

The Chamber Perspectives online

The Best 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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Hotel Capstone & BCC to Host November Mixer

Our next "Chamber Connects" mixer will be hosted by both Hotel Capstone and Bryant Conference Center (BCC) at BCC on Tues, Nov 17 from 5-7pm. This annual event is always very nice, with live music and fabulous food. Plan now to come! All employees of Chamber member businesses are invited as well as prospective members.

Our Oct mixer was hosted by Eye Care Associates of Northport. Dr. Rose Betz and team showcased their state of the art facility as well as in-fashion glasses frames. The great food, music and company was enjoyed by all and many business connections were made.



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Chamber Elects Seventeen Directors

Following review and certification of ballots from the general membership by the Election Committee, seventeen business and civic leaders have been elected to the Board of Directors of The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.



Re-elected for their second three-year term were: **Howard Garrison**, Duckworth Morris Garrison; **Leon Kemp**, Northwest Supply Company; **Bill Lloyd**, Wilhagens; **Bill Lunsford**, Bill Lunsford Construction; **Tim Parker III**, Parker Towing Company; **Ron Price**, InStone Masonry; **Mixon Russ**, Alabama Gas; **Shane Spiller**, Spiller Associated

Furniture Stores; **Mark Sullivan**, Bank of Tuscaloosa; and **Fitzgerald Washington**, Buffalo Rock/Pepsi.

Elected to first terms were: **Brock Corder**, Builders Group of West Alabama; **Frank Constanzo**, Tuscaloosa County Schools; **Joyce Levey**, Tuscaloosa City Schools; **Gary Phillips**, Premier Service Company; **Gene Poole**, Hudson-Poole Jewelers; **Chuck Turner**, Tennis Jackson Electric; and **Bryan Winter**, Lewis Smyth Winter.

Directors officially take office on January 1, 2010 and will serve three-year terms. They will be presented at The Chamber's annual celebration event on January 14, 2010. The Chamber's Board of Directors has a total of 36 directors representing the membership of the organization.

Pictured are: Garrison, Russ and Lloyd, all re-elected.

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Other Recent Board Appointments



Tracy Waldrop's recent departure left a Board seat and an Executive Committee spot vacant. **Alice Maxwell** (right) of Advantage Realty now fills the Board position and **Pam Smith** (left) of Ellis Architects took on the Executive Committee role as Vice Chair of the Community Development Division.

Thanks for your service.

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Take Part in Fall Training

Our great fall line-up of professional training classes was developed based on input from members like you. Visit www.tuscaloosachamber.com and click the "Business Survival Training" icon to see the list with details and registration info or call 758.7588.

Coming Soon:

Oh No! They Want Me to Change on Nov 11 from 11am-1pm at Cypress Inn. Presenter is Caroline Fulmer of Coaching and Training Solutions, LLC. Cost is \$30/person, which includes a great lunch. During tough times, you must focus on the profitability of your business. This often means that employees must understand new company goals and learn to perform new tasks. Learn how to meet with employees to set goals, clarify your expectations, and make sure their performance is helping your bottom line results.

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Tuscaloosa Ranked in "Best Places to Launch"

The Nov 2009 issue of Fortune Small Business Magazine features a cover story on great towns to grow your business. FSB found the most business-friendly communities in America, the handful soldiering through the recession almost unscathed. With help from an economist and leading scholar of entrepreneurship, they sifted through such data as per capita income, hourly wages, workforce quality, crime rates, taxes and foreclosures. They produced Top 20 lists of Large, Medium and Small Cities. Tuscaloosa is ranked #11 in Top 20 Small Cities. And Huntsville is ranked #1 in Top 20 Medium Cities. Visit www.fsb.com to read more and [click here](#) to read the great article the Tuscaloosa News did on this.

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Levey Named Alabama's 2010 Superintendent of the Year

The School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) and Classworks, an SSA Premium Business Member, recently announced the selection of Dr. Joyce Levey as the Alabama/Classworks 2010 Superintendent of the Year. Levey was selected from nine finalists throughout the state. She will be honored at the Superintendent of the Year Luncheon in Jan during SSA's Legislative Conference in Montgomery. Classworks will provide Levey with a ring and travel expenses to the AASA National Conference on Education, to be held in February in Phoenix.

Nominations for the award were submitted from the nine districts of the School Superintendents of Alabama membership to a committee of educators and representatives of education.

Levey has served as Superintendent in the Tuscaloosa City School System since 2003 and is a torchbearer with regards to the inception of a Pre-K program in the City of Tuscaloosa. With the support of local government, she has initiated and implemented a successful Pre-K program within the district that enables children to begin their quest for knowledge at a much younger age.

