Young professionals hitting the links with EPIC Putts & Pints

Emerging Professionals Impacting Cullman (EPIC) is taking over Cross Creek Golf Course for its second quarter social for the second year in a row! Join us at 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 21 for Putts & Pints, which will take place in the clubhouse and spill over to the chipping/putting green for a number of fun activities and giveaways.

Presented by: Drinkard Development
Sponsored by: HomTex, Inc.

This year’s Member Appreciation Day meal is going to include a special side — a heaping helping of Chamber history. Not only will the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce treat current member businesses and individuals to free lunch from Stone Bridge Farms on Wednesday, June 27th, but it will also use the opportunity to seal its 75th anniversary time capsule. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Chamber breezeway. The time capsule, which was ceremoniously closed at the Chamber’s 75th Annual Meeting & Gala in March, will officially be sealed at noon. The capsule will then double as a decorative breezeway fixture until its opened in 2068.

Please send your company’s head count — each business is limited to five attendees — to Chamber Director of Member Services Megan Bartlett at mbartlett@cullmanchamber.org by Wednesday, June 20th. There is no cost to attend.

Thank you to our Member Appreciation Day Presenting Sponsor, Stone Bridge Farms; our Corporate Sponsors, ADS Security, American Proteins, Inc., Cellular Sales/Premium Verizon Retailer, Cultured Marble of Cullman, James R. Smith Trucking, TDI Smith Lake and Walmart Transportation; and our Beverage Sponsor, Pepsi Cola Distributing Company.

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
The return of the Cullman area’s coolest summer festival is less than a week away! Starting June 8th in beautiful Downtown Cullman, 2nd Fridays will again be the place to be for locals and visitors alike, touting THREE stages, TWO kids zones, and the same great opportunities for eating local and shopping late you can’t get any other time of year.

Think that’s all the Cullman Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram-sponsored shindig has in store for the summer? Of course not! This year’s first of four monthly events, proudly presented by the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center and Cullman Parks, Recreation, & Sports Tourism, will also feature:

- Avenue G on the Cullman Dairy Queen Grill & Chill Restaurant Stage
- Johnathan East on the Shirley Quattlebaum State Farm Insurance Stage
- The SBGs on the Rock the South Stage
- Year 2 of the James R. Smith Trucking Artist Alley, nestled between Clark Street and 1st Street NE
- The much-anticipated return of the Branham Accessories – Line-X antique and classic car Cruise-In

The party isn’t just reserved for June 8th, either. Mark your calendars now to join us July 13th, August 10th and September 14th for another three months of 2nd Fridays fun.

Admission is completely free, but don’t forget your pocketbook to support area eateries, merchants, vendors, artists and farmers!

Attendees are highly encouraged to bring their own chairs as well.

The Show Lot, located across from the Stiefelmeyer Building on 1st Avenue SE near Highway 278, will open up to various recreational displays throughout the summer. Other 2nd Fridays activities planned for 2018 are a water balloon tossin’ contest, a dunkin’ booth and mechanical bull ridin’.

For updates each month, be sure to check out the event Facebook page: 2nd Fridays Cullman. For more information or to apply as a live musician, artist, pop-up shop vendor or food vendor, visit cullmanchamber.org/2ndFridays or contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.
2018 2nd Quarter Intern Insight – Jessup Moore

Where did you attend school? What was your major and why?

I recently graduated from the University of North Alabama, where I earned my Bachelor of Business Administration in Economics. I was drawn to this major for a few reasons. The first was because of my curiosity of how and why people behave and interact the way they do in a free and ever-changing marketplace. The second was because I saw how adjacent neighborhoods can be very different, and I wanted to go into a career field that would give me the opportunity to help improve daily life for everyone.

What business skills have you acquired at the Chamber?

During my time as the Chamber intern, I was able to truly polish my soft skills as a communicator and learn the ebbs and flows of a fast-paced business environment. I believe that if someone is going to work in an office with as many moving parts as this one, they need to work in an intern-like position for some period of time just to understand the daily protocol. Another important skill I took from this internship is learning what pieces go into planning for an event. There will always be some kind of event to put on and plan for, and there is a lot that goes into that.

What have you learned about the Chamber and its position in the community?

The Chamber holds an enormous stake in this community. It facilitates communication between all area business and gives different players in the community a platform to collaborate with each other and create better futures for all parties. The Chamber is the catalyst for growth and sustainability in this community. Without it, many parts of the community would become stagnant.

How will this internship affect your future plans?

The Chamber has already affected my future by giving me the incredible opportunity to put my degree to use and continue working here as an Analytics and Data Specialist. It is the perfect next step in my young career, and I could not be more appreciative. I enjoy working here very much and am looking forward to help carry out the initiatives laid out in the Chamber’s strategic plan.

