



The Chamber Perspectives online

Post Your Events on our Community Calendar

Don't forget to post your community events on our free calendar 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.

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.

Don't Pass the Buck! BUY LOCAL

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Chamber Adopts 2010 Business Plan

The Chamber has released an aggressive strategic business plan for 2010, which includes priorities in five areas that the organization will begin to address immediately. The plan, developed by our leadership and adopted by the board of directors, is posted in its entirety at www.tuscaloosachamber.com.

"Our 2010 plan is a sounding call to action," said Chamber President Johnnie Aycocock. "Even during a time of continued economic challenges, it is essential that we are bold in our vision and actions and that we work together to position the region to be more competitive, more economically viable and more livable once the economy begins to recover."

"The Chamber's 2010 action plan is designed to stimulate creative, engaged, leadership to meet a new horizon of possibilities and effectively carry out The Chamber's economic mission, values and vision."

The Chamber's business plan includes objectives and strategies in five critical areas: economic development, K-12 education, livability, a regional career high school, and expanded communications, marketing and resource development for the organization. The Chamber's professional and volunteer leadership structure will be designed around these five strategies.

"The Chamber's key priorities are important to the economic future of our community and region as well as our educational systems and

livability,” said Chamber President Johnnie Aycok. “As the largest regional, business-based economic organization in Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama, we will begin to move forward to address these priorities:

- Actively support, advocate and consistently monitor development and establishment of a regional technical high school for Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama in coordination with implementation of the regional workforce strategic plan and efforts to increase graduation rates.
- Advocate implementation of specific strategies to achieve status as one of America’s most livable communities; and develop appropriate marketing and communications strategies, resources, and tools that support and contribute to raising awareness, promoting livability and enhancing image. In addition, define ‘livability’ qualities and develop measurable goals and benchmarks to monitor and report community’s annual progress through an established “livability scorecard”.
- Develop and begin implementation of a multi-year, sustainable economic development marketing initiative to promote the region as a quality business and career destination for economic investment, commercial and retail expansion, residential growth and job creation.
- Expand The Chamber’s partnership and involvement with K-12 school systems to provide advocacy, support, business leadership and encouragement to achieve the highest level of educational excellence possible among peer school systems in the Southeast.
- Implement and sustain aggressive recruitment, marketing and advertising to expand membership base and Chamber Champion resources, increase retention, enhance visibility and expand public awareness of the Chamber, for both short and long term growth and financial viability.

The Chamber’s board of directors has also adopted a 2010 Public Affairs and Legislative Agenda for the coming year that will focus on 12 specific governmental and legislative initiatives. The Agenda can also be viewed on our website at www.tuscaloosachamber.com.

“We have exceptional volunteer leadership at all levels of The Chamber and our team is prepared to make a significant impact on our community and region in the coming year. Our 2010 business plan provides us with a very good strategic blueprint.”

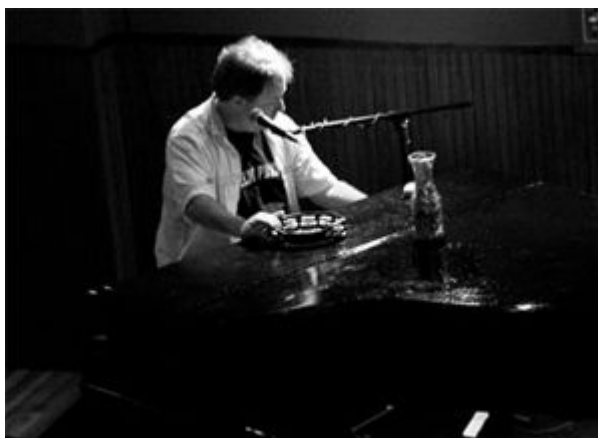
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It's Membership Renewal Time!



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First Mixer of 2010 at Brown's Corner



Our first “Chamber Connects” after hours mixer will be hosted by Brown’s Corner Dueling Piano Bar & Grill on Tues evening, Feb 9 from 5 to 7pm. There will be great food, music and networking. Plan to join us and ask a friend! All employees of Chamber member businesses are invited as well as prospective members.

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Chamber Champions 2010 Program Kicks Off

Being a Chamber Champion is a great way to support economic development, education, and livability in our community and at the same time receive a great value in sponsorships, exposure for your company, free training, free tickets to events and much more. For each dollar you invest in Chamber Champions, you will receive double return on your investment.

While we understand the uncertainties in our economy and the pressures on the business community, we sincerely believe that we all have to work together to transform a new horizon of possibilities into results.

To learn more, call us at 758.7588 or [click here](#) to download the brochure and choose your investment level. Thanks for your support!

