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Chamber's Total Resource Campaign (TRC) primed for another successful season

Come on down — you could be the next contestant on “The Chamber Life is Right!”

We’re not talking game shows, though. We’re actually talking about the return of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center’s Total Resource Campaign (TRC). Our trusty troop of volunteers will officially kick off this year’s membership and sponsorship drive with renewals from July 11-29 before moving on to open season from August 16-October 5.

The TRC was developed to assist members and provide additional services to area business. Offering “at cost” sponsorships provides members with affordable marketing options and prime opportunities to

Contact Director of Member Services Magan Bartlett at 256-734-0454 or mbartlett@cullmanchamber.org for more information.

engage with the public. This year’s theme, “The Chamber Life is Right,” is a fun reminder of

these “priced right” promotions. Sponsorships are only open to Chamber members,

and new opportunities are being added for 2018-19. Every business is encouraged to take advantage of the TRC, as well as all Chamber benefits.

This year’s TRC leadership consists of Chair, Kay Shabel (MoMoSHE 103), and Vice Chairs, Jimmy Hodges (Wallace State Community College) and Wendy Cridler (Cullman County Industrial Development Board). Shabel also serves as Vice Chair of Membership & Marketing on the Chamber’s Executive Board of Directors.

If interested in becoming a Chamber member or sponsoring a Chamber program or event, please contact Director of Member Services Magan Bartlett at 256-734-0454 or mbartlett@cullmanchamber.org for a list of volunteers.



Deadline approaching for 2018-19 Leadership class nominations

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

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce

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www.cullmanchamber.org | www.visitcullman.org

Second helping of 2nd Fridays set for July 13th

The first 2nd Fridays of 2018 was an absolute blast! How about we do it again in July?! Downtown Cullman will be rockin' for another round of 2nd Fridays on July 13th, offering locals and visitors alike 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.

But that's not all the Cullman Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram-sponsored shindig has in store for July. Not by a mile. This year's second of four monthly events, proudly presented by the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center and Cullman Parks, Recreation, & Sports Tourism, will also feature:

- The Pragmatics on the Dairy Queen Grill & Chill Restaurant Stage
- Overtones on the Shirley Quattlebaum - State Farm Insurance Stage
- Kent DuChaine on the Artist Alley Stage
- The ever-growing Branham Accessories - Line-X antique and classic car Cruise-In
- Ladies Night at Depot Park, featuring Sips N Strokes Art in the Park, Yoga in the Park and spa services from Bella Faire' Day Spa & Salon
- The James R. Smith Trucking Artist Alley,

with artists, Chamber member pop-up shops and music lining 1st Street NE

• Farm Y'all, sponsored by the Cullman County Industrial Development Authority and highlighted by a specially opened Festhalle Farmers Market

• The R.E. Garrison Trucking Show Lot,

with recreational displays, the Buffalo Wild Wings Kids Zone,

For updates, check out the event Facebook page: 2nd Fridays Cullman.

a Dunkin' Booth sponsored by Cullman Pool Store and the Cullman

County Public Library Bookmobile

• A salsa food demonstration, sponsored by American Proteins, Inc.

• Extended retail and dining hours at participating Cullman Warehouse District and Downtown Cullman stores

• Food trucks
• The Cullman County

Conservation District's Agventure trailer

• And much, much more!

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.

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.

2nd Fridays snaps



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Concours Mold hosts Chamber's 2nd Quarter Industry Tour

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce hosted its 2018 2nd Quarter Industry Tour at Concours Mold on Thursday, June 22nd. The tour was sponsored by HH Technologies.

Concours Mold is a North American leader in the mold manufacturing industry with locations in Windsor, Ontario, Canada; Puebla, Mexico; and Cullman. The Cullman plant primarily deals with automotive molds and regularly does work for REHAU, Royal Technologies and other similar companies. Concours is a trusted OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) partner along supply chains for automotive



manufacturers like Volkswagen and Nissan.

Ten years after building its headquarters — a two-man, 4,000 square foot tool shop — in Canada, Concours strategically chose to add a Southeastern location

in Cullman in 2004. It wasn't until mid-2007 that Mark Rocks decided to make the move from up North for what he thought would be a one-year stint as the plant's General Manager. Cullman's facility expanded to

45 full-time employees later that year, and Mr. Rocks has been happy to call Cullman County home ever since.

