

The Chamber Perspectives online

Upcoming Events

Nov 7

Franklin Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Overview

Nov 30

Women In Business Social Event

(More Events)

Tuscaloosa Souvenirs



T-Town Cooler
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Inside this issue

- [After-hours Gathering of Chamber Members is Successful](#)
- [Chamber Survey is Opportunity for Member Input](#)
- [Volunteers Take CHOICES to Five County Middle Schools](#)
- [Annual Meeting Set for Tuesday, January 23](#)
- [Chamber Partners with Others on Hunting, Fishing Trail](#)
- [Chamber Training: from Storms to Stress, from Excel to Execution](#)
- [Chamber, Small Business Center Sponsor Loan Clinic on November 16](#)
- [Business Luncheon Highlights Sister City Anniversary](#)
- [Ten-year-old Partnership Yields Great Benefits for The Chamber](#)
- [Thinking about a Gift? Consider The Chamber's Inventory](#)
- [Seven More Businesses Join The Chamber Team; Year Total Is 132](#)
- [Exhibit "Drawn From Life" Set at Westervelt Museum until Dec. 31](#)
- [Children's Hands-On Museum Celebrates 20th Anniversary](#)
- [Two Agencies Added to United Way Roster; Total Now is 26](#)
- [Council Member Cuts Ribbon for Quiznos on Rice Mine Road](#)
- [Jamison, Money, Farmer & Company Promotes Four](#)

After-hours Gathering of Chamber Members is Successful

Although rain and a competing social event might have kept the crowd down a little, the after-hours Chamber networking event at the Brand New Tuscaloosa Chevrolet on October 26 was highly successful.

Over the two-hour period of the event, a good-sized crowd filled the lobby of the dealership's new location on Interstate Parkway at Exit 77 on Interstate 20/59. The Chamber Ambassadors coordinated the event, led by Alan Hood of Tuscaloosa Chevrolet, his wife Ella of Home Towne Suites, and Angie Askew of Morgan Keegan.

The Business Network International (BNI) groups, led by Mary Power of Key Staff Source, also helped with the event.

A number of Chamber members donated food or door prizes for the after-hours get-together. Among them were: Pizza Hut, FIG, Amy's Florist, Woods & Water, The Brand New Tuscaloosa Chevrolet (in addition to being the host); Regions Bank; The Bank of Tuscaloosa; Home-Towne Suites; Sheila's Gift Baskets and Gifts, Chic-Fil-A; Coca-Cola Enterprises; Verizon Wireless, and Express Personnel.



New members, prospective members, and longtime members had some refreshments, won door prizes, and "connected" with each other.

"Networking is one of the key benefits of

Chamber membership," said Carla Bailey, Ambassadors Chair, "and our event in October was a good example of how Chamber volunteers can work together successfully."

After the event, the Brand New Tuscaloosa Chevrolet donated to The Chamber the two banners that were used to welcome members and guests. In the photo, Alan Hood, left, and Johnnie Chambers hold open one of the banners.

[Top](#)

Chamber Survey is Opportunity for Member Input

The Chamber recently sent to all members a survey that requested their help in setting the direction and developing the business plan for the organization in 2007.

The survey was sent electronically to most members, and mailed to about 200 members for whom The Chamber doesn't have a valid e-mail address.

The Chamber leadership, which will be directed in 2007 by Jim Harrison III, sincerely wants the input of as many members as possible.

Click the link below to participate in the survey:

<http://votervoicenet/target.asp?id=ccwa:10942507>

[Top](#)

Volunteers Take CHOICES to Five County Middle Schools



Some veteran volunteers and some who've just received training will be spending a lot of time in eighth grade classrooms at five Tuscaloosa County middle schools during November.

These volunteers will be presenting the CHOICES program, which is an interactive lecture-demonstration that deals with the importance of students making good decisions (choices) in their academic lives and how choices (good and bad) can affect their future success.

This is the seventh consecutive school year that The Chamber's CHOICES program has been presented to middle schoolers. The rest of the Tuscaloosa County schools and all Tuscaloosa City schools will be handled during the spring semester.

In the photo, Loo Whitfield, who heads the Adopt-A-School program for The Chamber and is the instructor for CHOICES training, conducts a class. Karen Cash of AFFLINK Corp., and Ken King of Cingular Wireless were two of the students.

Several businesses and organizations have provided the financial support for the CHOICES program. They are: AFFLINK Corp., the Bank of Tuscaloosa, Junior League of Tuscaloosa, the Reese Phifer Jr. Memorial Foundation, Regions Bank, Sam's Club, and Security Bank.

[Top](#)

Annual Meeting Set for Tuesday, January 23

Many more exciting details will be on the way soon, but go ahead and circle January 23, 2007, on your calendar today. That's when The Chamber will celebrate the accomplishments of 2006 with a lot of food, fun and fellowship. It will be a night to remember! You and your associates won't want to miss this event.

[Top](#)

Chamber Partners with Others on Hunting, Fishing Trail

Why, you might ask, does The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama get involved in a Hunting and Fishing Trail? Try the hunting and fishing industry brings in more than \$3 billion each year in the State of Alabama.



