



Upcoming Events

Nov 30
Women In Business Social
Event
Jan 23
Chamber of Commerce
Annual Celebration

(More Events)

Tuscaloosa Souvenirs



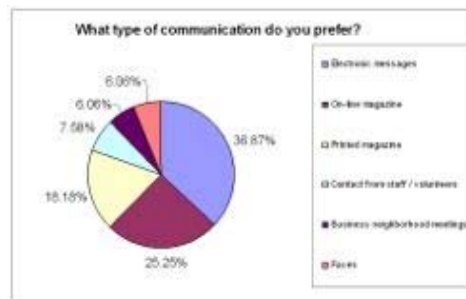
T-Town Cooler
\$5.00 Click to purchase

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Membership Survey Underscores Perceived Value Of The Chamber

A recent survey of members showed that investors look to The Chamber primarily because they think the organization works to develop the local economy, provides helpful networking opportunities, and gives them a chance to develop new business contacts. Members also feel The Chamber presents them ways to improve their business.



In terms of the benefits they receive from The Chamber, members rated the following four categories as the "most important" to them: networking opportunities, business referrals, business advocacy, and Leadership Tuscaloosa.

Members surveyed said they think it's important that The Chamber

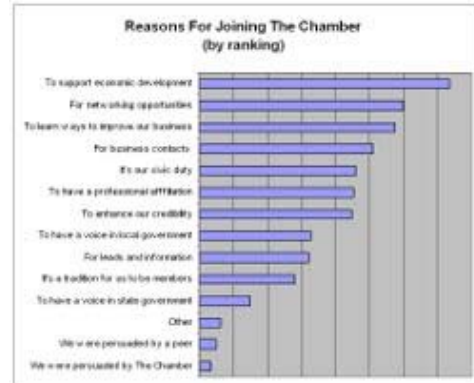
continue to work to enhance the livability of the Tuscaloosa County area, recognize and support small business, help existing businesses and industries grow, and market the Tuscaloosa County area to stimulate business growth.

One of the chief benefits of Chamber membership is the availability of good, reasonably priced seminars on business issues. In the survey, members' top four topics for potential seminars or workshops were advertising and promotion, customer service, leadership development, and human resources management.

The Chamber staff received high marks in the areas of professionalism and friendliness.

The most preferred method of communication between The Chamber and its members is weekly e-mails or "Chamber News." The Membership Directory is also considered a good source of information.

In terms of Chamber events that have proven to be most helpful, more respondents selected networking events after work hours. Business training seminars, The Chamber's Annual Celebration, and technology training seminars were also rated highly.



Fourteen percent of The Chamber's membership is in retail, nearly 12 percent in a non-profit association, about 11 percent in the service industry, and nine percent in real estate.

The survey also asked members if they know the name of the current Chairman of The Chamber. More than 71 percent answered in the affirmative.

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Attention Women In Business!

If you're a woman who likes to be pampered, who likes to shop, and/or likes her chocolate, you'll want to come to "A Sweet Escape" on Thursday, November 30, 5-7 p.m. at the Jemison Van de Graaff Mansion on Greensboro Avenue in downtown Tuscaloosa.

It's a one-stop fun night, sponsored by The Chamber's Women in Business Council.

Tera Lane, Epitome Salon by the River, Nancy Taylor Skin Therapy and Day Spa, and Tuscany Spa will all be present to pamper the women. Come find gift giving or gift receiving ideas. Sample some delicious chocolate.

There's no admission, but any and all tips for the pampering will go to the U. S. Marines "Toys for Tots" campaign, which is overseen by our local Salvation Army office.

But you must register by calling The Chamber at 391-0559.

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Tuscaloosa Council OK's Two Ordinances That Affect Businesses



Over the past few weeks, the Tuscaloosa City Council passed a couple of ordinances or changes to ordinances that affect some Tuscaloosa businesses.

Most recently, the Council passed an amendment to a city ordinance that allows restaurants that have an *on-premise liquor license* to permit smoking in their establishment between the hours

of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. the following day.

Earlier in the year, the Council approved an ordinance that requires all business owners to maintain their own handicap parking spaces. Installation and maintenance of these parking spaces must meet the standards

established by the Tuscaloosa Department of Transportation.

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Peoples Bank To Host First After-Hours Networking Event Of 2007

Although the details haven't been firmed up yet, one thing's for sure: the first networking event for Chamber members in 2007 will come early in the new year. January 9, in fact.

Peoples Bank & Trust Company, 31 McFarland Blvd. in Northport, will host the event, which will run from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Howard Garrison, Bank President, and Susan Hathorne, Vice President-Personal Banking, are working with The Chamber Ambassadors to plan an exciting opportunity for Chamber members to mix and mingle after a busy day at the workplace.

Much more about this event will be forthcoming, but mark January 9 on your calendar. It's the second Tuesday of January; the Ambassadors are planning a major after-hours networking event for each second Tuesday of 2007, with the exception of December.

