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Official Newsletter

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Chamber taking classic to new level for 75th Annual Meeting & Gala

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's 75th Annual Meeting & Gala is sure to be a classic.

With a theme like "Classic Cullman," it better be.

The Chamber will usher in its 75th year in style on March 8 at Stone Bridge Farms with

March 8, 2018
Stone Bridge Farms
Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

an evening full of memories, history and celebration honoring its past, present and future. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., and the program will begin at 6 p.m., with a lively after party to follow. Attire is black tie.

Highlights of the evening include:

- The Chad Fisher Band, featuring members of St. Paul & The Broken Bones
- An exquisite, 1940s-inspired meal
- Decade-by-decade displays highlighting the Chamber's past 75 years
- 75th Anniversary commemorative video
- A time capsule (see Page 2)
- And more!



Presented by Peoples Bank of Alabama, the Annual Meeting & Gala allows us to reflect on the past year's achievements under Chamber Chair Jason Spann, of

American Proteins, who will pass the gavel to Chair-Elect Susan Copeland, of Wallace State Community College. Winners of the Emma Marie Eddleman

Citizenship Award, Small Business of the Year, Ambassador of the Year, and the Mayor's Association's Lucille Galin Award will also be recognized.



Presenting Sponsor
Peoples Bank of Alabama

Piece of history: Time capsule highlights 75th anniversary celebration

Page 2

All tables have been sold, though a limited number of general admission tickets are still available for \$50. For more information or to purchase a ticket, please contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org. Keep an eye on the Cullman Chamber Facebook page for general updates for the Annual Meeting & Gala and other Chamber events.

This year's Annual Meeting & Gala Presenting Sponsor is Peoples Bank of Alabama. EvaBank, Justin Dyar and Team of Lake Homes Realty, and Warren Averett, LLC are Corporate Sponsors, and James R. Smith Trucking is Post Party Sponsor.

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 1104, Cullman, AL 35056-1104 | 256-734-0454 | F: 256-531-9434 | info@cullmanchamber.org
www.cullmanchamber.org | www.visitcullman.org

Piece of history: Time capsule highlights 75th anniversary celebration

There's only one logical way to encapsulate the storied history of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce.

With an actual capsule, of course.

As part of its 75th anniversary, the Chamber is celebrating with a time capsule to be sealed, stored for 50 years and opened in 2068.

So, just who gets the honor of placing items in the time capsule and what kind of items will be permitted?

First, the who:

- Attendee businesses that sponsored tables for the Annual Meeting
- Ten Chamber members

randomly drawn during a Facebook Live broadcast

- Each of the Chamber's community and strategic partners

- Each of Cullman County's 11 municipalities
- The Chamber

Next, the what:

Annual Meeting attending businesses will be allowed to place one sheet (8.5" x 11") with information regarding their business. Each participating member, strategic partner and municipality will receive one specially made commemorative box from the Chamber that they may fill as they wish — so long as it falls within the time capsule guidelines.

Those guidelines include:

- No perishable items
- No loose items
- Any paper items must be laminated to preserve their contents
- All items must fit inside your commemorative box (if applicable)

For more information on the time capsule, Annual Meeting & Gala or the Chamber's 75th anniversary, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.



CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

These beautifully stained wooden boxes commemorating the Chamber's 75th anniversary are currently being distributed to time capsule participants and will eventually be sold at the Chamber.

Young professionals kicking off 2018 slate with EPIC Takeover at Mae's

It's a new year, and thus a new opportunity to join the area's premier young professionals group.

