

The Chamber Perspectives online

New Community Calendar

The best online community calendar just got better...

Check out our new calendar program 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.

The "Submit your own event" option is at the bottom and top.

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.



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Tailgate with Bryant Bank

Roll Tide!

Bryant Bank will host our next "Chamber Connects" mixer at the Paul W Bryant Museum on the UA campus on Tues, Aug 11 from 5-7 pm. We'll tailgate for the upcoming UA football season with Robertson's BBQ and all the fixings. This was a very fun event last year. Don't miss it! All employees of Chamber member businesses are invited as well as prospective members.

Desperados Steak House, in Indian Hills Square in Tuscaloosa, hosted our July mixer where we enjoyed networking in a very hip setting and tasted the unique and delicious catering offered there. Thanks, Desperados!



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Sales Tax Holiday is Aug 7-9

Alabama's fourth annual sales tax holiday is Aug 7-9.

Our state government is waiving its 4 percent sales tax on back-to-school items purchased between 12:01am Fri, Aug 7, and midnight Sun, Aug 9.

The state Revenue Department says many cities and counties, including Tuscaloosa County, are also waiving their local sales taxes for the weekend. The state's most populous county, Jefferson County, is not participating this year due to financial difficulties.

The sales tax holiday covers clothing items costing \$100 or less, computer equipment costing \$750 or less, school supplies costing \$50 or less, and books costing \$30 or less. [Click here](#) to see a list of acceptable items.



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All-New Adopt A School Breakfast is Next Week

With the goal of incorporating career technical information and highlighting career preparation as a major part of the Adopt-A-School program, the Adopt-A-School Kickoff Breakfast will be held at Shelton State Community College this year. On Thurs, July 30 at 7am, business partners and educators will meet for a networking breakfast, awards program and informational presentation and tour of the career technical programs currently available at Shelton State.



Adopt-A-School Coordinator training workshops will follow. Concurrent workshops will include the following: Read and Lead (info concerning the illiteracy problems in our community and ideas for partnership activities to highlight literacy); Destination Graduation (designed to inform participants about the graduation statistics in our area and provide an opportunity to brainstorm activities to help ensure that all students are destined to graduate from high school); My Job is So Cool (ideas for job shadow and career awareness activities for partnerships); Community Connections (ideas for connecting businesses and schools with partnership activities); AAS Leadership (info on organizing partnership committees and sharing the responsibilities).

The Breakfast is open to everyone and Chamber members are encouraged to attend. Contact Loo Whitfield at 391.0563 or loo@tuscaloosachamber.com or [click here](#) for a registration form.

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"Coffee with the Speaker" Set for Aug 11

Make plans to attend an interesting public affairs program on Tues morning, Aug 11 at 10am at The Chamber with the Speaker of the House, Seth Hammett. He will be discussing how to work more effectively with the Alabama Legislature as well as looking ahead to development of legislative strategies for the future. There's no cost to attend. This is a program of the Public Affairs Council of The Chamber. Please RSVP to 758.7588.

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More Popular Webinars to "Excel" Your Knowledge

Take part in these live online sessions from your own office/computer! The PivotTables and Formulas workshops are \$45/person for Chamber members and \$55/person for non-members. The Excel 2003 Beginning series consists of three workshops for a total price of \$125/person and includes a workbook. Call 758.7588 or email tracy@tuscaloosachamber.com for course outlines and registration.

Excel 2003 PivotTables 101
Aug 20 from 1–3pm CST

Excel 2007 PivotTables 101
Aug 18 from 1–3pm CST

Mastering Excel Formulas 101
(Applies to multiple versions of Excel)
Aug 18 from 1–3:30pm CST

Mastering Excel Formulas 102
(Applies to multiple versions of Excel)
Aug 27 from 1–3:30pm CST

Excel 2003 Beginning Series – take one or all!
Cost for all three: \$125/per person and includes a workbook
Two workshops: \$90/per person and includes a workbook
One workshop: \$65/per person and includes a workbook

Part 1 of 3 Excel 2003 Beginning
Aug 18 from 9–11:30am CST

Part 2 of 3 Excel 2003 Beginning
Aug 20 from 9–11:30am CST

Part 3 of 3 Excel 2003 Beginning
Aug 27 from 9–11:30am CST

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Women In Business Council Seeks Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for the 3rd Annual Women In Business Council Awards. Based on predetermined criteria, the following awards will be given at the annual luncheon on Aug 25: "Bright Future" Award, "Defining Woman of the Year" Award, an Achievement Award, "Roots and Wings" Award and a "Trailblazer" Award. A complete description of each award along with a nomination form is available online at www.tuscaloosachamber.com (QuickLinks box on right side) or [click here](#). Deadline for submission is Aug 5. Please nominate a woman who deserves recognition for her accomplishments. For more info, contact Stacey Gann at 391.0559 or stacey@tuscaloosachamber.com. A form may be faxed, if requested.



