

The Chamber Perspectives online

Post Your Events on our Community Calendar

Don't forget to post your community events on our free calendar at www.tuscaloosachamber.com.

You can subscribe to get a daily email/RSS feed & add items to your own calendar! You can also get a reminder email or text.

We now offer groups an online event registration service for a nominal fee.

Also, a group may put our calendar on its website and may even purchase a sublicense to customize it.

Call 758.7588 for more info.

**Let Your Bucks
Stop Here!** Shop Tuscaloosa County this spring.

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Our Longtime President Retires



Johnnie Aycock, our fearless leader since 1983, announced his retirement at our Board of Directors meeting in May. He plans to leave in March of 2011, giving us some time to transition. [Click here](#) to read a great article by a favorite business reporter.

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It's Christmas in July at Hilton Garden Inn

Our next "Chamber Connects" after hours mixer will be at the Hilton Garden Inn on Tues, July 13 from 5-7pm. Theme is Christmas in July! Party planners will get a taste of what they have to offer for the upcoming holiday season. And it's fabulous! Come enjoy the festive décor by Linda's Flowers and elegant food prepared by their chef. Also, awesome door prizes will be given away. Plan to come and bring a friend--All employees of Chamber member businesses are invited as well as prospective members.

Attendees are asked to bring an item for United Way's "Stuff the Bus" school supply drive like hand sanitizer, crayons, glue sticks, washable markers, liquid soap, baby wipes, clear back packs, #2 pencils, scissors (Friskar is best brand), and paper.

Wintzell's hosted our June mixer, which was very well-attended. We enjoyed their signature seafood and networking on the patio.

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Women in Business Council Seeks Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for the 4th annual Women In Business Council Awards. Based on predetermined criteria, the following awards will be given at the annual luncheon: Bright Future, Defining Woman of the Year, Achievement, Roots & Wings and Trailblazer. [Click here](#) for a nomination form defining each category (form posted at www.tuscaloosachamber.com.) Deadline for submission is July 30. Please take time today to nominate a woman who deserves recognition for her accomplishments. For more info, contact Stacey Gann at 391.0559 or stacey@tuscaloosachamber.com. A form can be faxed, if requested.

Annual luncheon to honor recipients will be Aug 26 with Barbara Dooley, author of *Put Me In, Coach* and wife of former Georgia Bulldogs Football Coach, Vince Dooley, as the guest speaker. She is also a regular guest on the Paul Finebaum Radio Show and is being hosted by the Women In Business Council and Re/Max Premiere Group. Reservations will be accepted in July.

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Public Affairs Council Moving Forward on Agenda



At the heart of The Chamber's business advocacy role and representation of our members' interests is the Public Affairs Council, a core component of the governmental affairs division.

Roy Clem, general manager of WVUA-TV, serves as the 2010 Division Vice Chairman

of the Governmental Affairs Division; while Bryan Winter, partner in the firm of Lewis-Smyth-Winter, serves as chairman of the public affairs council, and Jordan Plaster of Merrill Lynch is the vice chair.

Under their leadership, the public affairs council developed an aggressive agenda for 2010, which included passage of local enabling

legislation to allow the citizens of Tuscaloosa to vote on local issues and to allow the use of traffic cameras to enforce 'red light' violations. In addition, the council has been focused and involved in various local and state races during an important election year, interviewing virtually every candidate for state senate and house races, district attorney, governor and for the 7th district congressional seat.

Maintaining positive and open working relationships with elected officials at every level is a key strategy of the public affairs council, which is being sustained during 2010. One of the key projects is the annual **Washington Fly In, which will take place Sept 29 and 30**. Some limited space is available but the deadline is approaching quickly. If you're interested in joining The Chamber team for the Fly In, call 758.7588 or email johnnie@tuscaloosachamber.com.

During the 2010 Fly In, The Chamber's delegation will meet with all of the members of the Alabama Congressional delegation and their staffs to discuss, propose and advocate for issues and projects that are important to the economic vitality and livability of the Tuscaloosa County region.