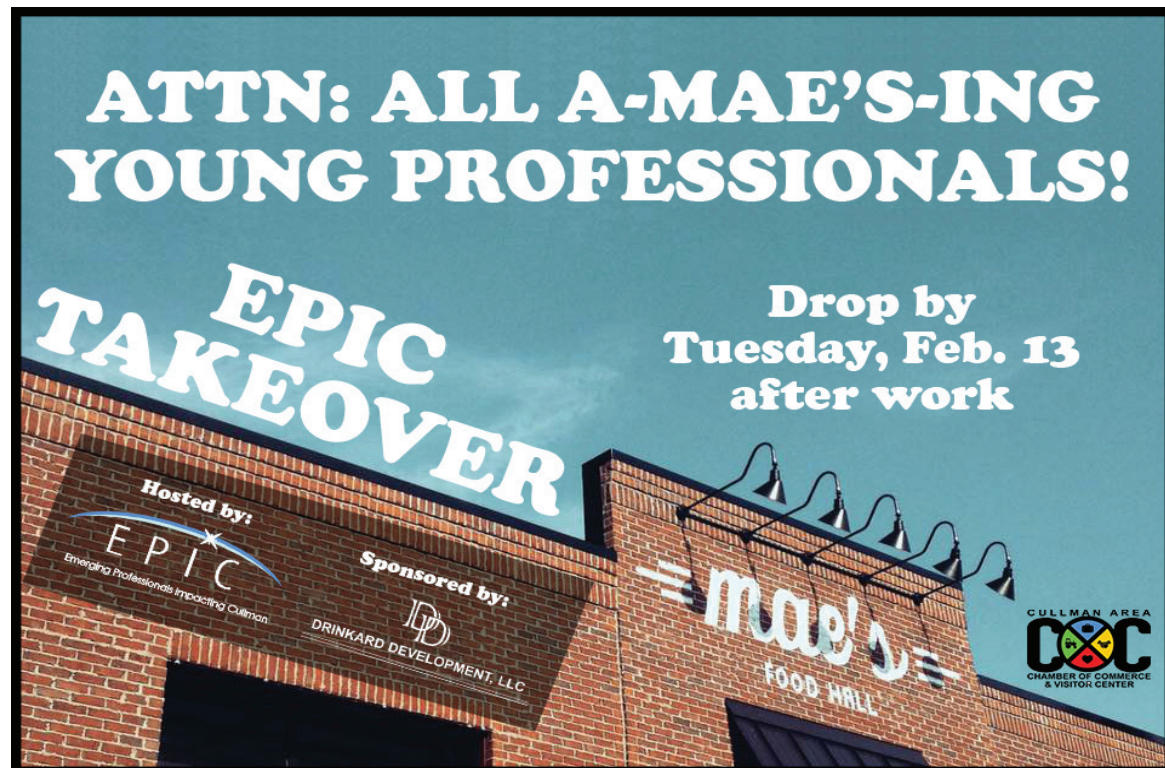
Emerging Professionals Impacting Cullman will kick off its membership drive for 2018 with an EPIC Takeover at Mae's Food Hall on Tuesday, February 13. Stop by the Warehouse District hotspot after work for the chance to network with other young professionals from the Cullman area, see what the Chamber's EPIC group is all about, and enjoy drink specials, giveaways and delicious food while you're at it.

If this sounds like a repeat event, it's because it is. The first EPIC Takeover at Mae's Food Hall went so well last November we knew we had to

do it again — and soon. The fact February 13 also just so happens to be Mardi Gras should make it even more fun.

Sponsored by Drinkard Development, EPIC is always on the lookout for new members between the ages of 21-39 and from all lines of work. The cost for membership is \$100, which includes entry to quarterly socials, as well as invites to professional seminars and recreational activities like takeovers.

For more information or to complete an application, visit www.cullmanchamber.org/epic or contact Wesley Smith, Chamber Director of Entrepreneurship & Education, at 256-734-0454 or wsmith@cullmanchamber.org.



Local delegation addresses jampacked crowd at annual State of the State

Each January, we all begin a new year, fresh with goals and resolutions and plans of how to achieve a better life. Here at the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, we begin each year with the State of the State address from our state delegation — Senator Paul Bussman and Representatives Corey Harbison and Randall Shedd.

The three local leaders (Representative Ed Henry was unable to attend) gave a large Community Crowd at the All Steak an overview of where our state is, what we hope to achieve and how we will get year. Some of the topics included in this year's update were the proposed fuel tax, the State Superintendent and Department of Education, small business development, urban and rural development, the Sheriff's inmate food money system, and tougher domestic violence penalties. It was apparent to all that attended that our delegation wholeheartedly agrees they are a united voice for the people of Cullman County.

The Luncheon began with an update from Rep. Randall Shedd, who spoke about the joint effort between Governor Kay Ivey and Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle, who admirably put politics aside to work for the betterment of Alabama



CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Alabama Senator Paul Bussman addresses a full State of the State crowd at the All Steak last month while Representatives Corey Harbison and Randall Shedd watch on from the head table after making their own remarks.

by recruiting the Toyota-Mazda plant for Limestone County. He alluded to Cullman's strategic location and how our area may be able to see an economic boost because of the announcement. Rep. Shedd went on to discuss the state of the general fund budget and how forward-thinking last year put Alabama in a better financial position than it has been in for many years.

Up next was Rep. Harbison, who announced that he and his wife are expecting their first child, a baby boy, this summer. He went on to discuss many

topics, including more stringent penalties for felony domestic violence offenders who act out in front of minor children. Rep. Harbison also discussed the proposed fuel tax and how it would be distributed if were a statewide tax or a local referendum. Either way, he believes it is up to the people of Cullman County to make the decision to invest in the infrastructure of our area.

