



A Publication of the Public Affairs Council of the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce

Upcoming Events

Oct 9
Chamber After Hours
Networking Event

Oct 15
Executive Committee

Oct 16
Paperless Office-It's Not
About The Paper!

Oct 16
Before Hours Networking
Event

Oct 18
Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa
Adopt-A-School Tennis
Tournament

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The Chamber's Washington Fly In Makes Impact

A community delegation led by 2007 Chamber Chairman, Jim Harrison, III and Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox, made an impact during The Chamber's 2007 Washington Fly In, September 25th and 26th. The 14-person delegation, representing a cross-section of the community, advocated a variety of issues with Alabama's U. S. Senators and Representatives.

Meetings were held with U. S. Senators Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, and Congressmen Spencer Bachus, Artur Davis, Bud Cramer, Robert Aderholt, Jo Bonner and professional staff members of the Alabama delegation.

The Chamber presented its 2007 Federal Public Policy agenda advocating business positions on pending legislation as well as promoting key community projects, including: passage of the Water Resources bill, which contains language and funding for the relocation of the Corps of Engineers' facilities; a HOPE VI housing revitalization project application from the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority for Rosedale Courts; extension of the airport and installation of radar at the Tuscaloosa Regional Airport; various highway projects, including the McWrights Ferry road extension, Jack Warner Parkway/M. L. King, Jr. Boulevard project, the North-South highway corridor from the Shoals to Mobile via West Alabama, and other highway projects; and continued riverfront and urban renewal funding.

"Our Chamber delegation received excellent response from members of the Alabama Delegation," reported Johnnie Aycok,



President of The Chamber. "Our elected leaders provided generous time for our community delegation and also provided opportunities to expand productive working relationships with their professional staff members. This was a very productive visit."

"We continue to appreciate the positive and effective working partnership our Chamber enjoys with our elected leaders in Washington and their staff of professionals," according to Aycock. "By building trust and relations, through efforts such as the Fly In, The Chamber is better able to represent our members' needs and interests as well as be an effective influence for community initiatives."



Members of the 2007 Washington Fly In delegation pause in front of the U. S. Capitol. Members of the team included: Jim Harrison, III, 2007 Chamber Chairman; Mayor Walt Maddox; Randy Skagen, Nucor Steel of Tuscaloosa; Mr. Lin Moore, Pritchett-Moore; Terry Waters, Alabama Power Company; Ryan deGraffenried III, deGraffenried & Associates; Dr. Frank Costanzo, Superintendent of Tuscaloosa County Schools; Willie J. Fort, Tuscaloosa Housing Authority; Fitzgerald Washington, Buffalo Rock/Pepsi; John Fisher and Bryan Winter, Adcox-Lewis-Smyth-Winter; Eric Larmore, Nucor Steel; and Johnnie Aycock and Donny Jones, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.



Chamber President Johnnie Aycock and Randy Skagen of Nucor Steel, who serves as The Chamber's Division Vice Chair of Governmental Affairs, visit with U. S. Senator Jeff Sessions.



Congressmen Robert Aderholt and Spencer Bachus visit during the Washington Fly In Congressional Dinner with members of The Chamber team.



U. S. Senator Richard Shelby makes a point during discussion of issues with members of The Chamber's Washington Fly In delegation.



Mayor Walt Maddox emphasizes key issues and project needs during the Washington Fly In. The local delegation visited in individual offices of Alabama's U. S. Senators and Congressmen.

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Thoughts from our Local Delegates

"The Washington Fly In was a wonderful opportunity to share our views on some of the critical issues and challenges facing the Tuscaloosa County School System and the Tuscaloosa County area.

It also afforded me the privilege to further develop and reinforce existing relationships with our elected officials and key business leaders representing The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.

The sincere support and concern for our community shown by our congressional delegation was both encouraging and uplifting."

**-Frank P. Costanzo, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Tuscaloosa County Schools**

"The Chamber takes great pride in our relationship with our Washington delegation and it is clear from our most recent Fly In that our senators and congressmen value our visits and the role that our Chamber plays in the economic development and quality of life in West Alabama."

**-Jim Harrison III
2007 Chairman, The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama**

"It was impressive to see the relationship that our Washington delegates have with each other. Party lines aside, the members genuinely turn to each another to see what can be done to help Alabama and to serve their constituents.

It was also encouraging to see how willing each of our senators and congressmen were to sit down and discuss key issues which affect the Tuscaloosa Metro and surrounding areas.

Many times we look at Washington and see what is wrong, but through The Chamber's Washington Fly in, we met men and women, both elected officials and staff members, who genuinely care about our community and work tirelessly to lead our country and support and represent Tuscaloosa.

Through trips like this, we are able to have a presence on Capital Hill. Our members were well represented by the local community leaders who participated in this important trip. Many times our members are not able to see the tremendous impact The Chamber has on the community. Through our constant communication in Washington and Montgomery and the relationships we have with elected officials, things happen in Tuscaloosa. And most importantly, lives are changed."

**-Donny Jones
Executive Vice President
The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama**

"The Washington trip was extremely successful because it provided

a united voice on major projects impacting the future of this community. From our efforts with HOPE VI to several infrastructure projects, we found a congressional delegation that was engaged and committed to moving Tuscaloosa forward. Another success story of our trip was the development of personal relationships with our Senators and Congressmen which are crucial in gaining and maintaining our positive momentum. The Chamber is to be commended in leading this effort and strengthening our relationships with key policy makers."

**-Walt Maddox
Mayor of the City of Tuscaloosa**

"From my perspective, the Washington Fly In was extremely beneficial. The tone for our mission was set immediately when we were greeted warmly by staff members at our first scheduled appointment. I was particularly impressed with how attentive our state representatives were at listening to our plans to improve infrastructure and community life for West Alabama. The response heard was very positive, which gave the local delegation a strong sense of accomplishment regarding the visit.

Kudos to Johnnie Aycock and The Chamber staff for pioneering such an effective initiative. Moving forward, the Tuscaloosa community and entire state will see the impact of these meetings."

**-Fitzgerald Washington
General Sales Manager, Buffalo Rock/Pepsi**

"The Chamber Fly In to Washington D.C. was an extraordinary experience and wonderful opportunity to visit with Alabama's impressive Congressional delegation in order to help promote the legislative goals and agenda vital to Tuscaloosa. Tuscaloosa is certainly blessed with intelligent, capable, and informed representation in Washington D.C. Senator Shelby and Senator Sessions, as well as Congressmen Spence Bachus, Artur Davis, Robert Aderholt, Jo Bonner, and Bud Cramer, warmly welcomed our delegation. Under the effective leadership of Mayor Maddox, Chamber President Johnnie Aycock, and the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority's Willie "Dino" Fort, our delegation was able to garner congressional support for legislation critical to Tuscaloosa's continued economic growth and prosperity for all of its citizens, including an empowering, multi-million-dollar federal grant for Tuscaloosa's Hope VI Housing Project. The highlight of my trip was having dinner with Senator Shelby and Congressman Davis wherein they both candidly shared their keen insights into the political, economic, and military challenges confronting America.

Based upon our trip and the leaders with whom we met, I remain confident that our Nation will meet these challenges. Thank you for a great trip!"

-Bryan Winter
Partner, Adcox-Lewis-Smyth-Winter

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