

The Chamber Perspectives online

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Tuscaloosa Galleria to Host Next Mixer

Our April "Chamber Connects" mixer will be held on Tues, Apr 21 from 5 to 7pm at the Tuscaloosa Galleria. The one hosted there last summer was very well-attended and we look forward to this one again! Please make plans now to attend and invite a friend--All employees of Chamber member businesses are invited as well as prospective members.



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Chamber Now on Facebook and Twitter

Got a **Facebook** page? Search "Tuscaloosa Chamber" to join our group

and page. Reach out to other members, receive the latest news and event info and post your thoughts. Also, follow us on **Twitter** at www.twitter.com/chambertusc for more quick updates. Get connected!

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Police Chief to Address Northport Advisory Council

You're invited to attend the Northport Advisory Council Meeting on Mon, Apr 13 at 6pm at Wintzell's Oyster House. Speaker is Robert W. Green, Northport Police Chief.

Dinner will be served, cost is \$18 for Chamber members and \$25 for non-members. Reservations must be made by Thurs, Apr 9. Call 758.7588 or email tracy@tuscaloosachamber.com.

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Seminar to Focus on Developing Leaders

Join us on May 12 from 11am until 1pm at Cypress Inn for an important seminar "**Developing New Leaders to Solve Old Problems**," which focuses on recruiting, inspiring and managing young professionals. For only \$30 you'll get professional training, a wonderful meal from Cypress Inn, and a great time to discuss business with fellow Chamber members.

"**Excel 2007 Pivot Tables 101**" is a hands-on class where each person will have the use of a laptop on Apr 15 from 8 to 10am OR 10:30am to 12:30pm OR 1:30-3:30pm at The Chamber; cost is \$45 for members.

Also, there's still room in our "**Quickbooks-Session I**" breakfast class. Learn the basics on Apr 22 from 7:30 to 9:30am at West Alabama Bank & Trust. Cost is only \$20 for members and breakfast is included.

Seating is limited so call 758.7588 today or [click here](#) to register online. Non-members are welcome at a different cost.

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Womens Division Spring Membership Tea Set

The Women's Division of The Chamber will hold its annual Spring Membership Tea on Apr 23 from 4-6:30pm at the home of Jimmy and Jean Hinton in Indian Hills. Address is 1109 Indian Hills Dr. \$20 membership fee for the year is payable at the door and there will be finger foods and wine donated by Spirits. All area ladies interested in a pure service group are invited to join. Call 348.2240 for more info.

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Adopt-A-School Sustainer Program Needs Your Support

The Adopt-A-School business-education partnership program is completing its



24th year of success in Tuscaloosa, proving that corporate America and our schools systems can work cooperatively to make a positive impact in our community. However, tax-deductible monetary support is essential to the continued success of this program.

Adopters and Sustainers are the livelihood of the Adopt-A-School program. Adopters give support through donated time, expertise, and financial commitments. Sustainers provide the financial support necessary for the coordination and administrative function of the entire program.

The 2009 Adopt-A-School fundraising Sustainer Drive is underway and we you to join **The Westervelt Company**, who has served as the corporate sponsor since 1992, in supporting the program.

Businesses and organizations may participate in the Sustainer program at the *Board, Superintendent, Principal, Teacher, or Mentor* levels of support. At all levels of participation a Sustaining partner provides a donation to the West Alabama Chamber Foundation, Inc., an IRS approved 501 (c) (3) charitable foundation.

To help the Adopt-A-School Program face the challenges ahead in the 2009-2010 school year, indicate your level of commitment on the [Sustainer Commitment Form](#) and return it to the Adopt-A-School office today! For additional information about participating as a sustainer or adopting a school in the Tuscaloosa City or Tuscaloosa County School Systems, contact Loo Whitfield at 391.0563 or loo@tuscaloosachamber.com.

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Chamber Facilitates Leadership Trip to Mobile



The Chamber, in cooperation with local governmental and economic leaders, recently organized and facilitated a local leadership visit to Mobile on Mar 5 and 6 to look at their successes and best practices in

economic development, education, governmental cooperation and workforce initiatives.

