things.

Instead, think of this as a starting point in appreciating and recognizing the tremendous attributes and resources available in and around Mobile.










There are a number of community organizations that plan magnificent events and provide much needed services to local citizens, as well as a number of businesses making favorite local products and scrumptious things to eat – too many to list them all and rather than offend anyone, we shied away from specifics.

Have fun with this list. Share it with employees. Keep it handy and when it seems things are less than perfect, and use it to remind everyone what a Gulf Coast treasure we have in Mobile.

- 1 Fresh seafood – shrimp, oysters, fish 
- 2 The disarming friendliness of the people
- 3 Great weather year-round 
- 4 Azalea Trail Maids 
- 5 The oak canopy on Government Street
- 6 Mardi Gras 
- 7 Downtown trolleys 
- 8 Being only 45 minutes away from walking on the beach 
- 9 An aggressive economic development recruitment team
- 10 Classic movies at the Saenger Theater 
- 11 The view from the Bienville Club 
- 12 Nationally-recognized golf courses 
- 13 Outdoor Mobile Pops concerts
- 14 USS Battleship Alabama, including its war memorials and vintage aircraft
- 15 The cannons fired at Fort Condé 
- 16 The way people want to come back when they have left
- 17 Both fresh and salt water fishing close by 
- 18 Antiquing at the Loop 
- 19 Blooming dogwoods, azaleas and wisteria 
- 20 Southern architecture found on homes and buildings
- 21 Fried crab claws 
- 22 The low cost of living

- 23 Responsible and responsive public officials
- 24 The Mobile Area Chamber's annual business expo
- 25 State-of-the-art and award-winning hospitals and medical facilities 
- 26 Swampboat tours of the Mobile delta
- 27  678 religious congregations catering to various styles of worship
- 28 The fact that we are a city, but not too big
- 29 Two malls across the street from each other 
- 30 United Way and the abundance of non-profit organizations and the opportunities to get involved
- 31 West Indies salad
- 32 Spanish moss and Mardi Gras beads dripping from the trees 
- 33 Chocolate Dobash cake
- 34 A growing regional airport 
- 35 Historic mansions
- 36  Wearing sunglasses in the rain
- 37 Cherubim statues at Magnolia cemetery
- 38 Short commutes to work 
- 39 The hospitality of the people
- 40  Cow pastures within miles of city limits
- 41 Standing at the Convention Center and watching huge ships navigate up the channel
- 42 Rain – yes really – and how it keeps everything green 
- 43 The countless festivals and craft fairs
- 44 BayFest 
- 45 The way Southerners talk slowly and thoughtfully
- 46 Driving along the Causeway
- 47 The community's activities and passion aimed at improving our schools
- 48 The statue of Admiral Semmes
- 49 Sand Island Lighthouse
- 50 Watching the sailboats from Dauphin Island 

- 51 The fountains in our many parks
- 52 The revolving Waterman Globe 
- 53 Baklava at Greek Fest
- 54 The partnerships between city and county public officials
- 55 America's Junior Miss
- 56 The 19th century train at Langan Park 
- 57 Watching movies at the IMAX
- 58 The flea market on Schillinger Road
- 59 Senior Bowl 
- 60 Fresh-made cheese straws
- 61 The flags at the International Trade Club
- 62 Sound Off in the *Mobile Register*
- 63 Bellingrath Gardens
- 64 Mobile-made richly decorated chocolate Easter eggs 
- 65 The Dauphin Island ferry
- 66 The first-class colleges and universities and the students they draw from all over the world
- 67 Magnanimous exhibits at the Gulf Coast Exploreum
- 68 The Government Street Farmer's market Saturday mornings in the summer
- 69  Midnight Madness at the Greater Gulf State Fair
- 70 The variety of youth sports and their volunteer coaches
- 71 The 50 courts at the Mobile Tennis Center 
- 72 The peaks of the Convention Center, Regions Bank building and Government Plaza lit up at night
- 73  The way we throw ourselves a 300th birthday party that lasts for a year!
- 74 Coming downtown for fun instead of only to pay a traffic ticket
- 75 Seagulls in the grocery store parking lots 
- 76 The wonderful fragrances and sights at Festival of Flowers
- 77 The "Hot Light" when it's on at Krispy Kreme doughnuts
- 78 Innovative technology and medical discoveries made at the University of South Alabama
- 79 Boating underneath Dog River bridge

- 80 The smell of fresh-baked bread along I-65
- 81 The walking/jogging trail at Medal of Honor Park in west Mobile 
- 82 Semi-pro baseball, basketball and arena football – BayBears, Revelers and Wizards 
- 83 Do Dah Day 
- 84 The parades we throw for every holiday, even for visitors who come to the GMAC Bowl
- 85 Sitting with Mr. Cooper at Cooper Riverside Park 
- 86 Magnificent fireworks on Mobile River 
- 87 Holding a horseshoe crab at the Estuarium
- 88 The talented pool of local musicians, artists and photographers 
- 89 The numerous playhouses and theaters 
- 90 "Race the Roach" at Hank Aaron Stadium
- 91 The diversity of people, cultures and traditions
- 92 Riverboat and wilderness cruises
- 93 The lack of snowfall 
- 94 Alabama School of Math & Science
- 95 Second graders wearing their favorite colors for the Iron Bowl
- 96 The many museums and art galleries (especially the new Mobile Museum of Art and the Museum of Mobile)
- 97 The Eric Overby photo collection at the University of South Alabama Archives
- 98 The droves of people who contribute to the Recycling Center
- 99  Our maritime history
- 100 A great place to raise a family
- 101 Spectacular sunrises over the bay

Useful Web sites

- Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce**
www.mobilechamber.com
- Mobile Convention & Visitors Bureau**
www.mobile.org
- City of Mobile**
www.cityofmobile.org
- Mobile County**
www.mobilecounty.org
- Mobile Arts Council**
www.mobilearts.org
- The Museum of Mobile**
www.museumofmobile.com
- Mobile Museum of Art**
www.museumofart.com
- Gulf Coast Exploreum**
www.exploreum.net
- Mobile Public Library**
www.mplonline.org
- Bellingrath Gardens**
www.bellingrath.org

Chamber Pushes Forward to Build Area Workforce



The Chamber's Workforce Development Team is always focused on building Mobile's workforce. From left to right are Michele Rumpf, Beverly Livers and LaToya Brooks.

With a new emphasis on finding additional funding sources for the Center for Workforce Development (CWD), the Chamber is demonstrating its commitment to building a better workforce.

Michele Rumpf, formerly with the Chamber's community and governmental affairs department, has been reassigned to concentrate her grant-writing expertise to secure monies for innovative programs and partnerships that result in a win-win situation for local businesses and students.

Businesses connect with skilled and qualified workers and students receive the training and experience they need to enter the working world in fields including computer technology, shipbuilding, aerospace and construction trades.

"The biggest challenge our local businesses face is finding qualified employees who have a good work ethic and want to work," explains

Beverly Livers, the CWD director. "It's what motivated the creation of the program and it's the first question economic development prospects ask when considering the Mobile area for their next business venture."

Entering its fourth year, the center is a result of the Mobile School-to-Work Partnership, a coalition of the business community, Mobile County Public Schools and post-secondary education that was launched by the Chamber in 1996. For the

past three years, it has been funded by a federal school-to-work grant received through the Alabama Department of Economic and

"The biggest challenge our local businesses face is finding qualified employees who have a good work ethic and want to work."

Beverly Livers,
CWD director

Community Affairs. Chamber staff expect future funding to come from a mix of corporate, private and government sources and to be much more project-driven than in the past.

Recent accomplishments of the center include the creation of ASAP (Austal Scholarship and Apprenticeship Program), where high school seniors and recent high school graduates simultaneously work full-time at Austal USA's Mobile shipyard and complete Bishop State's two-year aluminum welding program. The center plays a major role in recruiting and selecting, as well as training high school principals and guidance counselors to promote the program to students and parents.

Another major accomplishment in 2002 is the creation of a health cluster, bringing together a consortium of hospitals and other healthcare providers, secondary and post-secondary education. The group's goal is to address critical health occupation shortages through increased awareness, hands-on experiences and educational programs that encourage students to pursue health careers.

Future plans on the center's drawing board include:

- Continuing support for the Austal scholarship and apprenticeship program;
- Collaborating with business and industry clusters to create new apprenticeship programs based on the ASAP model;
- Collaborating with the Mobile County Public Schools to enhance and increase technical education programs;
- Participating in research and planning for a comprehensive technology high school and/or magnet schools; and
- Expanding career exploration opportunities for youth and grant writing/fund development to obtain financial support for all of the above.

For more information about the Center for Workforce Development, contact Beverly Livers at 431-8659 or Michele Rumpf at 431-8631.

Michele Rumpf Joins Workforce Development

Recently Chamber executive staff approached Michele Rumpf about using her talents and experience to help the Chamber's Center for Workforce Development find a better variety of funding sources.

In September, the former coordinator of community and governmental affairs changed her focus to the center and began working on identifying, writing and submitting grants for Chamber-related economic development activities and primarily the Chamber's Workforce Development Center.

"With the loss of federal and local funding for the center's school-to-work program, it becomes critical to vigorously pursue other funding sources," says Rumpf. "I'm looking forward to the challenge of securing additional funding for workforce development programs."

Rumpf joined the Chamber in April 2000. Previously, she worked in the nonprofit and university arenas, and has considerable grant writing experience.

"The Center for Workforce Development has been rewarded with the addition of Michele as the grant and project coordinator. Michele brings versatility and vision to the Center for Workforce Development staff," says director Beverly Livers.

Rumpf is a 2002 graduate of Leadership Mobile. She is a native of Fort Lauderdale and holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from Auburn University. She can be reached at 431-8631 or michele@mobilechamber.com.

LaToya Brooks Joins Chamber

LaToya Brooks is the newest team member of the Chamber's Center for Workforce Development. During a recruiting effort for the Austal USA scholarship program at Davidson High School, Beverly Livers, the center's director, met Brooks and immediately recognized her talents and enthusiasm.

Brooks joined the Chamber in September as administrative assistant after attending a two-month program in shipbuilding with Austal.

"She is a true school-to-career role model for students in the Mobile area," says Livers. "LaToya always projects a positive attitude and shows initiative in her position in the Center for Workforce Development."

