

Donny Jones

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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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Great Season for Mixers

Bank of Tuscaloosa, Rosen Harwood and Jamison, Money & Farmer will host our next "Chamber Connects" mixer on Thurs, Sept 17 from 5-7pm. Make sure to save the date for this event, where we'll check out the beautiful new building on the riverfront. More details to come. All employees of Chamber member businesses are invited as well as prospective members.

Bryant Bank hosted our August mixer at the Paul W Bryant Museum where a real crowd enjoyed BBQ and tailgating for the upcoming Bama football season, despite stormy weather that evening. This annual event has become a favorite!



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2009 International Literacy Day Events Planned Locally

In recognition of the annual International Literacy Day, The Literacy Council of West Alabama and The Chamber will host the following events, all featuring Dr. Margaret Doughty, President and CEO of Literacy Powerline, one of the nation's foremost authorities on literacy.



A **"strategic thinking" forum** will be held on the afternoon of Tues, Sept 8 from 2-4pm at Hilton Garden Inn for literacy service providers, educational agencies and employers to learn how to strategically infuse literacy into planning and programs.

A **literacy grant workshop** will be held on the morning of Wed, Sept 9 at Hotel Capstone from 9-11am to assist in identifying and securing grant dollars for literacy programs.

And the **2nd Annual International Literacy Day Luncheon & 1st Annual Awards program** will take place on Wed, Sept 9 at Hotel Capstone from 11:30-1:30pm for \$20/person. (Forum and workshop are free.) Awards will be given to involved students, tutors, organizations and leaders.

Register for these events by calling 391.0559 or visit the calendar at www.tuscaloosachamber.com to sign up online.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared Sept as International Literacy Month, with kick-off events scheduled for Tues, Sept 8, International Literacy Day. This offers an opportunity for literacy organizations to raise awareness about the issue of adult literacy in our own communities by connecting local events with national and international ones.

Here in West Alabama, adults lack the literacy skills they need to get better jobs, help their children with homework, or participate fully in our community. The Literacy Council of West Alabama brings together and promotes the existing literacy resources in the area. To learn more visit www.tuscaloosachamber.com/literacy. Dial 211 to volunteer

or get services.

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Fall Business Survival Training Classes Begin

Take advantage of our fall line-up of professional training classes, which were developed to meet your needs. Call 391.0554 or email tracy@tuscaloosachamber.com to register. You may also register online by visiting our website homepage, www.tuscaloosachamber.com and clicking on that icon. Non-members are welcome at a different cost.



Microsoft Office Tips & Tricks (2003 and 2007)

Sept 1 from 7:30am-9:30am at West Alabama Bank, Northport

Price: \$20/person

Trainer: Donna Gilliland, MOSTraining, Inc

Topics covered include Microsoft Outlook and Excel

Access Beginner Part I Hands-On

Sept 1 from 12:30pm-4:30pm in the Chamber Morrow Room

Price: \$89/person

Trainer: Donna Gilliland, MOSTraining, Inc.

Learning Objective: Navigate the Access 2003 interface and create basic databases, queries, and reports

Access Beginner Part II Hands-On

Oct 6 from 12:30pm-4:30pm in the Chamber Morrow Room

Cost: \$89/person

Trainer: Donna Gilliland, MOSTraining, Inc

Dale Carnegie: Customer Service - Attitudes for Service

Sept 15 from 11am-1pm at Cypress Inn (Lunch Series)

Price: \$30/Member & \$50/Non-member

Trainer: Nancy Covert, Dale Carnegie Training

Participants will learn to: Assess Customer Service Attitudes to set goals for improvement; Incorporate the Four Drivers of Customer Service to build customer relationships; Apply Attitudes Control Principles to manage their attitudes; Use conversational language to keep the interaction low pressure.

Change Is Coming! Chamber 2009 Employment Law Update

Sept 22 from 7:30am-11am at West Alabama Bank

Price: \$49/Member & \$69/Non-member

Trainer: Carol Armstrong, Bruce Henderson, & Tom Scroggins

Top Labor and Employment Attorneys with years of combined experience will provide tools and resources to meet and comply with federal and state regulatory and legislative changes. Human Resources Administrators and Practitioners will get a head start to get smart on

upcoming changes.

