



Annual Meeting

The Chamber's 105th Annual Meeting

By Jodi Harrell

There was some button-popping pride over what was accomplished in 2004, and expressions of confidence and anticipation about what is going to be accomplished in 2005.

And a number of individuals and organizations were singled out for special recognition.

These were all a part of The Chamber's 105th Annual Meeting, held January 20 at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel.

Before an overflow crowd, the leadership gavel was passed from 2004 Chairman Jim Flemming to 2005 Chairman Howard Garrison, and each made comments about what happened and what's going to happen at The Chamber. (Refer to your copy of the January issue of Perspectives for a review of 2004 and for the 2005 Business Plan.)



Howard Garrison, Chamber Chairman for 2005, congratulates two top honorees at The Chamber's Annual Meeting on January 20. They are Jim Harrison III, middle, named Member of the Year, and Dan Meissner of Gulf States Paper Corp., which won the Robert C. Tanner Corporate Service Award.

Highlight of the meeting was recognition of people and organizations that played important roles in The Chamber's successful efforts of 2004.

Chief among the individuals honored was Jim Harrison III, named "Charles H. Land Member of the Year." Described as the Chamber member "whose diligence and unwavering commitment and efforts contributed

most to the advancement of the mission and objectives of The Chamber," Harrison "has given so very much of himself this past year. His genuine spirit and his model of civic responsibility have been an inspiration to many who have worked with him. He is a loyal Chamber member, who believes in bringing people together to address opportunities in business development, the arts, public affairs and a host of other initiatives."

Chief among the organizations cited for 2004 was Gulf States Paper Corporation, which received the Robert C. Tanner Corporate Service Award. Described as "a model corporate citizen for not only Tuscaloosa, but also all of Alabama," the citation commented that "through their service and generous charitable spirit, this organization is always there when there is a need, providing resources, leadership, and support in a variety of diverse ways."

Distinguished service awards were given to:

--D. W. Wilson, a partner in the law firm of Tanner & Guin, for his effective leadership of The Chamber's Governmental Affairs Division.

--Mark Warner of Mercedes-Benz U. S. International for his leadership of The Chamber's Environmental Task Force, which has successfully addressed air and ozone issues with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

--Paige Giddiens of B. F. Goodrich for her exceptional leadership of The Chamber Ambassadors during 2004.

--Susan Leath of The Tuscaloosa News for her efforts to initiate the new Focus On Leadership program, which addresses training for emerging leaders in the African-American community.

Two organizations were given Distinguished Service Awards. They were:

--Clear Channel Communications.

--Apex Broadcasting.

The two media organizations were cited for "their longtime commitment to and support of The Chamber through communications and public awareness.

Two persons were selected to receive the 2004 Ambassador of the Year Award for 2004. They were:

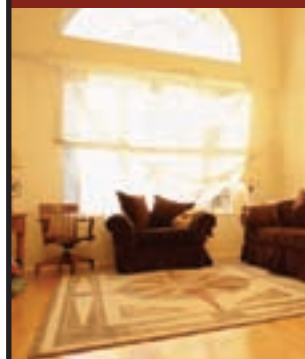
--Patti Jackson of Jamison, Money, Farmer & Company.

--Beth Whinery of Consumer First Mortgage Company.



Left to right: Mark Warner, D. W. Wilson, Susan Leath, Paige Giddiens and Voncile Pearce

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Legislative Update

Chamber's Drive In to Montgomery



Howard Garrison, 2005 Chamber Chairman, left, Governor Bob Riley, Northport Mayor Harvey Fretwell, and State Representative Bryant Melton had lunch together during the Drive In to Montgomery on January 27

The Chamber's Drive In to Montgomery on January 27 was a rousing success.

Listen to Dr. Robert Witt, Vice Chairman of The Chamber's Governmental Affairs Division:

"(It) was a major success and all of our key goals were achieved. The size of our group (50) clearly conveyed the commitment of the West Alabama business commu-

nity. The make-up of our group clearly demonstrated that key leaders in our community are interested, informed and prepared to be involved during the Legislative session and in future Legislative races. The quality of our schedule clearly indicated that key Legislative leaders are taking our issues

seriously. Also, I believe the trip strengthened the internal cohesiveness of our Chamber."

Listen to Howard Garrison, 2005 Chamber Board Chairman: "The trip was extremely successful because we had over 50 community leaders to attend. These were people from business, education, elected officials and local community agencies. The trip was important because we built relationships with key state officials and we were updated on many different issues affecting our state. The response from state officials was extremely positive. They were impressed by the number of people that came from Tuscaloosa County. We gave each official a copy of The Chamber's 2005 public policy agenda."