That is why two years ago, a group of business people in West Alabama saw a unique opportunity to utilize natural resources as an economic development tool, and change the way people view the state of Alabama.

The West Alabama Hunting and Fishing Trail was a collaborative effort between Alabama Power Company, the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, the Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau, local business owners and private citizens. It was made up of a collection of hunting and fishing lodges and its aim is to increase the awareness of outdoor recreation and enhance economic development in West Alabama.



The success of the venture was enough that the organizers are now taking the "Trail" statewide. From now on the name is the Alabama Hunting and Fishing Trail, reflecting an overall scope that is modeled after the highly successful Robert Trent Jones Golfing Trail.

Since its conception in 2004, the Trail has made significant impact for its members. "Our focus has been to work with local outfitters, business owners, economic development organizations and tourism partners to promote and strengthen the outdoor market in Alabama," said Donny Jones, chairman of the Alabama Hunting and Fishing Trail.

"I think the Trail can have a great economic impact on our state," said Barnett Lawley, commissioner of the department of conservation and natural resources. "Anytime we can promote our natural resources and the

opportunity for people to enjoy the state of Alabama we need to take advantage of it." Lee Sentell, director of Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, echoed that statement. "We feel the trail will encourage a new generation of youngsters from all over the world to become involved in outdoor activities. When boys and girls spend time outdoors with their fathers and grandfathers they have a greater respect for nature and a greater respect for the natural assets of Alabama."

The Trail not only utilizes its partnerships to promote members, but also employs the latest in web development and marketing to bring hunters and anglers to Alabama. In 2005, the Trail was presented the *Innovator of the Year Award* at the annual West Alabama Stars in the Industry ceremony.



Long known as one of the most diverse states due to its geography and location, Alabama, is a hunting and fishing paradise. "One of our goals is to capitalize on our longer hunting seasons, variety of wild game and extensive fishing opportunities," says Jones, who is also vice president of technology and operations, Chamber of Commerce of West. "Many northern states have limited game, fishing and hunting seasons.

For information go to: <http://alabamahuntingandfishingtrail.com>.

[Top](#)

Chamber Training: from Storms to Stress, from Excel to Execution



Thus far in 2006, more than 700 people have attended "Chamber University," and they have returned to the workplace better able to meet the day-to-day demands of their jobs.

The November 7 seminar on Franklin Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" was the 16th training course or seminar offered by The Chamber this year. An earlier Covey seminar, "4 Disciplines of

Execution," as a matter of fact, was attended by more members and associates than any other seminar this year: 86.

Five early morning seminars on technology were popular. They dealt with Microsoft® Word and Power Point, Outlook, Excel and Access, and one of them helped participants learn how to maximize their office productivity using technology.

Lunch and Learn seminars also featured tips on high impact marketing, exceptional customer service, and combating stress in life and work.

There were a number of special member educational opportunities. The Chamber's Women in Business Council held a well-attended seminar in September during



which four highly successful businesswomen talked about how to establish and maintain good relationships in the workplace. The Council had its annual meeting in March and another roundtable in June.

Again this year, The Chamber conducted its Entrepreneur Institute, a three-session course for upwardly mobile business people.

And in late October, The Chamber and the Emergency Management officials joined to hold a seminar to help business and industry leaders better understand how to prepare for and survive major disasters.

[Top](#)

Chamber, Small Business Center Sponsor Loan Clinic on November 16

The Chamber and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of the University of Alabama are sponsoring a Small Business Loan Clinic on November 16, to be held at the Northport Civic Center from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

One of the new programs the SBDC handles is the Community Express Loan Program. Through this program business owners can potentially acquire the working capital they need to finance ongoing operations or to start a new business. Loans are non-collateralized and are available in amounts from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

"This program is a simpler way for us to provide clients with a means of getting the working capital they need for their businesses," said Paavo Hanninen, SBDC director. "After completing the application, clients can usually expect a decision on it within 10 business days. If approved, the program requires that the client receive business counseling from one of our counselors," he said.

The loans currently have a rate of Prime + 4.75% for loans of \$5,000 to \$25,000, and a rate of Prime + 3.75% for loans of \$26,000 to \$50,000. The loan also requires that the applicant have an equity contribution. There are no pre-payment penalties, no taxes, and any fees are deducted from loan proceeds, only if the client is approved.

For more information or to get an application packet, call the SBDC at 348-7011.

[Top](#)

Business Luncheon Highlights Sister City Anniversary

Many Chamber members joined two delegations of foreign business men and women on October 20, including Kimberle Barton of CTX Mortgage (center in the photo), for a special luncheon.



The occasion? Large delegations from Narashino, Japan, and Shorndorf, Germany and their Tuscaloosa County friends were marking the 20th

anniversary of the Sister City relationship with Narashino and the 10th anniversary of the Sister City partnership with Shorndorf.

[Top](#)

Ten-year-old Partnership Yields Great Benefits for The Chamber

It was in 1996 that The Chamber and DeltaCom reached an agreement under which Chamber members receive a substantial discount on their long distance telephone service.

