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**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& VISITOR CENTER**

Official Newsletter

Eyes of www.cullmanchamber.org

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Post-party entertainment set for 76th Annual Meeting & Gala

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center's 76th Annual Meeting & Gala is shaping up to be a splash! Presented by Peoples Bank of Alabama, the sold-out event is slated for Thursday, March 7 at Stone Bridge Farms and features a theme — Charting the Course — that will see the Brown Stone Centre transform into an oceanic wonderland.

Though sold out, there is a waiting list for individuals and businesses interested in attending. Please contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org to be added to the waiting list. We will try to accommodate as many requests as absolutely possible.

More details about the Annual Meeting have begun to emerge, and the Chamber is over-the-boat excited to unveil the lineup for this year's

**Presenting Sponsor -
Peoples Bank
of Alabama**

Post-Party Entertainment:

- Keys to Please – A Premier Dual Piano Act
- Smith Farms Wine Tasting Station
- High Seas (And Stakes) Casino Experience
- Deep Water Dance Floor

Attendees are encouraged to pre-register for the Smith Farm Wine Tasting Station. Space-permitting, registration will also be available the night of the event.

Before diving into the Post-Party, guests will be treated to an exquisite dinner, the Chamber's annual report, the passing of the gavels (for both the Chamber Chair and the TRC Chair), and the recognition of the Chamber's Emma Marie Eddleman Citizen of the Year, Small Business of the Year and Ambassa-

March 7, 2019 | Stone Bridge Farms | Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

dor of the Year, as well as the Cullman County Mayor/Commissioner

Association's Lucille Galin Public Service Award.

Current Chamber Chair Susan Cope-land, of Wallace State

Community College, will pass the gavel to Chair-Elect T.J. Franey, of Cullman County Schools, while outgoing TRC Chair Kay Shabel, of Urban Grace, will pass the gavel to Incoming Chair Brian Lacy, of Cullman Electric Cooperative.

Attire is black tie. The "Charting the Course" theme is meant to let members and the community know they can be confident the Chamber is staying the course as we approach Year 3 of our 5-year "Converging for Success" strategic plan.

Thank you to our Annual Meeting Presenting Sponsor, Peoples Bank of Alabama, as well as our Corporate Sponsors, Comfort Care Home Health, EvaBank and Warren Averett, LLC.

Contact the Chamber for more information and to pre-register for the Smith Farm Wine Tasting Station.

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

Area delegation joins forces for jam-packed State of the State luncheon

The Chamber's January Community Luncheon is going to be pretty difficult to top in 2019 — and there are still six more Luncheons left!

A nearly full-capacity crowd welcomed the area's state delegation to the All Steak Banquet Room for the annual State of the State on Friday, Jan. 16. Representatives Randall Shedd (District 11) and Scott Stadthagen (District 9), as well as Senator Garlan Gudger (District 4) each took their turn at the podium, providing Chamber members, community and business leaders, and citizens with updates from Montgomery. Representative Corey Harbison (District 12) was unfortunately unable to attend due to sickness.

The veteran of the group, Shedd used his time to discuss key issues affecting his district that he'll be focusing on this legislative session. As legislative newcomers, Rep. Stadthagen and Sen. Gudger took the opportunity to share their early plans and intentions as they settle in to their respective positions.

Rep. Stadthagen is scheduled to hold a Town Hall Meeting at The Brandin' Iron in West Point on Feb. 5 at 6:00 p.m.



The trio was the first to receive this year's guest speaker gift, a one-of-a-kind desk compass enclosed in a locally designed and crafted box displaying Cullman County's coordinates and the Chamber logo. The gift coincides with the theme — Charting the Course — for the upcoming 76th Annual Meeting & Gala, meant to assure our members and the community that we're staying the course as we approach Year 3 of our 5-year "Converging for Success" strategic plan.

This year's Community Luncheon programming is presented by Shirley Quattlebaum — State Farm Insurance. January's State

of the State was sponsored by Weichert Realtors — Carter & Company.

For more in-depth media coverage from the event, visit The Cullman Tribune (cullmantribune.com/articles/2019/01/18/state-state-shedd-gudger-stadthagen-speak-annual-luncheon) and The Cullman Times (cullmantimes.com/news/infrastructure-career-tech-mental-health-funding-top-goals-for-session/article_39cd7e44-1b8a-11e9-bfbb-7b73ee8d7dec.html). A full video of each legislator's remarks can also be found on Cullman Today's Facebook page at facebook.com/cullmantoday/videos/286077602085524.

Dr. Bruce talking teamwork at February Community Luncheon

The doctor will be in at this month's Community Luncheon.