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Shelton State to Host Adopt-A-School Kickoff Breakfast



Celebrating the completion of 25 years of supporting area schools, the annual Adopt-A-School Breakfast Seminar, scheduled for Tues, Aug 3, will officially kickoff the 2010-11 AAS year. The seminar, held at Shelton State Community College, will begin with a buffet breakfast at 7:30am. Seminar provides a unique opportunity for school personnel in both the Tuscaloosa Co System and Tuscaloosa City System to

meet together and network with community businesses and leaders.

Attending will be representatives from all 57 public schools in the Tuscaloosa City and Co Systems as well as business leaders representing the 93 business and professional organizations who partner with area schools. Two partnerships have just completed their 20th year together and will be recognized. Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center & Arcadia Elementary School and The Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa & Northside High School have been partners since 1990. Also, First Federal Bank & Matthews Elementary School and TTL, Inc & Hillcrest Middle School have been partners since 2000 and will receive the Decade of Excellence Award.

Following the opening session, school and business coordinators will attend breakout workshops and develop plans for the 2010-11 school year. [Click here](#) for a registration form (available at www.tuscaloosachamber.com). Early bird registration is available

through July 16 for \$12/person. After that, cost for registration is \$15/person. For more info contact Loo Whitfield at 391.0563 or loo@tuscaloosachamber.com.

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Support AAS Golf & Tennis Tournaments



Help our local schools and play golf on one of the top-ranked municipal courses in the Southeast! Ol' Colony golf complex recently named in "2010 *Golfweek's* Best Municipal Courses," ranking 49th in the USA on the list, will host the 2010 Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt-A-School Golf Tournament on Sept 9, 2010.

All teams in the four-man scramble will begin play with a shotgun start at 1pm. Early bird registration for \$500/team is available now through Aug 9. After that, regular registration will resume and the cost will be \$600/per team. [Click here](#) for registration form (available at www.tuscaloosachamber.com). Includes green fees, range balls, cart and lunch. Patrick Agee of Advantage Realty is chairing the tournament this year.

Sponsorships Available for Golf and Tennis Tournaments

Proceeds benefit every public school in our community and provide critical funding for the coordination and administration of the AAS program for the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County School Systems. A variety of sponsorships are available for both tournaments.

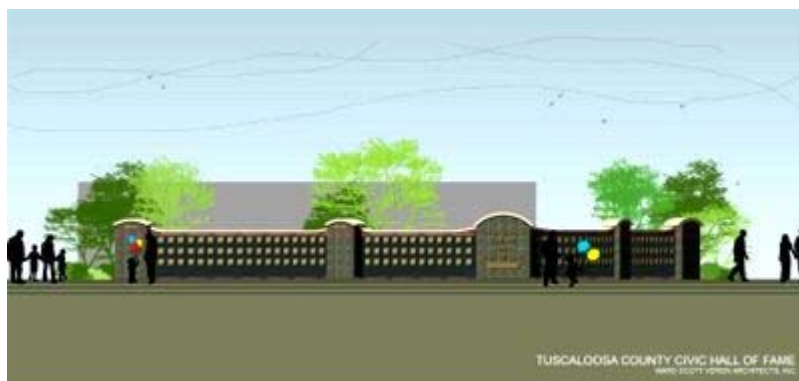
Eagle Sponsorships include recognition and sponsorships at both the Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Golf and Tennis Tournaments; TV and radio exposure; golf hole sponsorship; tennis court sponsor sign; the opportunity to man a booth at both tournaments; signage at both tournaments and recognition in all publications.

A variety of other sponsorships including closest to the pin awards; tournament prizes; scorecard, cart and hole sponsorships are also available. Along with the traditional court sponsorships, lunch/scoreboard and player favor sponsorships are now available!

[Click here](#) for sponsorship forms (posted at www.tuscaloosachamber.com). For more info, contact Loo Whitfield at loo@tuscaloosachamber.com or 391.0563.

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Home for Civic Hall of Fame Being Developed



Through a permanent display and community monument, the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame will contribute directly to our sense of history, the significance of service and leadership, and the lasting influence of dedicated citizens that have contributed to the overall quality and progress of our area.