Another topic Rep. Harbison brought to light is the current inmate meal plan, which makes food the personal responsibility of the sheriff. With various types of

inmates (local, state, federal), meal costs/reimbursements are varied. There have long been legal challenges to this method in other Alabama counties, so in order to avoid future problems, the delegation and local elected officials are being proactive and giving serious thought and attention to restructuring the law through a local bill. Harbison said Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry is supportive of the bill.

Rounding out the Luncheon was Sen. Bussman, who was clear that Alabama must address issues such as

the state of K-12 education, mental health, and other social matters we have turned a blind eye to for far too long. He discussed his recent meetings with Gov.

Ivey and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) on the cookie-cutter approach ALDOT has taken to the safety barriers that do not work for our community, as well as the lack of oversight the legislature has over the department.

Sen. Bussman discussed how each and every person in his district has the right to be heard and to be fought for in Montgomery, and how he strives each day to do just that.

We are blessed to have a great delegation here in Cullman County. With open lines of communication between the delegation, local elected officials, local municipalities, the Chamber, hospital, public and others, we can be successful when we join together for the betterment of our area.

WRITTEN AND submitted by: Jennifer Taylor, Congressman Robert B. Aderholt's Office, Governmental Affairs Committee Member

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February
Small Business
of the Month

Winner - Anytime Fitness



Supporter
- All Steak
Restaurant



Drinkard Development named January Small Business of the Month



The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center would like to congratulate Drinkard Development as January’s Small Business of the Month, sponsored by the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center.

Home to 12 employees, Drinkard Development has been open since

Drinkard Development
1630 Town Square SW
Cullman, AL 35055
256-739-1815

1963 under the leadership of CEO, President and Cullman icon Roy Drinkard. Mr. Drinkard was a member of the famed Flying 50 responsible for the area’s initial venture into industry and served as the Chamber’s Chairman of the Board from 1953-54. He was named Alabama’s Small Businessman of the Year in 1967 and presented the award by then-Vice President Hubert Humphrey. Today, at 97 years



DRINKARD DEVELOPMENT, LLC

young, Mr. Drinkard is recognized as the oldest living United States Marine.

“The world around us is ever-changing,” Drinkard Development states. “It is our goal to change with it, while at the same time holding true to the core values that have allowed us to maintain a viable presence in our community.”

Drinkard Development is a big believer in the old saying “the customer is always right” and strives to fulfill the desires of their customers by providing them with retail space that not only meets the demands of the tenant, but also meets the demands of today’s consumer.

Drinkard Development is heavily involved in the Chamber and gives back to the community in numerous ways, be it through the recruitment of new business or supporting

Sponsor: Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

various programs that help with education, growth and the area’s sustainability for generations to come. The small business teams with the Chamber as a Converging for Success Strategic Partner, is the Presenting Sponsor of the Chamber’s EPIC young professionals group and also serves as a sponsor for the Chamber’s Youth Leadership class, Total Resource Campaign, and Annual Meeting & Gala.

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 Brian Poole at bpoole@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.

‘Last Chance U’ star Brittany Wagner to speak at February Community Luncheon

It’s not every month you can say you’ve seen one of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce’s Community Luncheon speakers on Netflix.

Unless that month is February, of course.

Star of the hit Netflix documentary series “Last Chance U,” Brittany Wagner will join the Chamber and its membership on Friday, February 16 at the All Steak Restaurant. From 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., guests will be treated to a savory meal, invaluable networking opportunities and Wagner’s highly regarded presentation on “Being Part of the Solution.”

“Last Chance U” follows the three-time NJCAA national champion football program at East Mississippi Community College, where Wagner helped more than 250 athletes reach the next level as a vivacious academic counselor, mentor and mother figure. Now, Wagner travels across the country as a motivational speaker and is the owner of 10 Thousand Pencils, a company geared toward equipping high school and college athletes, administrators, counselors and teachers with academic and life skills.

Tickets are \$15 for Chamber Members and \$20 for future members. Contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org to reserve your seat. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor, Shirley Quattlebaum – State Farm Insurance, and to our February Sponsor, Payroll Services, LLC.



Wagner

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SBDC's Wright talking Small Business Tips at February Morning Blend

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce is shining a light on small business for its second Morning Blend of the year. On Wednesday, February 21 at 8:00 a.m. at Rumors Deli, Heather Wright will lead the discussion on this month's topic: Small Business Tips. Wright is a Small Business Advisor for the UAH SBDC (Small Business Development Center) and advisor for the Chamber's budding Business Resource Center (BRC).