What can you take away from this internship and apply to your career of choice?

From this internship, I can take away many lasting relationships that will be very beneficial down the road, as well as the soft business skills most don’t realize they lack — tasks as simple as properly answering the phone, all the way to developing stronger research and presentation skills. I could not have planned a better first step for my career, and I am so thankful to have been given this opportunity.

Morning Blend shining light on downtown revitalization

Come join the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce the morning of Wednesday, June 20 for delicious coffee and great discussion at our Morning Blend, held every third Wednesday of each month from 8 to 9 a.m. at Rumors Deli near the corner of Main Avenue and U.S. Highway 278. The Chamber staff welcomes members and visitors to attend this free event.

Representatives from Cullman Parks, Recreation, & Sports Tourism, the City of Hanceville, and the Chamber will lead the discussion for June’s topic: Downtown Revitalization. Coffee will be provided by Presenting Sponsor Karma’s Coffee House. June’s sponsor is the Cullman County Soil & Water Conservation District.

For more information, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.
Area tourism taking turn in spotlight at annual awards breakfast

Don’t forget to grab your tickets, because the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center’s annual Tourism Awards are almost here! The 2018 event, again sponsored by The Community Shopper’s Guide, is slated for Thursday, June 14th at 8 a.m.

In conjunction with the celebration of the Alabama Bicentennial, this year’s theme is “Cullman People,” highlighting the people and personalities who have helped make Cullman County an exceptional tourism destination. The program will include breakfast and the announcement of this year’s winners. The event will take place at Stone Bridge Farms located at 281 County Road 717 in Cullman. Table sponsorships start at $250 and include reserved seating for eight in a prime location with table signage. The Community Shopper’s Guide is serving as Presenting Sponsor, and The Cullman Times is Corporate Sponsor. Gold, silver and bronze table sponsorships are all available.

To reserve tickets for the 2018 Cullman Area Tourism Awards, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org. Space is limited, and seats will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.
Warren Averett named May Small Business of the Month

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center would like to congratulate Warren Averett, LLC as May’s Small Business of the Month.

Warren Averett has grown substantially in recent years, becoming one of the largest accounting firms in the Southeast and ranking among the top 35 firms in the United States. The company provides solutions that span beyond audit and tax to include corporate advisory, technology, risk and HR solutions, financial services, and personal services. Warren Averett serves thriving companies and organizations in numerous industries, including healthcare, education, non-profits, manufacturing and distribution, construction and real estate, technology and life sciences.

Warren Averett’s overall mission is to provide innovative accounting, tax and business consulting services of exceptional value and superior quality. The firm recognizes the client as its most important asset and considers innovation key, creating an Innovation Taskforce and continuing to make strides in its service areas through in-house specialty groups and experts.

Warren Averett strives to uphold the highest ethical standards and is committed to sharing its success with its communities. The firm fulfills this commitment through time, encouragement and monetary support, and encourages employees to get out in the community, help out and make a difference.

Warren Averett’s Cullman office is very active in the Chamber, serving as a Corporate Sponsor for the Annual Meeting & Gala and Industry Appreciation reception, having a representative in the Chamber Ambassador program, speaking to students in the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!), and attending EPIC young professional events and other Chamber functions. Firm-wide, Warren Averett has “Community Champions” in each office to help implement initiatives benefiting their communities, such as an annual back-to-school supply drive, United Way giving campaigns, Compasion International and the National Wear Red Campaign.

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 Small Business of the Year, which is presented at the Chamber’s Annual Meeting & Gala.

Chamber partnering with Livability Media for national marketing program

Because of your interest in the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce and its partners, we wanted to make sure you know about our plans to market the Cullman area to a national audience.

In a significant expansion of our digital marketing efforts, we are working with Livability Media to promote the Cullman area online, in print and via social media. It will be the centerpiece of our marketing efforts.

The key elements are:

• Dedicated pages about our community on Livability.com, which reaches more than 10 million visitors a year.
• Digital content optimized for all devices, including mobile — the “center of gravity” of communications today.

The annual Livability Cullman Area, Alabama magazine, a top-quality publication that will tell our story to nationally targeted audiences and prospects for relocation or business investment.

• A robust digital version on the magazine in digital format to be shared via links, email or social media.

Ashton Reason, our Livability Media representative, has begun contacting Chamber members to discuss how their businesses can participate in this program and gain year-round exposure to a vital target audience. To request a meeting and learn more about advertising opportunities, please email areason@livmedia.com or call 281-961-4472.

To learn more about Livability Media, visit livabilitymedia.com or find them on Facebook at facebook.com/livability.

As always, we appreciate your support. We firmly believe this partnership will only benefit the Cullman area and shine a wider, brighter light on all the wonderful aspects that make our community the ideal place to live, work and play.