Brooks is responsible for clerical and administrative tasks. She is glad to be in an office environment and part of the business world. She enjoys attending meetings and working with volunteers on projects promoting workforce development in the community. This subject is especially intriguing for Brooks because it promotes the development of jobs for high school graduates who are not prepared to attend a college or university.

She is a recent graduate of Davidson High School and plans to begin classes at Bishop State Community College in January.

Brooks can be reached at 431-8619 or Latoya@mobilechamber.com.

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International Company Finds Future in Small Chickasaw Operation

Eagle Chemical Co. is a little-known company in Chickasaw that has been quietly producing and shipping silica gel to a group of loyal customers throughout the U.S. for more than 50 years.

In 1959 Mercedes Roberts purchased the company that began as Joliet Chemical eight years earlier, then a tiny operation located at the State Docks. She moved the company to Chickasaw and built the manufacturing facility that is still in use today.

Processes at the company have not changed much since then. The company still types orders and invoices on an electric typewriter and bought its first computer last year. The process for manufacturing silica gel, a product that adsorbs and holds water vapor in packaging, hasn't changed much either. Also called a desiccant, it is still important for many industries using it to protect shipments or equipment from the harmful effects of moisture.

Time has a way of changing things, though. Since Roberts passed away in 1999, trustees of her estate managed the company. Dedicated employees continued to produce silica gel for repeat customers and received a few new orders from word-of-mouth recommendations, but the company was only marginally profitable.

Multisorb, a company that packages desiccants in Buffalo, N.Y., found the company an attractive acquisition.

"Without some influx of new life within the operation, they may have stagnated to the point where it may have been shut down," said Ron Moscoe, Multisorb's vice president and director of business integration, who led the acquisition.

Eagle represented a flawless opportunity for Multisorb, who was seeking a manufacturing facility. It was especially attractive because it had a niche in the industry by providing silica gel in a

greater variety of sizes and containers than any of its competitors who only make the product available in bulk quantities. Eagle provides packaging for smaller uses, such as a laboratory where only a couple of pounds are needed.

Multisorb plans to spend \$3 million increasing computer operations, building maintenance and adding technical strength with equipment upgrades to the existing facility as well as to shift some of the production from the Buffalo facility to Mobile.

Currently there are 30 employees. The recent changes could double employment within three years. Long-time Eagle employee Glenn Scarbrough welcomed the influx of leadership and capital from Multisorb.

"Ron gave me the good impression that he wanted to take the company and build it and make it go forward. If they are going to give us more product to manufacture and handle, it is going to step our production up," said Scarbrough.

Moscoe also applauds the efforts of the Chamber who helped him find local vendors and suppliers as well as figuring local tax situations. "The Chamber also put us in touch with environmental engineers and other vendors that we needed to pull together documentation for the acquisition."

Multisorb is a private company founded in 1961 by John S. Cullen to serve the needs of the electronics market in protecting products against the damaging effects of moisture. It is North America's largest producer of packaged and fabricated sorbents and the world leader in active packaging components. The Eagle Chemical facility represents the third manufacturing location, in addition to sites in Buffalo and Warrington, England.

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Southern Fish and Oyster Company

For centuries, Mobilians have dined on the delicacies of local seafood — shrimp, fish and oysters. Established in 1934, Southern Fish and Oyster, the Chamber's Small Business of the Month, is still the seafood source for many of the area's finest chefs as well as amateur ones at home.

It's the oldest, and possibly the last retail and wholesale seafood market in Mobile, according to owner Ralph Atkins.

His father, grandfather and uncle took over the business in 1952 located on Mobile Bay at a distribution point on Eslava Street. The Atkins family, originally from Georgia, came upon the business by a profitable accident. Atkins' father and uncle were fishing one day along the Gulf Coast and caught 5,000 pounds of snapper. For their catch, they received 15 cents a pound — adding up to a good day's wages of \$750. They soon realized the great demand and knew how to get the supply. The brothers, along with their father, purchased Southern Fish and Oyster in August 1952.

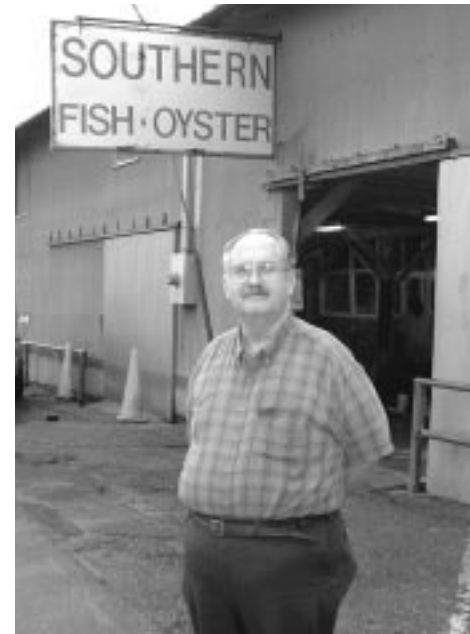
The company has remained in the Atkins' family ever since. Ralph started working for the company after graduating from the University of Southern Mississippi 37 years ago. "I graduated college and started work the next week," says Atkins.

A third generation owner, he purchased the business in 1980.

The seafood business is not as easy as it looks, says Atkins. It takes years to learn the business, "longer than to be a doctor." To operate successfully, one must know the seafood seasons, production techniques that keep the seafood fresh, marketing and especially how to deal with Mother Nature.

Southern Fish and Oyster's main clients are the white-tablecloth restaurants within a 50-mile radius of Mobile. Atkins also sells seafood retail, and buys what's available in the bay.

Most recently, Atkins is in the process of developing his export business. He's shipped his product



Ralph Atkins stands in front of the Southern Fish and Oyster sign overlooking Mobile Bay.

to Japan, Germany, France and the northern United States. These markets are craving the fresh Gulf seafood that isn't readily available.

"There is a lot of frozen seafood on the market, but Southern Fish and Oyster only sells the freshest," boasts Atkins.

For more information about Southern Fish and Oyster Company, contact them at 438-2408 or visit their market, Monday through Saturday, at the foot of Eslava Street on Mobile Bay.

The Small Business of the Month is chosen by the Chamber's Award and Recognition Task Force. For selection guidelines or to submit a nomination, go to www.mobilechamber.com/smallbusiness.

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Sharing Common Ground – Larkins Music Center

If it's music that brings people together, then the new partnership between the Mobile Opera and Mobile Symphony should last forever. The two organizations have joint ownership of a new music center, a formerly abandoned building on Dauphin Street.

Even when two leaders share similar goals, it takes guts, clear communications and confidence to enter into such an agreement.

In a partnership that may be the first of its kind, the Larkins Music Center opened its doors to the general public in July, with both the Mobile Opera and the Mobile Symphony calling it home. In addition to central offices, the facility houses a 2,000 square-foot rehearsal hall, private lesson rooms and access to the Saenger Theatre.

The idea was the brainchild of Jerome Shannon, general director of the Mobile Opera, who realized that working out of one building, rehearsing in another building 15 minutes away and having administrative offices in yet another building was not only unproductive, it was a tremendous hassle. "It was like working out of an office, but your computer is located 15 minutes away," says Shannon. "It just didn't make sense."

Shannon brought the concept to Christina Littlejohn, executive director of the Mobile Symphony. At the time, the symphony was housed in a building where there was plenty of room, but the need for rehearsal space for its Youth Symphony program was imminent. "We would have practice sessions in local high schools, which were fine, but they were not always mentally connected to being a symphony program," says Littlejohn.

The opera was in the same predicament. Their small offices were located with a group of doctors in the Loop area. Individually, neither organization would have been able to support themselves in a central location, but together, both have established a presence in downtown Mobile. "With this



Jerome Shannon and Christina Littlejohn pose in the park area of their new building, the Larkins Music Center.

facility, we are each able to have our own identity," adds Littlejohn.

Even before the move, the opera and symphony partnered on projects such as the collaboration on the recent production of George Bizet's Carmen opera.

The two organizations maintain separate staffs, boards, phones and Web sites. "But together, and through this center, we are establishing ourselves as a stable and major presence with a commitment to the Mobile community," says Shannon.

Shannon and Littlejohn felt strongly about locating downtown and contributing to downtown redevelopment. "There were several locations we could have moved into," says Littlejohn. "We wanted to show what can be done in downtown with an empty building."

The Larkins Center \$1.3 million renovation was designed by local architect and interior designer H. Don Bowden, and Mobile-based Ollinger/Mosteller served as the general contractor.

"With the symphony and the opera having a much larger presence, we are both able to attract better productions to the area, thus pushing the bar for orchestra excellence," says Littlejohn.

Both organizations have a greater likeness and respect for each other – which is evident between Shannon and Littlejohn. Their joint presence has sparked a growth and resurgence of interest in the fine arts in the Mobile community. "This facility is unique to the entire country," states Shannon. "The building is a prime example of the phrase, 'If you build it, they will come,'" adds Shannon.

The center was possible only with the support of boards representing the two organizations. Both groups immediately saw the advantages and threw their support behind the project, according to Shannon. "They were able to see a long-term vision."

The vision was realized during the center's first month of operation. "We had all rooms in the building full of music," says Shannon. "The rehearsal halls were full, all lesson rooms were occupied with students practicing and more students lined up waiting to get in the rooms for their turn. The center was so full of life. The way it should be."

The Mobile Opera can be reached at 432-6772 or mobileopera.org. The Mobile Symphony can be reached at 432-2010 or mobilesymphony.org.

CEO Profile

Harvey Joins Mobile Arts Council



Robin Harvey

Name: Robin Harvey

Title: Executive Director, Mobile Arts Council

Hometown: Amityville, NY

Education: She earned a bachelor's degree in creative arts management from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Ariz.

Previous experience: Harvey has held a number of positions in museums including business manager at the Museum of American Folk Art in New York, and internal auditor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Most recently, she served as the director of campus master planning at Spring Hill College.

Accomplishments: At 19, Harvey taught conversational English to French engineers (in Paris). At 39, she worked at McDonald's to see what it was all about. At 47, she took off on a 27-foot powerboat for 10 months, ending up in Mobile. She describes Mobile as the perfect ending to the trip. She quickly landed a job at Spring Hill College, bought a house and made Mobile her new home.

Career changing moment: Learning that being a good cook does not mean one can be a chef, and getting back on the right career path. Harvey said she took time off to explore her love of cooking. She went to cook at McDonald's and it wasn't long before her talent to manage was recognized, eventually leading her back to the career she originally left.