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New Training Classes for a New Year

**Social Media Business Etiquette:
The Right Way and the Wrong Way**

Date: February 10, 2010

Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Guest Speaker: Donna Gilliland, President of MOSTraining

You know what our Moms used to say: "first impressions are lasting impressions." Are you making the right impressions that will last possibly forever in cyber space? Social media is a powerful way to market your company. There is a right way and a wrong way to use these powerful tools in business. Twitter and Facebook are two very important players in the social media arena. Are you using them correctly in business? Find out.

Excel 2007 New and Enhanced Features (Breakfast Seminar)

Date: February 18, 2010

Time: 7:30 AM – 9:30 AM

Guest Speaker: Donna Gilliland, President of MOSTraining

Topics Overview:

Conditional Formatting contains major and useful additions...

- Highlight cell rules
- Top and bottom rules
- Data bars
- Color scales

Sorting – improved sorting and filtering

- By color
- By icons

And much more!

Excel Tables previously known as lists contain great enhancements

PowerPoint 2007 Beginning – Part I

Date: February 18, 2010

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Guest Speaker: Donna Gilliland, President of MOSTraining

Price: \$89/person

Seating is limited to 12 (Hands-on training)

PowerPoint 2007 is an incredible new version. If you are new to using PowerPoint or have minimal knowledge in the use of this powerful presentation tool, then this is the workshop for you. It's part one of a two-part series. If you're a beginner or have minimal knowledge, you'll want to start at part one. Otherwise, you can begin at part two. Date for part two will be announced soon. Email Train@MOSTraining.com for an outline of the topics scheduled for part one.

Call The Chamber at 758.7588 to register for classes.

[Top](#)**Entrepreneur of the Year Noms Open**

We need your help to honor the successful entrepreneurs in Tuscaloosa County & West Alabama. Every day, entrepreneurs and small business owners work to build their businesses and our local economy through private enterprise. These outstanding business leaders also model hard work, creativity and civic responsibility. And you can help us identify and honor their achievements.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 Entrepreneurs Awards program through The Chamber. The process is simple. Just complete the nomination form and provide a letter of recommendation to us. Think about those outstanding entrepreneurs and small business owners that may be your clients, customers, suppliers or friends. This is an opportunity to say thank you and recognize successful business enterprises that provide the very foundation of our local economy and private enterprise system.

Send us your nomination today by downloading the form [here](#). Deadline for entry is Feb 3.

And save the date for the awards event luncheon on Feb 25 at Hotel Capstone.

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Northport Advisory Council Dinner is Soon

Our Northport Advisory Council will meet on Feb 8 at 6pm at Wintzell's Oyster House. We'll discuss changes affecting the group as well as Northport's state of the community and the future. Guest speaker is Mayor Bobby Herndon.

This dinner is for ALL members. On the Buffet: Honey Citrus Glazed Chicken, Southern Fried Catfish Strips, Grilled Garlic Seasoned Shrimp, Fresh Green House Salad, Homemade Mashed Potatoes, Green Bean Casserole & Dessert.

Cost is \$18 for members and \$25 for non-members. Call 758.7588 or email tracy@tuscaloosachamber.com to make a reservation (required). Deadline is Feb 4.

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Literacy Council Elects 2010 Leadership Team



The Literacy Council of West Alabama elected its 2010 leadership team during the board of directors meeting on January 27th. Elected to serve are:

Chair – **Jackie Hurt**, The UA Honors Program; Vice Chair of Communications & Marketing – **Dr. Bruce Berger**, UA College of Communications; Vice Chair of Projects & Programs - **Sandra Ray**,

Hall-Ray Realty; Vice Chair of Service Providers Exchange – **Julie Sittason**, Consultant; Secretary – **Janet Griffith**, UA; Treasurer – **Chuck Turner**, Tennis Jackson Electric; and Immediate Past Chair & Interim Director, **Johnnie Aycock**, Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.

In addition, the 30 member board adopted the 2010 business plan, which included establishment of a formal management and financial structure during the coming year and employment of staff and full-time literacy council office. Other strategies and goals for 2010 include: the development and expansion of communications and marketing; development of a new website; expanded volunteer recruitment and tutor training; establishment of a literacy service providers exchange; and other programs and initiatives to raise the level of awareness about literacy.

The mission of the Literacy Council of West Alabama is to champion the power of literacy to improve the lives of children, adults, families and communities in West Alabama.

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Annual Meeting Celebrates 2009



The 109th annual celebration of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, held on Jan 14 at Hotel Capstone, celebrated progress and honored volunteers, community service and a year of achievements.

