

The Chamber Perspectives online

Upcoming Events

Feb 12
Executive Committee

Feb 13
Chamber After Hour
Networking Event

Feb 21
Franklin Covey Leadership
Seminar

Feb 22
Board of Directors

(More Events)

Tuscaloosa Souvenirs



T-Town Cooler
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Sold-out crowd enjoys Chamber's Annual Celebration; volunteers cited



The night of January 23 was a memorable one for those Chamber members who attended the Annual Celebration. There was great food, great music, and plenty of mixing and mingling among the approximately 350 at the Bryant Conference Center.

2006 Board Chairman Gene Poole passed the gavel to 2007 Board Chairman Jim Harrison III, and a number of Chamber volunteers were recognized for their efforts last year.

Mark Warner, president of HMC Homebuilders, was named the Charles H. Land Member of the Year. Chairman of The Chamber's Environmental Task Force, Warner was cited "as the individual whose commitment and efforts contributed most to the advancement of the mission and objectives of The Chamber."

Nucor Steel of Tuscaloosa grabbed the Robert C. Tanner Corporate Service Award in recognition of its exceptional charitable, volunteer and philanthropic service.

Distinguished service awards went to the following seven volunteers:

Carol Armstrong of Tanner & Guin LLC for her leadership of the Women in Business Council.

Tracy Waldrop of the First National Bank of Central Alabama, who chaired the Northport Advisory Council in 2006.

Lew Drummond of Shelton State Community College; Chris Harms and Ira Thrasher of CMI Consulting; Paul Still, Tuscaloosa Design, and Dereck Wyatt of Wycomp Technology, all honored for their work to develop The Chamber's exceptional technology and its website.

Angie Askew of Morgan Keegan Company was named Ambassador of the Year.

Dr. Robert Witt, president of the University of Alabama, was honored for his leadership in moving the University to new levels of progress, growth, and excellence.

WVUA Television was cited for its outstanding media support of The Chamber. And FM 103.3, initiated by the Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau, was recognized for its

effectiveness and creativity in promoting the area's attractions and resources.



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Sen. Shelby to speak at Rotary Club-hosted meeting, February 20

U. S. Senator Richard Shelby will speak at a luncheon at the Sheraton Four Points on Tuesday, February 20.

The luncheon, hosted by the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa, will begin at 12 p.m. Chamber members and their associates are invited. For reservations, call The Chamber at 758-7588. Seating is limited. The deadline for registration is February 15.

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Shelton State plans different, unusual and exciting after-hours event

Chamber members who come to the *Second Tuesday* networking event at Shelton State Community College on February 13 will be treated to a lot of things, in addition to the opportunity to mix and mingle and eat some good food.

For instance, the Shelton Singers, student musicians, Theater Tuscaloosa performers, cosmetologists, wellness experts, and representatives from all of the other divisions of the college will be part of the program.

Because of the large and varied agenda, the after-hours session will begin at 4 p.m. and run until 7 p.m. Although event is "come and go as you please," there will be plenty to keep Chamber members' attention for most of the three hours.

The Chamber Ambassadors are working closely with the faculty and staff of Shelton State to make this an evening that Chamber members will remember for a long time.

Plan to be there. Shelton State Community College. Tuesday, February 13, 4-7 p.m.

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Chamber to present Franklin Covey seminar on leadership February 21

Interest is growing in The Chamber's seminar on leadership, scheduled for February 21, 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at The Chamber offices. It's easy to see why; the session is entitled "Leadership: Great Leaders, Great Teams, Great Results."

A key difference between this new leadership offering and programs of the past is Franklin Covey's unique ability to bring some of the best thought leadership in the world into a cohesive framework.



To drop a few names: Jack Welch, Ram Charan, Clayton Christensen, Fred Reicheld,

Stephen Covey, and Stephen M. R. Covey.

For only \$39.99, participants will get a clear understanding of how they can lead their team to support immediate customer needs, connect to the broader strategy of the organization, and drive the organization's money-making model.

To register, call The Chamber at 758-7588.

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Chamber's Morrow Conference Room undergoes remodeling



The timing was great, the results are pleasing, and now all those boards, committees, task forces and other groups that meet at The Chamber have a brand new environment in which to conduct their business.

Thanks to the efforts and donations of many people, the Morrow Conference Room has been remodeled, updated with new technology, and given a new feeling of spaciousness.