Leah Bolin
President, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce
The 2017-18 Youth Leadership Cullman County class capped off a successful year with a graduation ceremony Thursday, May 17 inside Belle Vue Hall at Stone Bridge Farms. This year’s Presenting Sponsor was R.E. Garrison Trucking. The Graduation Sponsor was American Proteins, Inc., which was represented by Josh Singleton. Mr. Singleton, as well as Chamber Chair Susan Copeland (Wallace State Community College), Youth Leadership Co-Chairs Wes Moore (City of Cullman), Natalie Godwin (Wallace State Community College) and Micah Rice (Cold Springs K-8), Chamber Director of Entrepreneurship & Education Wesley Smith, and Chamber President & CEO Leah Bolin, all provided remarks to the 22 graduates and their family members. Kyle Willoughby, the Vice Chair of Entrepreneurship & Education on the Chamber’s Board of Directors, led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. Per tradition, each high school junior was given the opportunity to take the podium and share their experiences — often in entertaining fashion — from each session throughout the nine-month program: Experiencing Leadership Day, Education & Etiquette Day, Tourism & Community Day, Quality of Life Day, Public Safety Day, Local Government Day, Business & Industry Day, Agriculture Day, and State Government Day.

The evening culminated with the presentation of the graduates’ plaques, which were donated by Video & Awards Sponsor, Awards Palace. On behalf of the 2017-18 Youth Leadership class listed below, thank you to all the sponsors, businesses and individuals that made this year possible!

YOUTH LEADERSHIP GRADUATES

Matthew Blair, Cold Springs
Sydney Newton, Cold Springs
Mary Kate Stanford, Cullman
Klowy Barrett, Cullman Christian
Iva Burdette, Cullman Christian
Nolan Warner, Cullman Christian
Riley Carroll, Fairview
Kristen Hayes, Fairview
Lindsey Couch, Good Hope
James McWhorter, Good Hope
Tess Brown, Hanceville
Chandler Lane, Hanceville
Korey Butler, Holly Pond
Hailey Crumbley, Holly Pond
Kara Hollis, Holly Pond
Seth Self, Holly Pond
Paige Tackett, Home School
Shiloh Walker, Home School
Elliot Deep, St. Bernard
Emma Pierce, St. Bernard
Trey Boland, Vinemont
Sadie Junkins, West Point

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated the graduation of its 2017-18 Youth Leadership class in May at Stone Bridge Farms. Pictured, from right to left, are Tess Brown, Korey Butler, Paige Tackett, Hailey Crumbley, Sadie Junkins, Iva Burdette, Klowy Barrett, Sydney Newton, Emma Pierce, Mary Kate Stanford, Kristen Hayes, Shiloh Walker, Lindsey Couch, Chandler Lane, Trey Boland, Seth Self, Elliot Deep, Matthew Blair, Nolan Warner, James McWhorter and Riley Carroll. Not pictured is Kara Hollis.

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Leadership Cullman County graduates 2017-18 class

The 2017-18 Leadership Cullman County class celebrated its graduation with a bit of championship bling on Tuesday, May 22 at TP Country Club.

Before imparting his wisdom on this year’s participants, guest speaker Jeremiah Castille passed around three shiny Alabama football national championship rings from his time as a chaplain for the Crimson Tide. Mr. Castille played under legendary coach Paul “Bear” Bryant during his college career, went on to spend six seasons in the NFL and is set to host the 11th annual Castille Character Camp in Cullman on June 9th at Cullman High School.

At the conclusion of his time at the podium, Mr. Castille was presented with a $500 donation to the Jeremiah Castille Foundation on behalf of the Chamber for Charities program.

The 2017-18 Leadership class was presented by American Proteins, Inc. Inline Electric Supply Co. served as Graduation Sponsor. Thank you to every sponsor, business and individual that contributed to this year’s class!

The Chamber is currently seeking nominations for participants in the 2018-19 Leadership Cullman County class, which will begin in September with a retreat. Class size is limited to 20 participants. Monthly session topics include education, local government, state government, healthcare, economic development, human services, criminal justice, agriculture and quality of life. Tuition is $575, which covers all expenses associated with the program. To nominate someone (self-nominations are also encouraged), please fill out an application online at www.cullmanchamber.org/leadership-cullmancounty or call 256-734-0454 for more information. The deadline to apply is July 31st.

Concours Mold to host 2nd Quarter Industry Tour

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce’s 2nd Quarter Industry Tour will be held at Concours Mold on Thursday, June 21. The event is sponsored by HH Technologies, Inc. and will start at 10 a.m., though participants are encouraged to arrive around 9:45 a.m.

Because of the nature of these tours, open-toed shoes, loose jewelry and loose clothing are prohibited. Steel-toe shoes are recommended but not required.