About the organization: The Mobile Arts Council is the umbrella organization for more than 70 arts and cultural organizations, whose contributions enrich the area's quality of life, which in turn promotes the city's economic engine. Harvey can be reached at 432-9796 or rharvey@mobilearts.org.

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Mobile Chamber VP of Economic Development Accepts Job in Memphis

Jim Apple, vice president of economic development, has accepted a job as senior vice president of economic development with the Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce, and will begin work there in January 2003.

He has worked for the Mobile Area Chamber since February 1993, when he joined the economic development staff as director of the business development division. He was promoted to vice president in late 1994.

When announcing Apple's resignation to the executive committee, Chamber President Win Hallett said, "We are fortunate to have had a person with Jim's talent, drive and insights lead our economic development initiative. We wish him well in his new responsibilities in Memphis and feel confident that they will benefit from his good efforts."

Developing partnerships and maintaining alliances have been a great strength of the Chamber's economic development department over the years, and Chamber Chairman Mike Lee of Page and Jones hopes new partnerships can develop between Mobile and Memphis through Apple's efforts. "International trade and development afford Mobile and Memphis opportunities for cooperation that far exceed competition between the two cities."

During his tenure, Apple is most proud of his department's ability to take a more active role in community infrastructure and development issues that will have far-reaching and long-lasting affects on Mobile. Included in these accomplishments were the May 15, 2001 education tax referendum;



Jim Apple

Amendment One, which is pumping over \$100 million to the Alabama State Docks for infrastructure improvements; the on-going air quality study measuring the Mobile area's air emissions; and the University of South Alabama's research and technology park.

It is the passion for improving the community that John Turner with Whitney National Bank and former Chamber chairman believes is Apple's greatest strength. "His enthusiasm, tenacity and competitiveness have been critical to the Chamber's success," said

Turner. In addition to his work on community infrastructure, Apple's staff has been credited with bringing in thousands of new jobs to Mobile, pumping in millions of dollars to the economy. Some of these projects include Mitsubishi Polysilicon, Ineos Phenol, IPSCO Steel, Coflexip Stena, New Era Cap, West Teleservices, McNeil Specialties, ACE Hardware and Hertz.

"He has been most effective, but I understand his new position will be an excellent career opportunity. He was a real asset to the community and a valued citizen," says Mobile County Commissioner Sam Jones.

Apple will remain on staff with the Chamber until late December. Hallett said the Chamber's executive staff will work closely with Apple over the next several months to ensure his transition out will be smooth. While there is no timeline yet for naming a new head of the department, Hallett expects the board of directors will request that a national search begin as soon as possible to find Apple's replacement.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Calliope Art & Fine Crafts Gallery LLC



Louis Herman poses in his eclectic gallery which displays such one-of-a-kind items as pottery and hand-blown glass.

ditional Raku pottery and ceramic bowls and beaded handbags. Herman chooses the artists whose work is featured at the gallery and personally meets all of them. "That's the special part of the job. I enjoy meeting the artists and getting to know them," says Herman.

The featured artists at Calliope are all from the Southeast region and have shown their works regionally and nationally. The artists have also had displays at the Smithsonian or held major and private showings.

About being an artist himself, Herman responds, "I've got the eye but not the hand." He likes to remain open-minded about artwork."

In addition to one-of-a-kind gift ideas, Calliope also has

Calliope Art & Fine Crafts Gallery LLC offers its customers an eclectic selection of art and fine crafts. Located inside the Adam's Mark Hotel, Calliope is the Chamber's Spotlight Business of the Month.

Owner Louis Herman started the gallery in 2000. A former technical writer of computer programs and instructions in Atlanta, he wanted an outlet for his artistic side and creative ideas. "I was always good at matching people to gifts," adds Herman.

Born and raised in Mobile, Herman spent 10 years away, and wanted to return. "I missed Mobile," he says.

Calliope's art includes paintings and works in glass, clay and fabric. Such pieces include hand-blown glass vases and hot air balloon sculptures, jewelry made from ancient stones, sculptures, tra-

corporate gifts for companies to give to that special client. "Purchasing artwork, of any kind, is an investment and will last forever," says Herman. "It makes the owner of the piece stop and think of the giver every time they look at it, making it memorable."

Each handmade item comes with a brief biography of the artist.

The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. For more information about Calliope, call 433-0105 or visit the gallery located next to the Adam's Mark Gift Shop on the first floor of the hotel.

The 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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Understand the Mercury Issue and Eat Seafood with Confidence

Mercury strikes fear in the hearts of many. Knowing that too much mercury in the human body can impair central nervous system functions, cause kidney damage and even death, makes people understandably nervous when they learn that this — the only metal liquid at room temperature — is found in increasing quantities in Gulf waters.

This spring a seminar brought several world-class speakers and scientific experts to the area to explain more about the mercury problem. The basic facts presented made it clear that mercury exists naturally everywhere and the amount doesn't change, it just moves throughout the air, land and water.

"Mercury is a global issue. It is not unique to the Gulf of Mexico and certainly not to the Alabama and Mobile portions of the Gulf," says Steve Perry, executive director of The Forum, Industry Partners in Environmental Progress.

According to the scientists, the amount of mercury found on the planet never changes — it does not go away. The bulk, or 95 percent, of the world's mercury resides in the soil, 3 percent in the ocean's waters and 2 percent in the atmosphere. However, 50-75 percent of the mercury released to

the atmosphere is a result of human activities and most of those emissions come from the incineration of coal, garbage and medical waste.

The concern elevates when mercury is dispersed into the air and water at which point it further evolves, through a process called methylation,

when it comes into contact with the surrounding environment. The result is methyl mercury, or MeHg. Humans then consume this substance while eating fish and seafood.

"Because of the beneficial effects of fish consumption, the long-term goal needs to be a reduction in the concentrations of methyl mercury in fish, rather than a replacement of fish in the diet by other foods," explains Perry. "In the interim, the best method for maintaining fish consumption and minimizing methyl mercury exposure is the consumption of fish

known to have lower methyl mercury concentrations."

While government and industry officials work to minimize the amount of mercury released in the environment, seafood lovers can protect themselves from mercury poisoning by paying attention to the type of fish they eat.

While government and industry officials work to minimize the amount of mercury released in the environment, seafood lovers can protect themselves from mercury poisoning by paying attention to the type of fish they eat.

What fish should I eat?

The latest FDA guidelines recommend pregnant women and small children eat no more than two meals of fish each week and avoid swordfish, shark, king mackerel or tilefish (also known as golden or white snapper), species known to

contain the highest levels of mercury. They can safely eat 12 ounces per week of any other cooked fish.

To be on the safe side, eat fish with lower mercury levels, such as grouper, tuna, snapper or lobster, and no more than three times a week.

Fish with Highest Mercury Levels

Species	Mean (ppm)	Range (ppm)	No. of Samples
Tilefish	1.45	0.65-3.73	60
Swordfish	1.00	0.10-3.22	598
King Mackerel	0.73	0.30-1.67	213
Shark	0.96	0.05-4.54	324

Fish with Lowest Mercury Levels

Species	Mean (ppm)	Range (ppm)	No. of Samples
Grouper	0.43	0.05-1.35	64
Tuna	0.32	ND-1.30	191
Tuna (canned)	0.17	ND-0.75	248
Snapper	0.60	0.07-1.46	10
Lobster	0.31	0.05-1.31	88

[information provided by The FORUM Partners in Environmental Progress]



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Savoy Publisher to Speak at Eagle Awards

Event to be held Nov. 22 at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center

Mobilians will have the honor of hearing one of the most influential publishers in the urban and pop culture genre, when Keith T. Clinkscales addresses the audience at this year's Eagle Awards.

Clinkscales is the chairman and CEO of Vanguard Media Inc., publisher of *Honey* (a fashion, beauty and entertainment magazine targeted at female urban teens); *Heart & Soul* (a healthy living guide for black women); *Savoy* (current events, culture, fashion for African Americans) and *Impact! Weekly* (a music industry trade magazine).

The Washington Post called Clinkscales "the boy wonder of black magazine publishing" because of his knack for creating and marketing urban magazines that have broad appeal — his keynote address is bound to have the same effect on the Mobile audience.

As the first African American named as a president at Time Inc., Clinkscales served as president and CEO of *VIBE* magazine, one of the fastest growing and most influential magazines in pop



Keith Clinkscales

culture history. During his tenure, the oversized monthly that covers the news and culture of hip hop, R&B, soul, reggae and jazz, was hugely successful with its circulation growing from 100,000 to 700,000 in six years.

"Part of our goal in highlighting the successful minority business owners in our community is to showcase talented CEOs that many in the community may not be familiar with," says Jason Thrower, the Chamber's vice president of small business development. "Minority-owned businesses in town make a tremendous economic impact in our area, and this event gives us a chance to tell their stories."

The Eagle Awards showcases the best of local minority-owned businesses, and will honor winners with a reception and dinner at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center with the reception beginning at 6 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$35 each and tables of 10 are \$300. Sponsors for this year's event are Bishop State Community College, Mobile Water And Sewer System, Mobile Engineering Inc., BellSouth, Alabama Power, University of South Alabama and WALA-FOX10.

Winners were selected based on a wide variety of criteria that included years of service, projected growth and community service activities. A panel of judges selected the winners based on nominations from community and business leaders.

For more information on the Eagle Awards or to order tickets, contact Brenda Rembert at 431-8607 or via e-mail at brenda@mobilechamber.com.

"Minority-owned businesses in town make a tremendous economic impact in our area, and this event gives us a chance to tell their stories."

Jason Thrower
Small business development vice president



The 2002 Winners

Commonwealth Bank

Chief: J. Gary Cooper
Established: 1976
Employees: 24
Location: 2214 St. Stephens Rd.

"Economic inclusion is the most significant issue facing many small businesses in the Mobile area. There appears to be a great deal of talk about diversity but there is little evidence that the concept is being embraced," says Commonwealth Bank on their Eagle award application. This is a company that walks the talk. While their market area spans all of Mobile and Baldwin counties, the bank focuses on providing full banking and financial services to the under-served areas of Prichard, Toulminville and Crichton. The company was

founded in 1976 to provide financing to small businesses that contribute to the economic growth of inner-city areas and create jobs. Since 1998, the company's revenue has nearly doubled and was nearly \$3 million at the end of last year.