Dr. Bruce, that is. The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center is pleased to have team-building and leadership expert Dr. Bruce Pieper as guest speaker at its upcoming Community Luncheon on Feb. 15th at All Steak Restaurant. Dr. Bruce, of Emerge2LEAD Consulting, will deliver a presentation — in his infectiously enthusiastic style, of course — titled "Teamwork Makes The Dream Work."

Per usual, the Luncheon will be from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Presenting Sponsor - State Farm Insurance - Shirley Quattlebaum February Sponsor - Payroll Services, LLC

in the banquet room. Tickets are \$15 for Chamber members and \$20 for future members. As with all paid Chamber events, there is a 48-hour cancellation policy. Contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org to reserve your seat.

This year's Community Luncheon programming is sponsored by Shirley Quattlebaum — State Farm Insurance. February's Sponsor is Payroll Services, LLC.

Community Luncheon

February 15 | 11:30 AM
All Steak Restaurant

Speaker: Dr. Bruce Pieper
Emerge2Lead Consulting
"Teamwork Makes the Dream Work"



Presenting Sponsor:



Premier Sponsor:

PAYROLL SERVICES, LLC

BISCUITS & BUSINESS

FEBRUARY 26TH

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

HOSTED & SPONSORED BY:



AL Senator Garlan Gudger speaking at year's 1st Biscuits & Business

It's time to get back in a Biscuits & Business state of mind for the New Year!

The twice-yearly event will make its 2019 debut on Tuesday, Feb. 26 at 8:00 a.m. Peoples Bank

of Alabama will serve as host and sponsor at its main branch on Cherokee Avenue.

Alabama Senator (District 4) Garlan Gudger is headlining the popular networking opportunity.

The Southern Accents Architectural Antiques owner will stop by to discuss his early plans and priorities as he joins the political fold in Montgomery.

Biscuits & Business

includes breakfast and is free to attend, but reservations are required. For more information or to register, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.

Area students glean valuable lessons from YEA! CEO Roundtable

The Cullman area's inaugural Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) CEO Roundtable went off without a hitch on Thursday, Jan. 24, giving local students the chance to interact with and learn from a panel of seasoned CEOs. The event was hosted inside the first floor auditorium of Wallace State Community College's James C. Bailey Building.

The panel of CEOs consisted of Kyle Willoughby, Willoughby Roofing & Sheet Metal; Leah Bolin, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center; and Shane Quick, Premier Productions. YEA! Program Manager and Chamber Director of Entrepreneurship & Education Wes Smith acted as emcee, opening the floor for students to introduce themselves and their business ideas before asking the CEOs a series of questions compiled by the class and its instructors.

Students made sure to stick around after the program and glean as much information as possible from the participating CEOs, who are all products of host and sponsor Wallace State.

"The road to business start-up is sometimes a challenging one," Smith said. "Our objective with this event is to introduce our YEA! stu-



dents to a panel of local CEOs who have been through the process and can share their stories and advice.

"The Chamber is very proud of our YEA! students for the work they've put in so far, and we're excited to see them succeed in the business world."

Currently in its second year locally, YEA! is a six-month program that guides Cullman area

high school students through the process of launching and running their own real businesses or social movements. Students have the chance to receive real start-up cash and scholarships, as well as an all-expenses paid trip to New York for the annual Saunders Scholars National Conference & Competition reserved for the winning individual or pairing at the

Chamber's YEA! Investor Panel (think Shark Tank) in March.

This year's YEA! program is presented by the Wallace State

Community College Innovation Center. The YEA! CEO Roundtable was sponsored by Wallace State Community College, and 412 Public House and Drinkard Development are 2018-19 YEA! Corporate Sponsors.

Instructed by Wallace State Grant Specialist Kristi Barnett, the 2018-19 Cullman area YEA! class is made up of Cole Akridge, Cold Springs; Branson Danecker, Cullman; T.J. Fallin, Holly Pond; Cody Kanaday, Hanceville; Garrett Lee, Cullman; Sara Owens, Good Hope; Hank Radcliff, Hanceville; Lona Shelby, Good Hope; Spencer Smith, Cullman; and Nathan Steele, Cullman.

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Local government takes spotlight for Chamber leadership classes

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center's adult and youth leadership classes each spent January learning about local government.

Sponsored by R.E. Garrison Trucking, Inc., Youth Leadership Cullman County opened its latest session with a trip to City Hall for a Q&A with Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs and the Cullman City Council, as well as a group activity on "Planning for the Future." After lunch at Mae's Food Hall, students made their way to the Cullman County Courthouse for Q&A's with Cullman County Commission Chairman Kenneth Walker, Cullman County Probate Judge Tammy Brown and Cullman County Revenue Commissioner



Barry Willingham. The day ended with a mock trial with the Honorable Circuit Judge Greg Nicholas.

