

CULLMAN AREA



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& VISITOR CENTER

Official Newsletter

Eyes of www.cullmanchamber.org

PROGRESS

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DODGE CITY
FAIRVIEW
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GOOD HOPE
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SOUTH VINEMONT
WEST POINT

Gaga for the new lady

I have always said that music is the universal language. Hanz Christian Anderson summed it up best when he said, "When words fail, music speaks." A recent study even revealed that music therapy can facilitate cognitive function in Alzheimer's patients. Anyone who knows me understands that music is an important part of who I am. If you were to look at my playlist you would see a very eclectic display of artists and songs: Old Crow Medicine Show, Bon Jovi, Dolly, Adele, or Little Big Town. I enjoy a variety of music, but we all have artists we love and artists we don't. Recently, I saw a post on FB about Lady Gaga performing a medley of "The Sound of Music" at the Oscars. I was appalled to think she would try to attempt such a feat. Julie Andrews was a true vocalist not a grandstander with limited musical ability! (I apologize in advance to Lady Gaga fans, just keep reading), I couldn't wait to watch this travesty and



LEAH BOLIN
CHAMBER PRESIDENT

write a scathing blog to discredit her fetal attempt at true music. As I watched the first few seconds of the video, I sat in total disbelief at what I saw and what I heard. This didn't look like Lady Gaga: It didn't sound like Lady Gaga: But it was Lady Gaga. It was a beautiful performance by a beautiful lady. Lady Gaga made a decision to change the culture of her music and in a matter of three minutes my musical perspective of Lady Gaga had changed. SNAP- just like that!

Do you need to change the culture of your business? Business culture is not just about how others see your business; it is also about how the individuals within your organization understand it. For people to consider culture change,

however, usually a major event must occur; an event that rocks your world such as flirting with bankruptcy or significant loss of sales and customers. Great company culture, though, doesn't mean beanbag chairs, a popcorn machine, and a Ping-Pong table. In fact, if you do it right, your culture should be defined by things like increased revenue, increased customer satisfaction, and employee retention. Taking steps to make major changes is never an easy task. If you're not completely satisfied with your company's current culture, there are several ways to change it for the better. Ben Horowitz said, "either you shape your own culture or it will inevitably shape itself." Next month I will give you a detailed outline that can help you initiate a new culture for your business or organization. Changing people's minds isn't as hard as you may think. After all, as Lady Gaga would say, "Let's start at the very beginning; a very good place to start".

Chamber to present 2015 Cullman Area Tourism Awards

Where is your favorite place to shop, dine, visit, stay and play at in the Cullman area? The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center presents their 2015 Cullman Area Tourism Awards, where your nomination determines the best of the best in local entertainment, establishments, attractions and favorites.

The 2015 Cullman Area Tourism Awards includes 16 awards in two categories: The Business Awards and The Individual Service Awards. The awards ceremony celebrating excellence in tourism for the Cullman area will be held on Thursday, May 14 at 8 a.m. Doors will open at 7:30 a.m. and breakfast will be served. Awards will be presented from 8:30-10 a.m. The event will take place at the Brown Stone Centre at Stone Bridge Farms located at 281 Co. Rd. 717 in Cullman.

The Community Improvement Awards will also be presented at this program as a part of the event. These awards are given on a quarterly basis with one overall annual award winner in each category including: Best Landscaping (small), Best Landscaping (large), Best Curb Appeal, Best Restoration, Best New Construction, and "Building a Sense of Community." The Community Improvement Committee hopes to inspire others to take action to preserve, protect and promote community improvement in the Cullman area.

The guest speaker will be Tami Reist, President/CEO of Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association (AMLA). Single tickets are priced at \$20 for chamber mem-



Everyone is invited!

Join us for a homecooked breakfast buffet as we celebrate those in the Cullman Community who make our area extra special.

