

The Chamber Perspectives online

The Best 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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A Thanksgiving Thought

Thanksgiving is the time to feel gratitude to God for all the blessings in life. It is a time to acknowledge the good deeds of our fellow citizens and be thankful. Thanksgiving thoughts are the kind of thoughts that we should have all year long, turning each day into "thanksgiving".



People with thankful hearts have lives that are filled with song. Daily, we should take time to show kindness to those we hold most dear, extend a helping hand to those in need, and thank God for each new day and the opportunity to serve. Daily, we should set aside some quiet time and share it with a friend, for friendships bring a special joy and pleasure without end.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "For each new morning with its light, for rest and shelter of the night; for health and food, for love and friends; for everything Thy goodness sends."

From all of us at The Chamber, have a wonderful, blessed Thanksgiving season, and may the blessings of this day fill you with Thanksgiving peace that lasts the whole year through! We are thankful for you!



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The Women in Business Council hosts the 4th Annual Sweet Escape

The Women in Business Council will present the 4th Annual *Sweet Escape* on Thursday, December 3rd, 2009 from 4 PM to 7 PM at the Jemison Van de Graaff Mansion. We invite you to join us again for a night of pampering, shopping, chocolate and more--all in one place!

Guests will find many special treats as well as Christmas gift giving or getting ideas from local vendors.



Admission charge will be \$10 at the door, plus a new toy or cash donation for the U.S. Marines "Toys for Tots" campaign overseen by our local Salvation Army. You will receive one raffle ticket with admission and additional raffle tickets will be sold at the door for \$5 each or 3 for \$10.

Guests may purchase as many as they like for a chance to win one of two \$100 gift certificates to the vendor in attendance of their choice. A portion of the raffle ticket proceeds will benefit "Toys for Tots." All women attending can register for great door prizes, too!

Come enjoy the pampering from Chamber member salons including Tera Lane Salon & Spa, Nancy Taylor Skin Therapy & Day Spa, Tuscaloosa MedSpa, Shelton State Community College Cosmetology, Therapeutic Professionals Group and Salon 1201. Also do some early Christmas shopping with local vendors like Belk, Miss Priss Boutique, Sheila's Gift Baskets & Gifts, Sips n Strokes, FIG, and the Peterbrooke Chocolatier.

Parking: This year we will offer shuttle service from the new Bank of Tuscaloosa Plaza (offices of The Bank of Tuscaloosa, Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., Rosen Harwood & Hunt Refining) on Jack Warner Pkwy. to the Jemison Mansion. The shuttle will run from 4:30 until 7:00 pm for those interested.

To make your reservation call 391-0559 or e-mail stacey@tuscaloosachamber.com. Hope to see you there!

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2009 Civic Hall of Fame Honorees Inducted

Five exceptional citizens were inducted as 2009 honorees for the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame on November 12th at the Hotel Capstone. Join us in recognizing the following for their great accomplishments:



Star Kilstein Bloom (1939 – present). One of Tuscaloosa County's most active civic, educational and volunteer leaders, Star Bloom has dedicated most of her adult life working to build quality education and meet social needs within the community. She has made a significant contribution through a broad array of civic, educational and community roles and organizations, including Tuscaloosa County High School Foundation, Challenge 21, The University of

Alabama's Integrated Science Program and the Co-Director of The University's Center For Communications and Educational Technology, Baby Talk, as a founding member of Tuscaloosa's One Place, and a host of other meaningful leadership roles.



Albert Dawson Christian, Sr. (1917 – present). One of Northport's leading citizens and for many years, Dawson Christian has engraved his name on the quality and development of Tuscaloosa County in many ways. Since the early 1950's, he has contributed tirelessly to the community through a variety of civic organizations and community endeavors, including the Northport Lions Club, serving as their first president; the Alabama Lions Sight Conservation, Easter Seals of West Alabama, member of the Northport City

Council and the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education, St. Mark United Methodist Church, and many others. Recognized for his civic and community service, he is a recipient of the Northport Citizen of the Year honor.



