



THE CORNER

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHWEST MOBILE COUNTY CHAMBER

"Stronger Business. Stronger Community."





President: Leigh West

STRONGER

Business.

STRONGER

Community.

October always feels like the beginning of a new season. The temperatures (will hopefully) finally start to change, calendars begin filling up with fall activities, and before we know it, the holidays will be here. It is also a great time to think about what makes our community special. For me, so much of that comes back to the people and businesses who continually choose to show up, support one another, and give back.

That is at the heart of everything we do at the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce: Stronger Business. Stronger Community. As business owners and professionals, one of the simplest ways we can strengthen our community is by being intentional about supporting local businesses. Every time we choose a local restaurant, hire a local service provider, recommend another Chamber partner, or make a connection between two businesses, we help keep dollars, jobs, and opportunities right here in our community.

Chamber partnership works best when we do more than simply belong. It works when we build relationships, make referrals, attend events, and look for opportunities to help one another succeed. October gives us several opportunities to do exactly that.

Our October Business Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, October 7th, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Tillman's Corner Community Center. Our monthly luncheons continue to be one of the best opportunities to connect with fellow business professionals, strengthen existing relationships, and meet someone new. I encourage you to join us and take advantage of the connections available within your Chamber.

We will also gather for Coffee with the Chamber on Tuesday, October 20th, from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Coffee with the Chamber offers a more casual opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and learn more about the businesses and people in our area. Whether you have been involved with the Chamber for years or have recently joined, there is always another relationship waiting to be built.

October also marks the beginning of one of my favorite community initiatives, our annual Alabama vs. Auburn Food Drive. From October 1st through November 18th, we will be collecting nonperishable food items to help local elementary school families during the Thanksgiving break. Partners can also sponsor an entire Thanksgiving food box for a family with a \$100 donation. Football rivalries are serious business around here, but this is one competition where everyone can agree on the goal. Whether you yell Roll Tide or War Eagle, the real winner is our community.

As we head into the final months of 2026, I encourage you to stay connected and engaged. Attend an event. Make a referral. Shop with a Chamber partner. Donate to the food drive. Invite another business professional to join you at Coffee with the Chamber. Small actions, when multiplied across an entire community, can have a tremendous impact.

Thank you for continuing to invest your time, resources, and energy into SouthWest Mobile County. Together, we are building something that extends far beyond business growth. We are building a community where businesses and families can thrive.

Leigh West

Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup
Director, Growth & Brand Strategy

October Events:

07

Monthly Business Luncheon

Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Location: John C. Williams Auditorium

Speaker: Stephanie Bryan

Tribal Chair and CEO of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians

Caterer: Chicken Salad Chick

20

Coffee with the Chamber

Time: 7:30 am - 8:30 am

Location: John C. Williams Auditorium

Our monthly Coffee with the Chamber is a great opportunity to network with other business leaders and representatives. This event is open for both current SWMCC partners as well as prospective partners.

08

Leaders on Location Tour

Location: Coca-Cola Bottling Co. UNITED

Leaders on Location provides an exclusive opportunity for Board Members and Diplomats to tour local businesses throughout our community. These visits offer a behind-the-scenes look at the people, services, and operations that help make Southwest Mobile County a great place to live, work, and do business.

30

November Luncheon

Registration Deadline

The deadline to purchase an online ticket for the November Luncheon is October 30th at 5:00 pm.

No tickets will be sold at the door.

19

CAP Meeting

Time: 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm

Location: John C. Williams Auditorium

SMIA hosts a Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting each month. The objective is to provide citizens the opportunity for an open dialogue with industry, to help citizens better understand industry, and to help local industry understand community concerns.

31

Guns & Gifts Raffle Ticket Sale

Tickets are on sale through October 31st!

Purchase your ticket for just \$50 for a chance to win an exciting lineup of firearms and outdoor prizes while supporting the SWMCC Foundation.



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October Luncheon:

Speaker:



Stephanie Bryan
Tribal Chair and CEO
Poarch Band of Creek Indians

In 2014, Stephanie Bryan became the first woman elected to serve as Tribal Chair and CEO of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Under Stephanie's leadership, there has been a significant expansion of tribal government services that include a new health center, senior center, and community center.