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Seeking Nominations for Corporate Service Award

We're currently seeking nominations for the annual Robert C. Tanner Corporate Service Award, which is designed to honor volunteer, charitable, philanthropic, and civic service and leadership provided by a local business, industry, institution or firm.

Named in honor and memory for Robert C. (Bob) Tanner, founding member of the firm of Tanner & Guin, and a Past Chairman of The Chamber, the award is given to a corporate entity instead of an individual. It will be presented at The Chamber's annual meeting on January 14, 2010.

Nominations are encouraged and should be received at The Chamber no later than November 20th to be considered. To nominate, simply write or FAX on your corporate stationary outlining the nominee's volunteer service, charitable and philanthropic efforts, and corporate leadership that has contributed to a higher quality of life and better community. Nominations can be mailed to The Chamber at P. O. Box 20410, Tuscaloosa, AL 35402 or FAX 205.391.0565 – Attention: President.

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7th Annual State of the Community Breakfast Held

Along with sponsors Capstone Bank and The Prince-Glover Law Group, we presented the 7th annual "State of the Community" breakfast on Sept 29 at Hotel Capstone. The breakfast was open to the public at no cost.

"It is beneficial to have an annual report on the progress of our area and status of our local governments," emphasized Chamber President,

Johnnie Aycok. "Over the past few years, this program has been well-received and informative."

Participating in the annual event were: County Administrator Melvin Vines, speaking on behalf of Chairman of the Tuscaloosa County Commission; Mayor Walt Maddox of the City of Tuscaloosa; and Mayor Bobby Herndon of the City of Northport.

It was reported that the state of the community is strong. Most notably, there is a determined focus on tourism in the area and our strong manufacturing base will hopefully grow as a new strategy to recruit knowledge-based and aerospace industries was recently presented by Mayors Maddox and Herndon in Montgomery. It was also reported that there should be an awakening in our commercial retail market in the next 18 mos. We look forward to our bright future and thank our leaders for all they do.

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Third Recycling Day Largest Yet



The numbers are in. West Alabama's third E-Cycling event, held Sept 29-10, was by far the largest event yet. We collected 230,000 lbs/eight tractor trailers full of electronic waste, keeping an enormous amount of re-usable material from being wasted in local landfills. The re-usable plastics, metals and glass in the equipment collected will be safely reclaimed by the event processor, Surplus Supply of Rainbow City, Alabama.

The loads included 104 laptops, 1,764 PCs and over 2,000 monitors.

Eighty businesses dropped off equipment on Chamber-Member Pre-Day and 1023 vehicles came through the next day, Public Day. Residential visitors outnumbered people coming from businesses and non-profit organizations nearly 3 to 1.

We received great publicity through local media (thank you) and advertising and this event is one that greatly involves the general

public.

Thanks to the continued success of E-Cycling Day, organizers plan to have these on a regular basis. Effort is sponsored by The Chamber and the Cities of Tuscaloosa and Northport.

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AAS Tourneys Provide Program Funding

Thanks to title sponsor Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa and eagle sponsors Ellis Architects; Harrison Constructions Company; JVC America; Learning Experiences; McGiffert & Associates; NHS Management; Phifer Incorporated; Planit Solutions; and The UA, the 19th Annual Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt-A-School Benefit Golf Tournament was held on Sept 24 at Tuscaloosa Country Club. Thirty-one teams participated representing 26 area public schools.

The JVC America team had the lowest net score, thus claiming rights for their AAS partner, Arcadia Elem, to display the winning trophy until next year. On Oct 15, JVC presented Mary Jean Sutton, principal of Arcadia, the \$500 prize money and trophy on the Arcadia in-house TV program during morning announcements. "We plan to use the money to help purchase additional Promethian boards. We currently have them in all 1st-5th grade classes and we are purchasing them for the kindergarten and resource classes," said Sutton.

Prizes were also awarded to 11 other teams playing in the morning and afternoon flights: \$500 went to Northridge High for the most golfers representing a secondary school and Verner Elem received \$500 for the most golfers representing an elem school. Crestmont Elem School received \$500 prize money in a random drawing from all schools represented. Walker Elem received \$250 from the raffle drawing.

The 16th annual Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt-A-School Tennis Tournament was held on Oct 6 at Indian Hills Country Club. Thanks to title sponsor, Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa, and eagle sponsors, Ellis Architects, Inc; Harrison Construction Company; JVC America; Learning Experiences; McGiffert & Associates; NHS Management; Phifer Incorporated; Planit Solutions; and The UA, the tournament generated important funding for the AAS Program.