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Chamber Membership Grows By 135 So Far In 2006

The Chamber welcomes four new members since the last edition of *Perspectives On-Line*. So far in 2006, 135 businesses and organizations have invested in West Alabama's Voice of Business.

The newest members are:

- Premier Self Storage
- Zero Commission Real Estate
- Walnut Hill Designs (caterer)
- ESPN Regional Television

It's always good business to do business with other Chamber members. And when you deal with these five businesses, welcome them to The Chamber.

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Capitol School And Principal Honored By Leading Education Journal

Tuscaloosa's Capitol School and its founder-principal Dr. Barbara Rountree recently received a high honor from *Edutopia* Magazine, the flagship publication of the George Lucas Education Foundation.

Specifically, Dr. Rountree, in the magazine's March 2006 issue, was named one of the Daring Dozen for 2006 in the field of education.

To quote the magazine: "Thousands of teachers, administrators, enterprising students, and other concerned thinkers are devoting themselves every day to finding creative ways to improve our schools." In selecting its Daring Dozen, the



publication also said, "...we hope that this year's movers and shakers represent everyone who puts a shoulder to education's wheel."

Dr. Rountree founded Capitol School in 1993 and now serves about 120 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Making good use of technology, the school has moved from large-group instruction to small-group, individualized teaching. Students at the school, beginning as early as age nine, use laptop computers for much of their class work.

Besides academic work and physical pursuits like tennis and swimming, high school students spend time with mentors in the workplace.



The school's philosophy can be summed up quite simply, Dr. Rountree said. "We don't ask, 'How smart is a child?' We ask 'How is a child smart?'"

Described by the magazine as a "relentless leader", Dr. Rountree said that the Capitol School is a private school with a public mission. She hopes the Capitol School will eventually become Alabama's first public charter

school.

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Interested In Advertising In Chamber's Membership Directory?

Chamber member-businesses are urged to consider advertising in The Chamber's 2007 Resource/Membership Directory. The publication is a good medium to promote your business among the 1,100 members and their associates, as well as to visitors and prospective new residents.

Village Profile will again publish the directory and resource guide, and Ginger Nunley is handling sales of advertising. You can reach her at The Chamber office, 758-7588.

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Chamber Ambassadors Plan To Grow Their Ranks; Call For Applications

In order to more effectively handle a growing workload, which includes 11 after-hours networking events in 2007 and a beefed-up member contact program, The Chamber Ambassadors want to grow their organization from its current level of 34 volunteers to as many as 50.

"Our Ambassadors are the linchpin group in The Chamber's efforts to serve its 1,100 members," said Vice Chairman Lin Moore of Pritchett-Moore Insurance. "They are the official hosts and hostesses at many Chamber events, they plan our major networking events, and they stay in contact with our members, helping them to maximize their investment in The Chamber."



Moore said the Ambassadors' ambitious business plan for 2007 makes it

necessary for The Chamber to recruit additional volunteers for the group. "We're looking for energetic and enthusiastic volunteers-primarily businessmen and businesswomen who are looking for a challenging community volunteer opportunity and a chance to establish relationships with others in the business community," he said.

Angie Askew of Morgan Keegan Company will chair the Ambassadors in 2007. "I've been involved in the Ambassadors for two years, and I've really enjoyed the experience. I've had a chance to meet a lot of new and different people and to help make The Chamber a stronger organization."

Moore said those people who think they might be interested in joining the Ambassadors should contact Dick Johnson at The Chamber. His telephone number is 391-0561. Or he can be contacted by e-mail at dick@tuscaloosachamber.com. "Dick will send the person an application to complete, and later on the applicant will be interviewed by an Ambassadors committee."

The upfront cost for an Ambassadorship is \$150, Moore said. He added that new Ambassadors will be enrolled in January and July 2007.

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2007 Ambassadors Leadership Team Formed; Busy Year In The Works



Pictured left to right are Angie Askew of Morgan Keegan, Lachelle Koon of Sheila's Gift Baskets and Gifts, Jay Welborn of Piggly Wiggly Stores, and Lynley Cooper of Pine Valley Retirement Community.

The leadership team for the 2007 Chamber Ambassadors has been announced by Lin Moore, Vice Chairman-Organizational Development.

"We have a team that is talented, committed to The Chamber, and really energized to help us add value to the investment nearly 1,100 businesses have made in our organization," Moore said. "Our members can look forward to a busy and productive year for the group of volunteers that just might be the most important group working for The Chamber."

Chairing the Ambassadors will be Angie Askew of Morgan Keegan Company. She will coordinate the efforts of three Vice Chairpersons: Lachelle Koon of Sheila's Gift Baskets and Gifts, Jay Welborn of Piggly Wiggly Stores, and Lynley Cooper of Pine Valley Retirement Community.

Askew said Koon will be in charge of external activities, namely after-hour events and special ceremonies like ribbon-cuttings and groundbreakings. Cooper, she said, will be responsible for internal activities such as Ambassadors recruiting and training. And Welborn, she added, will lead the Ambassadors efforts in contacting members and helping with the orientation of new members.