The Civic Hall of Fame permanent monument, to be constructed in mid-summer, will be located in the center of the community in the new urban park in Downtown Tuscaloosa, providing exceptional access and visibility. The display will provide a focal point for all citizens to touch the history of the community while directly contributing to the historic nature of the park.

We are grateful that the City of Tuscaloosa has provided access to dedicated space in the new downtown urban park for the establishment of this beautiful, permanent display.

Private investment and support is currently being secured through various contributors to the permanent Civic Hall of Fame monument. The campaign team consists of Jerry Belk, Sam Faucett, Roger Sayers, Leroy McAbee, Tommy Hester, Jim Harrison, Jr, and Johnnie Aycock. Anyone interested in being involved and participating can email johnnie@tuscaloosachamber.com or call 758.7588.

The Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame was established in 2000, during the 100th anniversary of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, as a gift to the community to honor citizens of Tuscaloosa County who have made broad and lasting contributions to the betterment of the community. By recognizing these individuals and portraying them as role models, the Hall of Fame was created to stimulate interest in and an appreciation of the value of our history and heritage, and to expand community service and citizenship.

This lasting tribute to service, leadership and citizenship will be a constant reminder to all citizens of their opportunities and responsibilities to give of themselves for the betterment and progress of our beloved community.

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Downtown Revitalization is Key Strategy



It's obvious that downtown renewal is moving forward in Tuscaloosa and Northport, as the new federal complex goes up, streetscaping is shaping up and a new look is emerging. It's an important and exciting time for our community for revitalization of the central business districts

and is a timely economic strategy.

Across the nation, revitalization and redevelopment of downtowns has become a proven economic development strategy over the past 10-15 years. Downtowns were, for the most part, once the economic hub of economic, civic and social activity for a community, but downtowns declined as businesses followed their customer base to the suburbs and outlying areas.

Always at the heart of a community and often a reflection of the economic vitality of a city, a vibrant, diverse and prosperous central business district is an essential ingredient in a community's recipe for economic success.

A key to downtown revitalization is a strong commitment to luring private investment and creating an environment and public policy framework to entice private dollars. The pre-condition for private sector investment is public investment in infrastructure, including adequate and expanded parking, improved sidewalks, façade and building upgrades, beautification and cleanliness.

With local governments providing investment in infrastructure, coupled with federal dollars being infused into the central business district, excellent progress is being made in Tuscaloosa and in Northport to build prosperous, exciting downtowns. We have such great potential to create downtown sectors that are destinations for commerce, cultural venues and entertainment, community gathering places, residential areas, and other unique, creative economic and retail opportunities.

It is essential, however, that public policy recognize and stimulate the core value of private investment and create an economic climate for business prosperity. There must be a true public-private partnership approach to downtown development coupled with well-designed and consistent marketing and development strategies to expand the trade area and consumer base for central business districts.

According to research, experiences of successful central business districts, and many economic experts, to develop and grow sustainable downtowns aggressive communities are focusing on five strategies for downtown revitalization. These include: employment, culture and entertainment, residential, marketing, incentives and

public policy.

It's a proven fact that communities that understand what it takes for business to thrive in a downtown environment, that have public policies in place to stimulate investment, and that are willing to help build the critical mass necessary to sustain business success, will experience healthy, revitalized prosperous central business districts.

Tuscaloosa and Northport have this opportunity and the future is bright if we work together to continue to build and encourage a positive environment for business success and effective public-private partnership initiatives.

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New Chamber-Office Depot Program

Your Chamber membership now has an added benefit: an Office Depot Store Purchasing Card! This new discount program allows you to receive these special discounts:

~Top 100 item core list at floating 15% off of retail pricing in-store and online for paper/toner and 30% off general supplies (note that retail pricing is already deeply discounted off of list price)

~5% off Retail Website

~FREE Next Day delivery of in-stock items on orders over \$50

~*Get these discounts in-store with our Multi-tender Store Purchasing Card*

~Discounts on office supplies, technology, promotional products, copy & print and furniture

~Access to a private website for order placement
(<http://bsd.officedepot.com>)

~Customization available for members with annual spend over \$15K

~Your choice of an account billing (invoice) account or a credit card account, or both!