Fast Lube Oil Change Inc. and Car Wash

Chief: Frederick A. Marshall
Established: 1994
Employees: 8
Location: 2154 St. Stephens Rd.

Change the oil and wash the car. How many times does that necessary maintenance actually get done? Fast Lube Oil Change and Car Wash makes

it easier to accomplish that Saturday morning chore for neighborhoods close to St. Stephens Road. Serving Toulminville, Prichard, Crichton, Plateau and the Down the Bay areas, the company was established in 1994 by Frederick and Brenda Marshall. The Marshall's intention was to create job opportunities and launch an economic network of small businesses. The key to this Eagle award winner's success is treating customers fairly and delivering a thorough and accurate job in a timely manner. In addition to the obvious, oil changes and car washes, the company performs tune-ups and brake services.

Gabe Peck Insurance Agency LLC (Allstate Insurance Co.)

Chief: Gabe Peck
Established: 1982
Employees: 3
Location: 5636 Old Shell Rd.

Gabe Peck is a senior account agent for Allstate Insurance and owner of the Gabe Peck Agency, one of the first neighborhood Allstate offices in Mobile. Known for his civic involvement and business acumen, Peck is co-founder and president of "A Day at the Ranch" Foundation. The foundation brings at-risk youth and youth groups to his country ranch for horseback riding and other experiences they cannot get in their inner-city environment, including learning about the African American cowboys and their role in the development of this country. Peck opened Gabe Peck Allstate Insurance Agency in 1982 and enjoys providing peace of mind to his customers by taking the time to find the right insurance product they need to manage the risks they face.

Paramount Properties LLC Realtors

Chiefs: Brejeannia & Alma Gardner
Established: 1998
Employees: 5
Location: 5701-J Moffett Rd.

Buying property is intimidating to many, but not for customers of Paramount Properties. This mom-and-pop and daughter organization has been bringing together commercial and residential real estate buyers and sellers since 1998. With over \$23 million in sales last year, the company has done extremely well and had to expand beyond the family this year and bring on two additional agents to handle the workload. Paramount Properties is committed to building solid customer relationships, and they reinforce that philosophy by providing free seminars for first-time homebuyers and helping developers effectively market their properties.

Ramos Shoe Service

Chief: Felicito Ramos
Established: 1959
Employees: 2
Location: 3272 Colonial Mall Bel Air

Whether you need a new heel for your shoe, a new pair of shoelaces or a new strap for your purse, Ramos Shoe Service is the place nearly everyone in Mobile thinks of first. This Mobile institution, located outside Colonial Bel Air Mall on Airport Boulevard, has been providing full-service shoe repair and related services since 1959. Owner Felicito Ramos says his key to success has been having good credit and the determination to succeed. By working under the credo "pay my creditors first," he has managed to stay in business through good times and bad. Ramos can provide orthopedic specialty items, dying services and shoe shines, in addition to expert leather repair for purses, coats, belts and, of course, shoes.

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DIPLOMAT OF THE MONTH

Leah Diegan

Here's a secret on how Leah Diegan can get in to see so many company presidents with little difficulty – she brings along free popcorn.

As a diplomat, Diegan actively participates in the Chamber's "popcorn visits" program and regularly meets with new members to learn about their business and how the Chamber can provide them with better service. And often during her goodwill visits, she's able to talk about her company – The Cronus Group – where she is an account executive.

"There's a lot of competition in Mobile for business," said Diegan. "But my work with the Chamber gets me in to meet with potential customers." For her hard work with the Chamber, Diegan is the featured Diplomat of Month. She's been a participant in the program since joining The Cronus Group in March 2001.

"I was involved with the Chamber several years ago. I know how important the diplomat program is to getting your name known in the business community," she said. "It's not only good networking for new business, but also helps me stay involved and know what's happening in our community."

In addition to the goodwill visits, Diegan is regularly spotted at ribbon cuttings for new businesses and expansions, as well as registering Business After Hours and First Friday attendees. This year she also participated in Chamber Chase, a resource development campaign, raising money for the Chamber through sponsorships, advertising and donated goods and services.

Maria Bladorn, the Chamber's director of customer service and staff liaison for the diplomats, credits Diegan for her constant commitment. "I'm always looking for volunteers to help with last-minute ribbon cuttings, member visits, and Leah works to make herself available," she said.

To learn more about the diplomat program, contact Bladorn at 431-8649 or maria@mobilechamber.com.



Mobile Public Library Pursues New Grants Information Center

The Mobile Public Library, in partnership with the Community Foundation of South Alabama and the Chamber, has applied to the Foundation Center to locate a Foundation Center Cooperating Collections Library at the new West Regional Library, set to open Nov. 1.

The collection is a free funding information center and will provide comprehensive resources to those in need of information and training to become successful grant writers. It will include valuable Foundation Center tools including FCSearch, a searchable database of more than 65,000 grant-making foundations, hard copy directories, philanthropy publications and much more. The Chamber and Community Foundation will provide free

training opportunities in the computer lab.

The library currently supports some Foundation Center resources in the reference section at the main branch. The Cooperating Collection, if approved, will greatly enhance existing resources and provide extraordinary opportunities for Mobile's nonprofit community.

Founded in 1956, the Foundation Center is the nation's leading authority on institutional philanthropy and is dedicated to serving grant seekers, grant makers, policy makers and the general public. For more information about them, visit www.fdncenter.org. For more information about the Mobile Public Library's efforts, contact Robin Lang Krchak at 208-7105.

Make the Best of Employee Performance Evaluations

It's time to review 2002 and start planning for the new year. Part of this process is meeting with employees, giving them feedback and asking for their suggestions.

In the optimal environment, new employees would be introduced to the culture and history of a business, as well as what the company values, according to Daniel O. Lybrook, associate professor of organizational leadership and supervision at Purdue in an article published in *ACCE*, a magazine distributed by the Association of Chamber of Commerce executives.

"A good evaluation process is knitted into everything – job expectations, career path, compensation, advancement – in a healthy organization. It is important employees understand what he or she is to give and to get," says Lybrook to author J. Michael Lillich.

According to Lybrook, "Employee morale is a good measure of how healthy a relationship exists between employer and employee."

A Day-Timer e-mail publication quotes a nationwide study identifying seven demotivators. At the top of the list is unclear expectations, followed by politics, too many rules, unproductive meetings, internal competition, criticism instead of feedback and tolerance of lousy performance.

The good news is there is something managers can do to increase enthusiasm, motivating them to perform at higher levels. Suggestions from a number of sources include:

- Tie evaluations to promotion or advancement so managers and employees take them more seriously. It will also encourage competition among employees, and that can lead to increased production from everyone.

- Break up routines with fun. Give people the chance to socialize.

- Give employees clear responsibilities and the room to accomplish them.

- Let employees choose how they do their work as long as it meets company standards and is on time.

- Give feedback, directed at helping employees improve.

- Ask for suggestions and input to create "ownership."

- Promote opportunities for responsibility and leadership.

- Challenge employees.

- Look for ways to demonstrate employee appreciation.

- Look at the entire evaluation period as opposed to what was done last week.

- Make sure employees understand the intended outcomes, including the organization's goals and his or her part in reaching the goals.

- Encourage organization involvement and "present opportunities for career and personal growth."

- Take a multi-pronged approach and determine what the employee does, how the organization can do better and rewards when a goal is achieved.

Terry Bragg, who runs Peacemakers Training in Salt Lake City, in his monthly e-mail newsletter used an acronym to guide feedback from an associate editor of *Fast Company* magazine, Gina Imperato. FAST stands for frequent, accurate, specific and timely. Imperato also advises "reviews should be more about finding out what will help employees do a better job."

Bragg writes in response, "It amazes me how many problems people can solve, how many crises they can avoid and how many conflicts they can settle by opening up and talking to each other. For performance improvement, conversation and dialogue are more important than appraisal. Yet people and organizations avoid it like the plague."

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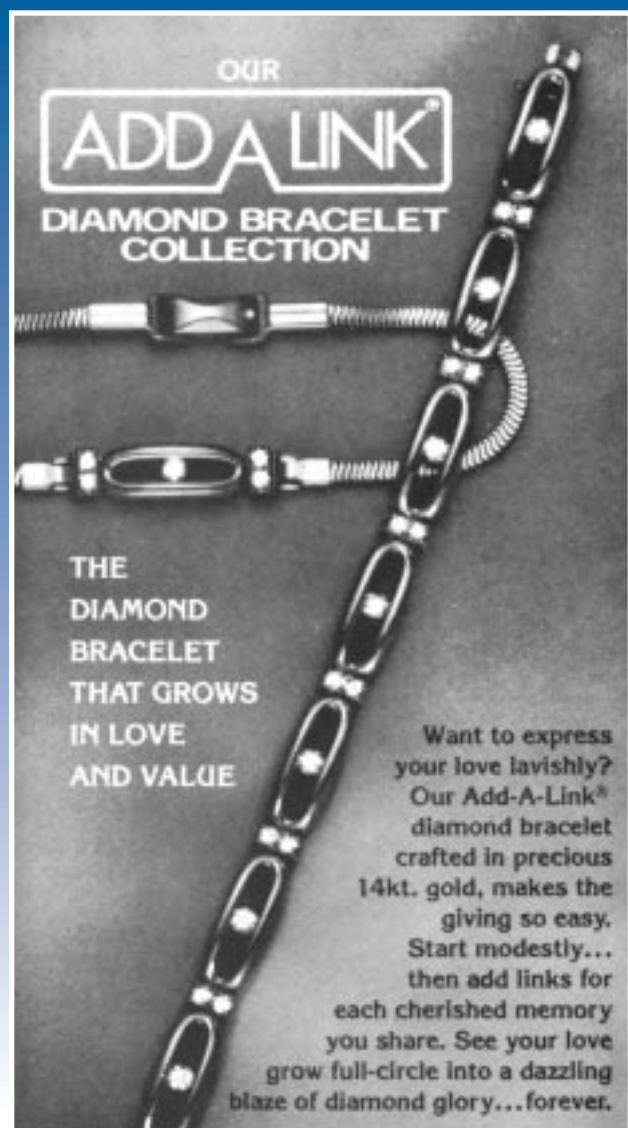
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The Chamber at Work For You



Listening to West Mobile

The Chamber is extremely interested in learning more about the successes, concerns and needs of businesses in west Mobile. In an effort to learn more, a Business Issues Forum was established to bring together business owners in the western sector of the community to facilitate dialogue on critical issues. The first meeting was held at Alabama Power Co.'s Hillcrest branch office. Chamber board member Barry Vittor PhD of Barry Vittor & Associates will serve as moderator for the newly created group. For more information on the next meeting, call the Chamber's small business development department at 431-8607.

