

## Environmental Success

Although the Tuscaloosa community achieved a high mark in the area of environmental quality in 2004, businesses, industries and individuals are going to have to work hard to keep the community at that level of quality.

That's the word from Mark Warner, chairman of The Chamber's Environmental Task Force. Warner, who works for Mercedes-Benz U. S. International, and his task force were able to show the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that Tuscaloosa County's is clean enough to meet the federal agency's standards.

"We are currently designated as 'in attainment' for the federal particulate matter standard," Warner said. "And it's very important to maintain this designation as there are severe consequences for being designated as 'non-attainment'.

"The most severe consequences are related to the adverse health effects associated with poor air quality," he said. "But, from a business and industry growth standpoint, not meeting the EPA's standard for air quality could

seriously hamper our area. We would have a much harder time getting any new air permits."

"We could lose potential jobs and we would probably see new businesses and industries locate somewhere else besides Tuscaloosa County," Warner added. "Existing business and industry would feel a cost 'pinch' because of the tighter air standards."

Warner said particulate matter comes from diesel exhaust, open fires, industrial furnaces, wood processing, dust, fine solids at some facilities, and from other related sources. "We must all work together to minimize these types of emissions because Tuscaloosa County, while in attainment with the EPA, doesn't have much of a cushion before we would exceed limit.

"We also need to stay aware of and try to reduce our local ambient levels because some organizations are asking the EPA to lower the standard to a level that would place us in non-attainment," Warner said.

## Energy Savings

Our good friends at Alabama Power Company shared some tips with us that we'd like to pass along to our member/investors.

- Be aware of solar heat gain. As a rule of thumb, if the walls of your building are more than 25% glass, you can benefit from window tints or reflective coatings. Be especially aware of this potential savings if you have large windows that face the south.
- If you're replacing your roof, be sure to add insulation, including a vapor barrier.
- Maintain heating and cooling by using and regularly changing filters.
- Don't let cost deter you from investing in more energy efficient lighting. The more expensive lighting usually consumes less energy.

• If possible, replace incandescent lamps with compact fluorescents (CFLs). If there is a problem with aesthetics, you can retrofit with a specially designed reflector and lamp holder.

• Encourage employees to turn off computers, displays, printers, and copiers when your business is not open. Office equipment is the fastest growing electricity end use in the commercial sector. Its use also adds indirectly to your energy cost by increasing cooling loads.

Consider these tips. If you have any particular questions about your business, please call the Commercial Department at Alabama Power.



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# Welcome

## Introduction to New Members

We want to welcome the following people and organizations into The Chamber. If you know these people and/or do business with them, take time to tell them you're glad they're a part of The Chamber Team.

### Amedisys

Lisa Rains  
1300 McFarland Blvd., Ste. 320  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35406  
(205) 752-0606  
Health Care Services - Nursing

### JA Graphic Design

Julie Atallah  
5118 Bluegrass Parkway  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35406  
(205) 248-0903  
Printing Services

### Talent Tree

Ray Culver  
80 McFarland Blvd., Ste. 3  
Northport, AL 35476  
(205) 752-0522  
Employment Contractors / Staffing

### American Diabetes Association

Bonnie Robbins  
200 Office Park Drive, Ste. 303  
Birmingham, AL 35223  
(205) 870-5172  
Non-Profit Organizations

### Midsouth Forestry Services, Inc.

Dale Lancaster  
P.O. Box 600  
Gordo, AL 35466  
(205) 364-7145  
Real Estate / Realty / Realtors

### US Army Corps of Engineers

Danny Hensley  
101 21st Avenue  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401  
(205) 752-3571  
Government

### Direct Communications

Tracey McDowell  
2521 University Blvd.  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401  
(205) 758-7822  
Communications - 2-radio Sales / Service

### On-Site Drug Screens

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834 Indian Mound Drive  
McMinnville, TN 37110  
(800) 809-7775  
Drug Screening

### Heritage Chapel Funeral Home

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P.O. Box 40567  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35404  
(205) 553-3555  
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## A Letter

At The Chamber offices, we get phone calls and letters that could be described as out of the ordinary.

