There’s bound to be a bit of judging going on than usual at September’s Community Luncheon — and, unlike the way it sounds, that’s actually a good thing.

Join the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce on the third Friday of the month, September 15, for an informative judge’s panel featuring four local judges. The Honorable Kim Chaney, the Honorable Greg Nicholas, the Honorable Rusty Turner and the Honorable Martha Williams will all be on hand to answer questions and to share their judicial wisdom.

Per usual, the Luncheon will be held in the banquet room at the All Steak Restaurant 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 or email info@cullmanchamber.org to reserve your seat.

Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor, Shirley Quattlebaum – State Farm, and to our September Sponsor, Cullman Regional.

The Chamber’s Emerging Professionals Impacting Cullman group, better known as EPIC, is growing! With recently formed membership guidelines and in the midst of its first membership drive, this group looks to highlight the area’s recent growth and expansion as an opportunity to attract top-tier talent to Cullman. Having fun, making friends, and elevating personal development while giving back to our community are all part of EPIC. Members aged 22-39 participate in quarterly socials, professional seminars, and recreational activities. Past events include Wine and Cheese Night, Putts & Pints, a College Football Tailgate and the Ugly Christmas Sweater Party, among others. For more information or to complete an application, visit www.cullmanchamber.org/epic.

**Judge’s panel on deck for September Community Luncheon**

**EPIC young professionals group expanding membership**

**Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce**

PO Box 1104, Cullman, AL 35056-1104 | 256-734-0454 | F: 256-737-7443 | info@cullmanchamber.org

www.cullmanchamber.org | www.visitcullman.org
2nd Fridays is saving the best for last! Help us close out the summer in style on September 8, as Downtown Cullman — for the final time in 2017 — is brought to life with TWO stages, a specially opened farmers market, and the same great opportunities for eating local and shopping late you can’t get any other time of year.

But that’s not all. Not even close. This year’s 2nd Fridays finale, proudly presented by the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center and Cullman Parks & Recreation, will also feature:

- **The Overtones** on the Cullman Dairy Queen Grill & Chill Restaurant Stage
- **The** band MP3, featuring members of De’ja Blue, on the Shirley Quattlebaum State Farm Insurance Stage
- **TriGreen Equipment** Farm Y’All inside the Festhalle Farmers Market
- **Hundreds** of classic and antique cars on display at the Branham Accessories – Line-X Cruise-In
- **Artist Alley**, with artists, pop-up shops, beer and wine sampling, and a caricature artist, just for starters
- **Door prizes** and fun activities in the Buffalo Wild Wings Kids Zone
- A Melon Fresca drink demonstration sponsored by American Proteins
- **Mechanical Bull Ridin’** sponsored by Brickyard Meats
- And much, much more!

Admission to 2nd Fridays is FREE, but don’t forget your pocketbook to support area eateries, merchants, vendors, artists and farmers! Festivities begin at 5:00 p.m. and will continue well into the evening.

For updates, check out the event Facebook page: 2nd Fridays Cullman. For more information, visit www.cullmanchamber.org/Cullman2ndFridays or contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.
Total Resource Campaign (TRC) volunteers ‘Building on Success’ in 2017

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce’s Total Resource Campaign (TRC) is in its third week of sales. Our volunteers and leadership have been hard at work contacting members to secure sponsorships for the 2018 year and to ensure they’re “Building on Success” from previous campaigns. The TRC is a membership and sponsorship drive providing members the opportunity to market their business at cost! This year’s leadership consists of Chair: Kay Shabel, MoMoSHE 103; and Vice-Chairs: Cheryl Bailey; Jimmy Hodges, Wallace State Community College; and Wendy Crider, Cullman County Industrial Development Board. Team Captains are Ashley Lackey, Alabama Technology Network; Stefani Nelson, Shirley Quattlebaum – State Farm Insurance; and Kathy Taylor, Wallace State.

This year’s volunteers are Kim Arndt, Cullman Electric Cooperative; Melissa Arnold, Wallace State; Jamie Blackmon, Wallace State; Lisa Burgess, The Bridge Counseling; Melanie Clemons, Walker Brothers; Joyce Fuller, Fuller Rentals; Toni Geddings, R.E. Garrison Trucking; Penny Goodwin, American Proteins; Belinda Hyatt, Cullman Economic Development Agency; Chasidy Lipsey, Peoples Bank; Tabitha Miller, Cullman Regional; Katherine Morgan, State Farm Insurance & Financial Services; Kim Odom, Doug Doggett Jewelers; Gidgett Overton, YouNique Sophistication; Shay Persall, St. John & St. John; Jamie Robertson, Wallace State; Jana Shelton, Cullman County Revenue; Kacie Smith, Warren Averett; Gail Swafford, Child Advocacy Center; and April Weaver, Quality Staffing Solution.