Thursday, May 14, 2015

Doors Open 7:30 a.m. Breakfast 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.
Awards 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

The Brown Stone Centre at Stone Bridge Farms
281 County Road 717 - Cullman, Alabama

Register online or call the Chamber by Friday, May 8

Presenting Sponsor
The Community Shopper's Guide

Corporate Sponsors
The Cullman Times The Smith Lake Book

bers and \$25 for future members. Table sponsorships are \$250 and include reserved seating for eight in a prime location with table signage. The presenting sponsor for the event is The Community Shopper's Guide. Corporate sponsors include The Smith Lake Book and *The Cullman Times*. There are gold, silver and bronze table sponsorships available for this event.

If you would like to reserve your tickets to the 2015 Cullman Area Tourism Awards, email info@cullmanchamber.org or call 256-734-0454. There are a limited number of seats available and tickets are on a first come, first serve basis.

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce

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

www.cullmanchamber.org | www.visitcullman.org

Inland Building Systems: Rebounding bigger and better


The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce visited Inland Building Systems on March 12th for its first quarterly Industry Tour of the year.

Inland Building Systems, like many families and businesses following the tornadoes that swept through our area in 2011, worked diligently to rebound and rebuild.

They did just that. After a temporary lay-off period, the company not only called back workers, but expanded by renovating and upgrading its Cullman plant.

Today, Inland Building Systems (IBS) and its authorized builders are leaders in the design and construction of custom-engineered metal building systems. As charter members of the Metal Building Manufacturers Association

INDUSTRY TOUR



HH Technologies
1733 County Road 68
Bremen, AL 35033
www.rollseal.net

May 15, 2015
Pre-Registration Required 256-734-0454
9:45AM - HH Technologies

(MBMA), they maintain the highest standards for the design and manufacture of metal building systems. IBS is headquartered in Cullman and manufactures a full line of

metal building products.

They're motto is "Large enough to serve...small enough to care."

Jim McIndoo, plant manager, along with tour guides,

Omar Ibanez (Manufacturing Manager), and Brandon Mason (Assistant), exemplified this motto as they lead an entourage of 20 guests through the facility.

Many of the guests, stemming from other area businesses and agencies, expressed its thanks to Inland Building Systems for its hospitality and all gained a greater appreciation for its contribution to the Cullman community.

The Industry Tour for the second quarter is scheduled for May 12th with HH Technologies at 9:45am. Please register with the chamber at www.cullmanchamber.org. For additional information, contact Mr. Derek Lane, Director, Small Business & Workforce Solutions, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce.

Cullman Area Reverse Business & Industry Trade Expo

The Chamber's Agriculture, Business, and Industry Committee invites you to join us for the 2nd annual Cullman Area Reverse Business and Industry Trade Show on June 18th from 1-3pm at the Cullman Civic Center.

This reverse trade show provides an opportunity for vendors and suppliers to visit booth exhibitors (occupied by major area industries) to connect and share products or services.

Thanks to RJ Young, CARBITE's presenting sponsor. Hospitality refreshments will be provided by Stone Bridge Farms. For additional information, contact Mr. Derek Lane, Director, Small Business & Workforce Solutions, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce.



Chamber recognizes students, teachers of the year

The State of the Schools/Student-Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet is an opportunity to support education and recognize those who've excelled in their field. This event recognized the system-wide Teachers of the Year and coordinated a selection process to honor the Student of the Year as well as the Career Tech Student of the Year. Winners are recognized and receive a scholarship for their academic achievements.

The Student/Career Tech Student of the Year nominees were

Isom Paul Carden of Fairview HS
Aimme Cortes of St Bernard Preparatory



Left, Cullman High School's Hadyn Ford, pictured with city schools superintendent Doreen Griffith and county schools superintendent Craig Ross, was named Career Tech Student of the Year. Right, Ross presents Destiny Lansford of Vinemont High School the Student of the Year award.

School
Hunter Creel of Good Hope HS
Jeffery Heath Dean of Hanceville HS
Seth Donaldson of Cullman HS
Destiny Lansford of Vinemont HS
Kaitlyn Stephens of Holly Pond HS

The young person selected for Student of the Year is Destiny Lansford of Vinemont High School.

The young person selected for Career Tech Student of the Year is Hadyn Ford, Cullman High School.