While members save with discounts up to 25%, The Chamber benefits, also, because DeltaCom donates a percentage of members' monthly charges back to The Chamber in the form of non-dues revenue.

Recently, a new account executive took over DeltaCom sales efforts in Tuscaloosa County. He is Matthew Sampson. He can be reached at (205) 380-3062 or (205) 310-8094 (cell).

[Top](#)

Thinking about a Gift? Consider The Chamber's Inventory



Are you looking for a gift for someone? Birthday? Christmas? For any other reason?

If you are, you might consider The Chamber's inventory of new products.

There's a top-quality golf shirt for only \$40. Tee shirts in red or black for only \$15. Coffee mugs (unique shape) at only \$7 or a set of four for \$25.

A nice-looking umbrella for rainy winter weather: \$13.

A colorful six-pack cooler: only \$5.

Go to The Chamber's website for further information and for ordering. That's www.tuscaloosachamber.com.

[Top](#)

Seven More Businesses Join The Chamber Team; Year Total Is 132

Chamber membership growth in 2006 hasn't quite reached the kudzu level, but since the last edition of Perspectives On-Line (Oct. 16), seven more businesses have become a part of the Voice of Business in West Alabama.

Year to date, The Chamber has added 132 businesses and organizations to its rolls.

Latest new members are:

- Humana
- Marathon Equipment
- B. G.'s Restaurant
- Milagro's
- Full Moon BBQ
- Re/Max Premiere Group
- Black Warrior Technology LLC

Chamber members are urged to do business with these new members-and welcome them to the Team.

[Top](#)

Exhibit "Drawn From Life" Set at Westervelt Museum until Dec. 31



You'd be missing something, if you don't go to the Westervelt Museum before December 31.

The Museum, in partnership with the Birmingham Museum of Art, is showing works from a number of 19th century artists. The exhibit is entitled "Drawn From Life."

Spanning nearly 60 years, the exhibition provides a unique opportunity to see more than 30 paintings by such artists as William Sidney Mount and Francis William Edmonds. All of the paintings center on a theme of the daily lives of the American people in the pre-industrial past of this

country.

If you'd like a tour, go daily to the museum except Sunday and Monday. But you need reservations and can make them by calling 343-4215 or going to the website, museum@warnermuseum.org.

If you just want to walk through the museum on your own, the hours are Tuesday through Friday, 12 noon to 5 p.m., 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturday, and 1-5 p.m. on Sunday.

The museum is located at 8316 Mountbatten Road NE, in the North River Yacht Club area. Admission is \$7 for adults, and \$5 for students.

[Top](#)

Children's Hands-On Museum Celebrates 20th Anniversary

If you don't want to watch the election returns in your den or living room, join the "big kids" downtown at the Children's Hands-On Museum.



They'll be watching the returns at CHOM as they celebrate the museum's 20th anniversary and honor the Founders of CHOM. For \$25 per person (\$40 per couple), you can meet many of the people who helped establish the museum, you can chat with the Board of Directors, sample the food and drink while listening to some good music.

For more information, call Tricia Wagg at 349-4235, extension 11.

[Top](#)

Two Agencies Added to United Way Roster; Total Now is 26

The United Way organization, which has set a campaign goal in 2006 of more than \$3 million, has added two more agencies to its roster, bringing the total to 26 agencies, most of which get a significant percentage of their income from the campaign.

Homer Butler, executive director of United Way, said the Good Samaritan Clinic and the Tuscaloosa Family Resource Center have been added.

He said the organization plans to end the campaign-its 60th annual--victoriously on November 21.

Chamber members and their associates are urged to support United Way in a generous manner.

[Top](#)

Council Member Cuts Ribbon for Quiznos on Rice Mine Road

The area around New Watermelon Road and Rice Mine Road is a beehive of activity these days. The latest business to join the roster at this intersection north of the river is Quiznos Subs, owned and operated by Scott Harbin.

On October 27, City Council Member Cynthia Almond cut the ceremonial ribbon to "officially" open the shop. Chamber Chairman Gene Poole and Chamber President Johnnie Aycock helped with the celebration, as did Chamber Ambassadors Shannon McBride and Michael McComb.

In the photo are (left to right): Tim Mock, Quiznos regional marketing manager; Shannon McBride; Leigh Harbin, Scott Harbin, Cynthia Almond, Gene Poole, Michael McComb.



[Top](#)

Jamison, Money, Farmer & Company Promotes Four

Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co. recently announced four promotions. These included:

Drew Brignac was promoted to senior accountant in the auditing and accounting department. A native of Selma and a University of Alabama graduate, Brignac joined the firm in 2004.

Casey Vaughan Jones was promoted to senior accountant in the tax department. She's from Phenix City, is a University of Alabama graduate, and joined the company in 2005.

Kristi Moore was promoted to senior accountant in the accounting and auditing department. A native of Northport, she joined the firm in 2004 and is a graduate of the University of Alabama.

Cara Oliver, CPA, was promoted to senior accountant in the tax department. She joined the company in 2004, is a graduate of the University of Alabama, and is a Tuscaloosa native.

[Top](#)