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Save the Dates for AAS Golf & Tennis Tournaments

For the 19th consecutive year, golfers and tennis players will rally this fall in support of the Adopt-A-School Program. Mark your calendars and plan to participate in the Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt-A-School Golf Tournament, scheduled for Thurs, Sept 24 at Tuscaloosa Country Club and the Tennis Tournament scheduled for Tues, Oct 6 at Indian Hills Country Club.

The tournaments are the annual fundraising events to benefit the coordination and administration of the Adopt-A-School program. According to Loo Whitfield, director of Adopt-A-School for The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, "Proceeds from the tournament benefit every public school in our community." The tournaments provide critical funding for the coordination and administration of the Adopt-A-School program for the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County School Systems. During the 2008-09 school year, through the coordination of the Adopt-A-School Program, 86 business and organizations adopted 54 public schools and worked to make a difference in the quality of education for students.

A variety of sponsorships are available for both tournaments. Registration forms will be mailed in early August. For more info, contact Loo Whitfield at loo@tuscaloosachamber.com or 391.0563.

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Amphitheater Project Officially Breaks Ground



Tuscaloosa City Council members and others broke ground with golden shovels in a ceremony for the amphitheater project on July 14. A crowd of about 100 gathered to witness the event.

Mayor Walt Maddox, Gary Weinberger of Red Mountain Entertainment, council members Bobby Howard and Lee Garrison and others spoke at a celebration that included a color guard from the Tuscaloosa Police Dept, prayer by Pastor Chris Denson of Forest Lake United Methodist Church and the national anthem played by saxophonist Lloyd Watson Jr.

Maddox said, "Thanks to the vision of so many in this community, including our forward thinking City Council, we are doing something remarkable for Tuscaloosa. Beyond its economic impact on our riverfront, the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater will connect the people of this community through music, entertainment and the cultural arts. It is a great day for Tuscaloosa and for future generations who will come to our riverfront to live, work and play."

Maddox thanked many who pushed for the project, including Bob Almon and Lee Garrison. Garrison then thanked Mary Ann Phelps, who chaired the first riverfront committee, and Leroy McAbee, who inspired him.

Pam Penick, executive director of the Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa, said the facility will have the largest seating capacity for cultural events in the area, and will serve not only for touring musical acts, but also for local projects. She said it is "greatly needed."

Weinberger, a native of Tuscaloosa whose company will program and run the facility, praised the team putting the project together.

The amphitheater site is currently being landscaped by Blakeney Co and Harrison Construction will soon begin the above-ground work. Opening is set for August 2010 and Weinberger expects quite an opening season. We look forward to the impact this facility will have on our community.

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Literacy Event Raises Awareness; Features Authors Tied to Bama Athletics



Crimson Literacy: Up Close and Personal was hosted on June 26 by the Literacy Council of West Alabama and featured seven great authors, all with ties to UA Athletics: Chip Cooper, "Crimson"; Ken Gaddy, "Twelve and Counting: The National Championships of Alabama Football"; Cecil

Hurt, "Traditions"; Tommy Ford, "Alabama Football All Access Vault" (August 2009); Richard Scott, "Legends of Alabama Football"; Kirk McNair, "What It Means to be Crimson Tide"; Christopher Walsh, "100 Things Crimson Tide Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die," "Crimson Storm Surge," Who's #1?: 100 Plus Years of Controversial National Champions in College Football".

A free Book Signing took place at Barnes & Noble, where a percentage of proceeds benefited the Literacy Council, and an Authors Reception followed at I.O. Metro. The latter was a ticketed event that included one-on-one time with authors, food, drinks, live music and silent auction. Proceeds



will help the Literacy Council of West Alabama with our region's literacy challenge. The Council hopes to hold an authors event annually. (Pictured at the reception are Literacy Council Board members Brenda Ryan and Laura Aaron.)

To refer individuals who need help, dial the United Way's Info and Referral Hotline: 211. Ask the operator for local literacy programs, which include community, college and church programs.

To learn more about the Literacy Council of West Alabama and our

regional illiteracy issue, please visit
www.tuscaloosachamber.com/literacy.

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Schools Need Adopters

The Adopt-A-School program continues to look for an adopter for South View Middle School, set to open in their new building in August. Several schools, including Lake View Elementary and Paul Bryant High, have requested additional adopters for 2009-10. For info, contact Loo Whitfield at 391.0563 or loo@tuscaloosachamber.com.

Also, additional partners are needed for Tuscaloosa Center for Technology. TCT is a unique because students from area high schools attend the school for one or two periods each day. We're looking for business partners to adopt specific career clusters within the school like these: Transportation, Distribution and Logistics Career Cluster (includes Automotive Technology); Agriconstruction Career Cluster (includes carpentry and landscape); Cosmetology Career Cluster; Architecture and Construction Career Cluster (includes drafting design and architecture); Electrical Technology Career Cluster; Arts, Audio, Video Technology and Communications Career Cluster (includes TV production and digital design); Masonry; Welding; Health Science Career Cluster. For more info on this, contact Loo Whitfield (see contact info above).

