

The Chamber Perspectives online

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Shop Smart,
Shop Tuscaloosa
County

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Shop Smart, Shop Tuscaloosa County During Sales Tax Holiday - Retail Workshop Planned

Thanks to the partnership between the City of Tuscaloosa, City of Northport, Tuscaloosa County Commission and The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, local consumers and families will be able to enjoy the benefits of a 'sales tax holiday', August 4th - 6th in Tuscaloosa County.

Under legislation passed during the recent Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature and signed by Governor Riley, the first weekend in August will be a 'sales tax holiday' in Alabama. The legislation also allowed local municipalities and county governments to exercise a local option thus exempting specified items from local sales taxes.

The 'sales tax holiday' provides that state sales tax, along with local sales taxes because of our local governing bodies exercising the local option, will not be collected on specific items purchased for back-to-school purchases, including clothing, computer items, school supplies, instructional materials and other related consumer goods.

According to Chamber President, Johnnie Aycok, "the sales tax holiday is a unique opportunity and based on similar experiences in other states, we are looking for an increase in retail sales overall. The sales tax holiday could and should be an excellent shopping weekend for consumers and families as well as local retailers."

"However, the legislation does create some confusion and is somewhat complicated, especially for the retailers," he pointed out. "This is why we are working in partnership with the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama Department of Revenue and other local governing bodies to help educate the retailers in Tuscaloosa County."

The **"Sales Tax Holiday" Seminar** will be held on Wednesday morning, **July 26th** at 10:00 AM until 12 Noon at the Tuscaloosa Fire Training Center, located in front of Bruno's at 2015 McFarland Blvd. East. There is no cost to attend, and representatives of the Alabama Department of Revenue and local revenue departments will be on-hand to assist retailers.

In addition, The Chamber, in partnership with the Tuscaloosa Ad Federation, Clear Channel Radio, WVUA Channel 7, The Tuscaloosa News, Citadel Broadcasting and other area media, will be running a "Shop Smart, Shop Tuscaloosa County" campaign to support the 'sales tax holiday' as well as to enhance the



Membership Discounts

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Don't know your username and password, just give us a call at 758-7588!

competitiveness of the Tuscaloosa County regional marketplace.

Finally, for information about various details and exemptions during the 'sales tax holiday', go to The Chamber's website at <http://www.tuscaloosachamber.com/tuscaloosa/salestaxholiday.php>

"Our local governments have made pro-business decision - consumers and families are getting ready to enjoy the benefits - and retailers must now fully engage and prepare for an excellent opportunity to raise the level of our market's competitiveness," stated Aycok. "It's important for retailers to get ready by educating themselves and implementing creative, bold promotional sales activities for all of West Alabama."

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Economic Growth Is Seen Everywhere In Tuscaloosa County



Spring 2006 has slipped into history, and Summer 2006 has fully arrived. But there's nothing hazy or lazy about the days in Tuscaloosa County-not with all of the earth-moving, girder-raising, and shrub-planting that is occurring in nearly every part of the county.

The signs of a growing, developing economy abound.

In Downtown Tuscaloosa, old structures are coming down and land is being cleared for the massive new Federal building complex that promises to revitalize the heart of the city.

Huge earth-moving machines lumber across the expanse of land across from University Mall on McFarland Boulevard as site preparations for the Midtown Project proceed apace.



One major bank is putting the finishing touches on its new downtown headquarters, while a couple of other bank main offices move toward completion across the Black Warrior River.

A major condominium development on Veterans Memorial Parkway moves along rapidly, and soon schematics for two other large condominium developments downtown will jump off the drawing boards and take life in the form of backhoes and bulldozers.



Perhaps before the Summer 2006 is over, there will be visible evidence of a new Lowe's Home Center on Highway 82 in Northport.

These are just some of the projects underway in Tuscaloosa County-the ones that grab the headlines on the business news pages. But, throughout the area, small businesses are modernizing, re-modeling, growing.

And right in the middle of much of the activity is The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, the Voice of Business and a catalyst for change and growth.

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SCORE Orientation Is July 18th - We're Looking For Experienced Business Leaders



The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama is looking for experienced talent and business expertise to help and support a new generation of small business owners, entrepreneurs and future businesspeople.

Therefore, an orientation and reception for individuals interested in participating in SCORE will be held on Tuesday, July 18th at 4:15 PM at The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, located at 2200 University Boulevard in Downtown Tuscaloosa.