Joseph A. Duckworth (1880 – 1976). If you look back in the history of Tuscaloosa, you will see the handprints of Joe Duckworth on many significant economic, civic and community initiatives and lasting successes. Founder of the Duckworth-Morris Insurance Agency, Mr. Duckworth was a visionary business leader, later forming the Tuscaloosa Building & Loan Association, forerunner to First Federal Savings and Loan, serving as President and Chairman. In

addition, he made a lasting impact through many other leadership

roles including: serving as Chairman and a member of the Druid City Hospital Board and is recognized as one of the developers of the hospital; President of the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa, and the Alabama Association of Insurance Agents; a leader in the First United Methodist Church, and a variety of other important leadership roles. He was the Tuscaloosa Citizen of the Year in 1953 and played a key role in securing a hotel for Downtown Tuscaloosa.



Benjamin Belton Fields (1925 – 2009). Long-time county extension service leader, Ben Fields touched the lives of many citizens through his professional, civic, community and religious life in Tuscaloosa County. Involved in a myriad of service roles during his lifetime, he was an active leader the Boy Scouts Board of Directors, Benjamin Barnes Branch and the Metropolitan Board of Directors, the Tuscaloosa Opportunity Board, later to become Community Services of West Alabama, United Way, Kiwanis Club, Family Counseling Services, Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, First African Baptist Church, and a variety of other initiatives designed to improve the lives of people in the community. Recipient of many honors and awards, he received the Alabama Association of County Agricultural Agents' highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award in 1984.



Johnnie R. Aycock (1945 – present). One of Alabama's most respected and effective chamber of commerce executives, Johnnie Aycock has served the community as President & CEO of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama for almost 27 years, contributing in significant ways to economic and business development, education, cultural development, leadership development, racial harmony, livability, and other aspects of Tuscaloosa County that have far exceeded the traditional role of a Chamber executive. He has been an active, creative leader working to build a quality community through a diverse menu of organizations and initiatives, some of which he provided leadership to establish, including: Leadership Tuscaloosa, Adopt A School, Literacy Council of West Alabama, Center For Workforce Development, West Alabama Leadership Prayer Breakfast, Challenge 21, Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa, Chamber of Commerce of Alabama, for which he was named Alabama's Chamber Executive of the Year in 2003, Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, Alabama Citizens For Constitutional Reform, Calvary Baptist Church, and many others.

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Tap Assets to Gain Competitive Edge

In These tough economic times, small businesses need to tap the resources that are available in their communities to weather the

storm. They need to look no further than their local chamber for help.

Local chambers advocate for small businesses at the local, regional, state, and national levels. Every day, they work to keep government at bay so that you can focus on running your business. They also introduce you to potential customers through business referral programs, market your business online and in their directories, and offer special discounts through various affinity programs such as insurance, shipping, and office supplies.

Local chambers are a one-stop shop for business information, including market access information for small businesses thinking about expanding, economic profiles of the community, workforce statistics, contact information for government officials, and regional trend studies.

Small business tool kits, which are found on your local chamber's Web site, can help with developing business, marketing, and communications plans as well as finding capital. If you're thinking about expanding your business, the local chamber should be your first call.

Local chambers are one of the best places to make business connections. After-hour networking programs and networking luncheons on topics relevant to business help you stay in the game and gain a competitive edge.

In addition, membership in your local chamber can greatly enhance your local company's brand. A national study titled *The Real Value of Joining a Local Chamber of Commerce*, conducted by The Schapiro Group, and Atlanta-based marketing research firm, suggests the following.

- When consumers know that a business is a member of the local chamber, they are 44% more likely to think favorably of it.
- Consumers who are told that a business is a chamber member are 51% more likely to be highly aware of it and 57% more likely to think positively of its local reputation.
- Consumers are 63% more likely to buy goods and services in the future from a company that they believe is a member of the local chamber of commerce

In addition, when business decision makers believe that a business is a chamber member, they are 37% more likely to think favorably of the business, 51% more likely to be highly aware of it, 58% more likely to think positively of its local reputation, and 59% more likely to buy goods and services from it.