Chamber Writes \$2 Million Grant

On behalf of the University of South Alabama Research and Technology, the Chamber wrote a pre-proposal to the Economic Development Authority (EDA) for \$2 million to fund infrastructure needs at the new Tech Park planned on the USA campus. The money will be used to build roads and install utilities at the park.

The Chamber met with EDA representatives and local elected officials to review the proposal and answer their questions. Based on results of this meeting, the Chamber expects to write a full proposal to EDA this fall, and secure the dollar-for-dollar match this grant will require.

A New Resource

Continually looking for avenues to help small business owners, the Chamber partnered with local investors in an attempt to create a formal angel funding resource. The small business development department pooled the resources of local investors along with the staff of the Business Innovation Center (Mobile's small business incubator) to match qualified business plans from local entrepreneurs looking to start or expand a business. A formal plan submission and screening process is currently being developed in an effort to identify entrepreneurs poised to start and position a company for future growth.

Regional Chamber Coalition Plans 2003 Fly-In

Regional Chamber Coalition Plans 2003 Fly-In Plans are underway for the 2003 Washington Fly-In, March 12-14. Hosted by the Gulf Coast Regional Chamber Coalition, Chamber staff and volunteers from Pensacola, Mobile, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, New Orleans and Baton Rouge partner meet with legislators to push a regional legislative agenda.

Membership Designed to Reach Growing Sectors

With the increasing popularity of home-based businesses and the number of new businesses launching every year, the Chamber researched ways to recruit these new entrepreneurs by providing them with full benefits of membership, but at a discounted rate. In October, the Chamber launched four new categories of membership:

- Home-based businesses with two or less employees
- New companies in business less than two years with less than three employees
- Individuals not in business
- Agents (realtors, insurance, financial planners etc.)

Membership for anyone in these new categories is only \$200 a year. New companies renew at the fair share level, \$295 plus \$5 per employee. To learn more about this program or Chamber membership in general, contact the membership department at 431-8638.

Chamber Begins New Initiative

To better utilize the output of various local plants, the Chamber is beginning a new initiative with Kellogg Brown & Root to evaluate the "downstream" opportunities associated with the products of certain chemical plants in the Mobile region. The Chamber will bring marketing Mobile experience to the table, while KBR adds engineering value and contact in the industry.

Cruising Task Force Set to Begin

Chamber efforts continue to bring the cruise industry to Mobile, with the establishment of a Cruise Task Force composed of representatives of shipyards, travel agents, the City of Mobile and Mobile County and the Mobile Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Distinguished U.S. General and Area Veteran Honored

The Chamber's Military Affairs Committee and the Veteran's Day Planning Commission recently named the Patriot of the Year, **Gen. Wesley K. Clark**, and Mobile Bay Area Veteran of the Year, **Capt. Hal Pierce**, U.S. Navy Reserve (Ret.). Both were honored at the annual Veteran Day luncheon at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center.

Clark, U.S. Army (Ret.), was selected based on a number of criteria including U.S. citizenship and national or international contributions to the U.S. with lasting impact. He is currently associated with Stephens Group Inc. in Little Rock, Ark.,

both where he works with high technology venture capital as managing director of merchant banking. His military career spans more than 34 years of active duty and culminated as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) from July 1997 to August 2000. In this position, Clark commanded the military forces in the Kosovo Crisis, which consisted of approximately 75,000 troops from 37 NATO and other participating nations.

"This was NATO's first major combat action, and the largest air operation in Europe since the second World War," says **Col. Patrick Downing**, U.S. Army (Ret.). Downing is chair of the Military Affairs Committee and the Veteran's Day Planning Commission.

On August 9, 2002, Clark was awarded the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Among his military decorations are five awards of the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, two awards of the Army Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, four awards of the Legion of Merit, two awards of the Bronze Star and two awards of the Army Commendation Medal. He also received decorations from more than 20 foreign countries, including the Honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (United Kingdom) and the Commander of the Legion of Honor from France.

Highlights from Clark's career include graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point where he was first in his class. He holds a master's degree in philosophy, politics and economics from Oxford University where he was a Rhodes Scholar from 1966-1968. Early in his career, Clark was an armor officer who commanded army forces at every level from a mechanized

infantry company in combat in Vietnam through command of the 1st Cavalry Division of more than 15,000 soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas. He graduated from the National War College, Command and General Staff College, Armor Advanced and Basic Courses, and Ranger and Airborne schools. In 1975-1976, Clark was appointed a White House Fellow and served as the special assistant to the director of management and budget.

In addition to Clark's association with Stephens Group, he serves as a military analyst for the Cable News Network (CNN) and pro bono as a distinguished senior advisor for The Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Veteran of the Year

Each year the selection committee chooses a veteran from the Mobile-Baldwin area with an excellent military record who has supported veterans and their causes over a sustained period.

"Capt. Hal Pierce has distinguished himself in both of these areas and will certainly represent Mobile bay area veterans in an exemplary manner," says Downing.

Retired, Pierce remains active in the community.

Currently he is serving as chairman of the Mobile Bay Lighthouse Centennial Commission. Last year, he worked to bring the LST-325 to Mobile and on the ship's recommissioning ceremony. He also assisted Mobile's Tricentennial committee to bring tall ships and other maritime celebrations to Mobile.

Pierce served in the Navy and Naval Reserve from 1955 - 1986 throughout the U.S. and Far East. He held special assignments in Taipei, Taiwan and the western sea frontier. He served as instructor at the Navy War College and as chief of education and training in Pensacola. Pierce came to Alabama in 1973 with duty in Navy recruiting. He was later assigned navy port coordinator to facilitate navy ship visits to Mobile.

A life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Pierce is also affiliated with the Reserve Officers Association and Military Officers Association, is a member of Post 3 American Legion and the Navy League of the United States. He is a founding member of the Veteran's Day Commission and a member of the Military Affairs Committee.



Gen. Wesley K. Clark



Capt. Hal Pierce

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Discount to Chamber Members

FYI

Just For Women

There's a new organization dedicated to helping women entrepreneurs succeed through networking and advocacy. Women Entrepreneurs Inc. (WE Inc.) is a nonpartisan business association working to improve and enhance the economic climate for women-owned businesses.

The organization recently launched its Web site, www.we-inc.org, as a resource for business issues such as financing information, marketing, taxes, international trade and more. The site also highlights critical legislative issues such as affordable health care.

Recognizing Employee Contributions

Scouting programs, Habitat for Humanity, American Red Cross – these are just three of the many community organizations that benefit from contributions of both time, dollars and effort given from various companies and their employees.

In conjunction with Envision Coastal Alabama, the Chamber recognizes one employee group each year at its Annual Meeting. Nominations for this year's Corporate Community Service Award are due by Friday, Nov. 29.

The award was created in 1999 to honor companies that make employee volunteer efforts an important part of their corporate vision, policy and operations.

Previous winners include Thompson Engineering, 2001; Regions Bank, 2000; and Kellogg, Brown and Root, 1999.

For more information, call Angela Erwin at 431-8621 or angela@mobilechamber.com.

Making Headlines

Spring Hill College is again among the best in the South, according to U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Colleges 2003." Spring Hill ranked 15th among colleges and universities in the Southern region of the U.S. in terms of overall quality. Spring Hill also received a favorable ranking in the "Best Value" category, coming in 14th in the Southern region.

Don't Miss Mobile's Favorite Holiday Celebrations

Festival of Cultures

Get ready for a smorgasbord of sight, sound, smell and taste at the annual Mobile International Festival. Indian and Greek dancers twirl side by side as the aroma of Asian eggrolls, spicy African gumbo and freshly baked Colombian empanadas surrounds the entertainment.



This year's Family Day is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 23 at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, \$3 for youth ages 7 - 15 and free for children 6 and under.

For more information contact the Office of Special Events at 470-7730 or www.mobileinternationalfestival.org.

Christmas in Lights

With all new animated figures and redesigned light displays, this year's Magic Christmas in Lights at Bellinrath Gardens and Home promises to be bigger and better.



The annual exhibit starts Friday, Nov. 29 and, except for Christmas Day, is open until New Year's Eve. Tickets start at \$9 per person for the garden and \$16.50 for both the garden and home.

Call 800-247-8420 for group ticket prices and information.

Annual Lighting of the Trees

The annual Lighting of the Trees in Bienville will be Friday, Nov. 22. Entertainment organized by Main Street Mobile starts at 5 p.m. and continues to 7 p.m. with the



tree lighting ceremony at 6:10 p.m.

Bienville Square will be filled with more than 300 luminaries as a showcase for this countywide neighborhood event, sponsored by the Mobile Association for Retarded Citizens.

Join the festivities, including free children's holiday projects, rides on the Santa Express Train, shopping in the Holiday Gift market and more.

Call Main Street Mobile for more information at 208-7443.

Christmas Parade

Santa Claus comes to downtown, Saturday, Dec. 21. The parade begins at 1:30 p.m. and will be filled with signature giant helium balloons, holiday floats, marching bands, costumed characters and more – all accompanying Santa.



For more information, call Rhonda Davis at Main Street Mobile, 208-7443.

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251.661.7075

Windsor Place

3661 Airport Blvd.
251.343.9725

Yester Oaks

146 Yester Oaks Drive
251.344.3400

Chamber's Fall Golf Tournament – A Dripping Success

Mobile saw a tremendous amount of rain in September, and the day for the Chamber's Fall Golf Tournament was no exception. Many thanks to the players that played on, and to the sponsors who made this event a great success.



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Mobile Gas Donates Antique Lights to the Chamber



In 1836, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce was founded and incorporated under the name Mobile Commerce and Business League. It was an exciting year. Martin van Buren was narrowly elected president of the United States with 50.8 percent of the popular vote. Texas declared its independence from Mexico, and Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie became involved in the battle of the Alamo. The city of Auburn was founded in east Alabama.

The same year, a new Mobile company was formed to use gas to light the city streets. That company became Mobile Gas Service Corp.