Your employees can take part in the program, too! [Click here](#) to get started and link business and personal credit/debit cards to receive these discounts. For more info, contact Shea Batts at 205.789.2757 or Shea.Batts@officedepot.com.

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Social Media Toolbox: Twitter



By Donna Gilliland, Social Media Specialist

Twitter Profile Page Could Make or Break Your Following

Is Your Twitter Profile Google Optimized?

Twitter is a powerful tool for building a business network and staying connected with your customers. It's also a great tool for listening to what people are saying about your products.

An additional objective in the use of Twitter is growing a quality following – a topic all its own. However, the focus of this short article is help you optimize your Twitter page and profile so that you can be found by those who are searching and increase your followers.

Google Searches Twitter

Twitter has a high Google search ranking and the profile field is a searchable field by Google. You have a strong chance that your profile will show up in a Google search if it is properly optimized.

Your Twitter Profile

Your Twitter profile is also known as your bio field. Keep in mind that people want to follow interesting people so think creatively about how you will describe who you are. You have up to 160 characters available to create your bio. Twitter suggests that you stay just under that value.

Include keywords in your profile to make it easier to be found in Google searches. For example, I am a social media trainer thus social media are keywords in my profile.

Learn from Others

Visit the Twitter pages of those you know to be successful using Twitter and review how they have written their Twitter bio. Look at the design of their pages.

Your Twitter Page

What does your Twitter page say about you? Follow me or move on to the next person? As stated earlier people want to follow interesting as well as helpful people. What you tweet about should reflect interesting and helpful.

Your Twitter page is a first impression for many and dependent upon what a person sees there will determine whether you are followed or bypassed. For example, if I visit a page and there is no photo, no link to the company and/or the tweets are sales pitches then I move on. Make certain that your page has a professional photo of you and a professionally branded background. Always include a link to your site.

Your Assignment

Visit your Twitter page and see if you would want to follow you. If not get busy implementing today's suggestions.

Donna Gilliland is a social media speaker and trainer. You can follow Donna on Twitter at <http://www.Twitter.com/MOSTraining>.

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Two Men and a Truck Celebrate Move



Owner Mike Verzino celebrated the move of his business, Two Men and a Truck, this month to 1001 McFarland Blvd NE. A ribbon cutting was held on June 9 for the new location. Call 247.5050 for help moving to a new office or home. Learn more about the company at

www.twomenandatruck.com.

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Angel Flight Now at Tuscaloosa Airport



Angel Flight celebrated its first branch office in Alabama with a ribbon cutting on June 11 at the Tuscaloosa Regional Airport. Angel Flight is a wonderful organization that provides free air transportation for people that have a medical need that

can't be filled in the local area. It serves primarily patients who are traveling from, to or through the states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. Visit www.angelflightsoars.org for more info.

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Northport Walmart Marks Renovation



Walmart in Northport held a grand reopening

on June 11 to mark its recent renovation. The store, open since 1995, underwent an overhaul that took three months to complete. New look has more open space, wider aisles and new lighting. Also, merchandise is grouped to help shoppers to find related items and more lines of merchandise have been added.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, the Walmart Foundation donated more than \$5,000 to local charities, including the DCH Foundation and Junior Achievement of Tuscaloosa.

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Jessup, Ingram, Burns & Associates Host Open House



Local CPA firm Jessup, Ingram, Burns & Associates, LLP held an open house and ribbon cutting on June 17. Attendees were treated to hors d'oeuvres, beverages and tours of the new building at 204 Marina Drive, off Rice Mine Rd near the Snows Mill intersection in Tuscaloosa. Call

349.1322 or visit www.jessupllp.com for more info.

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Welcome, New Members!

The following joined from May 1 to date.

Melina's

Chloe's Cup Coffee & Tea

Tree House Farm & Nursery, LLC

Campus Collection

Forkland Springs Farm, LLC

Capstone Club of AL

Payscape Advisors

Second Season Outdoor Consignment

Imagination Station Child Development Center

Baila Venues, LLC

Netquirk, LLC

Angel Flight

Vanguard Cleaning System of North Alabama
The Core
Al.com
Greene Beverage Co, Inc

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Diamond Level Sponsors



Mercedes-Benz

