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On-line Perspectives

One feature we would like to bring to your attention is the interactive calendar of events above. Just click on the event you are

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Civic Hall of Fame Announces 2006 Honorees

Seven exceptional citizens have been selected as the 2006 honorees for the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame, sponsored and coordinated by The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama. Johnnie Aycock, President of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, made the announcement.

The 2006 inductees include three deceased and four living distinguished citizens. They are: Carl W. Albright, Jr.; Frances Allison Alexander; Jerry Belk; Chester A. Fredd, Sr.; Doris Leopard; J. Barry Mason; and Charles Steele, Jr. The formal induction ceremony will be held Thursday night, April 20th at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel.

Sponsored by The Chamber, this will be the sixth annual induction for the Civic Hall of Fame, which is designed to honor exceptional citizens who have made significant, long-term contributions to the overall development of Tuscaloosa County.

The Civic Hall of Fame was born during The Chamber's 100th anniversary year in 2000, and since its inception, 33 citizens have been honored. "The basic purpose of the Civic Hall of Fame," stated Lin Moore, The Chamber's 2006 Vice Chairman of Community Development, "is to honor civic giants, men and women who have made broad, lasting contributions to the overall progress and quality of our community. Our 2006 inductees certainly meet this high standard and reflect the rich history and civic life of Tuscaloosa County."

The Civic Hall of Fame program will begin with a reception at 6:30 PM, followed by the formal induction ceremony at 7:00 PM. The program will include formal presentations of the 2006 honorees.

Tickets are on sale at The Chamber at \$35.00 per person. For details and tickets, contact The Chamber at 391.0559 or 758.7588.



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2006 Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame Honorees

interested in and your web browser will take you to additional information on the event automatically.

Watch for Perspectives Online as well as another electronic communications piece in the works, called "The Agenda", which will be focused on governmental and public affairs issues and activities.

We hope you enjoy and benefit from Perspectives Online.



Carl W. Albright, Jr. (1944-1997). A prominent, influential business leader during some of Tuscaloosa County's most prosperous and promising economic years, Carl Albright was a successful banker, attorney and civic leader. His impact was felt in the areas of industrial and economic development, serving in key leadership roles at and through The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority, Stillman College, DCH Foundation, First Presbyterian Church and a host of other community and civic organizations.

Frances Allison Alexander (1923-2003). A tireless civic leader and community volunteer, Frances Allison Alexander was influential in a broad range of civic, educational and religious activities. She was considered one of the founders of the Children's Hands-On Museum (CHOM); had significant impact on a wide range of religious initiatives through the Christ Episcopal Church; led in the creation of a variety of educational efforts, including tutoring programs for children; and provided a significant influence in community decision-making through her application of high moral and ethical standards in all of her service efforts.



Jerry Belk (1932-present). The long-time Director of the Tuscaloosa County Parks & Recreation Authority, known as PARA, Jerry Belk is being honored for a lifetime of accomplished public service. His name is synonymous with PARA, for he led its growth and development for over 30 years, but he is also being recognized for his influence and positive impact on race relations, humanitarian initiatives, youth programs, and many other civic endeavors. He has also served as the Chairman of the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame from its inception.

Chester A. Fredd, Sr. (1906-1997). One of Alabama's most devoted educators, Dr. C. A. Fredd, Sr., as he is better known, contributed significantly to the growth and development of C. A. Fredd Technical School, which is named in his honor, and today is known as the C. A. Fredd campus of Shelton State Community College. Dr. Fredd's influence in education was significant and reached far and wide. His leadership was also felt in a variety of community, youth and civic initiatives throughout West Alabama.



Doris Leapard (1919-present). One of Tuscaloosa's most influential pioneers in the cultural arts development of Tuscaloosa, Doris Leapard has significantly impacted a variety of arts and educational initiatives. The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa, the Tuscaloosa Community Singers, PRIDE, Theatre Tuscaloosa and a host of other major cultural and community initiatives benefited from the leadership and efforts of Doris Leapard.

J. Barry Mason (1941-present). One of Tuscaloosa's and Alabama's most distinguished and respected educators and business leaders, J. Barry Mason is the Dean of the College of Commerce and Business Administration at The University of Alabama. His influence has been significant in a variety of civic, economic, education and community endeavors through the DCH Health System, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, PARA, Boy Scouts and a host of other diverse local, state and national leadership roles related to management, scholarship, research and teaching.