Those first lights were in storage for many years. Recently they have been refurbished and again are shining bright. Mobile Gas donated and installed several of the antique gaslights in Commerce Plaza, the park-like area in front of the Chamber building.

A Mobile Gas employee installs one of the antique gas lanterns at the Chamber.

Featured Profiles Advisors

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, contact Katrina Dewrell at 431-8611.



Melvin E. Pierce

Melvin E. Pierce is president of Melvin Pierce Painting Inc. He has been self-employed for 30 years, and is married with six children. Among his community activities, Pierce has organized and established baseball in the Semmes area, and is an active member of the civic and religious life of his community.



John White-Spunner

John White-Spunner is president of White-Spunner Construction Inc. He graduated from Auburn University in 1978, and established White-Spunner Construction in 1979. White-Spunner has served on St. Paul's School Board, as chairman of Bayside Academy, on the Vestry at St. Paul's Church, as Senior Warden at St. James Episcopal Church, as a member of the Young Presidents Organization, and on the boards of the Boys & Girls Club and Whitney National Bank.

Smart Ideas By Doug Smart



Clear Up Blurry Communications

One of the top brewing companies in America is a consulting client of mine. However, during a seminar for a brewery management team, we were jolted by a "communication wake-up call."

We discovered that even though co-workers speak the same words, they don't attach the same meanings. I asked people to write a list of simple words, such as often, sometimes, never and usually. Then I asked them to put a percentage value next to each. For example, if I say, "He is often late for meetings," what does often mean? 10 percent of the time? 50 percent? 75 percent?

The range of answers was amazing. Often went from 5 to 97 percent. Sometimes was 20 to 80 percent. Even never was 0 to 100 percent, with a fourth of the people saying it was somewhere in-between! We were amazed because we assumed everyone in the room put about the same meaning on those simple, everyday words.

After all, this was the management team and

they worked closely together. I've led this exercise with over 200 groups working in offices, factories, hospitals, education, sales situations, even government. Incredibly, the results are wide-ranging, even among well-educated people who communicate regularly with each other.

What does this mean to you? It's helpful to keep this communication phenomenon in mind when you compose e-mails, memos, reports, instructions or ask for assistance. Make your communication clearer by using numbers in place of words, illustrating with specific examples, and asking clarifying questions. Define critical terms and spell out expectations. It's smart to recognize that we may speak the same words but not say the same things.

Doug Smart is a management development consultant, professional speaker, and host of a daily motivational radio show, "Smarter by the Minute." For more information, click on DougSmart.com. Copyright 2002.

Retirees Returning to Work

A number of businesses reported retired executives returning to work, and there are several reasons, according to Strategic Business Futurists Roger Herman and Joyce Gioia.

Retired executives are bored and want something to do, current leaders need help coping with the barrage of challenges they face, and business is picking up to the extent that more leadership is needed.

Their research suggests two separate trends. First is a trend toward hiring what Herman and Gioia call "Executives Without Portfolio," senior leaders without specific job descriptions or production assignments. They serve as strategic-level counselors, advisors and watchdogs. These experienced leaders can be another set of eyes, ears and ethics on behalf of top executives or corporate boards of directors. In some cases, they will engage in serious mentoring and coaching, helping leaders of today and tomorrow manage situations that they have not faced quite the same way before.

Corporations expect these returning seasoned professionals to work their magic again. These retired executives know the culture; in many cases they helped create it. They know the people; they have relationships with the key players and know

how to get things done.

Some experienced executives, managers and professionals work with employers they have not served before . . . sometimes in entirely different fields. The companies need their skills, perspective and wisdom even more than their technical expertise in a particular industry. These senior counselors are engaged-as full-time employees, contractors or consultants.

The second trend involves older people coming back into the workforce after a short — or even longer — retirement. They're eager to be active, to contribute, to make a difference. People over 55 belong to a generational group that emphasizes productivity as a core value.

Many of these older workers — executives, managers and employees of all sorts, will choose to remain in the workforce. Some will continue to work full-time if their employers let them; others will prefer part-time or contract work. The retirement age is being pushed back as people live longer.

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Comparative Economic Indicators August '02 vs August '01



CALENDAR VIEW

FastTrac



Lonnie Ash, owner of Milestone Automotive, invested some time away from his busy garage to attend FastTrac, the Chamber's 11-week entrepreneurial development class. Now, he's confident he's on the right road with his business.

Find out what Ash and others in the class learned, that FastTrac can help you take your business to the next level.

To learn more, plan to attend the Kick-off Breakfast meeting Feb. 6, 2003 at 8 a.m. in the Chamber's McGowin Room or call the Chamber's small business development department at 431-8607.

The Spring FastTrac session will be held on 11 consecutive Monday evenings from March 10 - May 11.

EXCELLERATING! - Nov. 18-19 How Successful People Really Get There!

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The Chamber and Compass Quest Inc. brings "Excellerating!" with Jim Harris PhD, to Mobile, Monday, Nov. 18 and Tuesday, Nov. 19 at the Mobile Marriott, from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. Harris is an award-winning author and CEO of netspeedconsulting.com and president of the James Harris Group, specializing in workplace trends, research and employee focused best practices. More than 1,000 people heard Harris speak at the Chamber's annual meeting in 2001.

Excellerating! is a resourceful program designed to bring insightful, ingenious and indispensable ideas for getting the right things done at the right time - consistently.

For information on individual and group rates, and for reservation information, contact Judie Crookson at 431-8640.

NOVEMBER



EXCELLERATING!

Time: 6 - 9 p.m. (both nights)
Place: Mobile Marriott, 3101 Airport Blvd.
Call: Judie Crookston at 431-8640



Time: NMW 4:45 - 5:30 p.m.
BAH 5:30 - 7 p.m.
Place: Mobile Museum of Art, Langan Park 4850 Museum Dr.

Cost: BAH \$2 members/\$5 potential members
Call: Robyn Wiggins at 431-8638



Co-sponsored by Copeland's



Time: 10 - 11 a.m.
Place: Chamber Board Room
Call: Bridgette Clark at 694-0702

Editor's Note: Due to the holiday, there will be no Business After Hours in December or First Friday in January. The 2003 schedule is on the Chamber Web site at mobilechamber.com/event-calendar.



Time: 6 - 8 p.m.
Place: Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center
Cost: \$35 per person, or table of 10 for \$300
Call: Brenda Rembert at 431-8607

DECEMBER



Time: 7:45 - 8:45 a.m.
Place: Hearthstone Assisted Living 3440 Hillcrest Rd.
Cost: \$2 members/\$5 potential members

For more information on any of the above events, visit the Chamber's Web site at www.mobilechamber.com.

Members Only

Buy a 2003 Business After Hours pass for only \$14. You'll gain entrance to nine Business After Hours for the price of seven. For more information or to purchase your Business After Hours pass contact Maria Bladorn at 431-8649 or maria@mobilechamber.com.

New Members *Continued from page 16*

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As of October 1, 2002

China is Focus of Future Export Opportunities

Each year, the Chamber's trade division targets international markets on the rise for Alabama exporters. With China's recent admittance into the World Trade Organization (WTO), the country has been identified as a viable export market for Alabama emphasis.

A briefing on an upcoming trade mission to China is set for Thursday, Nov. 21 at 10 a.m. in the Chamber's Board Room. The trip is planned for fall, 2003. The Chamber and its regional partners will lead a trade mission to Beijing and Shanghai, China. The United States Commercial Service will arrange appointments for each participating company based on specified business objectives. Previous trade missions have proven this is an excellent forum for U.S. companies to enter international markets.

World Trade Conference

China will also be the focus of next year's Fifth Annual World Trade Conference, scheduled for May 5-6, 2003. The Chamber will host this conference, considered the Gulf Coast's largest international trade event, attracting companies from Alabama, Mississippi and Northwest Florida.

Conference topics will include existing business opportunities for U.S. commerce in China; Trade Opportunities & Barriers in China; Opportunities & Problems in Post-WTO China; Resources for Doing Business in China; Cultural Awareness; and the Logistical,

Financial and Legal Aspects of Doing Business in China.

Representatives from the U.S. Commercial Service in Beijing, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S.-China Development Group, as well as many others will be presenters at the conference.

CeBit Asia

Taking place during the Chamber's trade mission to China, CeBIT Asia 2003, a premier international Information & Communications Technology (ICT) exhibition of the Asia/Pacific region, will take place in Shanghai. The trade show is expected to draw 700 exhibitors from 30 different countries and 28,000 visitors.

Companies addressing ICT solutions including information technology, telecommunications and networks, engineering solutions, software, internet solutions and services, IT Security, banking technology, are encouraged to exhibit at the event. The cost of the booth for prospective companies will be partially subsidized.

More info

To attend the information session on China Nov. 21 or for more information regarding next year's World Trade Conference, the trade mission or CeBIT Asia, contact Bridgette L. Clark at 694-0702 or bridgette@mobilechamber.com.

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Money Houses Inc.
Remedy Intelligent Staffing

Member Renewals, Years 1-4

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Service
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AMF Camellia Bowling Lanes
Boja's Foods Inc.
Carolyn Darden Enterprises
Challenge Engineering & Testing Inc.
Custom Security
DailyAccess.Com Inc.
DocuSys Inc.
Donald L. Herman & Associates d/b/a
Financial Resource Group
Drummond Coal Sales Inc.
First Response Services
Ferriss Industries Inc.
Gateway Country Stores
GE Capital Modular Space
The Holliman Group
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of America
MacKinnon Paper Co. Inc.
Marketing Details Inc.
McGinnis & Associates Inc.
Mobile Football LLC, d/b/a Mobile Wizards
New Health Dynamics d/b/a Dent-U-Save
N-Trend Communications Inc.
Port City Winnelson Co. Inc.
Primeship Agencies Inc.
C. H. Robinson Co.
Southeast Technical Solutions Inc.
Spectrum Collision
TechCode Inc.
Transgroup Worldwide Logistics
Women's Business Center of Southern Alabama

ATTENTION MEMBERS!

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

• Erika Dawson at 431-8647 or 402-1472

WHO'S NEW?

Regions Bank promoted two employees recently. A bank employee of 27 years, **Patricia (Patsy) A. Weed** is now vice president assigned to the Hillcrest Financial Center to oversee the sales efforts of several Mobile locations. She has extensive experience in human resources, the retail division and additional branch operations. Weed completed the Alabama Banking School at the University of South Alabama, and numerous American Institute of Banking courses.