Cullman's Concours plant is 25,000 square feet with five additional acres of land for eventual expansion. The local

facility is not responsible for making molds on-site, instead building pieces of molds or servicing or modifying them. The process of altering a mold is a complex one that involves computer-guided systems to help reshape them, along with a lot of manual grinding, polishing and welding to meet the customer's various needs.

Concours Mold understands the tediousness of its industry and is extremely conscious of investing back into the employees it depends on every day. The company challenges its team members to work smarter, not harder and considers safety and quality two of its most important prin-

cipals. Unbeknownst to many, Concours also offers an impressive array of fringe benefits, including company-paid health insurance, a flexible healthcare spending card, IRA matching up to 3 percent and profit-sharing twice a year.

Thank you to Mr. Rocks and Concours Mold for hosting this Industry Tour and contributing to the economic vitality of the Cullman area. The Chamber's next Industry Tour is scheduled for Thursday, September 20th at HomTex. Space is limited, so contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org to reserve your spot.

Beloved sitcom character inspiring July's Morning Blend theme

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: Hello, Cullman, We're Listening
Rumors Deli, 601 4th St. SW, Cullman, AL

Presented by:
KARMA'S COFFEE HOUSE
Where Good People Come For Good Coffee

Sponsored by:
SERVPRO
of Cullman/Blount Counties

JULY 18 8-9AM

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center is channeling its inner-Frasier Crane for July's Morning Blend, playing off

Presenting Sponsor - Karma's Coffee House
Monthly Sponsor - Servpro of Cullman/Blount Counties

the iconic character's signature radio sign-on with the theme, "Hello, Cullman, We're Listening." This will be

the perfect chance for members and visitors to join the Chamber staff to discuss any and all community happenings and upcoming events.

This month's Morning Blend is slated for Wednesday, July 18 at 8:00 a.m. at Rumors Deli near the corner of Main Avenue and U.S. Highway 278. Delicious coffee and snacks will be provided by Presenting Sponsor Karma's Coffee House. July's sponsor is Servpro of Cullman/Blount Counties.

The Chamber's Morn-

ing Blend is a free event held on the third Wednesday of every month.

For more information, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454.

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Chamber seeking ambitious young entrepreneurs for Year 2 of YEA! program

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is going places in Year 2 of the local program.

To end Year 1, it literally took a couple of Cullman area students all the way to Rochester, New York for the opportunity to secure scholarships and start-up funds at the 10th Annual Saunders Scholars National Conference & Competition.

As winners of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center's inaugural YEA! Investor Panel in early April, Cullman High School's Parker Van Dyke and Zane Manley were the pair who earned the all-expenses paid trip to New York to present their student business to an impressive slate of judges and potential investors. Together, the two braved the spotlight and introduced the panel to Instruct Inc, their idea for a website and search engine that connects individuals looking to learn skills or hobbies with those who are qualified to teach them — face to face, not just another how-to video on Youtube.

Though a favorite of several YEA! program directors from across the country, Van Dyke and Manley ultimately didn't crack the finalist cut. Their biggest



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Cullman High School's Zane Manley, right, and Parker Van Dyke take their turn in front of the video camera shortly after arriving in New York for the Saunders Scholars National Conference & Competition.

win, however, came on the way back home to Alabama.

While sitting at the airport with Chamber Director of Entrepreneurship & Education Wesley Smith and chaperone Chris Van Dyke, the Cullman High duo turned to Smith and asked a question that immediately brought a smile to his face, "So, where do we go from here?"

Here were two teenagers, who, for all intents and purposes, were finished with the year-long YEA! program and easily could've chosen to never give Instruct Inc another thought. But instead, they made it known to Smith that they were serious about taking their business

For more information on the application process or YEA! program in general, contact Wesley Smith at 256-734-0454 or wsmith@cullman-chamber.org.

idea and turning it into a full-blown business.

