



Converging for Success

Together We Can Accomplish Everything

A project to formalize a community wide strategic plan to guide the growth and development of the Cullman area is underway. The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Chamber President & CEO, Leah Bolin are pleased to announce the launching of its new five-year strategic plan for the community.

After completing a comprehensive interview process with over 100 area businesses and many area leaders to identify community needs and objectives, The Chamber and its partners have teamed up with a nationally renowned consulting firm, Funding Solutions, to launch the “Converging for Success: Together We Can Accomplish Everything” campaign, according to Bolin.

Texas based Funding Solutions has a successful track

record with numerous chambers in Alabama and assisted the Cullman Area Chamber in identifying five focused areas to compliment the work of other partners and to fill gaps in meeting community needs without duplication of efforts.

Through this plan the Chamber, in collaboration with its 1000 members, will utilize volunteers and fund raising to lead in five main areas:

- Community Development
- Existing Business Growth and Professional Business Sector Recruitment
- Entrepreneurship and Education
- Business and Community Advocacy
- Tourism

“I am very excited about our new initiatives. The new plan defines the community’s priorities and lays the foundation for a successful capital

campaign that will take us to new heights in excellence for the Cullman area. It will serve as a roadmap for the next five years.” Bolin said

The chamber’s new 5-year plan will focus on Community Development, Existing Business Growth & Professional Business Sector Recruitment, Entrepreneurship & Education, Business & Community Advocacy and Tourism.

Cullman City Economic Development Agency Director Peggy Smith has agreed to take personal time away from the city of Cullman to serve as a campaign advisor. Initially, Peggy will be working

with the chamber board of directors, campaign team and chamber president to help lay out the action steps for the new five-year plan.

Smith has spent a life-time in the business recruitment, retention and community development arena. “I am a firm believer in strategic plans. Visions are much easier to identify and communicate when everyone pools their talent and resources,” Smith said.

Cullman County, the City of Cullman, both the city and county school systems, Wallace State College and the hospital are actively working on plans for future growth. Using data from all those sources as well as others, will ensure our focus is on true community needs, according to Smith. “I view this plan as a great opportunity for us to make a successful community event better.”

A county-wide leadership team will provide the groundwork for our new programs. The campaign will be led by Jason Grimmett of Drinkard Development and Dr. Jeremy Stidham of Cullman Internal Medicine. A complete list of initiative chairs and our leadership team will be forthcoming in future media releases.

As the board progresses in executing the plan over the next year, chamber members as well as the community at large will be asked to provide input and suggestions through focus groups, committee involvement and surveys.

Each initiative has specific goals and expected outcomes which will be shared with our chamber members and the community over the next few weeks. The plan will be a “living, breathing” document that can be modified as the community changes.

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce

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www.cullmanchamber.org | www.visitcullman.org

January Community Luncheon to feature local legislators

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's Community Luncheons will pick back up with their monthly sessions beginning in January with our special guest speakers – our state legislature. Senator Paul Bussman and Representatives Ed Henry, Randall Shedd and Corey Harbison update us on the latest happenings from the capitol with their State of the State address. Join us on the third Friday of the month, January 20 for this special kick-off luncheon, which will be held at the All Steak Restaurant in the Banquet room from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for Chamber Members and \$20 for future members. Call 256-734-0454 to reserve your seat. Thank you to our 2016 Presenting Sponsor Shirley Quattlebaum – State Farm and to our Monthly



Bussman



Shedd



Harbison



Henry

Sponsor Weichert Realtors – Carter & Company.

THE DETAILS

The Community luncheon will be on Friday, January 20.

The event will be at the All Steak Restaurant in the banquet room from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

reservations can be made at 256-734-0454.

Tickets are \$15 for Chamber Members and \$20 for future members.

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A tax on fuel

PROPOSAL POINTS

Total of \$1.2 billion in bonds would likely be in two issuances to take advantage of savings and shorten the repayment schedule.

Bonds will be issued by a "cooperative district" composed of each of the 67 county commissions. The proceeds of the 3-cent increase in gasoline and diesel fuel taxes will be pledged to repay the bonds.

Bond proceeds would be divided among the counties using the gasoline tax formula.

Twenty (20) percent of the revenue allocated to each county would be spent within municipalities within the particular county.

County projects would be let at the county level using the Low-Volume Road Standards for those roads with less than 2,500 vehicles per day and using ALDOT standards for roads with higher traffic counts.