Charles Steele, Jr. (1946-present). One of Tuscaloosa's most prominent civil rights and political leaders, Charles Steele, Jr. is currently the President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). His influence and efforts have been significant through his service as a former member of the Tuscaloosa City Council and former Alabama State Senator, as well as his effort in a variety of local initiatives that impacted youth, housing and other social issues.



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Top Entrepreneurs To Be Honored May 3rd

The annual Entrepreneur of the Year awards will be presented during a luncheon program on Wednesday, May 3rd beginning at 11:30 AM, according to 2006 Chairman of the awards committee, **Sam Parks** of the First National Bank of Central Alabama.

The annual awards program is designed to honor small business owners and entrepreneurs in four categories. Awards will be presented to the Entrepreneur of the Year, Innovator of the Year, and Advocate of the Year; and the Rising Star award will be presented to young, growing firms. The Chamber will also honor a company or an individual with a Life Time Achievement Award based on their overall, long-term success and impact.

"This is a very special and prestigious recognition program," stated Parks, "for it highlights the essential role of small businesses and entrepreneurs in building our vibrant economy. Small business owners, managers and entrepreneurs take risks daily and are at the heart of job creation and economic growth. This annual program gives us an opportunity to focus on and underscore their vital roles."

"We have a marvelous entrepreneurial climate in Tuscaloosa County," said Chamber President Johnnie Aycock. "The spirit of private enterprise is reflected in the many diverse contributions small businesses make to our flourishing economy. Our annual volunteer-led awards program plays an important role in honoring and spotlighting local business leadership and impact."

The 18th annual awards program will be held at the Four Points Sheraton. Reservations and tickets will be available through The Chamber office or online. Watch for details, but plan now to be part of this very special and prestigious program on May 3rd

The 2006 Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Committee includes: Chairman, **Sam Parks**, First National Bank of Central Alabama; **Phyllis Gamble**, AmSouth Bank; **Janet Moore**, Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co.; **Bill Tate**, Tidwell DeWitt, LLC; **Charles Shelby**, Shelby Holding Co., Inc.; **Kevin Vann**, People's Bank & Trust Company; **Steve Shockley**, Habitat for Humanity; **Mary Nell Hallman**, Bank of Tuscaloosa; **Patrick Hamner**, Bryant Bank; **Alan Hartley**, Morrison & Smith, LLP.

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The Chamber Is A Long-Time Advocate of Downtown & Riverfront Development

For many years, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama has been an active advocate and supporter of the redevelopment of the central business districts and development of the riverfronts for both Downtown Tuscaloosa and Downtown Northport. Through the efforts and leadership of many Chamber and business volunteers, in partnership with local governments, The Chamber continues to push its vision.

What is the vision? The Chamber's Board of Directors and Downtown/Riverfront Task Force actually answered this question several years ago, and the adopted vision and mission statement continues to drive the organization's actions and policies.

The Chamber's vision is for Tuscaloosa and Northport to be recognized as a premier downtown and riverfront district through the revitalization and development of unique business, recreational, cultural and residential communities that will increase the economic vitality of the entire area.

According to Chamber President Johnnie Aycock, "our leadership wants to enhance the reputation and image of our 'city center' as an exciting place to live, work, shop and enjoy diverse cultural and entertainment opportunities while building on our unique history and character. The end result will hopefully lead to increased job opportunities, attraction of new investment, a thriving destination, and an even more vibrant economy."

The Chamber's adopted policy encourages the implementation of eight basic objective, which are:

- Emphasis on development of a vibrant residential community within the district.
- Renewed emphasis on retailing, working with established and new merchants and professionals to promote the 'city center' as an attractive shopping experience.
- Greater emphasis on recruitment of specialty shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, and residential properties.
- Implementation of a more opportunistic approach to partnering with cultural, educational and historical organizations to more effectively emphasize and expand the unique social, cultural and historical character of Tuscaloosa, Northport and the Black Warrior River.
- Emphasis on attracting development that is esthetically appealing and environmentally sound.
- Solicitation of greater community involvement in the downtown/riverfront districts through offering more frequent cultural and entertainment activities and diverse venues.
- Development of docking facilities to attract local and transient boaters to the riverfront and downtown districts.
- Emphasis on and encouragement of a consumer-oriented, pedestrian-friendly and accessible downtown/riverfront district that is a magnet for consumers, shoppers, tourists and residents.