That's what YEA! is all about — and those are the type of ambitious students the Chamber is seeking for Year 2 and beyond. More students like Cullman High's Lindsey Lowery, whose scrumptious Pixie Fudge already has her business in the black and primed for more profits as a 2nd Fridays food vendor under the Festhalle the rest of the summer. Or students

like Holly Pond's T.J. Fallin, who's taken strides this summer to beef up his Lawn Defenders lawn mowing business.

While the 2017-18 YEA! program was taught as a class at only two area high schools, it's being opened to ALL of them for the upcoming year. Cullman City Schools Superintendent Dr. Susan Patterson and Cullman County Schools Superintendent Dr. Shane Barnette have both expressed their support and excitement for the new format.

"I truly believe this program could be a gamechanger for some of our students," said Dr. Barnette.

After several productive talks between the Chamber and YEA! Corporate, a YEA! pilot program unlike any other across the United States has been developed solely for the Cullman area. The class will now be taught once a month for 10 months, similar to the Chamber's longstanding Youth Leadership Cullman County program. Students will meet at the Chamber in the morning and spend the day learning the tools to become a successful entrepreneur.

Over the course of the school year, YEA! students will:

- Brainstorm business ideas
- Write business plans
- Interact with business professionals
- Pitch their business plans to potential investors (think Shark Tank meets The Apprentice)
- Legally register their businesses

- Participate in a YEA! Trade Show
- Actually launch their own businesses or social movements

There are 22 available spots — enough for each area high school to ideally have two representatives — for the YEA! 2018-19 class. Students must be in grades 10-12 and preferably have access to reliable transportation and a laptop. While YEA! tuition can cost up to \$1,000 in some communities, the Chamber has made it completely free for all students in the Cullman area.

YEA! applications are available at the Chamber or can be found online at cullmanchamber.org/yea-application. Deadline to apply is Tuesday, July 31st.

For more information on the application process or YEA! program in general, contact Wesley Smith at 256-734-0454 or wsmith@cullmanchamber.org.

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July Small Business of the Month

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Solution

Quality
STAFFING SOLUTION, INC

Supporter
- East Side
Barber Shop

East Side
Barber Shop
105 5th St SE - Cullman, AL
Next to Busy Bee Cafe
Bo & Scott Waldrep
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Alabama Specialty Clinic named June Small Business of the Month

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center would like to congratulate Alabama Specialty Clinic as June's Small Business of the Month.

Alabama Specialty Clinic opened in 1998 and is owned and operated by Dr. James Thomas and his wife, Lisa. The clinic currently staffs two full-time nurses and four full-time Medical Office Professionals. Alabama Specialty Clinic believes their patients are the most important piece of the puzzle and strives to give the best care to each one every time they walk through the door or call in to the office. The staff realizes that the time of those they serve is a precious commodity and believes that thorough and quick service is of the utmost importance in their field and community.

The employees at Alabama Specialty Clinic truly love the community they serve. The level of passion they have for the community shows in the care they consistently provide to each



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patient. Every member of the staff actively and deliberately seeks ways to improve the experience for their patients on a daily basis. Customer service in the most real form is caring for those around you — and every team member at Alabama Specialty Clinic goes out of their way to make each patient feel as important and valued as they truly are.

Alabama Specialty Clinic is greatly involved in the Chamber and community. The clinic is a partner in the Chamber's "Converging for Success" strategic plan and annually serves as a Corporate Sponsor for the Chamber's Industry Appreciation Reception. In addition to providing consistent and timely service to many businesses and patients within the Cullman and surrounding areas, Dr. Thomas and his staff are also involved in the effort to train Cullman High School students participating in HOSA-Future Health Professionals. Alabama Specialty

Clinic is currently operating out of the former Peoples Bank location at 811 2nd Ave. SW while their permanent office is being repaired from March's hail storm. They can be reached at 256-736-1460.

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.



Area's new football coaches headlining August Community Luncheon

Football season is inching ever closer in Cullman County, and there are new coaches you may not be familiar with at a couple of your favorite area high schools. That's what the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center is looking to fix at its August Community Luncheon, giving members and the community the opportunity to learn more about Cullman's and Hanceville's offseason hires only a week before both teams begin their 2018 campaigns.