Municipalities would either let contract themselves, utilizing the ALDOT standards, or would combine projects with the county commission and let the contracts through the county's process.

A portion of the bond proceeds, not to exceed twenty (20) percent of any local government's allocation, could be utilized for matching federal funds, should such funding be available.

The revenue to fund the bond service would sunset on June 30 following the repayment of the bonds. An extra allocation will be made, following the repayment of bond proceeds, to ensure that counties receive a minimum of \$10 million.

Following this extra allocation, any remaining revenue will be distributed using the same formula for bond proceeds.

The restrictions on the use of the revenue, development of annual plans and transparency from Senate Bill 180 are included in this bond issue.

As the 2017 legislative session quickly approaches, take time to become informed on issues that may impact you as a citizen.

Although the legislature addresses several issues throughout a session, one issue in particular may be important to you as a citizen and motorist.

On December 8th, the Association of County Commissions of Alabama voted to support an increase to the fuel tax to fund a \$1.2 billion bond issue for road and bridge projects. The support by the Association of County Commission of Alabama will likely lead to the introduction of a bill in the 2017 legislative session. Previous support lead to a similar bill being introduced during the 2016 legislative session, which supported a 6-cent increase to the fuel tax. However, the 2016 bill failed.

The proposal from the Association of County Commission of Alabama and likely the 2017 legislative session bill would support a 3-cent per gallon increase in fuel tax and levy an increase in tag fees for alternative fuels vehicles. In return, the increase in tax will be pledged to raise \$1.2 billion in bond money.

The current gasoline tax formula has long been an issue for Cullman County and its road and bridge infrastructure. As many of you are aware, the gasoline tax formula is based on the population of the county and not the miles of road located in the County. Whether you support or oppose a fuel tax increase, be informed, pay attention, and let your voice be heard in Montgomery.

PREPARED BY Heath Mehrg, Governmental Affairs Committee Member / Griffith, Lowry & Mehrg

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Jordan Stricklin: Intern Insight

1. Where did you attend college and what kind of degree do you have?

Why did you choose to pursue this field of interest? I am currently a student at Wallace State Community College –Hanceville, I am finishing up an Associate’s Degree in Business Administration.

Following my departure of Wallace, I will be looking to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree in Marketing from UAB.

2. What business skills have you acquired at the Chamber?

Learning the skills to professionally communicate with the public, adapting to the fast-paced business world, and utilizing my skills, new and old, to become more efficient in the workplace.

3. What have you learned about the Chamber and its positions in the community? I’ve learned that the Chamber is a cornerstone for business in the community.

Iso, I have noticed that the Chamber is a very important place for visitors and relocators to acquire information about the area.

4. How will the Chamber affect your future plans?

The influence the Chamber has had on me



Jordan Stricklin

will affect my future in a very positive manner. I will use all I’ve learned here and apply it to my everyday life and by doing so, I know it will make me a more successful person.

Having the opportunity to network with so many business leaders and personnel will greatly help me grow my name as a person of interest in the Cullman area.

5. What can you take away from having interned at the Chamber that can apply to your career of choice?

All the skills and knowledge I have acquired here plus the personal connections will help my reputation and future as an aspiring entrepreneur.

My time spent here at the Chamber has helped me earn a position at YELTEK and I’m thankful for the opportunity and time invested in me.

2016 Small Business of the Month Recap

Congratulations to each Small Business of the Month recipient from 2016!

It is through the hard work of each owner and employee that we can each appreciate this wonderful community.


Monthly winners are automatically entered into the nominations for the annual Small Business of the Year award, which will be presented at the Chamber’s Annual Meeting & Gala on March 9th at Stone Bridge Farms.

- January
The Red Door Café
- February
MR. HICKS’ Mens Wear
- March
Jack’s Western & Outdoor Wear
- April
Jennifer’s Treasures
- May
Stone Bridge Farms Southern Event Venue
- June
Katherine Morgan State Farm Insurance & Financial Services

- July
Rumors Deli Inc.
- August
TriGreen Equipment, LLC
- September
Nearen Construction Company, Inc
- October
Awards Palace, LLC
- November
Pepsi Cola Distributing of Cullman
- December
278 Auto Wash & Detail

4th Quarter Intern Sponsor





The Chamber's
Morning BLEND

Find out what's happening in the Cullman area

Chamber staff will welcome members and visitors to the back room at Rumor's Deli every month to discuss various topics.