The Chamber's Downtown/Riverfront Task Force invites your participation. Rex Veron of Ward Scott Veron Architects serves as Chairman. Information about task force meetings and to get involved is available by contacting The Chamber at 758.7588 or going online to The Chamber's website at: <http://www.tuscaloosachamber.com/> .

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2006 Chamber Champions Announced

With honor and appreciation, The Chamber is pleased to announce our 2006 Chamber Champions, which are our members that go beyond their annual dues to invest additionally in our annual business plan and provide the resources that give our organization more flexibility and ability to carry out our strategies.

In addition, Chamber Champions receive direct benefits and a return on their investment through this annual resource development program. For more information on how your firm can be a Chamber Champion, contact us at The Chamber.

Join with our leadership team as we say thank you to our 2006 Chamber Champions!

Diamond Level

Advantage Realty Group
Tanner & Guin
DCH Health System
Bank of Tuscaloosa
Cadence Bank
Mercedes Benz U. S. International
University of Alabama
WVUA TV
Clear Channel Communications
Tuscaloosa Business Ink
BellSouth/BellSouth Yellow Pages

Platinum Level

Yellow Book USA

Gold Level

AFFLINK
Alabama Power
Hudson Poole Jewelers
Harrison Construction Co.
Harrison Galleries
TUSCOM

Silver Level

Alabama Gas Corporation
AmSouth Bank
Compass Bank
Gulf States Paper Corporation
Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co.
Regions Bank
Tidwell DeWitt
Wycomp Technologies
Shelton State Community College



Bronze Level

Bryant Bank
 CTX Mortgage
 db Technologies
 Duckworth-Morris-Garrison Real Estate
 Peoples Bank & Trust
 First National Bank of Central Alabama
 Townsend Ford
 Pritchett-Moore, Inc.
 University of Alabama College of Continuing Studies
 Totalcom, Inc.
 Randall-Reilly Publishing Co.
 Spiller Associated Furniture Stores
 McAbee Construction Co.
 TTL, Inc.
 ZF Industries
 Walmart

[Top](#)**Chamber Training Continues To Reach Members**

Over 700 plus business people participate on an annual basis in The Chamber's quality seminars and workshops, realizing The Chamber provides current, relevant and timely information on a myriad of issues and topics at a very reasonable cost.

"The Chamber understands the importance of providing our members continuing education opportunities to help grow their businesses, especially our small firms," stated Chamber Chairman, Gene Poole. "Our workshops and seminars are not only popular with our members, they have proven to be an excellent return on investment."

Workshops and seminars are provided in a variety of ways and formats and at a variety of times that hopefully can match up with any business person's schedule. The "Lunch & Learn" series is normally held during the lunch period and focuses on various business subjects, while the "Breakfast Series" tends to focus on technology-based issues and subjects.

In addition, The Chamber offers the Entrepreneur Institute, which is designed for more seasoned businesses to upgrade their skill levels and stay on top of ever-changing business trends and the economic environment.

Among the upcoming programs is the 2006 Workforce Development & Employment Law Seminar on April 26th. Also on the menu for The Chamber's Breakfast Series is the April 25th program on "Becoming Efficient With Microsoft Outlook", and on May 23rd, "Maximizing Your Office Productivity."

For a complete listing of all workshops and seminars, dates and registration information, call The Chamber at 758.7588 or go online to <http://www.tuscaloosachamber.com/>.

[Top](#)**Can The GO Zone Work For Your Business?**

The Gulf Opportunity Zone Act (GO Zone) was signed into law by President Bush and establishes tax incentives and bond provisions to support the rebuilding of and capital investments in local and regional economies in parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama that were devastated by the 2005 hurricanes. The GO Zone encompasses more than 20 parishes in Louisiana, approximately 50 counties in Mississippi, and 11 counties in western and southern Alabama.