This has become a fall tradition for ladies in the West Alabama tennis community. Eighteen schools had players representing them, as 38 women's doubles teams played. Prizes were awarded to 1st place teams and runners up in 4 divisions. Prizes were provided by Hudson-Poole Fine Jewelers and Bow Regards.

Rock Quarry Middle School received a \$250 cash prize in a random drawing of all schools represented in the tournament.

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Congrats, 2009 Northport Citizen Winners



Since 1976, the citizens of Northport have come together to honor individuals that have gone the extra mile to make Northport a better place.

Chuck Gerdau, business manager and preservationist, was named the 2009 Northport Citizen of the Year at our annual awards ceremony held Oct 6.

Also, Mike Dogan, owner of Dogan Steel, was named Business Leader of the Year; John Sheffield, a teacher at Tuscaloosa County High School, was named Educator of the Year; Derrick Gardner, an officer with the Northport Police Department, was named Public Safety Leader of the Year; Bryant McGee, retired educator, was named Religious Leader of the Year; and Marcy Koontz was named Pioneer of the Year.

Congrats to all!

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Fun in the Sun Membership Initiative Held

Our sharp group of Chamber ambassadors was involved in a sales contest recently to boost our membership. We offered sellers cash incentives and other great prizes, plus one free trip to the beach!

We also provided prospects to the group and made it easier for them to sell with special promotions like free advertising, receptions, and free training classes.

Christy Vick won the drawing for the beach trip. The Ambassadors sold a total of 16 memberships: Jennifer Hamner, 2; Jonathan Hood, 2; Brendan Knowles, 1; Candy Lowery, 2; Sharon Sommerville, 5; Christy Vick, 3; Ben Welch, 1.

Thanks for your hard work! [Click here](#) fore more details. Call 758.7588 if interested in joining this dynamic group.

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Womens Division Enjoys Fall Luncheon



Our Womens Division held its annual fundraising luncheon on Oct 7 at Indian Hills Country Club. Keynote speaker was Rushan Smyth, founder of Peniel Pillows. The group socialized and celebrated its support of various non-profit organizations. Proceeds from the luncheon will benefit community groups.

Pictured is 2008 president Sherie Giles (left) and 2009 president Shana Milligan (right).

This is an active, growing organization that welcomes new members at any time during the year. Join this great group of women today by contacting Shana Milligan at smilligan@ches.ua.edu. Your ideas and assistance on committees, projects, fundraisers and social events are welcomed and needed!

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Pushing Health Care Reform

The US Chamber of Commerce is pushing health care reform and offering alternatives to the current approaches being considered and debated in the Congress. The US Chamber is pressing for pragmatic, market-based health care reform without resorting to government takeover of health care, employer mandates, and higher taxes.

"Businesses voluntarily pay more than \$500 billion every year for health insurance benefits for their employees, and they cannot afford the continuing cost increases," says Bruce Josten, Executive VP for Gov Affairs at the US Chamber. "None of the bills in Congress adequately address the cost issue."

The US Chamber supports a three-pronged approach to health care reform: improve medical outcomes and get costs under control; reform the insurance system; and implement health care purchasing and payment reform.

Within these three components, the US Chamber believes that: we must provide consumers with meaningful health care provider comparisons on quality measures and price; pay health care providers for results and outcomes, rather than for procedures performed; reform the medical liability system to reduce the cost of unnecessary and defensive medicine; provide employers and individuals with incentives for both disease prevention and wellness; reform long-term care; and allow individuals and small businesses to deduct the full cost of insurance expenses.

In addition, the US Chamber advocates to eliminate denial of coverage

based on pre-existing conditions or health status; guarantee that any individual or small business will be issued a policy that cannot be revoked; provide low income families with subsidies for health insurance; place reasonable restrictions on the differences that individuals and organizations pay for the same health plan; and obligate individuals to obtain health coverage.

Furthermore, the US Chamber recommends creating a national all-inclusive insurance exchange so that businesses can compare coverage options and choose the one that works best for their employees; and improve business pooling mechanisms so that more businesses can share risk and administrative expenses and bargain with providers for the best prices for effective care.

"The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama supports meaningful, common sense health care reform that will cure the problems that plague us now – not create new ones," says Chamber President Johnnie Aycock. "The business community shares the goal to reduce the costs of health care and to increase public access to quality health care services, but it is essential that employers are not negatively affected by reforms."