If you would like to sponsor a Chamber program or event, please contact Magan Bartlett at 256-734-0454 or mbartlett@cullmanchamber.org, or contact one of the volunteers listed above.

September Morning Blend shining spotlight on hunting & fishing regulations

Come join the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce the morning of Wednesday, September 20 for delicious coffee and great discussion at our Morning Blend, held every third Wednesday of each month from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. at Rumors Deli in the Warehouse District. The Chamber staff welcomes members and visitors to attend this free event. Alabama Conservation Enforcement Officer Jonathon Bartlett will lead the discussion for September’s topic: 2017-18 Hunting & Fishing Regulations. Coffee will be provided by Presenting Sponsor Karma’s Coffee House. September’s sponsor is Joel C. Adams, DMD and R. Clyne Adams, DMD. For more information, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.
Harbin provides Cullman City Schools updates during August Morning Blend

Cullman City School Board President Suzanne Harbin talks education at the August Morning Blend.

What kind of daily assistance is there for kids with diabetes?
Cullman City Schools is very fortunate to have registered nurses in each school. They are there to assist students with medications as needed. They, along with our faculty, work daily with our students to ensure that medications are administered daily as prescribed and needed.

After all these renovations to the high school, how was it that no more space being added was part of the plans?
There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the high school construction/renovation project. The project was $19 million and came in under budget, and additional classrooms were added to the original number of classrooms in the prior footprint of the school. The expanded space has allowed our faculty and staff to expand services and add new programs for our students, including a healthcare academy and a new pre-engineering program, which began this year. The individual classroom size was expanded as well to accommodate more students. The capacity of CHS is over 1,200 students, and the current enrollment is below 1,000 at this time.

We hear all the time that the city school system is overcrowded. Is that true?
There are two grades (third and fifth) that are currently at capacity within our current elementary facilities. As students move up grade levels, space constraints will ease and provide opportunities for the system to admit additional out-of-district students. The Board is continuously reviewing the population projections for the city and county. These are currently growing at a very small percentage, but the Board is in the process of acquiring additional property for future expansion and preparation for growth of our community and system.

Is there anything to the rumors about East and West elementary schools merging?
There has been discussion about merging the elementary schools for over 20 years (maybe more), but that is not a decision that would be made without a lot of discussion and input from our community, faculty, staff, and parents. There is always discussion regarding space, aligning programming between the two elementary schools, and the best use of existing facilities. The discussion of merging and grade realignment is ongoing within the community and the system with the goal of providing the very best educational opportunities for all of our students. At this time, though, there are no plans in development to merge the schools in the near future.

Why are there no buses in the city school system?
Cullman City Schools receives limited funding for transportation from the state. The close proximity of our schools to our students, along with limited resources to fund transportation makes providing bus routes for all students cost-prohibitive.

Funding up-to-date and necessary technology, such as Wi-Fi and technology required for virtual learning:
The system has continually upgraded our technology to maintain the best options for students. Cullman High School transitioned to Chromebooks this year, and the iPads previously used are being distributed across other schools. The system secured a $200,000 grant for new interactive learning options with 3D learning options and zSpace monitors. These are being integrated into curriculum this fall.

Ensuring students have quality education materials in classrooms and libraries:
The system provides funding above the state allocation to all teachers to provide for quality education materials.

Maintaining existing facilities in good, secure, clean, and aesthetically pleasing condition and addressing current and future student growth:
The system facilities team worked diligently over the summer to make classroom improvements at West Elementary, restoring the hardwood floors in many classrooms. This will continue over the coming year. The system is currently in the process of acquiring additional property to provide for future growth, expansion, and safety/traffic options around several of our schools.

Q&A

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[The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce focused on Education during its August Morning Blend, with Cullman City School Board President Suzanne Harbin stopping by to provide an update on Cullman City Schools’ strategic plan. An update on the top stakeholder priorities she discussed is below, as well as answers to questions she fielded from Morning Blend attendees. All views expressed in these answers belong to Mrs. Harbin.]

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Providing adequate funding for extracurricular activities:
The system is currently working on a plan to provide standardized funding for extracurricular activities and to lessen the burden on our booster clubs and community businesses.

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It’s that time of year again!

JESSE NEWSOM
Director of Tourism

It’s baaaaack! People have been waiting since December for this time of year. Cool mornings, brisk evenings, leaves falling from trees, everyone has missed it. Go look out your front door, and you’ll see decorations and people starting to get back into the spirit of things.

No, I’m not talking about football — it’s FESTIVAL TIME in Alabama! Fall festival season kicks off this holiday weekend at Smith Lake Park, where folks can feast on the world-famous sweet potatoes grown right here in Cullman County. If barbecue is more your thing, then head out to St. Bernard and listen to live blues music while relaxing with the monks. The Cullman County Fair is sure to please even the most picky of eaters, with amazing food vendors, games, rides and everything you could want in a fair.