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Adopt-A-School Tournaments Coming Soon

Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa AAS Golf Tournament is Sept 24

Mark your calendars for the Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt-A-School Golf Tournament on Thurs, Sept 24. The four-man scramble will be at Tuscaloosa Country Club. Both 8am and 1pm shotgun starts are available and registration fees include green fees, cart and lunch. Proceeds benefit every public school in our community and the event provides critical funding for the coordination and administration of the Adopt-A-School program for the Tuscaloosa City and County School Systems. Registration and sponsorship forms are available at www.tuscaloosachamber.com/aas. For more info, call 391.0563 or email loo@tuscaloosachamber.com.



Save the Date: Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa AAS Tennis Tournament is Oct 6

On Oct 6, area tennis players will compete in a doubles tournament (2.5, 3.0, 3.5, and 4.0+ divisions) at Indian Hills Country Club and proceeds will benefit the Adopt-A-School Program. Cost is \$45/player and all schools with players representing them are eligible to win cash prizes. Registration and sponsorship forms are available at www.tuscaloosachamber.com/aas.

(Registration forms are also available at the Club.) For more info, call 391.0563 or email loo@tuscaloosachamber.com.

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State of the Community Breakfast Coming Soon

The 2009 State of the Community Breakfast will be presented by Capstone Bank and The Prince-Glover Law Group on Tues, Sept 29 from 7:30-8:30am at Hotel Capstone. Take in this annual report on the progress of our area and status of our local government. There's no cost to attend, but reservations are required. Call 391.0559 or email stacey@tuscaloosachamber.com.

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E-Cycling Day Set



The 3rd Annual E-Cycling Day will be held Sept 29-30 in the back parking lot of University Mall. The first day is a pre-event for Chamber members only. Drop off times

are 9am-5:30pm both days.

The last event was a huge success with over 880 participants and over 70 volunteers! E-Cycling Day is sponsored by The Chamber and the Cities of Tuscaloosa and Northport. Visit our homepage at www.tuscaloosachamber.com and click on that icon (toward the bottom) for more details, including approved items.

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Different Adopt-A-School Breakfast Kicks Off School Year

The annual Adopt-A-School Breakfast & Workshop was held on July 30 at Shelton State Community College's Martin Campus. A networking breakfast was held in the atrium and announcements and awards were presented afterwards in the Bean-Brown Theatre where the Taylorville Primary School Choir also performed.



Decade of Excellence Awards were given to Geological Survey of Alabama-Westlawn Middle School and ZF Lemforder. Twenty Years of Excellence Awards were given to Bryce Hospital-Central High School, Tuscaloosa Music Club-Buhl Elementary School, Tuscaloosa County Medical Society Alliance-Alberta Elementary School and Black Warrior Methane-Brookwood Elementary School.

In lieu of a keynote speaker, a guided tour of Shelton's Technical career programs was given. Workshops for coordinators followed.

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2009 Women In Business Council Conference Held; Awards Given

The 4th Annual Women in Business Council Empowerment Conference and Awards Luncheon was held on Aug 25 at the University Church of Christ. The focus was "Moving Forward" and the conference included workshop leaders discussing subjects such as: health and wellness, expressing yourself appropriately in the workplace, employment law changes, "executive mommy", dressing for success and planning your family's future today.

Awards were given at the annual luncheon following the workshops.

Motivational speaker was Coach Sarah Patterson, UA Women's Gymnastics Coach, who spoke about her community involvement and Breast Cancer crusade.



Jennifer Wilson (far right), a sales manager for Express Employment Professionals, received the Trailblazer Award for starting a mentoring program for high school girls. Her idea is to encourage ninth-grade girls to work for their goals and provide mentoring for them through high school. The program will start this year at Tuscaloosa County High School. UA students and its honor students will be mentors and will meet regularly with the high school students. Wilson would like to see the program eventually be used in all of Tuscaloosa County's schools.