Breakfast was sponsored by Alabama Archives, and lunch was

sponsored by Jackson & Williams, Attorneys At Law.

Sponsored by River Valley Ingredients (Tyson), Leadership Cullman County kicked off its session

at the Chamber with visits from Cullman County Revenue Commissioner Barry Willingham and Cullman County Associate Commissioner — and Leadership class

member — Garry Marchman. The rest of the morning was spent meeting with City Clerk Wes Moore at Cullman City Hall and touring the Cullman County Emergency Management Agency/ Cullman County Water Department with EMA Director Phyllis Little. The class enjoyed lunch and a TED Talk at the Chamber before departing for tours of

the Cullman Regional Airport and Cullman Electric Cooperative. General Manager Ben Harrison led the former, while Leadership Co-Chair Brian Lacy led the latter. Harrison (Executive) and Lacy both sit on the Chamber Board of Directors.

Breakfast was sponsored by McLeroy Law Firm, LLC, and lunch was sponsored by Domino's.

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Quartet Convention taps Chamber resources to bring in big crowd

When it comes to marketing an event, the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center is ready to help organizers develop comprehensive plans to achieve success.

For example, this past fall, representatives from the inaugural North Alabama Quartet Convention contacted the Chamber and asked for help marketing their event to North Alabama and surrounding areas.

"We got a late start promoting the event and so we contacted the Chamber and asked for some advice," said Kathy McLeroy, an event volunteer. "This was the first time we put together an event of this size, and the Chamber was really helpful in guiding us through the ins and outs of event promotion."

Over the next few weeks, Chamber staff and event personnel worked together on several tasks, ranging from reserving hotel rooms for the singing groups to marketing the event on various media platforms.

With everyone on the team hoping for a moderate turnout, the event opened its doors on January 18 at Temple Baptist Church. Based on the number of vehicles already in the parking lot, it didn't take long to realize something special was fixing to happen.



CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITOR CENTER

The seats were packed at Temple Baptist Church for the first night of the North Alabama Quartet Convention.

"The attendance exceeded every expectation that we had," said Rodney James, event organizer and founding member of Living Faith Ministries, which organized the event. "We expected no more than 700 for the entire event. However, we estimate over 1,800 were there, with 1,400 attending on

Friday night alone."

Based on the reaction of those who attended, it was a no-brainer to already begin planning next year's event.

"We had folks coming from Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and other states as well," said James. "Everyone seemed surprised this was our first

year. We are definitely moving forward on making this an annual event."

Considering the success in bringing folks from around the region to the Cullman area, the Chamber will continue its efforts in helping organizers get their events off the ground and running. Plans are

already underway to develop an "Events Resource Center" similar to the Chamber's highly successful "Business Resource Center (BRC)" geared toward new and existing businesses.

"I just have to say that the Chamber played a big role in the success of our event," said James. "We couldn't have done

it without you guys."

If you are looking to promote an event in the Cullman area and need help on any aspect of the process, please feel free to contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454. We're here to make Cullman County and the surrounding area the event capital of North Alabama.

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February Small Business of the Month

Winner -
Guthrie's
(Cullman)



Supporter -
Lee's Veterinary
Hospital



Cullman Florist named January Small Business of the Month

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center would like to congratulate Cullman Florist as January's Small Business of the Month, sponsored by Jeb Williamson, CPA, LLC.

Cullman Florist
119 4th St. SE
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-0263

Cullman Florist is family owned and has been serving the Cullman area since 1966. As designs and innovations change in the florist industry, the staff of nine aims to not only keep up, but to move above others around the state and nation. Cullman Florist provides educational opportunities for their employees so they can add to their design skills and bring new creative ideas to Cullman. By taking advantage of continued education opportunities like national conferences and workshops, the shop is able to offer the community the most cutting-edge designs.

Cullman Florist maintains positions in national florist companies and professional organi-



zations (Manager Carla Fussell is the President of Teleflora's education unit for the State of Alabama) in order to stay current on new and changing designs. This allows the small business — which recently received a 2018 state Award of Excellence from Teleflora — to offer exceptional customer service, premier designs and one-of-a-kind products.

Cullman Florist is heavily involved in the Chamber, participating in 2nd Fridays,

Christmas in Cullman Open House, the annual

Christmas Window Display Contest (they were



Supporter -
Jeb Williamson, CPA, LLC

Service category winners just last December) and the Membership Appreciation Cookout, as well as the Chamber's 75th anniversary time capsule project.