January's topic: Healthy Lifestyles
Rumors Deli, 105 1st Ave NE, Cullman, AL

Presented by:
KARMA'S COFFEE HOUSE
WHERE GOOD PEOPLE COME FOR GOOD COFFEE

Sponsored by:
ANYTIME FITNESS

**Jan. 18
8-9AM**

DECEMBER BUSINESS OF THE MONTH



Small Business of the Month The Chamber’s Retail Committee would like to congratulate 278 Auto Wash & Detail as December’s Small Business of the Month, sponsored by College Tire of Hanceville.

Owner Nathan Haynes first started his business when he was at 17 year old high school sophomore.

As one of Cullman’s youngest budding entrepreneurs, Nathan strives to get involved and ignite his brand by utilizing giveaways and contributions to the community.

Recently, Nathan participated in both My Cullman TV’s “Christmas Giveaway” and Cullman Today’s “Free Christmas Gift Giveaway” promotions on social media.

Additionally, Nathan has taken initiative and detailed the train at Sportman’s Lake and donated auction items to benefit Anna Hughes as she recovers from an auto accident.

Although relatively new to business ownership, Nathan’s involvement within the community doesn’t stop with charitable programs and contributions, but opts to additionally participate in a wide range of Chamber functions and events.

Within 2016 alone, 278 Auto Wash & Detail has participated in the Total Resource Campaign, EPIC and the Ugly Christmas Sweater Party, 2nd Fridays, Community Luncheons, Business

After Hours (Summer Samplers), and the Membership Appreciation Cookout. In addition to giving back, Nathan has developed a pricing strategy that he feels offers customers the best service for the most reasonable price while ensuring each customer feels appreciated.

Taking an innovative approach in Cullman’s recent drought, Nathan also offered state of the art water-free hand washes.

These additions to his service lineup allowed Nathan to stay in business while adhering to the county’s restrictions on water usage.

In refer to receiving the Small Business of the Month award, Nathan stated it was such “an honor to receive this award. I give 100 percent of the credit to my wonderful customers who have graciously supported me.”

278 Auto Wash and Detail 8810 U.S. HWY 278 West Cullman, Alabama 35057 (256) 595-1281 Each month, a sponsoring business helps celebrate and acknowledge the Small Business of the Month winner.

If you have a local business you would like to nominate for their outstanding service, please contact Ben Smith at bsmith@cullmanchamber.org. Monthly winners will be entered into the nominations for the annual Small Business of the Year award, which is presented at the Chamber’s Annual Meeting & Gala.



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2016-17 3RD QUARTER COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Congratulations to the 3rd Quarter Community Improvement Award winners for the year of 2016-17. These awards are given on a quarterly basis beginning in July of each year, with one overall annual award presented at the Cullman Area Tourism Awards. The Community Improvement Committee hopes to inspire others to take action to preserve, protect and promote community improvement in Cullman. Nominations are accepted year round for the best examples of community improvement efforts made by business/company owners of properties in

the Cullman area. Anyone may nominate a commercial property/organization in the Cullman area. Businesses/Organizations are eligible for one award per category each year and must be a Chamber member in order to be nominated. There is no fee to nominate. You must submit a nomination form for the award on a quarterly basis. A sign will be placed in the winner's location each quarter (July, October, January and April). Moss Service Funeral Home Business/Organization with Best Landscaping - Small Awarded for best design,

maintenance, litter control and plant materials. Northbrook Baptist Church Business/Organization with Best Landscaping - Large Awarded for best design, maintenance, litter control and plant materials. Apel Machine & Supply Business/Organization with Best Curb Appeal Awarded for substantial improvements to the outside of the property with the most attractive presentation from the street. Classy to Sassy Business/Organization with Best Restoration Awarded for superlative work in the restoration,

rehabilitation, reuse of property or sensitive design. Legacy Realty Group Business/Organization with New Construction Awarded for superlative work for those businesses who have undergone careful construction of a new structure completed within the past three years. Miracle Field-Cullman City Parks & Rec Business/Organization "Building a Sense of Community" Awarded to a business that strives to improve the community through additions of a park, play area, park benches or playground, etc.



*Northbrook Baptist
Best Landscaping - Large Business*



*Moss Service Funeral Home
Best Landscaping - Small Business*

2016-17 3RD QUARTER COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT



*Classy To Sassy
Best Restoration*



*Apel Machine & Supply Co.
Best Curb Appeal*



*Legacy Realty Group
New Construction*

2016-17 3RD QUARTER COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT



*Field of Miracles
Sense of Community*

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