Besides Gov. Bob Riley, the group met with State Finance Director Jim Main; Jim McInnes, Director of the Alabama State Highway Department; Phyllis Kennedy, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations; Roy Johnson, Chancellor of the Alabama Postsecondary System; Ed Castile, Director of the Alabama Industrial Development Training Program, State

continued on page 8



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Highway Department; Phyllis Kennedy, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations; Roy Johnson, Chancellor of the Alabama Postsecondary System; Ed Castile, Director of the Alabama Industrial Development Training Program, State Sen. Hank Sanders, and State Rep. Richard Lindsey, the last two being key leaders of the Legislative budget process.

Among the key issues addressed during the day were employment, training and workforce development, budgets for higher education, highway and transportation projects, and other Legislative and public policy concerns.

Among the other local leaders making the trip was Sydney Cook, chairman of The Chamber's Public Policy Council.



Sydney Cook, left, Chairman of The Chamber's Public Affairs Council, led a group of Tuscaloosa County officials to Montgomery on January 27. Among those going was Ken DeWitt of Tidwell DeWitt, LLC, second from the right. Among the hosts were Supreme Court Justice Bernard Harwood, second from left, and State Finance Director Jim Main.



The Tuscaloosa Drive In contingent included, left to right: Susan Miller, Director of the Center for Workforce Development; Dr. Roy Johnson, Chancellor of the Alabama Postsecondary System; Bill Jones, Director of Governmental Affairs for the University of Alabama, and Carolyn Dahl, Dean of the College of Continuing Studies at the University of Alabama

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Chamber Volunteers

Chamber Ambassadors for 2005

Angie Askew
Morgan Keegan & Co.

Carla Bailey
Children's Hands-On Museum

Denise Brown
Kelly Services Inc.

Katie Butler
Best Western Park Plaza

Chad Clark
Hampton Inn I-20/59

Leah Colvin
SouthTrust Bank

Dave Crenshaw
SouthTrust Bank

Wade Dailey
AmSouth Bank

Greg Entrekin
Country Inn & Suites

Ashley Ezell
Tuscaloosa MedCenter South

Billy Falls
N. C. Morgan Construction Co.

David Hartin
Tuscaloosa Police Department

Reid Holley
Bank of Tuscaloosa

Patti Jackson
Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co. PC

Lance Johnson
Regions Bank

Ginger Johnson
Southern Linc

Stacy L. Jones
University of Alabama

Melissa Lang
AFFLINK

Scott McClanahan
Merrill Lynch

Kimberly Meyer
University of Alabama

Denise Osborn
Locklear Automotive Group
And Chrysler Jeep of Tuscaloosa LLC

Misty Potter
Northriver Yacht Club

Lillian Quarles
TotalCom

Pam Rackley
Nohab Business Products LLC

Lisa Rains
Amedisys

Kendrick Speight
Home-Towne Suites

Tracy Waldrop
First National Bank of Central Ala-
bama

Beth Whinery
Consumer First Mortgage

Becky Wharton
National Bank of Commerce



Chamber Ambassadors held an intensive training session at AFFLINK Headquarters on January 27. The group has an ambitious plan for 2005 and will be led by Patti Jackson of Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co. PC, and Carla Bailey of the Children's Hands-On Museum.



Honored at The Chamber's annual meeting on January 20 were Chamber Ambassadors of the Year. They are Patti Jackson of Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., PC, left, and Beth Whinery of Consumer First Mortgage.



The 2005 team of Chamber Ambassadors is being led by Carla Bailey, left, who works at the Children's Hands-On Museum, and Patti Jackson, an administrator at Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co. PC.



FORERUNNERS: a stepping stone to community leadership

In 1992 Tuscaloosa County High School junior Rick Anders was selected to be one of the first students to enter a new nine-month leadership-training program for high school juniors sponsored by Leadership Tuscaloosa Alumni Association. The program was called “Forerunners.” Anders had his own group of friends in school, most of whom he had known for many years, and he was happy with his life the way it was at the time.

Today, looking back, Anders says that Forerunners taught him a lot, especially in the area of self-awareness. “I was a little Northport boy who had lived a pretty sheltered life. There was never much disagreement between me and any of my friends. Being in the Forerunners with students from other high schools in this area was a real eye-opener. It was the first time I had been in a group of people who had ideas that were different from mine. It helped me grow and made me get out of my comfort zone. I know I’m a better businessman today and deal with people a lot better because of what I learned in Forerunners,” Anders says.