The System-wide Teachers of the Year included

Vanessa Rakestraw of West Point Elementary
Sarah McCutcheon of Cullman HS
April Smith of Parkside Elementary
Dana Lisle of Hanceville HS

Thanks to our Presenting Sponsor Chick - fil-A for their support to make this event possible along with our Corporate Sponsors: Cullman Electric Cooperative, Cullman-Jefferson Gas and Wallace State Community College.

Estate planning seminar June 23

The Chamber's ABI (Agriculture, Business, & Industry) committee is hosting an Estate Planning Workshop sponsored by Alabama Farm Credit on Tuesday, June 23rd from 6:00pm - 8:00pm. Mark your calendars! The workshop will focus on estate planning and inheritance tax information. Keep up-to-date on current laws and inheritance taxes. Tony Glover, Cullman County Extension Coordinator, is our host organizer. Our presenters include Dr. Robert Tufts and Ruth Brock. The event is free and open to the public but registration is required. Register online at www.cullmanchamber.org. For additional information, contact Mr. Derek Lane, Director, Small Business & Workforce Solutions, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce.

Leadership Cullman County learns about economic development

The 2014-15 Leadership Cullman County class met on April 8 to learn about economic development. The day's events included a visit with the staff at Cullman Economic Development Office, a tour of REHAU's manufacturing facility, and a trip to the Duck River Dam construction site.

The day started at CCED with breakfast, sponsored by McLeory Law Firm and a presentation by Dale Greer and Peggy Smith. They shared the department's history, the evolution of industrial and economic development in Cullman County and talked the class through the lengthy, detailed, secretive and almost always complicated process of recruiting a new industry to our com-



Members of the Leadership Cullman Co. Class stand where what will be under water once the reservoir is complete.

munity.

"Economic Development day has by far been my favorite day," said class member Natalie Godwin, who works at Wallace State Community College. "Not being a Cullman native I enjoyed learning about how Cullman first recruited business and about the process of

recruiting new business today."

Class member Derek Gossett, who works at REHAU, said the presentation by Greer and Smith revealed challenges most people don't realize come with economic development.

"It is surprising how hard the economic development works to get and

keep industry here," he said. "The struggles they are faced with when a property has wetlands and what qualifies as a wetland is an obstacle most never consider when building a house or see a new business being built."

REHAU opened its doors for the leadership class to see both its automotive and PEX pipe

manufacturing operations. For Godwin, the precision in quality and exact timing of parts being delivered to the Mercedes plant in Vance, was most impressive.

"Before the tour my idea of car-part manufacturing was they made a thousand of the same part and shipped it out whenever," Godwin said. "Now I know that's not the case.

It's a detailed process with multi-colored specialty bumpers shipped to Mercedes within a six-hour window."

Kevin Jackson of CCED led a driving tour through the rest of Cullman's industrial parks before taking the class to its final stop of the day—a tour of the Duck River Dam construction site, led by Susan Eller of the CCED.

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C. Blake West

Estate and Medicaid Planning for Regular People

Tuesday May 5 at 5:30 PM

Call for other available dates
Cullman Chamber of Commerce
301 2nd Ave SW Cullman, AL 35055

1701 Main Ave SW #5
Cullman, AL 35055

Seating is limited. Reservations are required.

Contact: Whitney Thomas, Client Services
Direct dial 256-727-8657 or
whitney.blakewestlaw@gmail.com

(256) 734-0026
www.cblakewestlaw.com

Youth Leadership Cullman County Graduation



The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's 2014-15 class of Youth Leadership Cullman County recently graduated at the TP Country Club. The 10-month long leadership program is open to rising juniors in the Cullman area.