Randy Skagen, Vice President & General Manager of Nucor Steel of Tuscaloosa and 2009 Chairman of The Chamber of Commerce

of West Alabama, presented the organization's annual leadership honors and presided over the annual event.

Fitzgerald Washington, General Sales Manager of BuffaloRock/Pepsi, was honored as the recipient of the 2009 Charles H. Land Member of the Year, which is The Chamber's highest honor to an individual member.

Washington was selected as the individual whose commitment and efforts contributed most to the advancement of the mission and objectives of The Chamber, and for his exceptional effective leadership of The Chamber's organizational development initiatives over the past year.

The 10th annual Robert C. Tanner Corporate Service Award was presented to **Ellis Architects**. The award, which is the organization's highest corporate honor, is given annually to recognize exceptional charitable, volunteer and philanthropic service by a corporate entity in the Tuscaloosa County/West Alabama region.



In addition, **Candy Lowery** of Bryant Bank was honored as The Chamber's Ambassador of the Year, for her exceptional service to and on behalf of The Chamber's membership. The Ambassadors are The Chamber's official hosts for all Chamber functions and responsible for member relations.

The Chamber also recognized outstanding community leadership with the presentation of twelve Distinguished Service Awards, which are presented to individuals or organizations that have displayed effective service and leadership. The 2009 awards were presented to:



Jerry Belk, former Director of PARA, was recognized for his faithful leadership of the civic hall of fame over the past years and his community service.

George Hamner of The University of Alabama was cited for his efforts and leadership on behalf of The Chamber's technology council and recent WiFi initiative on "The Strip".

Donna Gilliland of MOSTraining was recognized for her outstanding training efforts on behalf of The Chamber's small business and technology training programs.

Bryan Winter of Lewis-Smyth-Winter and **Ryan deGraffenried III**, of deGraffenried & Associates, were recognized for the effective leadership of The Chamber's public affairs council during the past year.

Mike Case of The Westervelt Company and **Tim Harrison** of Harrison Construction were honored for their leadership and development of a regional career-technical high school concept.

Eric Larmore of Nucor Steel and **Shane Daugherty** of the City of Tuscaloosa were recognized for their efforts in environmental quality and The Chamber's highly successful E-Cycling Day.

State Representatives **Alan Harper** and **Chris England** were cited for their efforts to bring a high level of awareness and community attention to the Bryce Hospital issue.

Don Staley, Executive Director of the Tuscaloosa Sports Foundation, was honored for his exceptional leadership of the foundation and the high successful Super Six Championship project.

The Chamber begins its 110th year of continuous operations in Tuscaloosa County, currently representing almost 1,100 businesses, industrial, professional and institutional members. The official transition to the 2010 leadership team was made at the annual celebration. Claude Edwards, President of Bryant Bank, will serve as the 2010 Chairman of The Chamber.

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State Funds Hiring of Family Assistance Recipients

The Alabama Dept of Human Resources and the Alabama Career Centers are collaborating to provide time-limited, paid employment to Family Assistance recipients to help them become self-supporting. Employers will be reimbursed for 100% of the employee's gross wages, including mandatory withholdings. An informational meeting will be held on Feb 3 at 10am at Tuscaloosa Co DHR, located at 3716 12th Ave E, behind OK Tire Store on McFarland Blvd. For more info, please contact Dorothy Carson at 554.1137, Robert Terling at 554.1170 or Judy Young at 554.1101.

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Free Job Training for Area Residents

The Construction Education Foundation of Alabama (CEFA) is the construction industry's trade training organization. CEFA has access to grant funds that are available to provide training to people who are unemployed. CEFA has a class for people who want to learn the electrical trade starting the week of Mar 1. The class will be held at Shelton State two nights/week for 20 weeks.

CEFA hopes to help put people in our community back to work. They

will contact and recruit any employee that has been laid off and encourage them to enter the training, regardless if the employee has worked in construction or not. Because when the economy turns around, the construction industry will not have enough skilled/trained workers to meet industry demand. For more info, contact Byron McCain at 205.956.0146 or bymccain@bellsouth.net.

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Kentuck Announces a la cARTe Series

The Kentuck Museum Association recently announced a new addition to its year-round programming. In addition to Art Night, the first Thurs of each month, Kentuck monthly programming will now include an "a la cARTe series" the third Sat of each month.

Kentuck's a la cARTe series will focus on engaging the community and perpetuating the arts with art and conversation, artist demonstrations, Kentuck for Kids activities and regional cuisine. Designed to promote local businesses and Alabama food, the catering will be provided by Kentuck partnerships with local restaurants and local farms. Regional artists and art professionals will provide art talks and demonstrations while Kentuck for Kids will feature a kid's art activity in the Courtyard. A la cARTe participants will enjoy a 10% discount on Gallery Shop items. The suggested donation of \$10 will go toward Kentuck Artists Studio renovations.

