



# Adopt-A-School Newsletter

Sponsored by: The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Tuscaloosa City & County School Systems

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## Calendar of Events

- Apr 4 State of the Schools Address
- Aug 1 Adopt-A-School Breakfast Seminar
- Sep 27 Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt-A-School Golf Tournament

**2nd Annual**

## State of the Schools Breakfast

**April 4**  
Four Points Hotel  
7:30am

(click here to register)

## Adopt-A-School Newsletter Converts to Electronic Newsletter

The Adopt-A-School Newsletter formerly published three times a year has developed a new format. Beginning this month the newsletter will be produced monthly and delivered electronically to the business and the education community.



The Adopt-A-School Program, sponsored by The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama and the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County School Systems, has been a vital part of the Tuscaloosa community since 1985. Currently seventy-eight businesses and organizations participate as adopters for the forty-eight schools in the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County School Systems. These adopters provide resources and support for the schools that they otherwise would not have. The activities, projects and relationships are constantly developing and growing.

The monthly newsletter provides an opportunity to share with the community the activities of these partnerships, as well as information regarding upcoming events. If you have information you would like included in the Adopt-A-School newsletter, contact Loo Whitfield [loo@tuscaloosachamber.com](mailto:loo@tuscaloosachamber.com)

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## Second Annual "State of the Schools" Breakfast Meeting

When it comes to today's rapidly changing, always changing educational system, it's important for the business community to know and understand what's happening in their local systems.

That's why The Chamber of Commerce, Ellis Architects and *The Tuscaloosa News* are co-sponsoring a "State of the Schools" breakfast meeting on April 4 at the Four Points Hotel. The meeting starts at 7:30, and there is no charge, however reservations are requested. A light continental style breakfast will be available.

Headliners for the report to the community will be the superintendents of Tuscaloosa County's two public school systems: Dr. Joyce Levey, Tuscaloosa City Schools, and Dr. Frank Costanzo, Tuscaloosa County Schools.

Each school leader will give a status report on their system and will take questions from the floor. Chamber members are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to receive an update on the school systems that are preparing our students for the workplace.

Participants can register on The Chamber's website at [www.tuscaloosachamber.com](http://www.tuscaloosachamber.com) or call 391-0556.

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### **ADOPT-A-SCHOOL WEEK 2007 "Community Connections.....Making a Difference"**



Using the theme "Community Connections.....Making a Difference" creative and informative displays lined the corridors of University Mall during Adopt-A-School's recent celebration of Adopt-A-School Week. As visitors moved from one display to the next, it was evident that the partners are indeed developing Tuscaloosa's future as they provide resources from the business community to enrich the educational process at their partner school.

The purpose of Adopt-A-School Week is two-fold: to express appreciation to all Adopt-A-School partners, and to inform the community of the many projects and activities that are provided to schools through Adopt-A-School. These aspects of the program were successfully accomplished in many ways.

While mall displays are perhaps the biggest and most visible part of Adopt-A-School Week, individual schools and adopters celebrated their own Adopt-A-School partnerships on-site at schools and places of business. Letters and cards of appreciation were sent to adopters, banners were constructed by students and hung in hallways, marques saluted Adopt-A-School partners, letters and fliers were distributed to inform parents of the many projects of their partnership, adopters were invited to schools for adopter-appreciation breakfast or lunch, students wrote personal thank you notes to adopters, adopters provided breakfast or lunch for school staff, and the list goes on and on.



Those who viewed the mall displays had the opportunity to vote for their favorite display in each of three categories. The winners in each category were:  
**Best Theme-Related Display:** Sprayberry Education Center

**Most Informative Display:** Rock Quarry Elementary  
**Most Creative Display:** Cottdale Elementary

On behalf of the Adopt-A-School Program and The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, we sincerely appreciate the commitment that the Adopt-A-School

partners make toward ensuring that students in the Tuscaloosa City and County School Systems receive the best education possible.

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### **BFGoodrich Brings Career Day to Cottdale Elementary**

On Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, employees at BFGoodrich visited Cottdale Elementary, their long-time Adopt-a-School partner, and gave fifth-grade students a real treat. Their continued goal has been to assist in preparing students for the work force. Three careers were presented to Cottdale's three fifth-grade classes. Each was presented in an interesting way, and students were allowed to participate.



Ron Andress, a metrology administrator, introduced students to the science of measurement. He explained that it is a fun occupation, and emphasized that it involves a great deal of math and science. Every measurement, he added, contains a degree of uncertainty. This is why he must check his work with fellow workers to make sure a

mistake has not occurred. He showed students, using a power point demonstration, how gauge blocks are used that are accurate within millionths of an inch.