The local 41-member delegation, which included elected officials, business owners and CEO's, educational leaders and economic development professionals, was led by Mayor Walt Maddox of the City of Tuscaloosa, Probate Judge and County Commission Chairman, Hardy McCollum, and Randy Skagen, Vice President & General Manager of Nucor Steel of Tuscaloosa and 2009 Chairman of The Chamber. **Pictured (left to right) are: TCIDA Executive Director, Dara Longgear; Chamber President, Johnnie Aycock; and TCVB Executive Director, Robert Ratliff.**

The local leadership delegation met with their counterparts in Mobile, including key public officials, business and education leaders to learn from their successful and effective working, cooperative partnerships among the public and private sectors. Among the topics addressed were: governmental cooperation, downtown development, education and workforce initiatives, increasing graduation rates, legislative initiatives, regional cooperation and other economic issues.

As follow up, various teams are looking at applications of the lessons learned from the Mobile experience for the Tuscaloosa County/West Alabama region that will contribute to: expanding public-private partnerships and collaboration; increasing the area's economic competitiveness; and more effectively aligning economic, education and governmental strategies and visions for the future.

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Chamber to Pursue Regional Career-Tech High School

Adopted as a priority in the 2009 business plan, The Chamber has established a leadership team to consider establishment of a regional career-technical high school in Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama.

The business-based task force, led by Mike Case, President of The Westervelt Company and Tim Harrison, President of Harrison Construction, is meeting and currently gathering research on similar models from around the nation, reviewing city and county school data, and beginning discussions with the key stakeholders in business and industry, education and local governments. The task force is part of The Chamber's Education and Workforce Development Division, led by Vice Chair, Terry Waters of Alabama Power Company.

As part of The Chamber's strategic planning process in 2008, which was adopted by the Board of Directors in Jan, 2009, a key objective is to provide leadership, advocacy and coordination of efforts that foster business-education partnerships that will contribute to career preparation and the enrichment of all students.

"To accomplish this objective," emphasized Chamber President Johnnie Aycock, "our leadership team has adopted development of a regional high school that will prepare students for successful careers and

expanded technical skills. This is a key component of an effective system to build workforce capacity for West Alabama, and we believe it can have a very positive impact on increasing graduation rates.”

The task force is scheduled to work through the summer with recommendations for action due in early fall 2009.

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Council Passes Landscape Ordinance

Tuscaloosa’s new landscape law was passed unanimously by the City Council on Mar 24.

It basically requires three things: perimeter landscaping around developments, landscaping buffers between commercial or industrial developments and residential property and interior landscaping within developments.

The purpose is not just aesthetic. The ordinance is designed to turn landscaping into part of the city’s storm drainage system. Water will filter through landscaping before entering pipes, reducing the amount of drainage and filtering out pollutants washed off structures. Water settling into the soil will also replenish aquifers beneath the ground.

This law will be applied with some flexibility, for example, developers are allowed to use a variety of buffers. But, City Attorney Bob Ennis stated that the punishment for violating the ordinance is the most severe under state law.

Pam Smith of Ellis Architects and Ron Price of InStone Masonry, both on The Chamber’s Board of Directors and The Chamber’s Landscape Task Force, worked very hard to get this pushed through. Congrats on a job well-done!

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Chamber Board Endorses New Regional Workforce Model



Following over six months of planning involving over 100 leaders from the business, education and public sectors in West Alabama, the Board of Directors of The Chamber has endorsed a new regional workforce system model. The strategic plan and corporate model has also been adopted by the Region 3 Workforce Development Council, chaired by Terry Waters of Alabama Power Company.

Johnnie Aycock, President of The Chamber, led the strategic planning team with the purpose to develop and implement a sustainable, comprehensive workforce delivery system for West Alabama that will contribute to the expansion of the area's economic development and workforce capacity.

The model and strategic plan was developed following review of other successful workforce systems around the country, especially two effective models in Mobile, Alabama and Arlington, Texas. The strategic plan calls for a business-led, customer-driven corporate approach that integrates quality support service for employers as well as job seekers at all levels.

Recommendations within the strategic plan call for full-time management and coordination of a regional system among the public and private sectors; a full-time chief executive and professional staff; an active, business-led board of directors; a more effective regional consortium of employers, education and workforce service providers and local governmental leaders; and more effective alignment of all workforce initiatives, policies and programs with economic development strategies.

"Even in during periods of economic slowdown, communities and employers still need to address and invest in expanding workforce capacity," said Chamber President Johnnie Aycock. "Our region needs to be positioned to be more competitive and economically viable once the economy begins to recover, and a comprehensive workforce system is essential."

A complete copy of the recently completed and endorsed strategic plan is available on The Chamber's website at www.tuscaloosachamber.com. [Click here](#) to see it directly.