The Chamber staff welcomes members and visitors to attend this free event on the third Wednesday of each month. Coffee will be provided by Presenting Sponsor Karma's Coffee House. February's Sponsor is A-1 Bail Bonds. For more information, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.

BRC AVAILABLE FOR NEW, EXISTING BUSINESSES
Speaking of the BRC, don't forget it's open for business — literally! Been living in a cave and haven't heard of the Business Resource Center since it opened last January? Well, don't fret, because we've got all the details you could ever need.
The BRC is a small room at the Chamber producing big-time results for the area's small business community.

The Chamber's

Morning BLEND

Find out what's happening in the Cullman area

Chamber staff welcomes members and visitors to the back room at Rumors Deli every month to discuss various topics.

Topic: Small Business Tips

Rumors Deli, 105 1st Ave NE, Cullman, AL

Presented by: KARMA'S COFFEE HOUSE

Sponsored by: A-1 BAIL BONDS LLC

FEB. 21

8-9AM

Presenting Sponsor
Karma's Coffee House
Monthly Sponsor
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Its emergence coincides with the Chamber's launching of a five-year strategic plan focused on four key initiatives — Community Development, Existing Business Growth & Professional Sector Recruiting, Entrepreneurship & Education, and Business & Community Advocacy. Thanks to a strong partnership with the Alabama SBDC Network, the Chamber and BRC have already created several opportunities for success in each area.

For more information about the BRC or to schedule an appointment, contact Wesley Smith, Chamber Director of Entrepreneurship & Education, at 256-734-0454 or wsmith@cullmanchamber.org.

- That far-reaching impact can largely be tied to the seemingly endless list of services offered through the BRC. Said list includes, but certainly isn't limited to:
- Pre-counseling
 - Business plan creation
 - Professional business counseling
 - Financial borrowing and lending assistance
 - Location services
 - Market research plan development
 - Healthcare benefit guidance
 - Disaster recovery awareness programs
 - Importing and exporting support
 - Localized business connections
 - Continued follow-up for new businesses for two years
- Though the BRC is housed at the Chamber, its services aren't just for Chamber members. And better yet, almost

BRC

BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER

A SERVICE OF THE CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

all resources and training — which are geared for both new and existing businesses alike — are completely free.

If you're still on the fence about trying out the BRC, then maybe a few eye-opening statistics will help get you in the door. After all, the proof is often in the numbers.

In the last year:

- More than 70 businesses have utilized the BRC
- Eleven small businesses have been helped from the pre-venture stage to opening
- More than 16 small businesses have been able to keep their doors open because of the BRC
- Seventy-four jobs have been created through the BRC, and another 124 have been retained
- Nearly \$13 million of small business funding has been closed on in the BRC, with more over \$100 million still in the pipeline

For more information about the BRC or to schedule an appointment, contact Wesley Smith, Chamber Director of Entrepreneurship & Education, at 256-734-0454 or wsmith@cullmanchamber.org.

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Industry Tour attendees gather for a group shot after getting the opportunity to check out Louisiana-Pacific Corporation (LP) in Hanceville last month. LP is an engineered wood building products manufacturer.



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An LP tour guides gives attendees an up-close look at the plant's lumber yard while a crane prepares to lift logs early during the manufacturing process.

Hanceville's Louisiana-Pacific Corp. hosts latest Industry Tour

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce hosted its 2017-18 4th Quarter Industry Tour at Louisiana-Pacific Corporation (LP) in Hanceville on January 11. The Tour was sponsored by REHAU. LP is an engineered wood building products manufacturer with mills in the United States, Canada, Brazil and China. The Nashville-based company was founded in 1973 and pioneered the U.S. production of oriented strand board (OSB) panels. Constructed in 1994, LP's Hanceville plant is 249 acres with 484,000 square feet under its