Latrelle Bell (second from left), director of the Hospice of West Alabama, received the council's Defining Woman of the Year Award. Bell, a social worker, started as a home-care hospice worker 13 years ago. Two years ago, she became the Hospice of West Alabama's director. Her goal is to assure quality end-of-life care for the dying and comfort for their families and to expand the Hospice of West Alabama's facility.

Carrie Williams (not pictured) received the council's Bright Future Award. She started working as an account representative for Key Staff Services two years ago and was recently promoted to sales manager. Williams works hard to be involved in the community—she was an ambassador for The Chamber and recently graduated from the Leadership Tuscaloosa program two weeks after giving birth to her son.

Kathryn Hornsby (far left), a managing director of Citigroup Global Transaction Services and head of its client technology services, received the Achievement Award for her high level of dedication to those she serves through her business and for her mentoring of students as an executive in residence at the UA Culverhouse College of Commerce. She's also an adviser to the Women's Initiative Program.

Congrats, ladies!

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Literacy Council Kudos



The Literacy Council of West Alabama chairman Johnnie Aycok recently announced that the Council has been awarded a \$250,000 appropriation from Congress, which should be received in

2010. The Council plans to use the funds to hire staff and set up an office.

Also, the UA Alumni magazine recently included an article about LITE (Literacy Is The Edge student organization). It caught the attention of the Alabama Higher Education Partnership, an association of 14 public Alabama state universities. LITE leader, Dr. Bruce Berger, was asked to present at HEPs Leadership Conference in Sandestin this month to share the LITE story and explain how other universities in the state can start similar LITE campaigns on campus. Audience included administrators from universities and student leaders. It was a wonderful platform for stimulating involvement on a much larger scale across universities.

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UA Students Begin Voting on "Best" Businesses; Posters Available

The UA Student Government Association, in partnership with the *Crimson White* and The Chamber, is conducting 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 start to vote online Sept 1 (through 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 November. 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.

Encourage your student patrons to vote online, Sept 1 through Oct, at

www.sga.ua.edu or www.cw.ua.edu. Posters are now available promoting this. Call 348.2742 or drop by the UA SGA office (231 Ferguson Center) to pick one up. For more info, contact Meg McCrummen at megmccrummen@gmail.com.

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School Calendars Feature Technical Careers

Wall calendars featuring technical career info are available at The Chamber office (2200 University Blvd in downtown Tuscaloosa, across from City Hall).

These were produced to stimulate interest in and educate middle school students and their parents about technical career opportunities available regionally.

These picture area middle school students in different technical career environments along with career details including certificates offered and salary ranges. These are currently being distributed to middle school students in the Tuscaloosa City & County School systems. The days in the calendar contain holidays, etc. observed by them, making them even more valuable.

If you'd like to pick up some, call 391.0561 or email robin@tuscaloosachamber.com and mention how many you'll need. We're glad to supply you with them.

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Alabama Child Labor Law Has Changed

Governor Bob Riley recently signed into law House Bill 144. The new act reforms Alabama child labor enforcement standards, transferring the permitting process from the public school system to the Department of Labor. In addition, new record keeping requirements and administrative penalties have been added.

Under the new system, work permits are no longer required for each minor employed. In its place, employers are required to obtain a Child Labor Certificate in order to employ minors. A Class I Certificate is required if employing 14 or 15 year olds and a Class II Certificate is required if employing 16 or 17 year olds. Each location of a business employing minors must obtain the proper certificate(s) in order to employ minors. The cost of the Child Labor Certificates are \$15 each and shall be renewed annually.



A Child Labor Law poster (2009 version or later) is free of charge and required to be on display in every location employing minors under the

age of 19. For this and more info, visit www.labor.alabama.gov.

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Ready to Work Program Makes Positive Impact

Ask any company the secret to its success and you'll probably hear "our workers." Phifer, Inc., a Tuscaloosa-based metal and synthetic wire screen manufacturer, partners with nearby Shelton State Community College in a program that helps ensure the company will have access to the most qualified, committed employees.

"We sat down with Shelton State and told them what we wanted as an employer," said Russell DuBose, Phifer's HR manager. The result was an applicant pre-screening and selection process and subsequent referral to the Ready to Work training program.