Concours Mold is located at 901 24th St. SW in Cullman Industrial Park I near Golf Course Road. The company, which opened its Cullman facility in 2004, is a mold manufacturer, supplier and distributor for the automotive, heavy trucks and consumer goods industries in the United States and around the world.

Industry Tours are free to attend. Space is extremely limited, so registration is required. For more information or to register, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmandirectory.com.
Chamber holds 2nd Chick-fil-A State of Our Communities event

This year’s Chick-fil-A State of Our Communities was again a huge success, taking place Friday, April 27 at the Cullman Civic Center. The Cullman area has been growing by leaps and bounds for several years, and we are so grateful to hold this all-day event celebrating all the good things happening in our communities. As many are aware, the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce is well into its five-year strategic plan to continue in this positive direction. By working together and coordinating efforts, we can show everyone just how great Cullman County is of a destination to live, work and play.

The State of Our Communities was highlighted by four major sessions — the State of Education, State of Healthcare, State of Local Government and a Legislative Forum. Also included were breakout rooms related to tourism and recreation, human services, utilities, the Chamber, education and the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) Trade Show.

Sponsored by Wallace State Community College, the State of Education kicked off the morning with glowing reports from Wallace State’s Kristen Holmes, Cullman County Schools Superintendent Shane Barnette and Cullman City Schools Superintendent Susan Patterson. The session was punctuated by the revealing of Grace Chambers (Cold Springs) as Student of the Year and Russell McDonald (Vinemont) as Career Technical Student of the Year. Russell is the first student to ever be nominated as both Student of the Year and Career Technical Student of the Year. Also recognized during the program were the Student of the Year nominees (Eva Barck, St. Bernard Prep; Meredith Ann Calvert, West Point; Chambers; Carrie Doss, Good Hope; Alivia Gambrill, Farview; Colby Hutson, Cullman; McDonald; Katlin Schultz, Hanceville; and Isaac Smith, Holly Pond), Career Technical Student of the Year nominees (Ethan Burson, Vinemont & CATA; Hunter Kaser, Good Hope and CATA; and McDonald), Cullman City Elementary Teacher of the Year (Patti Britton, East Elementary), Cullman City Secondary Teacher of the Year (Kim Johnson, Cullman Middle School), Cullman County Elementary Teacher of the Year (Letha Miller, Holly Pond Elementary), and Cullman County Secondary Teacher of the Year (LaTisha Jackson, Good Hope High School).

The State of Healthcare was up next, sponsored by Katherine Morgan – State Farm Insurance & Financial Services. The panel discussion was emceed by Cullman Electric Cooperative’s Brian Lacy and featured Cullman Regional Chief Nursing Officer Charna Brown, WellStone Behavioral Health COO Chris Van Dyke and Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry. The progress Cullman Regional is making with additional beds, urgent care facilities and additional services is an anomaly at a time when it is becoming more and more difficult for quality healthcare to survive in rural areas. We are certainly blessed here in Cullman County; however, it was eye-opening to see the unmet needs not only in the area but in our entire state. Mental health across the nation must be addressed, and we locally have a wonderful taskforce starting to figure out how we can take care of our neighbors in Cullman County. It is indicative of our local leaders to be proactive, and here they are again taking the lead on one of our most pressing issues.

Lunchtime brought the State of Local Government, sponsored by American Proteins, Inc. Cullman County Commission Chairman Kenneth Walker touted the recent improvements in and around Smith Lake Park, including the resurfacing of the roadway leading to the park and the newly expanded six-lane boat ramp. The Mayors for the City of Cullman (Woody Jacobs), City of Hanceville (Kenneth Nail) and City of Good Hope (Jerry Bartlett) all reported on the robust economic development their areas have been experiencing with the addition of new employers in each municipality. Local businesses such as AGCOR Steel have chosen to reinvest in our community instead of relocate. We can’t be prouder for them to call our area home, while we’re also overjoyed to welcome new neighbors like Met-South in Hanceville.

The day came to a close with a Legislative Forum sponsored by James R. Smith Trucking. Each and every area candidate running for the Alabama Senate and House of Representatives attended this session. Participants were Paul Bussman and Garlan Gudger (AL Senate District 4), Corey Harbison and Alex Chaney (AL House District 12), and James R. Bowling, Justin Morrow and Scott Stadthagen (AL House District 9). All candidates spoke from their heart about why they’re running, what they hope to accomplish, the biggest problems currently facing the area and how they intend to serve Cullman County. We sincerely hope you will get out and vote for your choice during the June 5th primary election.

Thank you to all our sponsors, speakers, attendees, vendors, volunteers and everyone who made this event a success. We can’t wait to unveil our improvements to make it even better in 2019! As the saying goes, third time is always a charm!

Written and submitted by:
Jennifer Taylor
Congressman Robert B. Aderholt’s Office
Governmental Affairs Committee Member