The flower shop also believes in giving back to the community. This is achieved in several ways, including "Make Someone Smile Week" in July, where they give away happy face mugs to local facilities. Additionally, Cullman Florist holds "Petal It Forward" in October, giving

away two bouquets to random people — one for them and one to share. Lastly, the store sponsors a Facebook "Work It Wednesday Contest" to brighten an area business each week. 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.

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Open For Business



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Professional Office Building 3, Suite 201, Cullman, AL 35058 | 256-737-2177**



Cullman Bowling Center | 1710 Tally Ho St., Cullman, AL 35055 | 256-734-2600



Willow Tree Pediatrics | 1167 County Road 437, Cullman, AL 35055 (connected to Good Hope Pharmacy) | 256-735-4632

Free Fraud Summit focusing on scam detection, avoidance

Some deals these days sound just too good to be true.

Unless you're talking about one of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center's upcoming seminars, of course.

The Chamber and Better Business Bureau of North Alabama are partnering to present a Fraud Summit seminar on Tuesday, Feb. 12 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The free event will include lunch and take place in the Chamber's Walmart DC Room.

The Fraud Summit panel will be made up of representatives from the Alabama Securities Commission, Better Business Bureau, Cullman County Sheriff's Office, Cullman Police Department and Peoples Bank of Alabama. Each will provide their perspective on how to detect and avoid scams, a growing concern not only for the elderly, but for millennials and younger age groups as well.

The Fraud Summit seminar is sponsored by Peoples Bank of Alabama and the Alabama Securities Commission. Pre-registration is required to attend. Contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org to sign up.

SCAM ALERT

CULLMAN FRAUD SUMMIT

featuring panelists from:

**Better Business Bureau | Peoples Bank of Alabama
Cullman Police Dept. | Cullman County Sheriff's Office
Alabama Securities Commission**

FREE seminar on how to detect and avoid scams!

**Tuesday, February 12 | 10:00 AM - Noon
Chamber of Commerce — Walmart DC Room**

FREE lunch | Must register to attend!

PRESENTED BY:



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

SPONSORED BY:



Young professionals holding EPIC Mardi Gras Membership Drive at Mae's

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

Emerging Professionals Impacting Cullman (EPIC) will kick off 2019 with the EPIC Mardi Gras Membership Drive at Mae's on Thursday, February 28. Drop by the Warehouse District hotspot any time between 5:30 - 8:30 PM 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.

And with Mardi Gras the following week, be sure to snag some beads and have some serious 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, recreational activities and volunteer projects through EPIC Helps.

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



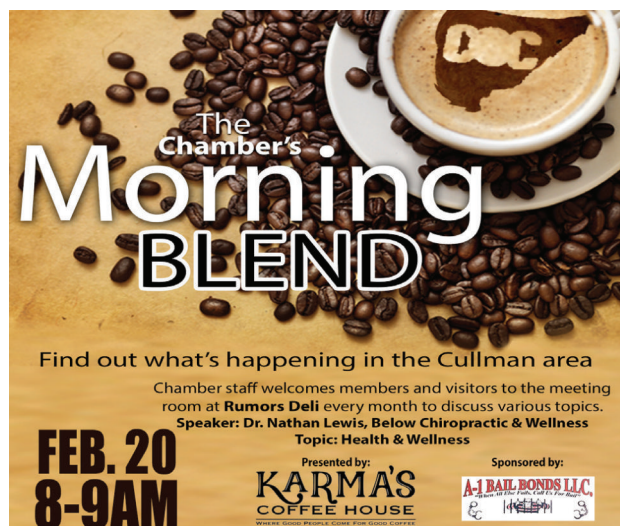
Morning Blend making health & wellness a priority for February event

Perhaps you're a full month into the New Year, and your resolutions are still holding strong. Or maybe, just maybe, they flew out the window only two days into 2019.

If you happen to fall into the latter category, it's not too late to get back on track.

Come join the Chamber staff on Wednesday, Feb. 20 for delicious coffee and a great discussion centered around health and wellness at our monthly Morning Blend, held every third Wednesday from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. at Rumors Deli. Members and visitors alike are welcome to attend this free event.

Below Chiropractic & Wellness' Dr. Nathan Lewis will lead February's discussion. Below



Presenting Sponsor -
Karma's Coffee House
Monthly Sponsor -
A-1 Bail Bonds

Chiropractic is home to "8 Weeks to Wellness," a national, effective and comprehensive program designed to positively shape how people move, think and eat by the time they complete the course.

Coffee and healthy snacks and breakfast foods will be provided by Presenting Sponsor Karma's Coffee House. February's sponsor is A-1 Bail Bonds.

Pre-registration is not required. For more information, contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454 or info@cullmanchamber.org.