**Quarterly Sponsor
REHAU**

roof. More recent major capital projects have included the ability to burn their bark and the addition of a new press, new regenerative thermal oxidizers (RTOs), new sander and LP's TechShield line. LP has gotten behind the Hanceville facility in a big way, selecting the site for a new OSB applied technology lab. The Hanceville plant employs 161 people, utilizes four shifts and has a capacity of 418 million square feet. The latter number is constantly growing and likely to rise to a record

high for a third straight year. Hanceville's mill uses approximately 674,000 tons of wood a year or 26,000 truckloads, which translates to 95 loads a day. The plant's "wood basket" comes from 57 timber suppliers spread over 6,760,975 timberland acres in North Alabama. The average haul is 52 miles. LP is extremely environmentally and safety-minded. The company's procurement operations have been third-party certified against Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards, and 100 percent of its suppliers are trained professionals. Addition-

ally, the plant uses the entirety of every log, with zero waste. On the safety side, the Industry Tour marked the 973rd consecutive day without injury for LP's Hanceville site. LP's manufacturing process begins with logs arriving by truck and includes sorting, debarking, stranding, placement in wet bins, drying, blending, forming, pressing, fitting and finishing. In addition to OSB panels, the Hanceville plant makes two of LP's most popular lines: TopNotch sub-flooring and TechShield Radiant Barrier Sheathing. After cardboard protectors

are applied and one last round of quality inspection, products are strapped and ready for warehousing or shipping. Thank you to LP for hosting the Industry Tour and for contributing to the vitality of the Cullman area. The Chamber's next Industry

Tour will be Thursday, March 22 at T&S Perfection Chain Products in South Vinemont. Space is limited for this Tour, sponsored by Inland Buildings, so contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org to reserve your spot.



111 1st Street NE
Cullman, Alabama 35055
cullman@sipsnstrokes.com

In addition to our public classes found on our online calendar, ask us about:

- Birthday Parties
- Team-Building Events
- Fundraisers
- Corporate Parties
- Kids Classes
- And More!

Active shooter training on tap at Biscuits & Business

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's first Biscuits & Business of the year is one you definitely won't want to miss. If you're ever faced with an active shooter in the workplace or elsewhere, it could very well save your life.

Peoples Bank of Alabama will serve as host and sponsor at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 14 as Deputy Chad Whaley with the Cullman County Sheriff's Office provides ALICE training to all who attend. ALICE (Alert, Lock-down, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training prepares individuals to handle the threat of an active shooter. ALICE teaches individuals how to achieve their own survival while also leading others to safety.

BISCUITS & BUSINESS

FEBRUARY 14TH

8:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M.

HOSTED & SPONSORED BY:


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of ALABAMA
www.peoplesbankal.com

Host & Sponsor -
Peoples Bank of Alabama

Biscuits & Business includes breakfast and is free to attend, but reservations are required.

February 14, 2018
FREE | RSVP

Please contact 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org to register.



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Retooled Visit Cullman AL App primed for early March launch

In the past, visitors to the Cullman area accessed information about attractions, restaurants and shopping opportunities by searching the brochure rack at a state rest area or stopping by a gas station and asking the attendant where to find a good bite to eat.

Yet, with the rapid development of information technology over the past two decades, these methods are quickly fading away. To stay abreast with these changes in how people access information, especially through their phones, the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center released its first version of the Visit Cullman AL App a little over a year ago.

This initial application, which provided access to events, attractions, shopping and dining options in Cullman County, was extremely successful with more than 2,700 downloads over the past 12 months. In spite of this success, the swift pace of technological change has already rendered the initial app outdated and in need of some improvements.

In order to embrace this constantly changing environment, the Chamber is currently developing a new version to address the current needs of visitors either planning a trip or simply wanting quick, easily accessible information while passing through the area.

The new app will be available for download via the App Store on iPhone and the Play Store on Android beginning in March.

The biggest priority and guiding principle in the new design was making it much easier for visitors to not only navigate and find what they're looking for in Cullman County, but to also research the area and discover new things to see.

"Our main concern in developing the new app was creating a better design that would be much more user-friendly than the current one," said Brian Poole, the Chamber's Director of Business Development & Investor Relations. "We focused on enhancing the app's map location system and also included phone, web and social media links to allow users to access what they're looking for in multiple formats."

With the new map location feature, visitors can easily get GPS-based directions to their desired location with the simple click of a link. The app will also feature current phone numbers, web addresses and social media links to events, attractions, venues, restaurants and shops throughout the area.

Additionally, the app will be updated on a regular basis, meaning the user will always have access to the latest — and correct — information about all things Cullman County.

The Chamber also plans to notify local hotels and business owners about the new version of the app to ensure their customers know where they can find and download it while in the area, thus guaranteeing they have access to everything Cullman County has to offer.

"Our goal with this new app is to make sure visitors can easily find anything they may want to enjoy, whether they're just passing through or staying awhile," said Roger Steele, the Chamber's Interim Director of Tourism. "We believe this new design will accomplish just that."

For more information about the Visit Cullman AL App or tourism in general, contact Roger Steele at 256-734-0454 or rsteale@visitcullman.org.