Honor M. Hartzes is the new branch manager at the Hillcrest office. She joined the bank in 1998 with more than 27 years of banking experience. Hartzes also serves as a facilitator for the bank's quality and productivity of service program. She has completed several bank-related courses.

**Hughes**

Karen A. Hughes is the new chief information officer with DocuSys, a digital medical solutions company. She brings 20 years experience to her new position. Previously she was executive director of support standards with McKesson Corp. in Atlanta. Hughes has a bachelor's degree in computer science from Middle Tennessee State University.

Dr. Juvonda S. Hodge joined the University of South Alabama Health System. She is the first African-American woman general surgeon to practice in Mobile. Prior to her appointment, she was affiliated with the Greater Southeast Community Hospital in Washington DC. Hodge is a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, the New Jersey Medical School in Newark, N.J., and rotated her residency training among a variety of hospitals.

**Hodge**

Timothy Gyan joined AmSouth Bank as relationship representative in the commercial banking department. He formerly worked with Whitney National Bank. Gyan received his bachelor's degree in finance from the University of South Alabama.

**Gyan**

Fred Dance joined AmSouth Investment Services as senior vice president and financial consultant. Originally from Pensacola, he most recently worked with Wachovia Securities in Georgia. Dance has a marketing degree from the University of West Florida.

**Dance**

Kay Mashburn was promoted to vice president and sales manager of AmSouth Mortgage. She started with the company in 1992 and most recently served as loan originator and assistant vice president. Mashburn has both an undergraduate and master of business administration degrees from the University of Mobile.

Dr. Jon Krause joined Lynne Cary's Holistic Day Spa. He is a board-certified naturopathic physician with 20 years in the health care industry. His primary area of expertise is in nutritional counseling, weight loss management and vitamin therapy.

Clark Personnel hired **Jay Cole** as a recruiter for the direct placement division. She has more than 20 years experience assisting companies find employees in a variety of professions such as sales, technical and engineering.

Lee Adams joined Mr. Electric of South Alabama recently as operations manager for Mobile and Baldwin counties. He has more than 20 years experience in electrical service and engineering management. Adams will focus on electrical service for commercial properties.

MEMBER NEWS

The University of Mobile named **Elizabeth Flanagan** as dean of the school of nursing. She has been with the university since 1978. Flanagan holds a bachelor degree in nursing from the University of Alabama, a master of science degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and a doctorate in education from the University of Southern Mississippi.

The university also welcomed new faculty including: **Ursula Bencsath**, instructor in nursing; **Janice Bowers PhD**, associate professor of marketing; **Reggie Moody**, instructor in organizational administration and leadership; **Garrison Thompson**, assistant professor of sociology; **Sharon Vest**, assistant professor of computer information systems; and **Judith Wilson PhD**, assistant professor of chemistry.

Wilkins Miller PC announced the addition of **Ana Alexander CPA**. She previously worked with several large local private companies and owned an accounting firm. Alexander is a graduate of University of South Alabama.

Jill Haynes joined MDI, a media group, as associate public relations director. She brings more than 15 years of public relations, crisis communications and issue management experience to the company. Haynes received her bachelor's degree in journalism at the State University College of New York at Buffalo and a master's degree in communication from the University of South Alabama.

**Haynes**

Elizabeth A. Citrin, H. James Koch and **Mary Abigail Sessions** joined the law firm of **Alford, Clausen & McDonald LLC**. Citrin is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Pace University School of Law. Her major area of concentration will be complex litigation defense. Koch is a University of Alabama and the University of Alabama School of Law graduate. He and Sessions will practice in the areas of medical malpractice and long-term care litigation defense. Sessions is a graduate of Samford University and Cumberland School of Law.

**Citrin****Koch****Sessions****BUSINESS ENDEAVORS**

The **Mobile Convention & Visitor's Corporation** recently changed its name to the **Mobile Convention & Visitors Bureau**. The change reflects a move to the industry standard where such organizations are commonly referred to as "bureaus." The Mobile CVB originally began operation as a part of the Chamber in the mid 1980s.

Mr. Electric of South Alabama recently signed on as a dealer and service representative for **GENERAC** generator products. This will give GENERAC a professional engineering and electrical service capability for any new and all existing generators installed in the Gulf Coast area.

Accelerated Technology, the Embedded Systems Division of Mentor Graphics Corp. (Nasdaq:MENT), announced its **Nucleus® Real-Time Operating System** was selected by the National Radio Astronomy Observatory. The program will allow the NRAO satellite to record and process celestial bodies in real time as seen by the most scientifically productive and widely-used telescope in the world. The upgrade is part of a \$72.6 million expansion project.

Austal USA signed a contract with New York operator **Circle Line-Statue of Liberty Ferry Inc.** for a 143-foot passenger catamaran. The vessel will be the first aluminum high-speed boat for Circle Line and the third contract Austal secured for the New York area in the last six months. Circle Line transports thousands of passengers each day to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

MINOLTA-QMS Inc. and **Corel Corp.** announced a strategic partnership including new marketing initiatives such as software bundles, price promotions and interactive product tour of MINOLTA-QMS' high quality laser printers and Corel's powerful creative software. In addition, MINOLTA-QMS recently introduced its most inexpensive and smallest color laser printer; the Magicolor 2300-DL, designed for both small workgroups and the home office user.

Lynne Cary Holistic Day Spa opened a new location in the Shop Easy Shopping Center on Old Shell Road. The spa has a retail store with health food items and an expanded selection of health and beauty products. Classes in self-defense, Yoga and Tai Chi will be available in a new workout room.

Southeast College of Technology announced a new bachelor's degree program in electronics and computer engineering technology. The program is an 18-month bachelor of applied science degree designed for students who hold associate-level degrees in the electronics field.

Chapura Inc. announced that **PocketMirror Standard** synchronization software will ship with every Palm Zire handheld across the globe. Using PocketMirror, every Zire handheld owner can manage important Microsoft Outlook information from any location.

Adams and Reese LLP announced plans to merge with **Lange, Simpson, Robinson & Somerville LLP** of Birmingham on Jan. 1. In Alabama, the firm will operate as **Adams and Reese/Lange Simpson**. The merger creates the largest law firm in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, with nearly 300 attorneys in seven offices including Birmingham, Mobile, New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Jackson, Houston and Washington DC.

ALLTEL opened a new location at the Shops of Schillinger at 740 S. Schillinger Rd. last month.

The Cronus Group LLC, an information technology services and software development company, announced a new program for municipalities – **Building Permit Software for Municipal Government**. The program runs on the IBM AS/400. For municipalities without an IBM AS/400, this software solution is available from the Cronus Group data center in Mobile.

The **University of South Alabama Foundation** and **PrimeHealth Holdings Inc. (PHI)**, a Florida corporation, negotiated and signed a **Stock Purchase Agreement** through which PHI will acquire PrimeHealth Companies. The sale, subject to approval of the Alabama Department of Insurance, involves PHI's purchase of the stock and assets of Prime Health of Alabama, the health maintenance organization arm of The PrimeHealth Companies, and Prime Health of Alabama Administrative Services, the third party administrator business branch.

WELL DONE!

The Society of Chest Pain Providers announced **Christi Whatley Mossburg** with **JK Whatley Communications** as the national communications chair. The organization exists to support quality chest pain care and promote the interests of chest pain center physicians throughout the nation.

The Carter Group LLC, an executive search and management consulting company, recently named **Michael A. Koban Jr.** to its advisory board of directors. Koban, of Tennessee, has more than 25 years experience in the healthcare services and hospital management industry and is currently a private investor.

Pixallure Design, a brand development firm, announced its inclusion into the 2002 American Corporate Identity Annual. This annual recognizes the best and most creative identity and brand development programs throughout the United States. Pixallure was selected for an identity designed for the law firm of **Dumas & McPhail LLC**.

DocuSys, a digital medical solutions company, announced **Suniti Ponskhe** joined the company's advisory board. Ponskhe, of McLean, Va., previously served as the company's chief information officer and now leads her own consulting firm.

Providence Hospital received the Consumer Choice Award for the sixth consecutive year from the National Research Corporation, an independent healthcare performance measurement leader in the U.S. Providence is one of only 149 hospitals in the nation to receive the annual award. Winners are determined by consumer perceptions on multiple quality and image ratings collected in the company's annual Healthcare Market Guide Study.

The National Restaurant Association selected **Wintzell's Oyster House** as the Alabama winner of the Restaurant Neighbor Award. The award is based on commitment and involvement, innovation, goals and impact. Throughout the year, Wintzell's donates time, food and financial assistance by hosting and catering many events for charities and community organizations.

Centralite Systems' Elegance Home Lighting and **Component Control System** was named as one of the Top 25 Products of the Year by Electrical Contracting and Engineering News. In addition, another product, the **GenDI (Centralite Device Integrator)** system that controls home systems from a handheld computer, was awarded Product of the Year by *Electronic House Magazine*.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Honoring long-time arts supporter **Jimmie Morris**, the Mobile City Council voted to name the Performing Arts Pavilion at Langan Park the "Jimmie Morris Performing Arts Pavilion." Morris is known for his 40 plus years supporting the arts in Mobile as director of the Senior Bowl half-time shows, chairman of the National Bicentennial Celebration, and founder of the Mobile Symphonic Pops Band, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

Alabama State Docks set aside 200 acres near the Theodore Ship Channel for a wetlands mitigation area. The site consists of uplands and forested wetlands adjacent to both sides of Muddy Creek and opened to the public for bird and wildlife viewing on Nov. 1. The acreage is being returned to a natural setting in exchange for impacting 22½ acres with the construction of the Marine Liquid Bulk Terminal.

University of South Alabama is exploring the development of a NCAA-Division I football team. If 6,000 season tickets are sold by December, the plan for creating the team will continue. Season tickets are \$50. For more information, contact the USA Ticket office at 460-6047 or the USA Athletic Office at 460-7121.

Alabama Power Co. renewed its membership to **Project Habitat**, a wildlife program designed to enhance wildlife opportunities within right-of-ways. Member utilities rely on integrated vegetation management with low-volume herbicide applications to transform right-of-ways into havens for wildlife by encouraging growth of diverse vegetation.

The **Mobile BayBears** are again offering discounted tickets for New Orleans Saints football games.