With numbers like this, run-don't walk- to your local chamber and get engaged with its program or work. A strong chamber symbolizes a strong community-both benefit from each other.

Raymond P. Towle, IOM, CAE
Published in July 2009 issue

US Chamber of Commerce

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Dickens Downtown Scheduled for December 1

The annual "Dickens Downtown" festival will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 1 in historic downtown Northport.

The festival is a tribute to Victorian England and the fiction of the legendary Charles Dickens ("A Christmas Carol"). The event will feature visits by Father Christmas and Queen Victoria.

The parade welcoming the Queen will begin at 5:30 p.m. Photographs will be taken of patrons with Father Christmas.

There will also be carriage rides. A forecast of snow is guaranteed!

The Northport Christmas Tree Lighting will be held at 5:30 p.m. at the ShirleyPlaceHouseMuseum. Northport Mayor Bobby Herndon will be on hand for the event. Shirley Place will be open for tours at 6 p.m.

Live music will be provided by local school singers and performers, the Alabama Pipes and Drums, strolling bagpiper Trent Bradford, and the Fifth Alabama Regimental Band (7 p.m. at Shirley Place).

Food will be sold by community organizations. **Come early! Parking will be available at** Northport Baptist Church, the old gin site and the old Mac's Bait Shop site.

People come and go through the evening so parking will come available. For more information, call 1-205-752-4761.

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Young Professionals of Tuscaloosa Host "Premier Event"



On October 28th, 2009 YP(t) premiered on the Tuscaloosa scene with a bang. The Thursday before Halloween proved to be a much needed

treat for young professionals in Tuscaloosa. Brown's Corner hosted YP(t)'s "Premier Event" which saw nearly 300 people (ages 22-40) attend the event.

YP(t), or Young Professionals of Tuscaloosa, started it's planning in April of this year. Since then, co-chairpersons, Mike Small and Christy Vick, have led an eager group in developing what will be the voice of young professionals in Tuscaloosa. The group is founded on five pillars, Premier Events, Professional Development, Special Interest, Community Service and Media Relations.

The mission of the group is... to create opportunities for future business and civic leaders to build relationships, to enhance professional development, to contribute to the needs of the West Alabama community, with an emphasis on the members' personal passions and professional goals.

The 2010 calendar is being finalized and YP(t) expects 10-12 events throughout the year. Please reference the group's website (yptuscaloosa.com) and facebook page for further information.

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Braxsim Celebrates New Location



A ribbon cutting ceremony for Braxsim, LLC was held on November 3, 2009. Their new location is 1903 27th Street, Northport(across from Buddy's Diner). Phone number there is 349-4444. To learn more visit www.braxsim.com.

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Baby Talk Holds Ribbon Cutting



Babytalk store, located at 933 McFarland Blvd, Northport, held a ribbon cutting ceremony on November 12, 2009 to celebrate their new expansion. Phone number there is 333-1594. For more information visit www.alabamababyclothes.com or www.mybreastpump.com.

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Welcome, New Members!

The following joined from Sept 1 to date.

Jewels By Park Lane
Hooters
Dave's Dogs
Spine and Sports Chiropractic, Inc.
Best Western Catalina Inn

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Super Six To Be Held In Tuscaloosa

The Alabama High School Athletic Association's "Super Six" Championships will be held at Bryant Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa December 3rd and 4th. The Chamber is a partner with the Tuscaloosa Sports Foundation in hosting this very exciting event.

We are encouraging our members to place signs in front of their businesses to welcome AHSAA or Super 6 visitors. For more information please contact Stacey Gann at 391.0559 or email: stacey@tuscaloosachamber.com.

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Members In The News

Peterbrooke Chocolatier Host Holiday Events

Peterbrooke Chocolatier Presents local Author "Abbey Holthaus" and "The Treasures of Christmas" will be at Peterbrooke Chocolatier for a book signing on December 3rd from 4-6pm. She will sign copies of the

book and decadent chocolate samples will be provided. To pre-order your copy of the book call Peterbrooke at 205-752-0211.

Peterbrooke Chocolatier's 3rd annual FREE photo's with Santa.