Take this letter from a young man in California:

"Dear Chamber:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm doing a report on Alabama. Please send me some information about what kind of cars you have. What do you like? I like cool cars, fast cars, do you have a car. What kind of car do you have? Do you have a dog? I have a dog. Can you give me some information about Alabama and what kind of food you eat? Anyway my dogs name is Spike.

"Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
5th grade student





## Fast Food

# IT'S MORE THAN JUST FAST FOOD!

A hidden workforce exists in west Alabama; one that some people believe employs individuals only in the fast food industry. That's not necessarily true, however, according to Tim Green, program coordinator for The Arc and Suzanne Sterling, coordinator for the World of Work at the Tuscaloosa Center for Technology.

According to these two professionals, this workforce, composed of people with disabilities, can be found working, in addition to fast food restaurants, in a number of local businesses such as Bryce Hospital, automobile detailing companies, the city school system, and retail stores to name just a few. A network of various community agencies and the Tuscaloosa City School System work together to form an ongoing training program and support group that has been in place for a number of years.

This spring a mini-conference, "Transitional Services in the City Schools," sponsored by the Tuscaloosa City Transitional Team will be held at the Belk Center April 1 from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. in the large auditorium. Speakers for the conference will include representatives from CrossingPoints, Tuscaloosa Center for Technology, Oak Hill School, Resource for Independence, The Arc of Tuscaloosa, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Easter Seals, Ability Alliance of West Alabama and other community programs. The conference is open to anyone who is interested to working with individuals with disabilities but is of special benefit to business managers, employees, teachers, families and friends of those individuals. There is no cost to the conference.

According to Green, this network is formed for the good of the consumer and the employer in order to build a good relationship with both. In Green's work with The ARC, which serves adults with mental retardation and other disabilities, he has found that the agency has two customers, the consumer and the employer.

"Both the consumer and the employer have seen the students' work. Once the students make the transition from school to work, we go out and develop specific jobs. Students go through the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services usually during their junior year," Green says.

"This transition offers services to the consumer and to the business community. Businesses are not responsible for insurance. Students must pay for their own health insurance. We are not asking for special favors. We are just asking to be included," said Green. "Businesses can come to us, and we can make changes. It's a win-win situation for everyone. Nothing is ever carved in stone."

Sterling works with students with vision, hearing or other health impairment or low IQ scores below the standard deviation in order to help in the development of appropriate employment skills. She

says that part of her job with the city schools is to try to remove any barriers that might keep the students from going to work, such as transportation, clothing.

"We also do on-the-job training. Once students go through the school system, we offer long-term support on a bi-monthly basis. If an employee is doing well and changes jobs and responsibilities change, Arc will come in and change what they teach. High school students train in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades for one to one and one-half hours each day. There is a very low turnover rate, less than one percent," Sterling adds.

"The biggest thing that business gets with us is support. Students that go through our World of Work program are tested, trained and given employment opportunities," Sterling adds.

Two students who have gone through the World of Work program with the city schools believe in its success. Amos Bennett graduated last year from Central High School with a Certificate of Attendance and many additional job-training hours. Originally from Detroit, Amos moved to Tuscaloosa when he was a little boy. This past year he worked part-time at Checkers. Perseverance paid off for Amos as he begins a new job this spring working at Bryce Hospital. Eventually, he hopes to go to Shelton State and take some courses in computer science.

Briget Winston will receive her Certificate of Attendance from Central High School this May and begins work this week at McDonald's in Northport. She believes in the World of Work program and recommends it to other students. She has been trained at a number of retail stores and knows how to do shipping and receiving, merchandizing and inventory control. She hopes to eventually pass the ability-to-benefit test at Shelton State and enter the nursing assistant program at the college. She is thankful for her new job at McDonald's. Is it her dream job? Probably not. She admits she would really like to be a singer and be known around the world. But this job is a start, and isn't that what dreams are made of?

For more information on the mini conference, call Green (205) 556-4900 or Sterling, (205) 759-3648.



Suzanne Sterling and Tim Green



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# Together

**We're building a brighter future for West Alabama.** True understanding, in life as well as law, depends upon recognizing the connections among seemingly diverse issues, problems, and personalities.

Through their involvement in a variety of community organizations, attorneys at Phelps, Jenkins, Gibson & Fowler L.L.P. are helping to build bridges that lead to greater insight and understanding.

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