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Students to Vote on "Best" Businesses

The UA Student Government Association, in partnership with the *Crimson White* and The Chamber, is pleased to announce the First Annual Student's Choice Awards, a new program to allow students to choose the "Best" of local businesses. Students will benefit from knowing which businesses provide the best services and local businesses will be recognized for exceptional student-friendly service.

UA students will vote online in Sept and Oct, choosing their favorites from the following categories:

Best Restaurant (Overall), Best Beer Selection, Best Bar, Best Bar Food, Best Bartender, Best Breakfast, Best Burger, Best Coffee, Best Diner, Best Mexican, Best Pizza, Best Place to Late Night, Best Place for a First Date, Best Food for a Hangover, Best Margarita, Best Sushi, Best Ice Cream, Happiest Happy Hour, Best Apartment Complex, Best Car Repair, Best Local Band, Best Bookstore, Best Golf Course, Best Radio Station, Best Personal Trainer, Best Gym, Best Women's Clothing Boutique, Best Place for Gameday Attire, Best Men's Clothier, Best Outdoor Store, Best Spa, Best Hair Salon, Best Taxi Service, Best Private Party Venue, Best Music Venue, Best Local Band, Best Dry Cleaner, Best Shoe Repair, Best Clothing Tailor.

Results will be tallied and released in early Nov. The top business in each category will receive the designation "Winner," the next two, the

designation "Finalist." Winners and finalists will receive recognition from local media, a framed certificate that they may place in their store, and rights to use the "Student's Choice Award" logo for one year.

We hope you'll encourage your student patrons to vote online in Sept and Oct! We'll let you know when posters become available and when the online voting system is in place. For more info, contact Meg McCrummen at megmccrummen@gmail.com.

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Edelweiss Bakery Reopens After Brief Closure

Ester Scheeff and partner Chris Wiedmann quietly closed Edelweiss Bakery on May 2 thinking it may be for good. Baking bread, cakes, pastries, muffins and scones from scratch is hard work, as is preparing homemade weekday lunch specials. A break was needed.



Ester (pictured on the left) used the time to visit family back home in Germany but it wasn't long before she decided to reopen the bakery on her own. She recruited help and reopened Edelweiss on June 22. She's worked long hours since then to train the new employees and it's paying off. Things are running smoothly at the German Bakery located in downtown Tuscaloosa's Temerson Square. And community support will keep this gem of a business thriving.

Ester learned to bake from her talented mother, growing up in Germany. When her husband's work at Mercedes brought them to

Tuscaloosa several years ago, Esther got a job at the European Bakery, which was also located in downtown Tuscaloosa. When the owner closed it, Ester and Chris decided to open a shop on their own and Edelweiss (named after a German mountain flower) was born on July 16, 2007.

Favorite lunch items are chicken paninis with basil and tomato, Black Forest ham and cheese paninis, Bratwurst and beautiful fresh soup. Popular pastries include chocolate and almond croissants and cherry-vanilla, apple, and cream cheese Danishes. Edelweiss makes delicious cakes, too, like



strawberry, Black Forest (chocolate with cherries) and cheesecake.

Drop by Edelweiss to see Ester and treat yourself to an edible work of art today! It's very affordable. Hours of operation are Mon-Fri 7am-5pm and Sat 7am-3pm. Call 343.6545 for more info.

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Read News Articles on our Homepage

A new Tuscaloosa, UA, and Business news system has been added to our homepage at www.tuscaloosachamber.com, which allows you to see daily news from The Tuscaloosa News, Tide Sports, and Reuters Business. Format is set up as a tabbed box that allows a lot of content in a small space. This addition brings us to a new level in main stream media using RSS feeds.

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Northport Chick-Fil-A Opens



People started lining up in the parking lot of the new Chick-fil-A in Northport on the day before its opening. The first 100 customers received 52 free combo meals, which corporate officials estimate to be worth about \$300. The patrons were treated to food and games while they waited, making it a fun time.

Owners Ashley and Blake Gill, along with family and city officials, opened it this morning, July 23. The group toured the immaculate new restaurant complete with a fun play unit. Chicken Minis and fresh fruit were served. Ashley, Chick-fil-A's very first third-generation owner, cut the red ribbon and the group took a ceremonial "first bite" of their famous chicken sandwich. The Gills and the Chick-fil-A company wish to become involved in supporting our community churches and schools. To contact them, call 330.1110. Address is 1620 McFarland Blvd, next to KMart.

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Welcome, New Members!

The following joined from June 1 to date.

Westervelt Warner Museum
 Great Southern Distributing
 Hood's Home Inspection Service
 Tuscaloosa Eye Care
 Black Warrior Printing & Imaging
 Chick-fil-A of Northport
 V&W Supply Co.
 The Retreat at Lake Tamaha
 High Five Advertising, LLC
 Touchdown Alabama Magazine
 Discreet Wireless
 West Alabama Urology Assoc.
 Brown's Corner Dueling Piano Bar
 Miss Priss Boutique

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Diamond Level Sponsors