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The Literacy Council of West Alabama is Established Organization

Only about a year after the highly successful Literacy Summit was held in Mar of 2008, The Literacy Council of West Alabama is now an officially established IRS 501 © 3 education and charitable foundation.

The Council, which was established to provide literacy support, services and advocacy for the eight county WestAlabama region, has in place a 30-member board of directors. Recently elected as officers for 2009 are: Johnnie Aycock, Chairman; Julie Sittason, Vice Chair; and John Merrill, Secretary-Treasurer. The council's board of directors meets monthly on the 4th Wed at 4pm at The Chamber office.

The mission of the Literacy Council of West Alabama is to champion the power of literacy to improve the lives of children, adults, families and communities in West Alabama, with a vision to build a region in which each person is functionally literate.

Following strategic planning sessions, the board has adopted a set of ambitious objectives to address the challenge of growing functional illiteracy in West Alabama. Among these goals are to:

~ Increase awareness of the impact of literacy in the workplace, communities and across the region.

~ Advocate, support and enhance coordination of sustainable literacy initiatives and delivery of services in the West Alabama region.

~ Build alliances with public and private sector organizations, service providers, educational systems and institutions, and employers to stimulate and sustain regional initiatives that impact effective literacy services, communications and programming.

~ Build capacity and quality of resources, communications, training and professional development services, advocacy, volunteer development and best practices research that enhances delivery of literacy services

The council is currently working on several initiatives and programs that include an authors evening on June 26 at Barnes & Noble and IO Metro in MidtownVillage and a two-day literacy forum on September 8 and 9. Watch for more details on the programs, but place them on your calendar now.

Visit The Chamber's website at www.tuscaloosachamber.com and click on the Literacy Council logo. It'll take you to more details along with a directory of services available to meet literacy needs.

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Use Our Economic Help Links

Both employers and employees have access to quick links to helpful info on our website homepage at www.tuscaloosachamber.com. Several links have been added to the employee help section lately for individuals needing assistance. You can [click here](#) to check them out.

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Tuscaloosa & Auburn Win AHSAA Super Six

The Alabama High School Athletic Assn's Central Board of Control met on Apr 8 and approved a six-year agreement to move the AHSAA Super Six state Football Championships to Tuscaloosa and Auburn.

The Super Six Championships will now be played in Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa and Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn on a rotating basis through 2014, starting this December at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

Executive Director of the Tuscaloosa Sports Foundation Don Staley said, "The Tuscaloosa Sports Foundation specifically recognizes City of Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox, Tuscaloosa County Commission Chairman Judge Hardy McCollum, Northport Mayor Bobby Herndon and The University of Alabama President Dr. Robert Witt for making this a reality."

The Super Six Championships have previously been held at Birmingham's Legion Field every year since 1996. Prior to 1996, the Class 6A state championship game was held at Legion Field but the other 5 classifications played at home sites.

This announcement comes days after the successfully hosted Blue Angels event, which saw an estimated crowd of 150,000 come to Tuscaloosa and Northport and, according to Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox, is a continuation of positive momentum and points to the continued growth of Tuscaloosa. Maddox said, "Now we've gone out, by working with the city of Auburn, and landed one of the premier sports events in Alabama. This community is on the move, and that investment is one I'm proud this city made."

The events are expected to generate significant revenue for Tuscaloosa through tourism as well as exposure for the three area academic institutions: University of Alabama, Stillman College and Shelton State.

The tentative dates set for this year's Super Six at Bryant-Denny Stadium are Dec 3-4, 2009. For more info on the AHSAA Super Six go to www.ahsaa.com or www.tuscaloosaspportsfoundation.org.

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Citizens Police Academy Inaugural Class Graduates



Classes for the first Tuscaloosa Police Department Citizens Police Academy began Feb 2 and were held each Mon evening through Mar 23. Graduation was held Mar 30 and Chamber president Johnnie Aycok was among the graduates.

The objective of the Citizen's Police Academy is to develop a positive relationship between the Police Department and a cross-section of the Tuscaloosa Community through a carefully tailored educational curriculum.

The Citizen's Academy will create a growing cadre of responsible, well-informed citizens who will influence public opinion about law enforcement procedures and services. The graduates of the Academy depart with an increased awareness and understanding of the problems and challenges facing law enforcement today and the Tuscaloosa Police Department's commitment to the philosophy of Community Policing--An informed community is more effectively involved in crime prevention and stimulates a dynamic citizen-police partnership in their neighborhoods.