And dealing with people each day is what Anders does as the young, outgoing owner of Anders Hardware Store located in downtown Northport. His roots run deep in Northport, and like his family before him, he decided he wanted to stay in this area. After graduating from high school, Anders went on to the University of Alabama where he received a degree in small business management. With pictures of five generations of his family ranging from his father to his great-great-uncle hanging on the wall, he is the most recent member of his family to run the hardware store.

This family business, which was established in 1909, mixes the old with the new. Old beams and rafters line the ceiling of the store while a number of the latest computers are strategically located throughout the office, making it easy to serve the store’s many customers.

It was this love of community that led Anders to enter Leadership Tuscaloosa class in 1999. In May 2000, Anders became the first person to graduate from both the Forerunners and Leadership Tuscaloosa programs.

“Forerunners serves as a stepping stone that prepares you for the next level, such as college and adulthood,” Anders says. “Leadership Tuscaloosa literally takes you into the community and lets you see the needs firsthand.”

According to Jay McCollum, president of Leadership Tuscaloosa Alumni Association, the message is the same in both the Forerunners and Leadership Tuscaloosa programs, but the presentation is different because of the age difference of the participants. “There is more interaction among the Forerunners. They work more in groups and have more group activities. Leadership Tuscaloosa has more speakers, more lectures. It takes Forerunners a little more time to feel comfortable speaking in groups.” McCollum adds.

“We hope that in the future Forerunners will have something that can be produced that will help the students in their transition to their senior year to be sure they are on the right track. The question is how do you harness their energy at the end of the program and turn it into something tangible?”



Lucy Kubiszyn, foreground, interviews several people for the Perspectives article on the Forerunners Program. They are, left to right, Allison Hocutt of Boone Newspapers, Jay McCollum of Phifer Wire Products, and Rich Anders of Anders Hardware in Northport.





ship.

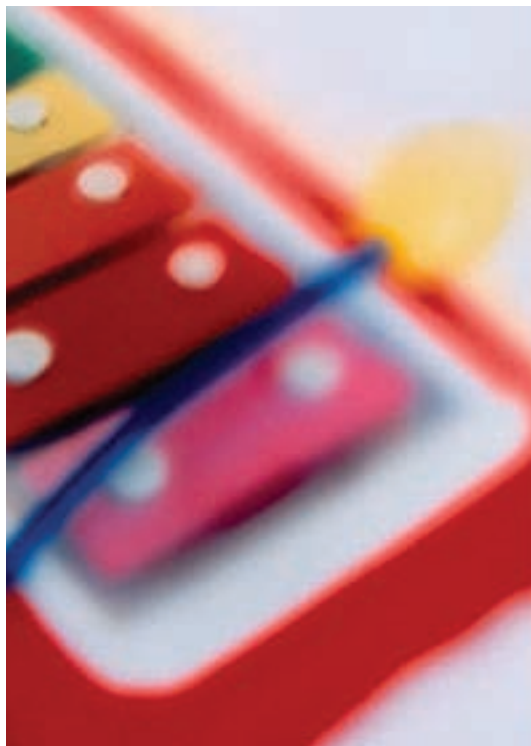
One of the more interesting Forerunners projects is “Broken Road,” an all-day simulation where each student is given their own case study, a problem that must be overcome. As part of the problem, each student is in need of community services. Students are given props, such as a ten-pound bag of potatoes to carry that is used to simulate a real baby. That student would carry the sack of potatoes around all day while trying to find the needed community services.

Allison Hocutt has worked a great deal with the Forerunners program since it began, and she believes that one of the most important reasons for the program’s success is its diversity, such as race, gender and socio - economic background. “From the very beginning, we wanted the students to sit with students from other schools and not their friends from their own schools,” he said.

“In selecting the Forerunners class, we didn’t always look for the so-called ‘leaders’ of the school. We tried to find those individuals who might not have had the opportunity to develop their leadership skills yet,” Hocutt added.

According to Geri Stone, program manager for Leadership Tuscaloosa, both programs are part of a trend of lifelong leadership development. “Forerunners was an idea that directly came out of Leadership Tuscaloosa Alumni Association. The alumni ran it and administered it. Actually, the program owes a lot to John Merrill, Tuscaloosa County School System. He was the person who made it happen. The purpose of the program was to benefit high school students in leadership studies and to prepare them for school and the workforce,” Stone said.

Parents who are interested in learning more about the Forerunners program should call Stacey Gann at the Chamber, 758-7588. Applications will be available in late February, and student interviews will be held in the spring of the student’s 10th grade year. Sixty 11th graders will be chosen to participate in the nine-month program beginning in September. Schools must be members of the Chamber of Commerce to be considered for the Forerunners program.



