

## A Few Facts About Literacy

*43% of adults with low literacy skills live in poverty.*

*40% of children entering fourth grade are unable to read at grade level.*

*50% of welfare recipients do not have a high school diploma or GED.*

*70% of Alabama's inmates are functionally illiterate.*

*75% of small business owners in Alabama report that many applicants for job openings do not have basic reading, writing and math skills.*

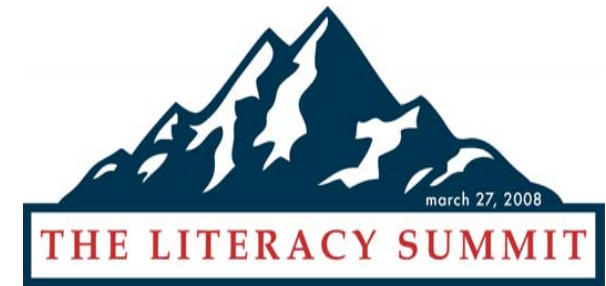
*Alabama's Level 1 functionally illiterate rate is 25%. In other words, one out of four people function at the lowest literacy level in Alabama. Rates in West Alabama: Tuscaloosa County, 23%; Fayette County, 24%; Bibb County, 27%; Pickens County, 35%; Hale County, 41%; & Greene County, 51%.*

*Sources: Alabama Adult Education & Family Literacy Plan; U. S. Department of Education; The Literacy Council of Central Alabama.*

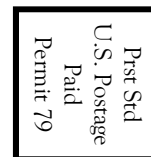


Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama  
2200 University Blvd.  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

## West Alabama Literacy Initiative



**March 27, 2008**  
**8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
**Bryant Conference Center**  
**Tuscaloosa**



# Tuscaloosa-West Alabama Literacy Initiative

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## Mission:

The mission of the Literacy Committee is to expand awareness of the challenges and impact of illiteracy in the community, region and workplace; and to address, support and/or implement local initiatives that will contribute to a higher level of literacy among the citizens and families of Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama.

**Vision:** To build a community and region in which each person is functionally literate.

**Goals:** Participate in a major emphasis literacy project in March, 2008.

Undertake a literacy project with local and/or international impact.

Seek opportunities to build alliances with other organizations and regional initiatives that impact effective literacy services and programming.

Raise awareness and support for literacy in Tuscaloosa County & West Alabama.

Develop framework for enhancing coordination of delivery of literacy services through establishment of a regional literacy council.

## Literacy Summit Sponsors & Partners:

The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama  
Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa  
United Way of West Alabama  
The University of Alabama  
WVUA-TV  
Comcast Cable  
Shelton State Community College Adult Education & Project Literacy  
Reese Phifer, Jr. Memorial Foundation  
American Advertising Federation Tuscaloosa  
Public Relations Council of Alabama,  
Tuscaloosa Chapter  
Junior League of Tuscaloosa

**Program:** The Literacy Summit is Thursday, March 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Bryant Conference Center in Tuscaloosa. Doors open at 7:45 a.m. and a light breakfast will be available. Program content will include adult and workplace literacy, family literacy, and early education, pre-K and related topics.

**Who Should Attend?** Employers and business owners, human resource professionals, educators, school counselors, service providers, non-profit agencies and organizations, civic, charitable and faith-based leaders, city and county school board members and superintendents, and local elected officials.

## Speakers and Presenters:

US Congressman **Artur Davis**; **Dr. Margaret Doughty**, Founder Literacy Powerline; **Ms. Jackie Wuska-Hurt**, CEO & Executive Director, The Literacy Council of Birmingham; **Dr. Sherrill Parris**, Director of Alabama Reading Initiative; **Dr. Ray Hart**, President, RS Hart & Partners; **Ms. Sue Matkin**, Director; Tarrant County Literacy Council, Fort Worth, Texas; **Mr. Ed McFalls**, BNSF Rail, Fort Worth, Texas; **Mayor Walt Maddox**, City of Tuscaloosa and more.

## Topics/Issues to be Covered:

The Challenges & Faces of Illiteracy  
Impacting The Next Generation  
The Power of Partnerships  
Learning From Best Practices  
Designing & Building a Regional Literacy Council  
Impact of Illiteracy on the Family  
The Economic Costs of Illiteracy in the Workplace  
Preparing For A Diverse Economy: English As a Second Language

## What You'll Take Away:

A One-Source Directory of our regional literacy groups and an understanding of how to help build our own Literacy Council.

A better awareness of the problem and of "best practices" to address it from your standpoint.

## Detachable Registration Form

Please indicate two breakout session choices, then fill in the blanks below and mail to address at bottom. **There is no cost to attend.** Box lunch will be provided.

*Booths are available for the Resource Fair area to be at the Summit. Please see contact information at bottom, if interested.*

Afternoon Breakout Sessions:

- Learning from Best Practices
- Designing & Building a Regional Literacy Council
- Preparing for a Diverse Economy: ESL
- The Impact on the Family
- The Power of Partnerships

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*"People are the common denominator of progress. So, no improvement is possible with unimproved people, and advance is certain when people are liberated and educated. It would be wrong to dismiss the importance of roads, railroads, power plants, factories and the other familiar furniture of economic development. But we are coming to realize...that there is a certain sterility in economic monuments that stand alone in a sea of illiteracy. Conquest of illiteracy comes first."*

-John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society

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**You may also register online at [www.tuscaloosachamber.com](http://www.tuscaloosachamber.com).**