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The Chamber's Annual Celebration: A Must For Members In January

The "must" in the headline makes it sound like Chamber members are *required* to come to The Chamber's Annual Celebration on Tuesday, January 23.

Obviously, The Chamber can't require its members to come to what promises to be a memorable evening of food, fun and entertainment, but The Chamber's leadership can surely urge members to put this date on their January 2007 calendar and *make plans* to join the several hundred who are expected at the affair.

Many more details about the Annual Celebration will be coming out soon.

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Franklin Covey Seminar Brings 2006 Seminar Schedule To End



A great crowd learned about the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" during The Chamber's final seminar in its Lunch and Learn series for 2006.

The November 7 seminar drew more than 60 people. During the year, more than 700 Chamber members and associates attended 16 early morning workshops on technology and lunchtime seminars on various business issues.

To find out how you and your company can participate in our personalized training programs or on upcoming 2007 training seminars give us a call at 758-7588. Also, be sure to keep an eye out for future sessions on our calendar of events page at www.tuscaloosachamber.com.

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Business And Industry Can Benefit From Waste Exchange

Tuscaloosa County businesses, industries and institutions now have an Internet-based service that can help them dispose of non-regulatory materials or waste.

Called the WasteTrade Materials Exchange of Alabama, the service allows organizations to post information about their waste or surplus materials, search for materials that might be available from other firms, and get access to timely information on the nature, quality, and quantity of materials on the market.

Organizational identities remain confidential until the organizations contact each other directly to arrange sales and delivery. There is no charge for using the exchange.

The exchange can help regional manufacturers, businesses, schools, and hospitals reduce their waste disposal costs and improve their efficiency by accessing cheaper raw materials and supplies. Non-regulatory materials that were once land filled or incinerated can now be traded in a new virtual market. The concept is based on the idea that the waste or surplus of one organization may often be re-used by another organization.

For more information about the WasteTrade exchange, call 1 800 516-6358 or visit the website of the Waste Reduction and Technology Transfer Foundation website, www.wastetrade.org.

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Don't Forget Benefits Of U. S. Chamber Membership

If your business is a Chamber member and has 100 or fewer employees, your business is also a member of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, at no extra charge.

As such, there is a host of resources available to your company, from financial calculators to marketing plans. Access to the U. S. Chamber's Members Only section which has a Small Business Center that contains more than 10,000 pages of tips and tools devoted entirely to small businesses.

The U. S. Chamber keeps its members up-to-date on legislation that affects small business, and it offers members discounts on insurance through AIG Insurance, up to 20% savings on some shipments with FedEx, a 56% discount on less-than-truckload shipments in excess of 150 pounds, and free, one-time single job posting with Monster.com.

So take advantage of this partnership between our Chamber and the U. S. Chamber!

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Almon Associates: Proud Of Its Past; Excited About Its Future



It doesn't make any difference if you talk to the senior statesman of the company or to one of its new, young partners, the feelings are mutual.

Robert Almon, who went to work for the company in 1958 and later bought it, and Jason Walker, who now shares ownership in the company, both feel proud of Almon Associates' past and excited about its future.

Elvis Presley was wigglin' and jigglin' when Almon went to work for Alsey C. Parker and Son Engineering Company in 1958. In 1969, he bought the company from Parker's estate. In 2004, the current owners (James Brown, Russ Nevin, Phillip Guin, Mike Gray, and Jason Walker) purchased

the company from Almon. Now, 50 years from its founding, Almon Associates has more than 50 employees, including 26 civil engineers. Walker, who serves on The Chamber's Board of Directors, heads one of the company's five divisions.

Almon Associates has five divisions, a fact that underscores the company's diversification. The divisions are: civil and environmental engineering (site, industrial, institutional, and recreational development); water resources (which includes water supply, reservoirs, and wastewater); transportation (streets, roads and highway design); structural design (bridge design and industrial and architectural consulting), and surveying and mapping.

Diversified, also, is the client base of Almon Associates. That base is statewide in scope, and includes many local governmental entities, the Alabama Department of Transportation, and private sector clients, and industries.

"We've had steady, stable growth over the years," Almon said, "primarily because we've done quality work and developed long-term relationships with our clients."

The nature of the work has changed significantly, according to Walker. "It used to be that there may be one engineer for every four technicians," he said. "But with advances in field and office technology, we now have a 50-50 ratio of engineers versus support personnel." The company has also set up an office in the Birmingham area.

Both men see a continued bright future for Almon Associates. "Right now, the state's economy is good and so is our local economy," Almon said. "We expect our growth trend to continue because we have solid working relationships with our clients."



If, as they say, the past is prologue to the future, both Almon and Walker should be confident about the years ahead for Almon Associates.

In the photographs, Bob Almon and Jason Walker talk about a current project the company has underway. Later, Almon joined Russ Nevin, center, and Scott Dollar alongside an Almon Associates truck.

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