"A person's business experience, no matter at what level on the corporate and entrepreneurial ladder, can be of immense value to a new business or to someone considering going into business for the first time," said Chamber President Johnnie Aycock. "Through SCORE, seasoned business veterans can directly impact the start up, growth and success of a small business in our community."

"Our local SCORE chapter is an excellent source of counseling, support and assistance, but it's a well kept secret," stated Aycock. "We want to grow our SCORE chapter in Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama to expand its reach."

SCORE, which stands for the Service Corps of Retired Executives, is a U. S. Small Business Administration supported initiative, housed at The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama. "Everyday, across America, thousands of SCORE expert volunteers provide high-quality, confidential advice and counseling to small business owners, entrepreneurs and 'wanna be' businesspeople," according to Aycock, "and we have a successful SCORE chapter right here at home."

"However, we need to build our SCORE chapter and recruit additional experienced business talent and volunteers so we can expand our outreach and assistance," said Aycock. "We are currently seeking volunteers that are willing to share their expertise with individuals looking to start or grow their businesses."



You have achieved business success. Here's your chance to give back.

Join SCORE

SCORE counselors donate their time and talent to:

- Listen and mentor
- Help entrepreneurs build a profitable business
- Share knowledge and insights

To become a counselor call 1-800/634-0245 or visit www.score.org to find a SCORE office near you.

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An individual can be retired, semi-retired or still active in their business or profession. SCORE needs volunteers who have specialized knowledge in a variety of business areas and who are willing to provide confidential counseling and assistance. SCORE provides an orientation and training process for all volunteers to guide an individual through the counseling program.

"The Tuscaloosa-based SCORE chapter is looking for experienced volunteers that want to share their real-world expertise with entrepreneurs that need your help," said SCORE Chapter President, Don Townsend. "SCORE counselors take part in one-to-one mentoring and team counseling. The assignments are varied and challenging and can include a broad range of business issues and needs."

"Community service takes many forms," said Townsend. "I retired from a company after 36 years in various management positions. A friend suggested SCORE as an active business related service entity which offered a lot of challenges and as an opportunity to stay close to business while providing some personal fulfillment. I've now been a SCORE volunteer for over eight years and have enjoyed the satisfaction of contributing to the success of others."

Known as "counselors to America's small businesses," SCORE is a non-profit, volunteer organization with more than 10,500 working and retired business professionals in chapters across the country. As a resource partner of the U. S. Small Business Administration, SCORE annually counsels more than 350,000 small business people and entrepreneurs.

The local SCORE chapter receives support from SBA and the national SCORE organization. At the local level, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama provides the chapter with help and support for day to day operations, including facilities for monthly meetings and client sessions and referrals of potential clients seeking business counseling.

For anyone interested in getting involved in SCORE or wanting more information,

call The Chamber at 758.7588 or 553.0957, or visit online at www.score.org/volunteer.html or attend the SCORE orientation session at The Chamber on July 18th at 4:15 PM.

Inquire today for a challenging and rewarding tomorrow through SCORE.

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"Save the Date....Thursday, September 28th"



For the sixteenth consecutive year, golfers and tennis players will rally this fall in support of the Adopt-A-School Program. Honorary Chairpersons Sarah and David Patterson invite you to mark your calendars and plan to participate in the Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt-A-School Golf and Tennis Tournaments, scheduled for Thursday, September 28th. Golfers will hit the greens at the Country Club of Tuscaloosa and tennis players will challenge each other at Indian Hills Country Club.

The tournament is the annual fundraising event to benefit the coordination and administration of the Adopt-A-School program. According to Loo Whitfield, director of Adopt-A-School for The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, "proceeds from the tournament benefit every public school in our community." The golf and tennis tournaments provide critical funding for the coordination and administration of the Adopt-A-School program for the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County School Systems. During the 2005-06 school year, through the coordination of the Adopt-A-School Program, eighty business and organizations adopted forty-eight public schools in Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County and worked to make a difference in the quality of education for students in our local public schools.

Joel Lake of Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., P.C. is chairing the golf tournament and Paula Fridley and Joyce Gurich will co-chair the tennis tournament. A variety of sponsorships are available for both tournaments. Registration forms will be mailed in early August. For more information, contact Loo Whitfield, loo@tuscaloosachamber.com or 391-0563.



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