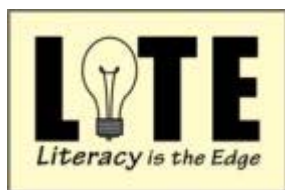
Your Chamber supports health care reform efforts: that will retain viable employer-sponsored health care; that will retain associated tax credits and deductions; that will not create a public plan option; that will not impose additional tax burdens or mandates on individuals or businesses; and that will not expect providers to pay for the plan.

The Chamber's leadership has communicated with members of Alabama's Congressional delegation on numerous times, including during the recent September Washington Fly In.

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Fight Illiteracy & Support LITE

In Alabama, one out of four people is functionally illiterate (FI), which means that more than one million residents can't read, write, or do simple mathematical computations. As the illiteracy rate in West Alabama is expected to increase over the next 25 years, the competitiveness and economic development of the state are in danger.



Companies in West Alabama can fight illiteracy in several ways, including supporting a new organization, Literacy is the Edge (LITE), a student advocacy group created at the UA in 2008. In partnership with the Literacy Council of West Alabama, LITE seeks to raise awareness of FI in Alabama and recruit volunteers to tutor children and adults. Last year, LITE recruited 204 UA student volunteers, 82 of whom are now teaching adults and children to learn to read in West Alabama.

FI has a significant impact on the workplace. In Alabama, 75% of small business owners report that many job applicants don't have basic reading, writing and math skills. Also, most applicants are not to speed with rapidly evolving technologies. A poorly educated workforce is not prepared to adapt and contribute to the success of local corporations in the current competitive global market.

On the other hand, a highly skilled and literate workforce offers significant economic benefits. Workers with high literacy capabilities are more productive, earn higher wages and have greater job security. Such workers also help companies reduce turnover, gain a competitive edge and remain profitable. Consequently, literacy has a positive impact on society by creating a strong economy and reducing poverty, homelessness, unemployment, crime, high school drop outs and other social problems associated with FI.

The Chamber supports LITE and encourages members to participate in this initiative by promoting LITE's efforts among employees and spouses. Tutors are desperately needed, and tutoring requires only 30-60 minutes a week.

Another way of helping LITE is to provide small donations/sponsorships that will be used to maintain the organization and its activities. The volunteer student organization relies on contributions to fund its programs.

LITE will be launching a new campaign in Tuscaloosa in Nov. If you'd like more info about LITE and tutoring, or are interested in supporting this cause, please call 205.348.7692 or email literacyistheedge@gmail.com.

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Artist Arrives to Paint Murals for New Federal Courthouse

Caleb O'Connor, the artist commissioned to paint 16 murals for Tuscaloosa's new federal courthouse, has moved into his newly renovated studio in Tuomey Hall on the UA campus. [Click here](#) to read more from the UAs *Dialog* Newsletter.

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Ten Ways to Make the Most of Your Lunch Break

...on the UA campus. With autumn weather upon us, it's an ideal time to break away from your workspace for a midday respite. [Click here](#) to read more from the UA's *Dialog* Newsletter.

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Capstone Bank's Indian Hills Branch Open



A ribbon cutting ceremony for Capstone Bank's convenient Indian Hills Branch was held on Sept 25. Address is 230 McFarland Circle No in Tuscaloosa, near Ruby Tuesdays. Phone there is 205.469.1100. To learn more, visit www.capstonebankal.com.

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American Family Care Celebrates Opening



A ribbon cutting ceremony was held for American Family Care as it officially opened on Oct 19. Attendees enjoyed food, door prizes and tours. Address is 9070 Hwy 69 South (next to Publix). An Open House was held the day before. Clinic is designed, equipped and staffed to provide comprehensive urgent care, family care, minor emergency treatment and occupational medicine. For more info, visit www.americanfamilycare.com.

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Sinclair Clinic Holds Ribbon Cutting



Sinclair Clinic of Chiropractic held a ribbon cutting ceremony Oct 27. Address is 1418-A Greensboro Ave in Tusc (corner of 15th & Greensboro). Please drop by to meet Ed & Sharon Sinclair. Visit www.sinclairchiro.com for more info.

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Welcome, New Members!

The following joined from Sept 1 to date.

(RE) Design, LLC
Oyster Bay Seafood & Steak
Spirits, Inc.
Eye Mart Express
Randy Rogers Companies
Sinclair Clinic of Chiropractic
Joe Stephens-Principal Financial
CBSi
Charter Business
Moore Family Health
Jan Pak/Sustainability & Lead Certification
Best Buy 1540
Bob Sykes BBQ Tannehill
First Capitol Title, Inc.
Ferguson Bath & Kitchen Gallery
Alacare Home Health & Hospice
A Alpha Plumbing & Heating, Inc.

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Diamond Level Sponsors



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