The 2014-15 Youth Leadership Cullman County class graduated at TP Country Club on Tuesday, April 21 with American Proteins as the sponsor. The 10-month long program explores different themes each month as two students from each school in the area and home schooled students, all come together to experience a day of learning and leadership. Themes covered each month include agriculture, industry and state and local government. YLCC was born out of the

Leadership Cullman County group. Congratulations to the following program graduates: Grace Eidson, Javier Figueroa, Will Raney, Savanna Terry, Sarah Dyer, Bailey West, Thomas Bolin, Isaac Smith, Brett Perry, Luke Barlow, Reilly Hood, JK Davis, Ethan Barnette, Kerragan Baker, Lacey Barrett, Tiffany Crook, Jessica Patterson, Brianne Brewis, Niyonna Malcom, Heather Middleton, and Lesley O'Donnell. Thanks to Wallace State Community College for Sponsoring the 2014-15 YLCC Class.

Billy Ray Taylor
Auto Sales
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to choose from!

MAY'S SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

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Summer Samplers in the Breezeway

Come out and join us for a celebration of local foods with our Business After Hours event, Summer Samplers, happening on June 4 from 5:30-7 p.m. The Cullman area's premier business networking event is scheduled in "The Breezeway" next to the Chamber building (301 2nd Avenue SW, Cullman, AL 35055). We will enjoy a warm summer night sampling a showcase of the fantastic local flavors that the Cullman area has to offer. Be sure to pack plenty of business cards and come ready to make some serious new contacts. If you are a Chamber member restaurant in the area and would be interested in participating, please call the

Chamber at 256-734-0454 for more information. The cost to attend is \$15 per person for members and \$20 for future members. Includes hors d'oeuvres and beverages. 48-Hour Cancellation Policy. Reservations are required, and tickets are limited. Contact the Chamber by

phone at 256-734-0454 or via e-mail at info@cullmanchamber.org for more information or assistance registering. Summer Samplers is presented by HH Technologies, Inc. and entertainment is sponsored by Lamar Advertising.

Presenting Sponsor



Entertainment Sponsor



Join us for a wonderful morning of biscuits and business, networking, and a speaker. Come out and enjoy a delicious breakfast, great discussion and fellowship. ATN IT Specialist Doug Blackmon will be speaking about Cyber Security. There will be a Q&A to follow the session. The event is sponsored by Alabama Technology Network, and will take place there from 8-9 a.m. on June 2.

BISCUITS & BUSINESS

JUNE 2ND
8:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M.

SPONSORED BY:



The Chamber's
Morning BLEND

Find out what's happening in the Cullman area

Presented by: **May 20 | 8-9AM** Sponsored by:

Chamber Building Commons Room

Come join us on May 20 for delicious coffee and great discussion at our Morning Blend, held every second Wednesday of each month from 8-9 a.m. in the common room at the Chamber. Chamber staff will welcome members and visitors to the Chamber building every month to discuss the hottest topics in business and share tips, ideas and viewpoints.

SPRING INTO A NEW RIDE. DRIVE AND DISCOVER

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Governmental Affairs Committee looking out for local businesses

The new Cullman Area Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee is excited and committed to being proactive in promoting the public policy interest of the Cullman business community and connecting you to your local and state leaders.

Every business, no matter how large or small, operates within a world of policies, regulations, laws, and long-range planning. It is vital for business owners and the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, which represents them, to have a clear understanding of how legislation affects business, and how business owners can positively influence the governmental process. We must first have a strong relationship with our government officials through honest and purposeful communication. We will work to effectively articulate our vision for Cullman's Business Community and promote public policy priorities that result in freeing our citizens from over-taxation, over-regulation, and over-litigation.

Simply put, the GAC serves as the liaison between our legislators and our membership, regarding issues of business and commerce, in hopes of bringing unity of vision for the greater good of our state as a whole. As Cullman grows, the state grows. With Cullman's infrastructure of highways, land availability, and upcoming water sources, the opportunities here are amazing!

Imagine Cullman leading the way in Alabama by becoming a haven for opportunity. Mix investing in mentorship and job

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Chair - Jamie Speakman
Liberty National

Leah Bolin
Chamber Staff President and CEO

Tim Culpepper
Culpepper & Associates

Matthew Kinsland
Cullman Co. Economic Development

Dr. Lori McGrath
Division Director CRMC

Barry McGriff
McGriff Industries

Heath Meherg
Cullman County Commission

Dr. Carmen Moss
Cosmetic Dentistry of Cullman, PC

Bridgette Warner
ERA Waldrop Real Estate

Heath Williams
Yeltek

training of our young leaders with creative opportunities in early development of an entrepreneurial spirit; then top that off with the momentum of tax relief ... the growth and success are unavoidable! We do not have to re-invent the wheel. We simply look to other leaders who built prosperous cities. How do you build a city? Start with joining those dedicated to your success ... JOIN THE CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE!