The next a la cARTe event is Feb 20 from noon to 2 pm. It will feature a Kentuck Community Mosaic Project, Kentuck for Kids mosaic activity, and catering by Marys Cakes & Pastries. Participants are encouraged to bring item(s) from home (glass, ceramics, metal, plastics) to adorn the Kentuck mosaic.

More info is available at www.kentuck.org. For more info contact Kentuck at 758.1257.

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Alabama AG Credit Holds Ribbon Cutting



Alabama AG Credit held a Cutting on Jan 21 at their at 2618 8th Street, Ste downtown Tuscaloosa. The non-profit assoc that financ land, operational loans equipment loans. For mo call 205.247.4475 or <http://www.alabamaagcre>

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Members in Motion

Wine Tasting at Carpe Vino

Grab a buddy or a date and enjoy a nice, relaxing night of wine tasting at Carpe Vino. Cost is \$5 and you get \$5 off any bottle in the store. Tasting is from 6-8:30pm each Thurs and Fri night. Call 205.409.4738 for details.

Doing What Matters for Tuscaloosa's Children Forum to Come

The 4th annual Doing What Matters for Tuscaloosa's Children conference will be held on Feb 1 from 8:30am-3:30pm at the Bryant Conference Center. It will focus on the needs of children and families in our area. State speakers are set for the morning session with 8 break-out groups in the afternoon. Registration is \$15 and is available online at <http://training.ccs.ua.edu/children> or by calling 348.3000.

Jack Warner Art Institute Classes Begin

Study with artists surrounded by the artwork of great American masters. Classes hosted by the Westervelt Warner Museum of American Art begin in Feb. Visit www.warnermuseum.org for details. All classes, except Oil Painting, will be held in the Impressionist Gallery. Classes will be limited to 10 students. Register by calling Kathie at 343.4543 or kthurman@warnermuseum.org.

UA's ACCESS Hosts Open House

The UA's ACCESS Distance Learning Support Center is hosting an open house for Alabama legislators, West Alabama social and civic leaders, and members of the media, on Tues, Feb 2, from 8am-10 am in Martha Parham West Hall on UA's campus. Participants will have the opportunity to experience a live video conference with high school students and teachers in their classrooms. The demo will show how ACCESS is linking classrooms throughout Alabama to expand student learning opportunities. Now students in ACCESS-enabled schools can be connected with classes and subject areas that are not available in their home high schools. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and ACCESS technology and equipment will be showcased. Register online at <http://ACCESS.ua.edu/openhouse> or via phone at 348.2647 or 1.866.591.9998. More info is available at <http://ACCESS.ua.edu>.

Epiphany Café Hosts Fritz Wine Dinner

Epiphany Café will host a Wine Dinner with Clay Fritz, winemaker of Fritz Winery on Feb 4 at 7pm. Cost is \$79/person for five courses expertly paired with Fritz wines. Call 344.5583 to make a reservation or visit www.epiphanyfinedining.com. The restaurant is located at 519 Greensboro Ave in Tuscaloosa and also offers nightly specials.

Dale Carnegie Announces Feb Classes

Two Dale Carnegie courses will be held in B'ham in Feb, one on High-Impact Presentations (Feb 18) and one on Effective Communications & Human Relations (Feb 24). Visit www.birmingham.dalecarnegie.com to learn more.

Smile Design Center Relocates

Drs. Chris Taylor and Earl Hydrick announce the relocation of their dental office-The Smile Design Center, now located at 300 Towncenter Blvd. The new office features great architecture and an "art gallery" atmosphere. An adult "quiet zone" is designed for adults to relax and decompress while the "family" lounge area is a "family friendly" zone. The two areas separated by a partition which comes together at the beverage bar. The Smile Design Center is a family dental practice with an emphasis on preventive and cosmetic dentistry using metal free fillings and crowns and offering a wide range of services. For more info, call 750.8008.

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Welcome, New Members!

The following joined since Dec 1, 2009.

Anderson Accounting
 Regency Retirement Villlage
 Capitol park Antiques, Interiors & Gardens
 Alabama Book Store, Inc.
 Midtown Village
 Ellie Crimson
 JM Wireless
 Alabama AG Credit
 Kinnucan's
 D Groupe
 Lamar Advertising
 The Booth
 Colonial Life
 CATS EMS/Safety

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Diamond Level Sponsors

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