If you’re busy in September, then October definitely has you covered.

Considered by many as the BEST Oktoberfest in Alabama, Cullman’s Oktoberfest does a stellar job celebrating the area’s storied German history. If you prefer late-season fishing, then make sure to call Cullman County Parks & Rec and sign up for the $10,000 grand prize at the Smith Lake Bass Fest. Maybe fishing’s not your cup of tea, but maybe arts & crafts are. In that case, Hanceville has you covered with the Mud Creek Arts & Crafts Festival, and so does the Gourd Festival inside the Cullman Civic Center.

But if you ask me, a special day has got to be Oct. 21, reason being the Peinhardt family opening the gates to their family farm and letting everyone experience history.

So, yes, get ready for family days away from the TV (except on college football Saturdays, of course). Get out and support your local TEAM (Tourism Efforts Are Many) and all the hard work these groups put in. I’ll see you around the festival circuit.
In-N-Out Self Storage named August Small Business of the Month

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce would like to congratulate In-N-Out Self Storage as August’s Small Business of the Month, sponsored by Cullman Eye Specialists, P.C. Owner Stephen Skinner and his team have provided rental space with cutting-edge technology and advanced security since In-N-Out first opened its doors in 2015. Stephen utilizes a variety of tools designed to maximize customer experience and relations, including a 24/7, fully automated rental kiosk. Additionally, Stephen noted In-N-Out’s 150-kilowatt solar station, which keeps costs down and greatly reduces their impact on the power system. Stephen and his team also take security very seriously. With 24/7 access comes added safety through a network of more 30 security cameras recording at all times.

In-N-Out currently has five employees, filling maintenance positions through a relationship with the Link of Cullman County. Stephen stressed that he models his business to support local schools and other non-profit organizations. Stephen has participated in the Chamber’s Community Luncheon programming.

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 Wes Smith at wsmith@cullmanchamber.org. Monthly winners will be automatically nominated for the annual Small Business of the Year award, which is presented at the Chamber’s Annual Meeting & Gala.
Youth Leadership class learns team-building skills at 1st session

The Chamber’s 2017-18 Youth Leadership Cullman County class, presented by R.E. Garrison Trucking, took in Experiencing Leadership Day in August for its first monthly session.

Students spent the day at Hulaco Youth and Family Camp working together as teams and in small groups to complete various challenges. Amongst the challenges were an obstacle course and a ropes course standing 30 feet off the ground. Students helped one another navigate the latter course, which culminated with a 300-foot zip line to the finish line.

August’s session, sponsored by EvaBank, was extremely beneficial to Youth Leadership student Kara Hollis.

“It made me get out of my comfort zone and helped me learn more about myself,” said the Holly Pond High School junior. “The lessons that I drew from the session were to take risks and that communicative teamwork will help you and your team become successful.”

Pepsi Cola Distributing Company served as the Experiencing Leadership Day breakfast sponsor, and State Farm Insurance – Bill Floyd sponsored lunch.

Youth Leadership student Sydney Newton, of Cold Springs High School, takes a turn down the zip line during August’s Experiencing Leadership Day.

Leadership Cullman County set to kick off 2017-18 class

Leadership Cullman County, sponsored by American Proteins, is gearing up for the start of the 2017-18 class. This year’s program will officially kick off later this month with a retreat featuring team-building activities, ropes and obstacles courses, and group sessions. Beginning in October, the class will meet for eight monthly meetings. Each daylong session will examine a different area impacting the community and its leaders, including education, local government, state government, healthcare, economic development, human services, criminal justice, agriculture, and quality of life.

This distinguished program has more than 300 graduates and is designed to identify, prepare, and build upon leadership resources without Cullman County by bringing leaders together to discuss the present and future direction of our area, and preparing them for greater involvement through volunteer roles in the community.

THE 2017-18 class consists of:

Dusty Baker, Cullman County Commission on Aging
Kristi Barnett, Wallace State Community College
Bonnie Baty, Cullman Electric Cooperative
Keith Blackwood, Cullman-Jefferson Gas
James Clements, Cullman Regional
Jessi Eidson, Culpepper Real Estate
Meg Glover, Chick-fil-A of Cullman
Becky Goff, United Way of Cullman County

Katie McClendon, American Proteins
Katherine Morgan, State Farm Insurance & Financial Services
Daniel Powell, T&S Perfection Chain Products
Shane Quick, Premier Productions
Will Rusk, Rusken Packaging
Tanya Sears, Cullman County Economic Development
Wesley Smith, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce
Jeff Tolbert, Trident Marina
Tim Verano, REHAU Automotive
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