The process included a class at the police firing range, and introduction to the Tuscaloosa Special Response Team, Helicopter Unit, K-9 Division, and Bomb Squad. A four-hour ride along with a Tuscaloosa Police patrol officer was also required to better understand how the Tuscaloosa Police Department operates.

The Citizen's Academy is open to all residents of the City of Tuscaloosa. Business owners that hold a Tuscaloosa City Business License may also attend. Class numbers are limited. Applicants must be 21 years of age or older. The Citizen's Police Academy is free of charge. The next class is set for fall; applications may be found at www.tuscaloosa.com and are due in August. For more info, contact Vincent Corrao at 205.248.4804 or Officer Brent Blankley at 205.248.4833.

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Shelton State Holds Charter Celebration

Shelton State Community College recently held a three-day celebration of the 30th anniversary of the receipt of its charter as a community college. The event was held Apr 1-3.

Day one included a reception to honor Sandra Ray, long-term member of the Alabama State Board of Education District VII, and welcome newly elected member, Gary Warren. "The Challenge of Expanding Workforce Training Opportunities in Alabama and the Nation" was presented by Dr. Stephen Katsinas with special guests Johnnie Aycock and Charles Storey.

Day two was hosted on the Fredd Campus, where the keynote speaker was Chamber President Johnnie Aycock (pictured) who spoke on "The Economics of Literacy." An open house followed.

On the last day, "How Education Will Meet Future Workforce Demands" was presented by Chancellor Bradley Byrne



with special guests Dr. Frank Costanzo and Terry Waters. Also, Dr. Mark Heinrich, unveiled "Shelton 2020: Realizing Our Vision," the strategic plan for the College through 2020, which is posted at www.sheltonstate.edu.

Shelton State can trace its historical roots back over half a century to 1952 when it was known as the J.P. Shelton Trade School. In 1979 the Alabama State Board of Education established Shelton State Community College by combining the trade school with the Tuscaloosa branch of Brewer State Community College. What has emerged over the last 30 years is an outstanding two-year educational institution dedicated to providing exceptional learning. Shelton State Community College now serves students of all ages while significantly impacting West Alabama through initiatives in workforce development, the arts, adult education and more.

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Ameriprise Financial at Commons North Dr Hosts Ribbon Cutting



The Ameriprise Financial Service, Inc. office located at 1817 Commons North Dr (behind the NorthRiver Cuppy's) hosted a very nice ribbon cutting ceremony for its new office. Please stop by to congratulate them, Ted Jackson heads this group. Company website is www.ameriprise.com. For more info, call 345.2035 X 14.

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Light'n Up Hosts Open House & Ribbon Cutting



Light'n Up is a European-inspired home gallery filled with both antique and new unquities from around the world. You can purchase individual gifts, complete vignettes for your home, one-of-a-kind estate jewelry, and even clothes from a small, upscale vintage collection.

Owner Cynthia White says problem solving is her forte and the catalyst for her business. Frustration from dead end searches pushed her "create" button to come up with products and designs she was looking for. For example, she's wired beautiful pieces of wood to become fabulous lamps.

For exquisite home furnishings or that perfect gift, you must check out the findings at Light'n Up. The shop is tucked away in the Temerson Square area of downtown Tuscaloosa, near the intersection of 4th and 22nd streets.

A ribbon cutting and open house was held on Mar 12.

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Momma Goldberg's Deli Hosts Ribbon Cutting



Momma Goldberg's Deli hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on Apr 7. It's

located in the Temerson Square area in downtown Tuscaloosa on 23rd Ave, behind Mellow Mushroom. Local owners are Lamar and Starr Daniels. The Deli began in Auburn and is home to the famous Momma's Love sandwich and Momma's Nachos. Stop by and try it! Visit www.mommagoldbergsdeli.com for more info.

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Air Show Photos

We'd like to share a couple of photos taken on Sat, Apr 4 at the Tuscaloosa Air Show. The Navy Blue Angels and the Army Golden Knights were awesome! What a great day for our community! An estimated 150,000 turned out for the show. Kudos to the organizers.



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Welcome, New Members!

The following joined from Mar 1 to date.

Tuscaloosa Flower Shoppe
Masonry Solutions, LLC
Armstrong & Desai, LLC
The Brown Byrd House
Honey Baked Ham Company & Cafe
Big Brothers Big Sisters of West Alabama
Momma Goldberg's Deli
The UPS Store
Susan Pace Hamill
Allstate Insurance/The Toni Storey Agency
The Trunk
Debrick, Inc.
Sips n Strokes

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