The GO Zone legislation allows private business owners and corporations to borrow capital through tax exempt financing to acquire, construct, reconstruct and renovate non-residential real property, qualified residential rental projects, and public utility property in the affected areas. Tax exempt borrowing provides lower cost of capital than conventional debt financing. Alternatively, the borrowers have the opportunity to take accelerated depreciation in the first year equal to 50% of the cost of new capital investments.

GO Zone bonds must meet certain guidelines, including:

- Must be located within the Zone
- 95% or more of net proceeds are used for "qualified project costs"
- Projects must be approved by the Governor
- Bonds must be issued by December 31, 2010
- Election for depreciation benefit expires at end of the 2008 calendar year

What types of businesses are eligible for this financing? Tax exempt financing has been largely limited to governmental agencies or not-for-profit organizations. However, under the GO Zone Act, a wide range of businesses, including public and private corporations, retailers, commercial developers, utilities and hospitals, have the opportunity to build or rebuild at interest rates that can be as much as 1.5% to 2% below conventional financing options.

Various Chamber-member law firms in Tuscaloosa County can be of assistance and guidance with the GO Zone financing and processes. In addition, Congressman Artur Davis will be hosting a seminar on the Go Zone on **Monday, April 17th from 8:30 AM until 1:00 PM** at Shelton State Community College in Room 2255. For additional information on the program, contact Daryl Perkins or Sissy Hembree at 205.254.1960.

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Export Seminar Can Benefit Your Firm

Are you interested in selling your products overseas? If so, you have an opportunity to learn how to assess your company and products to see if you're export ready as well as learn about the various programs and services that are available in Alabama to help you with overseas buyers.



Export Alabama, the Alabama International Trade Center, the Governor's Office and The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama have joined together to offer a seminar on exporting on Thursday, April 27th from 11:30 AM until 2:00 PM at Cypress Inn. Lunch will be provided and there is no cost to attend.

The program will look at various aspects of exporting, including do you have exportable products, adequate start-up resources, sound domestic marketing methods and a commitment to manage exporting. The seminar will also look specifically at opportunities in Central America and China and will provide a discussion on trade barriers as well as local and state resources available to support your firm's exporting strategies.

Participation is limited, so please make your reservations today by contacting Hilda Lockhart at the International Trade Division of the Alabama Development Office at toll free 1.800.248.0033, Ext. 20442 or you can email her at lockhart@ado.state.al.us. A FAX registration form is available at The Chamber also and you can call us at 758.7588.

Get involved in energizing Alabama exports and learn how your company can benefit and prosper.

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April 16 - 22 Is Tune Up Week In Tuscaloosa County

The Chamber's Environmental Task Force continues to keep a laser-like focus on improving the air quality in Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama, and want you to also improve your gas mileage at the same time. Keeping your car properly tuned and tires properly inflated help increase your car's mileage and the air clean!

This is why the Environmental Task Force is sponsoring and encouraging your participation in the biannual Tuscaloosa Tune-Up Week, April 16-22, during Earth Week. You can visit one of the participating dealerships or shops during Tune-Up Week, and if you mention "Tuscaloosa Tune-Up", you can get a discount on a tune-up and/or tire check.

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Thank you to our participating "Tune-Up Week" dealerships and shops, which include: Leigh Buick/Mercedes-Benz; Madden Lincoln-Mercury-Volvo; Quality Mazda-Volkswagen; Townsend Ford; Townsend Honda; Tuscaloosa Chevrolet; Tuscaloosa Toyota; Sears; Express Oil Change on Rice Mine Road and Highway 69 South; and Express Oil Change 15th Street.

For more details, contact The Chamber or Mark Warner, Chairman of the Environmental Task Force at 507.3972 or mark.warner@mbusi.dcx.com.

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Congressman Artur Davis To Host Town Hall Meeting

Join Congressman Artur Davis for his Town Hall Meeting on Monday, April 17th from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM at the Tuscaloosa County Courthouse in Judge John England's courtroom on the 2nd floor.

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Members In The News



Regions Bank officially opened its newest branch on March 28. The new facility is located on New Watermelon Road across from The Shops at Lake Tuscalooswa. Chamber Ambassadors were on hand to help with the ribbon-cutting.

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