Cullman's Matt Plunkett and Hanceville's Cody McCain will be the guests of honor on Friday, Aug. 17 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. inside All Steak Restau-

Presenting Sponsor -
Shirley Quattlebaum -
State Farm Insurance
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rant's banquet room. Each coach will have the chance to tell attendees a little bit about themselves and provide insight on their coaching philosophies and plans for the future.

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.

The Chamber's 2018 Community Luncheon programing is presented by Shirley Quattlebaum - State Farm Insurance. Cullman Electric Cooperative is August's sponsor.

Foust takes home top prize at 2018 Cullman Area Tourism Awards

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center is a big fan of tourism — and we had the décor to prove it at the 2018 Cullman Area Tourism Awards.

This year's event was held on Thursday, June 14 inside Stone Bridge Farms' Belle Vue Hall, celebrating "Cullman People" with commemorative fans spotlighting 20 men and women who've helped put Cullman County on the map over the years. The fans were provided by Presenting Sponsor The Community Shopper's Guide and featured the following personalities: Wesley Britt, "Big Jim" Folsom, Jim Folsom Jr., Chester Freeman, Elaine Fuller, Morgan Smith Goodwin, Kurt Heinecke, Guy Hunt, Jordan Lee, Matt Lee, Mother Angelica, Joyce Nix, Shane Quick, Larry Rowlette aka "Colonel Cullmann," Josh Rutledge, Frank Stitt, Channing Tatum, Jimi Westbrook, Hank Williams Jr. and Brother Joseph Zoettle. The "Cullman People" theme coincided with the second year of the Alabama Tourism Department's three-year Bicentennial celebration.

Director of Tourism Roger Steele gave guests an extensive report on tourism in the Cullman area, speaking primarily on the tourism-specific strategic plan he's



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Tourism Professional of the Year – Ron Foust (Stone Bridge Farms)



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Savvy Retail Sales Associate – Phillip Hicks (Mr. Hicks Mens Wear)



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Silver Spoon Award – Zach Chanin (Strada di Napoli)



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White Glove Award – Tonia Duke (La Quinta Inn & Suites)



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Extraordinary Everyday Eatery – Rumors Deli



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Rockin' Retailer – Werner's Trading Company



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Best Attraction – Skydive Alabama



CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITOR CENTER
Exceptional Festival or Event – Cullman Oktoberfest

currently developing to go hand-in-hand with the Chamber's Converging for Success plan. Said tourism plan will focus on four main areas: Smith Lake, sports tourism, religious tours and agritourism.

Following Steele's report, 2018-19 Tourism Chair Sandy Harris (Smith Lake RV & Cabin Resort) announced the award winners, and Chamber President & CEO Leah Bolin and 2018-19 Tourism Vice-Chair Katie Fine (Karma's Coffee House) presented the awards.

Between the Business and Individual Service categories, eight awards were handed out, highlighted by

the Tourism Professional of the Year. This year's winner was Stone Bridge Farms owner and past Tourism board member Ron Foust.

The Cullman County Museum's Elaine Fuller was also recognized with a retirement gift for her longtime service to the area's tourism industry. *The Cullman Times* served as Corporate Sponsor, and Johnny's Bar-B-Q was Program Sponsor.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners and nominees!

BUSINESS AWARDS

These awards recognize businesses and events that differentiate themselves by provid-

ing exceptional service, anticipating customers' needs and consistently exceeding visitors' expectations.

- Exceptional Festival or Event – Cullman Oktoberfest
- Best Attraction – Skydive Alabama
- Rockin' Retailer – Werner's Trading Company
- Extraordinary Everyday Eatery – Rumors Deli

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE AWARDS

These awards recognize hospitality and frontline individuals who consistently deliver warm, friendly and helpful service, exceed visitors' expectations, anticipate customers' needs

and have received written or verbal feedback about their exceptional service from their colleagues, supervisors or customers.

- White Glove Award – Tonia Duke (La Quinta Inn & Suites)
- Silver Spoon Award –

Zach Chanin (Strada di Napoli)

- Savvy Retail Sales Associate – Phillip Hicks (Mr. Hicks Mens Wear)

- Tourism Professional of the Year – Ron Foust (Stone Bridge Farms)

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