Beth Jordan and John Belcher involved students in an activity to determine whether tires were straight and well-made. Tire uniformity is important, they explained, because if the tread were too thick in places, or a steel belt were off-center, tires could lose tread. Listening and following instructions, they reiterated, is crucial in making a good tire. They informed students that the Tuscaloosa plant makes about 14, 500 tires a day.

Derrick Crocker, a process technician, and Yaser Ahmet, a measurement technician, showed students an instrument that resembled something out of Star Wars. Derrick explained to envious students that he gets to work with "cool stuff" because he went to school and got a degree. He pointed out that he works with math every day. The tool he was displaying is so adept, he added, that it measures down to a hair, even the oil off of a person's skin.

The day was definitely a success. Students were entertained, educated, and impressed with the importance of finishing school, learning math and science skills, and listening and following directions. Teachers and other educators found themselves drawn into the interesting presentations also. Cottdale Elementary is grateful for having such a caring and involved partner in BF Goodrich.

*(photograph in this article taken by Allen Rosen)*

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### **Tuscaloosa Middle Students Job Shadow The Radiology Clinic**

On February 1<sup>st</sup> The Radiology Clinic invited a small group of students from Tuscaloosa Middle School to participate in a Job Shadowing program. The Radiology Clinic provided a tour through several of their departments.

The students observed different types of MRI machines, and learned how Open MRI's work effectively. Chris, a member of the Radiology Clinic team, showed the students the many exciting aspects of the human brain and how the test performed at the Radiology Clinic can save lives. The students viewed X-rays, in which the Radiology Clinic employees demonstrated stomach acids expanding with a balloon. The students were able to get a first hand look at one of the few PET scans in Alabama and were informed about the radio active materials used in the testing process. The students also observed an ultrasound in which they had the rare opportunity to see a live baby girl on the sonogram.

Tuscaloosa Middle School students completed their tour of The Radiology Clinic with a snack and t-shirt. Ashton Fendley, a sixth grader at TMS, commented, "I liked where Chris showed us the brain. It was really neat." "The hard work I saw performed at the Radiology Clinic really inspired me to work harder in school," observed Sarah Stuart, a TMS seventh grader. Tuscaloosa Middle School is very proud of the wonderful partnership shared with The Radiology Clinic.

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### **Westlawn Students Shadow Geological Survey Staff**



Punxsutawney Phil did not see his shadow on Groundhog Day, which is traditionally an indicator that spring, is just six weeks away. However, the staff at Geological Survey of Alabama did see their shadow, but it does not mean more wintry weather.

Students from Westlawn Middle School had an opportunity to job shadow GSA staff members and perform work tasks that were educational and helpful, as well as appreciated. Students participated in job activities such as identifying and sorting fish, sorting

fossils, measuring maps and posters, restocking shelves and archiving files. After the day of "shadowing" the students met to share their job experiences with each other. "Job Shadowing is a great experience for the students and really allows them to see the connection between education and the workforce," commented Loo Whitfield, Director of Adopt-A-School.

At the end of the day the students were presented with posters, maps, fossils and other

educational resources published by the Geological Survey of Alabama.

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### **Walker Elementary Students Visit Rite Aid Distribution Center**

On Friday, February 2, 2007, fifth grade students from Walker Elementary School had the opportunity to learn about their adopters when they visited the Rite Aid Distribution Center. Students rotated through several stations where they learned about the daily operations at Rite Aid Distribution Center.



During the visit the fifth grade students were divided into groups and moved through four different stations. In one station the students were divided into small groups and participated in team building activities. The Rite Aid employees explained to the students the importance of working together as a team on the job. Next students were able to have their personal identification badges made as they learned about the importance of security in the Rite Aid Distribution facility. The bar code system was explained to the students as they toured the facility and watched employees locate products and fill orders. Finally, the students were divided into teams and they participated in a simulated work station where they actually filled a store order. They learned first hand the value of carefully completing the orders and working as a team.

The annual job shadow experience is not only fun for the students, but educational as well. Thanks to the employees of Rite Aid Distribution Center, the Walker Elementary students have a better understanding of the skills needed to be an effective employee.

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### **Drive Thru Dinner A Great Success**

Huntington Place Elementary School and their Adopt-a-School Partner, The Credit Union of Alabama FCU, once again held a very successful *Drive Thru Dinner Fundraiser*. All who participated in the event on January 25th, 2007, enjoyed delicious bar-b-que provided by Robertson's Bar-B-Que.