Initial screening of applicants based on company specific criteria is handled by the Tuscaloosa Career Center. From this pool, the company selects a smaller group of individuals inviting them to participate in the Ready to Work program offered by Shelton State. Although not guaranteed a job, these individuals know they have a better than average shot at getting hired when the company has openings.

The free, 5-week Ready to Work program, funded by the Alabama Community College System and approved by the State Workforce Planning Council, provides entry-level skills to adults with limited education and employment experience. Attendance and punctuality are strictly monitored and the participants are assessed in soft skills, such as workplace behavior and problem solving. Successful completers also earn a WorkKeys credential and an Alabama Certified Worker Certificate.

This pre-employment screening and invitation process pays big dividends for the company, notes DuBose, adding that individuals who have completed the Ready to Work program "make a better applicant." In the two years since it began utilizing this hiring process, DuBose said, the company has enjoyed a 90% retention rate and very low turnover – both of which help with the bottom line.

According to DuBose, all of the jobs at Phifer have been profiled and require a WorkKeys credential. The added benefit of assessing and documenting an individual's interpersonal skills is a bonus. "Any way to measure workplace behavior," DuBose said, "is a plus for the company. 92% of the employees fail due to workplace behavior and only 8% because of skills."

George Pratt, Shelton State's assistant director of workforce development, agrees with DuBose's assessment. Those who have completed the Ready to Work program are "better hires because they have documented, metric-measured abilities; they have committed to the program; and they have had a chance to interface with the

potential employer so the learning curve of how the industry functions is reduced.”

Pratt said Phifer is pleased with this screening and referral process and plans to use it almost exclusively to identify new hires. “Phifer and Shelton State’s partnership is an excellent example of a system approach to workforce development,” said Dr. Matthew Hughes, who serves as the director for both the Governor’s Office of Workforce Development and the Workforce Development Division of the Department of Postsecondary Education. “I hope other industries will take advantage of the partnering opportunities offered in our system.”

The Office of Workforce Development was created by Governor Bob Riley for the purpose of providing Alabama with a fully integrated, efficient and effective workforce development system that is responsive to current and future needs of job-seekers and employers.

For more info, contact Linda Bryan at 334.353.1409 or lbryan@dpe.edu.

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Bank of Tuscaloosa Plaza Opens



Guests and employees attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Tuscaloosa’s premier office building, the Bank of Tuscaloosa Plaza on Aug 13. The four-story, \$30 million building located at 2200 Jack Warner Pkwy is headquarters for four businesses — the Bank of Tuscaloosa, Hunt Refining Co, JamisonMoneyFarmer PC and Rosen Harwood PA.

Bank of Tuscaloosa president Mark Sullivan said the four businesses have two things in common: roots in Tuscaloosa and a need for a bigger headquarters.

Before the building's construction, which started a couple of years ago, the site was covered with woods and brush, and, underground, the remains of an old car lot and junkyard. The site is now beautifully landscaped, blending into the Riverwalk.

Sullivan recognized the architects at Giattina Aycock in Birmingham and crews from Harrison Construction for their outstanding work on the structure.

Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox noted that the city and the business community have come together to revitalize the riverfront and more enhancements to the city's riverfront are to come. Public projects include eventually extending the Riverwalk for 13 miles to the north and south of the river, plus, building a 7,100-seat amphitheater, new farmers market and office for the Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau. More private development in the form of restaurants, hotels, condos and offices is expected to follow.

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Welcome, New Members!

The following joined from July 1 to date.

V & W Supply Co
The Retreat at Lake Tamaha
High Five Advertising, LLC
Touchdown Alabama Magazine
Discrete Wireless
West Alabama Urology Assoc
Brown's Corner Dueling Piano Bar & Grill
Miss Priss Boutique
DNA Drug Test Center of AL, LLC
Tuscaloosa Pediatric Dentistry
Toulmin Cabinetry, Inc
Woodland Forrest Country Club
United American Assurance
Ramos Maintenance Service, Inc
Kuk's Dog Days
Tuscaloosa Elementary Magnet School
Tuscaloosa Middle Magnet School
Charter Business
The Salon at NorthRiver
The Therapeutic Professional Group
D and H Food Group
University General Dentistry
Salon 1201

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