This event will take place at Peterbrooke Chocolatier on December 12th from 12-5pm. Skip the hustle and bustle of holiday mall traffic and bring the little ones by for a free photo with Santa and a taste of chocolate! For more details call Peterbrooke Chocolatier at 205-752-0211.

Seventh Annual Holiday Singalong

Love to belt out some seasonal songs? Come join the one holiday community event in which you can do more than just stand and watch: The Seventh Annual Holiday Singalong.

And we don't even care if you can't carry a tune in a bucket. We're all in this together, folks.

It's essentially caroling in Capitol Park, except we stay in one place rather than go door to door, and there's food and drink, lyrics and accompaniment all provided courtesy of The Tuscaloosa News, along with other community sponsors to be named later.

The event is 1-3 p.m. Dec. 5 this year. That's the Saturday following Dickens Downtown, in between the two "Hilaritas" performances, and two days before the Christmas parade. In the past few years, the first Saturday in December has been sunny and comfortable weather. All free, and family friendly. Plenty of park for the kids to play in.

Contact Mark Hughes Cobb @ mark.cobb@tuscaloosanews.com

Nancy & Co. Ladies Night Out

Grab your girlfriends and come to Nancy & Co. on November 30th from 4:00pm - 7:30pm, for a fun-filled night of desserts, champagne, & door prizes! Check out all the Holiday Decorations & Try on all the Hottest New Jewelry. Fill out a wish list for a chance to win fabulous prizes & to make sure that Santa knows what you would love to see under the tree this Christmas!

Barnes & Noble Offers Help To Non-Profits

Barnes & Noble offers non-profits the opportunity to earn donations for the holiday season. Non-profits can schedule volunteers to gift wrap presents for Barnes & Noble customers. Shifts run between the hours of 10 am - 10 pm. Shifts can be scheduled in 2 hour increments. All supplies are provided, all that is required is dependable volunteers to gift wrap. Gift wrapping dates begin Sunday November 22nd and end Thursday, December 24th. Proof of non-profit status is required. Please contact Rhesha Smith at

205.349.6366 to schedule your non-profit group.

Theatre Tuscaloosa Rings In the Holidays with "Christmas Belles"

If southern comedy with a twist of Christmas madness and magic appeals to you, then you will enjoy Theatre Tuscaloosa's December production of **"Christmas Belles."** The December 11-20, 2009 production can be seen at the Bean-Brown Theatre on Shelton State Community College's Martin Campus, 9500 Old Greensboro Road. Tickets, \$17-adult; \$14-senior adult; \$10- student; and \$5- Shelton students, are available through Theatre Tuscaloosa's website theatretusc.com or you may call the ticket office at 205.391.2277. Discounts for groups of 10 or more are also available.

United Way Campaign Celebration

United Way of West Alabama is having its annual Campaign Celebration Event on Thursday, December 17 from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. at the Westervelt-Warner Museum. Join United Way to hear the announcement of results from this year's fund raising campaign which benefits 25 local partner service agencies. You will enjoy beautiful holiday music from the students in the Strings in Schools program of the Tuscaloosa City Schools. There will be delicious food from A Cutting Edge Caterers as well as beverages donated by local businesses. Admission is free and no RSVP is required. Please contact Rusty Smith at United Way with questions (rusty@uwwa.org or 205-345-6640).

25th Annual Juried Show

The Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa County will present the 25th Annual Juried Show exhibit November 15 through December 18, 2009 at the Bama Theatre's Junior League Gallery. The exhibit will feature original two- and three-dimensional works by West Alabama artists in a variety of media including oil, watercolor, acrylic and photography, with most pieces available for purchase. An opening reception honoring the winners and the artists accepted to the exhibit will be held on Sunday, November 15 from 2pm – 3:30pm at the gallery.

Nancy Taylor Black Friday Offering

Nancy Taylor Day Spa is offering 15% off gift certificates and 20% off all retail BLACK FRIDAY only!! Join us for our post-Thanksgiving sale this Friday, November 27th and get the best gifts for your loved ones! Also, check your calendars for the 5th of December and schedule your FREE consultation with Dr. Hedden!

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