Over 650 Bar-B-Que Plates were sold by students, parents and faculty. The top two sellers were awarded gift cards and the class that sold the most tickets received a pizza party. The \$3000 generated by the event will be used by classroom teachers to purchase classroom supplies and educational materials.

Bar-b-que is not the only thing Huntington Place and their adopter, The Credit Union of Alabama FCU have going on. Recent months have been full of special events planned by the Credit Union. Halloween created much excitement and delight when two Credit Union employees showed up at the school dressed as familiar characters, Raggedy Ann and Andy, to provide candy for everyone. November brought the much anticipated "Annual Crazy Hair Day" Contest. This contest was a huge success and everyone had fun raising money to help an underprivileged family for Christmas. In December, students with birthdays in the last quarter of 2006 were treated to a special birthday bash.

Guest readers, teacher appreciation activities and continued birthday bashes are just a few of the planned events this successful partnership has scheduled for the rest of the year.

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### **Holt Elementary School and Sam's Club Reading Together**

Schools are constantly looking for ways to "give back" to their adopters. Principal Debbie Crawford and teachers from Holt Elementary School chose a unique way to show their appreciation to Sam's Club.

On December 9<sup>th</sup> Holt Elementary teachers made the hectic pre-Christmas shopping flurry a little less stressful for Sam's Club Shoppers. The teachers read to young visitors while parents took their time shopping at Sam's Club. Sam's employees decorated a cozy niche in the store and provided comfortable mats and rocking chairs for the participants.

It was an enjoyable time for all, particularly the parents who were able to fulfill their shopping lists, and a way the teachers at Holt Elementary could help Sam's Club.

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### **Faucett-Vestavia Elementary Students Explore Possible Career Options**



Several Facuett-Vestavia fifth grade students had the opportunity to explore two entirely different career options when they visited their adopters on Groundhog Job Shadow Day.

While visiting Nancy & Company, FVES students learned about the world of retail and fine jewelry. As the students viewed diamonds through a microscope Nancy Dawkins described the perfections and imperfections of the different diamonds. They also watched a professional jeweler size and set jewelry.

The students then visited Morgan Keegan and explored the world of stocks, bonds, mutual funds and investments. The stock market changed before their eyes as they watched the transactions handled by the wire operator and cashier. They were able to look closely at bonds and mutual funds as Jeb Bonner and other Morgan Keegan employees explained the day to day operations at Morgan Keegan.

After being treated to lunch a Mellow Mushroom by their adopters the students returned to school with new ideas concerning the career opportunities in their future.

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### **Tuscaloosa Chapter of Credit Unions Recognizes Student of the Month**

Lloyd Wood Middle School and The Tuscaloosa Chapter of Credit Unions are proud to announce a new "Student of the Month" program. Each month two students are chosen from each grade level (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>) based on exemplary character. The students are nominated by their teachers and the recipients are given a special "Student of the Month" t-shirt along with a certificate for their accomplishment.



To kick off this new program, students were encouraged to submit entries to design a t-shirt and create a slogan or motto. The winning entry for design was awarded \$25 and the motto winner was awarded \$10. Many students submitted entries in each category, and the final product was a great t-shirt that any student would be proud to wear.

Not only does The Tuscaloosa Chapter of Credit Unions wish to recognize students, but they also recognize the hard work and dedication of the faculty and staff of LWMS. In order, to show their appreciation and thanks Chapter representatives served a BBQ lunch to the entire staff in honor of American Education Week.

Lloyd Wood Middle School showed their appreciation to The Tuscaloosa Chapter of Credit Unions when the school's "Show-Stoppers" Show Choir performed for their adopters. In December the "Show-Stoppers" traveled to five different credit unions spreading holiday cheer not only to the credit union employees but also to credit union members. Lloyd Wood Middle School and The Tuscaloosa Chapter of Credit Unions enjoy an active and rewarding partnership and are already making plans for future projects.

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### **Mercedes-Benz U.S. International Shows Appreciation to Teachers**



Teachers play an all important role in the education of children and sometimes they need a bit of encouragement and motivation too. Therefore, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International (MBUSI) decided to implement a teacher appreciation program for its Adopt-A-School partners - Brookwood Middle and Vance Elementary.

At each of the schools, monthly drawings are held and two teachers' names are selected to receive special prizes. These prizes range from an assortment of office supplies, movie tickets, Mercedes-Benz memorabilia and other items that teachers might find useful and enjoyable.

The prizes are a small way to add some excitement to the teachers' school day, while at the same time honoring them. Throughout the school year, MBUSI plans to participate in other teacher/staff appreciation activities from recognizing the school's office personnel for Secretary's Day in April to celebrating Teacher Appreciation Day/Week in May.

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