The Chamber wants to thank the following companies for their super help in getting the renovation completed in time for the first meeting of The Chamber's Board of Directors in January:

- Ellis Architects: Mike Ellis and Beth Requist
- Premier Service Co.: Gary Phillips
- Wal Mart Tuscaloosa: Fred Twilley
- Wal Mart Northport: Tyrese Hampton
- Sam's Club: Jeff Young and Sherry Parsons
- Keller's Wallcovering: Anson Keller
- Kyle Office Supply: Chris and Drew Kyle
- Russell S. Lee Flooring America: Kenny Lee
- SiteCom Technologies: Kenny Smitherman
- Any Length Construction: Jay Parker
- Bill Lunsford Construction: Charles Lunsford
- Spiller Furniture Stores: Shane Spiller



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Chamber technology series aimed at making life simpler, more profitable

The Chamber's 2007 Chamber Business Growth Series, which concentrates on helping members get the most out of their office technology, has the following theme: "Maximizing Your Productivity and Simplifying Your Life."

Now, who wouldn't want to take advantage of these informative, budget-priced seminars?

First in the series was Microsoft Word® and PowerPoint, held February 7.

Scheduled for March 7 at the Peoples Bank & Trust Co. office at 31 McFarland Blvd. is Microsoft Excel®. This seminar, which runs from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., will answer such questions as: How can you create a column chart with the press of one key? How can you automatically create subtotals and grand totals together in a list? How can you quickly obtain a sum of values in a range without creating a formula?

On April 4, the series will deal with Microsoft Outlook®, and will discuss time-saving features that increase productivity and organization. Included will be e-mail tips and tricks, organizing an in-box quickly, follow-up reminders, folders, contacts and much more. Peoples Bank & Trust is the location again, and the times are the same, also.

Donna Gilliland, president of MOSTraining, Inc., will lead all of the seminars.

Chamber members and their associates can attend the seminars for only \$20. Non-members pay \$40.

Call The Chamber office at 758-7588 for registration or email Tracy Crumpton at tracy@tuscaloosachamber.com.

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University, Insuresoft cooperate on key new data project

The University of Alabama and Insuresoft, a leading provider of insurance policy administration software, are working together on projects relating to data warehousing and predictive modeling.



The initiative is expected to advance the University's Bama Technology Incubator, which was created to help promote sustained local economic growth by boosting the number of technology companies in Alabama, administering programs to help those companies and facilitating access to technologies developed in the University's laboratories.

Dr. Robert Witt, University President and a member of The Chamber's Board of Directors, said the partnership with Insuresoft "will support our outreach efforts to the business community and will be another step in developing the kind of high-tech initiatives that are becoming so much a part of today's economic research scene.

While the close cooperation will provide Insuresoft with access to a highly qualified talent pool of University students and alumni to fill positions produced by the company's growth, the relationship will also be a boon to downtown Tuscaloosa.

Insuresoft has bought the Financial Center and plans to re-name the building "The Technology Center." This facility will be used to house Insuresoft's future growth, and to host and mentor companies as an extension of the University's Bama Technology Incubator.

"This is a significant milestone for our downtown revitalization initiatives and our efforts to create a diverse and vibrant economy," said Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox. "Beyond the positive impact of high paying jobs and the economic enhancement of our downtown commercial corridor, Insuresoft's decision to locate in Tuscaloosa will serve notice that we are committed to transforming our community into one of the most livable cities in the nation."



Chamber President Johnnie Aycock said "Insuresoft will provide a dramatic stimulus for future private sector investment, business leadership, and economic vitality for the heart of our community and beyond."

The partnership is expected to leverage the University's data experts and Insuresoft's industry experts to further enhance the company's robust data warehousing application. Another element of the partnership is predictive modeling.

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The Second Tuesday is the time for Chamber members to get together

During 2007, The Chamber plans to have at least 11 major after-hours networking events. Each of these events will be on the *Second Tuesday* of the month.



The first such event, held January 9 at Peoples Bank & Trust Company, drew a large crowd of Chamber members and their associates.

The second *Second Tuesday* will be held at Shelton State Community College on February 13, 4-7 p.m. The Chamber Ambassadors are working closely with the staff at Shelton State, specifically Leigh Hays, to plan an exciting and informative evening. See more specifics on

this event elsewhere in this issue of *Perspectives On-Line*.