This committee meets the last Friday of each month, plans local political forums, the Montgomery Drive-In, & the Washington Fly-In. For more information about the Governmental Affairs Committee please contact Chairman Jamie Speakman at cullman.libnat@gmail.com or Leah Bolin at lbolin@cullman-chamber.org.

Community luncheon

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's May Community Luncheon, formerly called Fourth Friday, will be held on Friday, May 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Banquet Room at the All Steak restaurant. The speaker will be Allison Black Cornelius, Founder & President of Blackfish Strategies. She will be speaking about The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team

Allison is a true blackfish, a template of inner strength and perseverance. She is what the best of us aspire to be, but few have the grit to become. Blackfish represents a movement, she says, and move she does. Allison met adversity early on. When she was only seven years old, she was raped and molested by her Sunday school teacher. Too small to do anything about it then, she tried her best to forget it. She pushed past her trauma into adulthood, developing extraordinary compassion and actively volunteering in Birmingham's nonprofit community.

Twenty years later came Allison's day of reckoning. She faced her attacker and told the world what he had done. Shockingly, more than 50 additional victims of this man came forward. In a landmark case that drew widespread attention from the national media, Allison put her rapist behind bars and became one of the nation's strongest advocates for victims' and community rights. She



Allison Black Cornelius

spearheaded the passage of Megan's Law, creating the country's first Sex Offender Registry.

Today Allison makes about 150 presentations each year as the principal and "unflippin' believable" consultant of Blackfish, training audiences in nonprofit organizations, government agencies and Fortune 500 companies how to keep on swimming. She advanced her studies at Harvard, and her speaking engagements have taken her to the Kennedy Center, professional sports

Please come and join us for our Community Luncheon! To reserve tickets, please email info@cullmanchamber.org or call 256-734-0454. Tickets are \$15 for chamber members and \$20 for future members. Presenting Sponsor for 2015 is Shirley Quattlebaum - State Farm Insurance and the monthly sponsor is Quick Tire Sales, Inc.

Presenting Sponsor



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MARCH THRU OCTOBER

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BATTLE of the BANDS

Every Second Friday

CULLMANCHAMBER.ORG/FRIDAYS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Thank you for your support
& investment in the Cullman Area!**

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O-Baby	256-735-4506
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Traver Resources	201-674-4084
ASL Energetics	205-837-7836
Dixie Diamond Sports	256-974-9910
In - N - Out Self Storage	256-734-8807

2ND FRIDAYS

It's the shop late, eat local event you have all come to love. 2nd Fridays features extended hours of shopping with great drawings and discounts, restaurants with specials and entertainment, as well as a chance to experience downtown nightlife like never before. Starting every second Friday in March through October, from 4-8 p.m., come see what the Cullman area has to offer after dark. Experience a fun night of shopping, entertainment, and dining in the Cullman Central Business District. The Chamber has partnered with Coca-Cola & Rock the South to bring Battle of the Bands to downtown Cullman. Join us for a downtown concert experience listening to bands battle it out for a chance to play on the Rock the South stage.

Our kick-off for Battle of the Bands was held on March 13 at All Steak where we garnered several nominations for bands who will duke it out in the months of April, May and June at our 2nd Fridays in a partnership with Rock the South.

April's 2nd Friday saw the Brooke Danielle Band and Brick Avenue squaring off against one another - with Brick Avenue winning the round. May's 2nd Friday will fall on May 8 and we will be celebrating our second official round of bands playing in the Battle of the Bands at The Downtown Grill. Come out, enjoy some incredible music and company, great food and shopping deals, and see what downtown Cullman has to offer.

For more information, go to www.cullmanchamber.org/fridays.

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