Remaining games include: Nov. 24, Cleveland at Noon; Dec. 1, Tampa Bay at 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 15, Minnesota at Noon; and Dec. 29, Carolina at Noon. Normally priced tickets for \$58 and \$53 are \$35 and \$30. There is a bus available. For information, call 479-2327.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Nonprofit agencies, schools, churches and civic clubs will benefit from the **McRae's Fall Charity Sale** Nov. 23. Tickets are \$5. Shoppers get discounts, special sale prices, a continental breakfast and a chance to win door prizes given during the sale. For info call **Volunteer Mobile** at 433-4456.

Share the Good News

Member News features a variety of announcements from Chamber members. All submissions are due the 1st of the month preceding the month of the publication. (For example, an announcement submitted on July 1 would appear in the August issue.) Send your information to Member News, The Business View, MACC, P.O. Box 2187, Mobile, AL 36652-2187 or fax to 251-431-8646.

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THE BUSINESS VIEW

NOVEMBER 2002 MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VOL. XXXIV, NO. 11



Photo by Thom Scott

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ON THE COVER: Sidney King and the Commonwealth Bank team are among the 2002 Eagle Award Winners. See story on page 9.

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A new company founded by former Lerio Employees works to recoup lost jobs.

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Honoring our military's finest.



MOBILE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Please notify Donna Iknier at 431-8609 or donna@mobilechamber.com if this issue is not reaching the intended person.

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envision
COASTAL ALABAMA

Quarterly Update

November 2002

Envision Launches New Brand, New Leaders to Boost Area's Regionalism



Envision Coastal Alabama action team co-chairs unveil the new logo at the press conference held at Ed's Seafood Shed. Pictured left to right are: Phillip Norris PhD, Ron Martin, Terry Harbin, Cindy McBrearty, Carolyn Akers, Charlotte Cabaniss and Bob Mullican.

Community leaders from Baldwin and Mobile counties unveiled a new name, logo, direction and leaders for the two-county regional vision program last month at Ed's Seafood Shed on the causeway.

Envision Coastal Alabama: Charting our Future logo and tagline (formerly known as Envision Mobile-Baldwin) comes as the program reaches a distinct milestone – its five-year mark. The launch of the new brand is the culmination of an effort to review the program's strategies and tactics as well as preview new goals that will ensure future success.

The original blueprint for action created by the community in the last five years was also revamped under four new compass points pointing to economy, equity, education and environment. Tasks were prioritized to facilitate action.

"In the past five years, Envision has had the privilege of shedding light on the tremendous work

of our coastal community's leaders and organizations who have been making our blueprint for the future a reality," said Envision Coastal Alabama Chair Gigi Armbrrecht with BellSouth.

"I feel confident that under the leadership of these new compass point leaders and with the new priorities that have been established, our coastal community is ready to achieve results in the next five years on the blueprint actions which still desperately need our attention," said Armbrrecht.

The new brand is the result of interviews with a diverse array of Baldwin and Mobile community leaders who have been both engaged in – and notably absent from – the Envision program over the past five years.

Research highlights that impacted the branding include a general consensus that:

- Regional efforts are critical to Alabama's coastal counties' competitiveness, increasing public, financial and political support in this day of global trade and communications. Increased public, financial and political support will allow us to continue building the quality of life.

- A shared, diverse leadership of the coastal area's effort is critical to making progress on regional competitiveness.

- Among the widely diverse demographics both within and between the two counties, the fact is, water is the element that most binds the area together and will serve as a common bond while embarking on regional efforts together.

- The program's role – to build awareness for and support individuals' and organizations' efforts (both past and future) in building the coastal community's vision based on the "blueprint" – needs to be more clearly communicated.

- The blueprint is a tremendous achievement of a community effort.

- The blueprint needs to be revamped to be more focused and ready for action.

"We have not been without struggles in the process, but this is not uncommon for visioning programs," says Linda Ingram, the Chamber's director of community and governmental affairs. "Our next, immediate goal needs to be ensuring action on the blueprint."

In 1997, more than 1,000 citizens from Mobile

and Baldwin counties spent a year developing a long-range strategic plan to provide a framework for their vision. The resulting document contained over 150 strategies for success in six focus areas of education, economic development, infrastructure, quality of life, government and community leadership.

This year, Envision began a regional re-visioning process that further refined these strategies by collapsing the existing focus areas into four foundations of sustainability – environment, equity, economy and education. During the process a new name and focus for the organization was developed.

The Junior League of Mobile, Whitney National Bank, BellSouth, Waste Management, Mobile Gas Service Corp. and Alabama Power Co. underwrote the financial costs of the strategic planning effort, and along with efforts of the volunteer steering committee in numerous meetings and workshops, made these achievements possible.



Mobile County Commissioners Freeman Jockisch and Sam Jones join Mayor Mike Dow in a symbolic meeting on the causeway with Baldwin County Commissioner Joe Faust, Daphne Mayor Harry Brown and Spanish Fort Councilman Joseph Thomas. Fairhope's Mayor Tim Kant was also in attendance.

Charting a New Direction

Below are the four Envision Coastal Alabama's focus areas with a brief description and the Mobile and Baldwin county leaders:

Environment

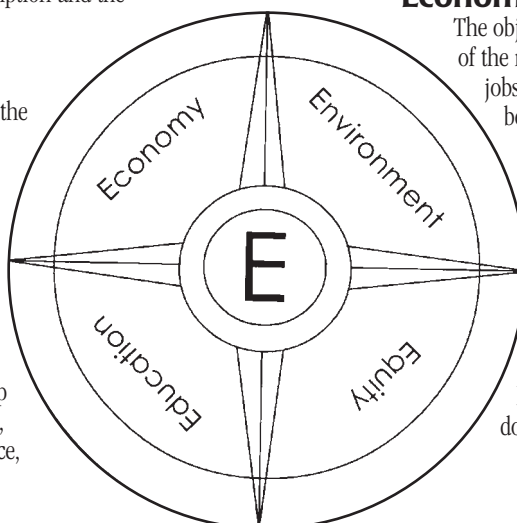
These strategies focus on protecting, restoring, maintaining and conserving the natural resources of Coastal Alabama as we build, grow and expand the infrastructure of the region with strong emphasis on the continuing improvement of water and air quality plus endorsing issues of sustainable land use.

Contact: Charlotte Cabaniss, Baldwin, (251) 580-1648
Cathy O'Keefe, Mobile, (251) 460-7131

Equity

Strategies in this group are devoted to supporting the rights and entitlements of citizens to representation, equality and opportunity. They develop opportunities and more access for the people in the region to careers, education, cultural enrichment, social leadership and recreation – and equality among race, gender, geography and age.

Contact: Phil Norris, Baldwin, (251) 928-8133
Ron Martin, Mobile, (251) 434-5621



Economy

The objective of these Envision strategies is to contribute to the economic development of the region and strive to create wealth in the area. They provide more high quality jobs and create a stronger workforce. These strategies support coastal Alabama in being a competitive region in the global economy by proactively developing and marketing the unique resources in technology, environment, education and human capital.

Contact: Bob Mullican, Baldwin, (251) 990-3849
Terry Harbin, Mobile, (251) 690-1595

Education

Access to quality education is the overall goal of these Envision strategies as well as creating a diverse range of educational options. Most importantly, however, citizens want to create a passion for learning and the opportunities to do so at any age.

Contact: Cindy McBrearty, Baldwin, (251) 990-8653
Carolyn Akers, Mobile, (251) 476-0002

Envision Leaders Plan a New Direction for Coastal Alabama

Cindy McBrearty and Rosemary Butler (pictured at right) are members of the Envision Coastal Alabama Steering Committee who participated in a leadership workshop held to involve leaders from Baldwin and Mobile counties as work began to chart the future of the region.

Below is Larry Jackson, Sgt. Phillip Garrett and Wendy Allen during a table talk on assigned strategies as other members of the steering committee are likewise involved.

The interaction from leaders in both counties will result in collapsing the strategies from the original focus areas adopted in 1997 to the sustainable foundations of environment, equity, economy and education.



Envision Success Story

Federal Grant Expands Area Youth Services



Danny White and Cynthia Ramos, health educators for the Right Choices Program of Crittenton Youth Services, work with students at Mae Eanes Middle School.

each year," said Clare Geary, assistant coordinator for the CYS program "Project Plan Right Choices."

"We currently reach 15,000 students each year, but this increase in federal funding would allow us to educate more than 42,000 students each year. Students need information on the life-long consequences of risk behaviors, so they can make the right choices," said Geary. Crittenton speakers present week-long classes in area middle and high schools to educate youth on risk behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use and premarital sex, and the lifelong consequences of such behavior. The education programs promote an abstinence-only philosophy and focus on building self-esteem as a

key to avoiding risk behaviors. CYS presents their "Project Plan Right Choices" education program free of charge to public, private and parochial schools in Mobile and Baldwin counties. "United Way funding and grants are our only source of income, so this federal money is crucial for the expansion of our services," said Geary. Using the federal planning grant funds, the coalition organized a series of focus groups to identify key problems facing teens and possible solutions. Researchers have already held focus groups with educators, business leaders, teens and churches. A parent focus group chaired by Mobile Councilmember Connie Hudson was held Nov. 7. In addition to participating in group discussions about key issues, focus group participants completed an anonymous opinion survey about issues in their community. Results of the opinion surveys will be compiled demographically to identify the most important issues within several communities in the Mobile and Baldwin county area. For information on attending the parent focus group or CYS education programs contact Crittenton Youth Services at 479-8585.

Teen pregnancy. Alcohol use. Drug abuse. Sexually transmitted diseases. These are just a few of the serious issues facing young people nationwide. A federal grant awarded recently may help Mobile and Baldwin county youth get the information and guidance they need to tackle these tough issues. A community coalition between Crittenton Youth Services, University of South Alabama Children's and Women's Hospital, Baldwin County Public School System and Mobile County School System was awarded a federal planning grant to fund a needs assessment for improving youth services in the two counties.

Results of the needs assessment will be submitted in January in a separate grant application and could secure a substantial federal implementation grant to expand education programs addressing teen risk behavior in both counties. The federal implementation grant would be the largest grant Crittenton Youth Services (CYS) has ever received and would allow CYS to almost triple the number of students they reach in a year.

"This grant would be a tremendous leap for us, allowing us to revamp our services, hire more presenters and increase the number of students we see

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