Here's the remaining schedule of *Second Tuesday* after-hours sessions in 2007, as of February 1:

March: Nucor Steel of Tuscaloosa

April: Bill Lunsford Construction and The Tuscaloosa News, an outdoor, on-the-riverfront affair.

May: Capstone Village

June: Tanner & Guin LLC and Palmer & Burns P. C., an outdoor event at Capitol Park

July: Country Inn & Suites, a poolside party

In addition to these *Second Tuesday* after-hours affairs, The Chamber Ambassadors are planning two interesting "before-hours" networking meetings and a revival of the Commerce Street.

Chamber members say that the opportunity to network with other members-and potential clients and customers-is an important benefit of Chamber membership. The Chamber leadership is committed to providing those kinds of opportunities.

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Chamber is adding new members at a rapid rate so far in 2007

Since the calendar rolled over into 2007, 10 businesses have become new investors in The Chamber. They are a diverse group, ranging from an individual physician to one of the popular dining establishments in Tuscaloosa County.

In 2006, The Chamber added 139 members.

Here are this year's new members. If the opportunity presents itself, welcome them to The Chamber Team. Do business with them. Refer them to friends and associates.

- Taylor Electrical Contractors
- Stamp Your Feet
- Ashley Furniture Home Store
- ITT Technical Institute
- Dr. Sarita Elizabeth Cox
- Olive Garden
- Southeast Media & Mailing
- US LEC of Alabama
- SAR Automation LP
- Dale Carnegie Training
- Wide Screen Media

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Northport Advisory Council hears from new city planner

Katherine E. Ennis, new Director of Planning for the City of Northport, introduced herself and her goals and objectives at the February 5 meeting of The Chamber's Northport Advisory Council.

An Auburn University graduate, Ms Ennis worked for the City of Auburn for 18 years and has held high-level planning positions in Shelby County and in Montgomery. She served on the Governor's Committee for Smart Growth 2003-2004.



Tracy Waldrop of the First National Bank of Central Alabama chairs the Advisory Council, which meets at the Northport DCH Medical Center.

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Special, important mailing to go to Chamber members soon

Chamber members should soon be receiving a package of informative, important information.

That information includes a printed copy of The Chamber's 2007 Business Plan, which will give members an idea of how active their Chamber is and how they and/or their associates can get involved in Chamber efforts.

Also in the package will be a Membership Directory supplement, which includes listings of members who've joined the Chamber since June 2006, when an earlier supplement was printed.

An informational sheet about the planned major after-hours networking events for 2007 is also included.

Finally, members will receive a non-adhesive label that they can affix to the door or a window of their business. It proclaims that they are a "Member and Supporter. The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama." This "clinging" label can be used in lieu of or in addition to the plastic desktop holder that's traditionally been used by members to let public know of their investment in The Chamber.

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Volunteer opportunities abound in Chamber during 2007

If you're interested in helping The Chamber this year, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities. Check over the following list of committees/task forces, and call The Chamber at 758-7588 to let us know where we can place you!

Organizational Development: The Chamber Ambassadors (member relations); membership development and marketing.

Business Development: Cultural Development/Creative Community Task Force; Downtown & Riverfront Task Force; Entrepreneurs Awards Program; Technology and Small Business Council; Retail Development & Promotion Advisory Task Force; Women in Business Council; Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).

Education and Workforce Development: Adopt-A-School Program; Workforce Development Council; CHOICES Training Program.

Governmental Affairs: Public Affairs Council (local, state and federal); Environmental Task Force; Tax and Fiscal Policy; Task Force on Business Climate.

Community Development: Leadership Tuscaloosa; Northport Advisory Council; Northport Citizen of the Year Program; Civic Hall of Fame.

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Lowe's in Northport cuts a board to open new store on January 25

The Chamber and Northport city officials were out in full force on January 25, when the new Lowe's Store on Highway 82 West was officially opened with a board-cutting ceremony.

Left to right in the photo are: John Myers, Northport City Council; Scott Collins, Northport City Council; Angie Askey, Chair, Chamber Ambassadors; Jim Harrison, 2007 Chamber Board Chairman; Tyson Chism, Chamber Ambassador; Northport Mayor Harvey Fretwell; Cecilia (C. C.) Cabeza, Lowe's store manager; Steve Webb, Northport City Council; Lachelle Koon, Chamber Ambassador, and William Tunnell, Northport City Council.

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