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Member News

People In The News



Christopher J. Williams, CPA, CVA, has been promoted to Manager within the Tax and Accounting Department at Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., P.C. Chris joined JMF 6 years ago after obtaining his Bachelor of Science Degree in Commerce and Business Administration, and a Master's Degree in Tax Accounting from the University of Alabama. He recently completed certification requirements from the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts (NACVA), earning his designation of Certified Valuation Analyst (CVA). He also specializes in preparing tax returns and financial statements for businesses, individuals, estates, trusts, and non-profit organizations. He and his wife, Melissa Mills Williams have one daughter Taylor, and all are natives of Northport, Alabama.



Tabitha I. Lee, CPA, joins the Accounting and Tax Department at Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., P.C., as a senior accountant. Mrs. Lee is a University of Alabama graduate and has 13 years of experience in both public and private accounting. She has previously served as partner in a public accounting firm and most recently as controller for Synchronous Industrial Services. Mrs. Lee is originally from Winfield, AL, is married to Robert Lee and she has 2 children.

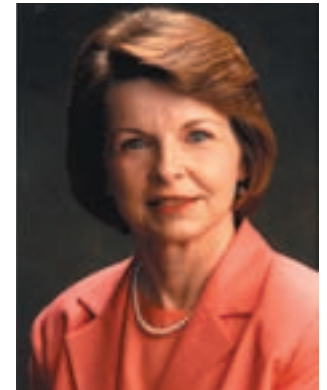


Drew Brignac joins the Accounting and Auditing Department at Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., P.C., as a full time staff accountant. He is a recent graduate of the University of Alabama with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and a minor in computer technology and application. Brignac interned with the accounting firm Warren, Averett, Kimbrough and Marino in Birmingham and most recently served as a business partner in Southern Shirts, Inc., in Tuscaloosa. He is originally from Selma, AL.

Susan McMullen also joins the Accounting and Auditing Department at Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., P.C. as a full time staff accountant. McMullen has a Bachelor of Science degree in commerce and business administration and a Masters of Accountancy degree from the University of Alabama. McMullen interned at Martin & Letang, L.L.C. in Tuscaloosa before joining the staff at JMF. Formerly Susan Speckels from Jackson, MS, she is a member of the Tuscaloosa Junior League and is married to Doster McMullen.



Diane K. Criss joins the Client Services Department at Jamison, Money, Farmer & Co., P.C. Mrs. Criss has previous experience ranging from full-charge bookkeeper and office management to corporate controller. With 10 years experience in QuickBooks, she will be working directly with small business clients in bookkeeping, sales tax and payroll tax. Originally from Selma, AL, Mrs. Criss is married to Phillip Criss and she has 2 children.



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Member News

People In The News

Misty Potter has joined Gulf States Paper Corporation as accounting manager for the company's NorthRiver Yacht Club.

A Tuscaloosa, Alabama, native, Potter graduated from Hale County High School in Moundville, and received her bachelor's degree in science and commerce administration and her master's degree in accountancy from the University of Alabama.

Prior to joining Gulf States, she served as controller for the Four Points by Sheraton in Tuscaloosa. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants, the American Society of Women Accountants and the Tuscaloosa

Business and Professional Women. Additionally, she serves as a West Alabama Chamber of Commerce Ambassador and as a member of Leadership Tuscaloosa's Class of 2004

She is married to Roger Potter, who serves as a Northport firefighter.



Tanner & Guin partner **David E. Rains** has been selected by the Board of Bar Commissioners as one of 30 lawyers from across the state to be a member of the inaugural Class of 2005 of the Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum. The Forum is designed to develop skills that are needed by leaders in our state, cities, counties, and communities and in local and state bar associations. Ethics, professionalism, and leadership through service will be emphasized in the sessions. Tanner & Guin is proud to be part of this initiative to raise the ethical and professional standards of the legal community.



David provides legal counsel and assistance to businesses in the areas of business and civil litigation; workplace law; employment litigation; construction law and litigation; environmental law; libel, slander, and defamation defense; class action defense; alternative dispute resolution; and tax litigation. David also serves as an Adjunct Professor in Trial Advocacy at The University of Alabama School of Law. David can be reached at 205/633-0236, Fax 205/633-0336, and drains@tannerguin.com.

Madden Volvo Grand Opening

Friday evening, December 10, marked a new beginning for Keith Madden, and Tuscaloosa Mayor Al DuPont was on hand to help Keith and his folks celebrate the event. The new beginning? Sales and service on Volvo automobile, which shares the Madden dealership with Lincolns and Mercurys. Four Chamber Ambassadors helped with the ribboncutting ceremony: David Hartin, Reid Holley, Misty Potter and Dave Crenshaw.




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