As CEO, she encouraged a strategic diversification of the Tribe's business portfolio beyond gaming. Today, the Poarch Creek Indians own more than 20 different businesses spread across several states and the Caribbean.

A lifelong member of the Poarch community, Stephanie worked in the insurance industry before deciding to pursue her passion for public service. First elected to Poarch's Tribal Council in 2009, she served as the Council's Vice Chair until being elected to her current role. She also served as Chair of Poarch's Tribal Gaming Commission.

Throughout her career, Stephanie has been a highly effective advocate for improving healthcare, education, and employment opportunities for Poarch's tribal citizens.

In Alabama, Stephanie is on the board of the Business Council of Alabama (BCA), Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama (BCBS), the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA), and Leadership Alabama.

Nationally, Stephanie is a member of the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Tribal Advisory Committee, and she is on the board of USET (United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.).

Stephanie is a mother and grandmother and a lifelong member of the Poarch Community. She credits the strong women in her family – her mother, grandmothers and aunts – with instilling in her a deep dedication to her community, respect for tradition, and a laser focus on progress and growth. These core values have made her a pivotally important leader for her Tribe, in Alabama, and nationally.

Sponsor:



Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup has proudly served Mobile and the surrounding Gulf Coast community since 1962. What began as a one-truck family business has grown into a third-generation, locally owned and operated company serving residential, commercial and industrial customers throughout Mobile, Baldwin and Washington counties.

From plumbing repairs, drain and sewer services, water heaters and septic systems to 24/7 emergency plumbing and water damage cleanup and restoration, Roto-Rooter is equipped to help when customers need it most. Our team combines the resources and trusted name of a national brand with the personal service and accountability of a local company.

Roto-Rooter is proud to support the Southwest Mobile County Chamber and the businesses, schools and organizations that make our community such a great place to live and work.

The Name You Know. The Plumbers You Trust.

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH



For more than four decades, McAleer's Office Furniture has been helping businesses across the Gulf Coast create functional, professional spaces. Founded in Mobile in 1979 by Jim and Camilla McAleer, the family-owned business began with a simple goal: provide quality office furniture at a great value while giving customers a local place to find the products and service they need.

Today, McAleer's continues that legacy under the leadership of Jim and Camilla's daughter, Melissa Cross, who took ownership of the company in 2022. With locations in Mobile, Foley, and Pensacola, McAleer's offers new and used office furniture, cubicles and contract furniture, educational and healthcare solutions, and complimentary design services. Their team can assist with everything from selecting a single desk or chair to planning and furnishing an entire office, including space planning, delivery, installation, and service.

What began as a small family business has grown into a trusted Gulf Coast resource while remaining rooted in the values that started it all: quality products, knowledgeable service, and a commitment to helping customers succeed. We are proud to recognize McAleer's Office Furniture as our Business of the Month and celebrate their continued investment in the businesses and communities they serve.



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Thompson Wealth Management & Life Planning



Director: Tina Poiroux

Building Relationships That Strengthen Our Business Community

One of the most important roles of the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber is serving as a voice and advocate for our business community. While many people recognize the chamber for its networking events, programs, and opportunities to connect local businesses, an equally important part of our work happens through the relationships we continue to build with our elected officials and legislative leaders. The decisions made in Montgomery can have a direct impact on businesses right here in Southwest Mobile County. Issues involving taxes, workforce development, infrastructure, regulations, economic development, and other business-related policies all have the potential to affect how our local businesses operate and grow. That is why it is so important for the chamber to maintain open lines of communication with our state representatives and legislators.

By building meaningful relationships with those who represent our community, we have opportunities to share the perspective of our local business community and ensure that the voices of our chamber partners are part of important conversations. These relationships also allow us to stay informed about legislative issues that could impact our area and provide valuable information to our business community. Our efforts do not stop at the local level. The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber is also proud to work alongside Alabama Chambers, formerly known as the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama. Alabama Chambers serves as a united voice for chambers of commerce across the state, providing advocacy, resources, professional development, and communication on issues affecting local businesses. Through its partnership with the Business Council of Alabama, Alabama Chambers helps connect local chambers to a broader network of business advocacy throughout the state. The Business Council of Alabama works to represent the interests of the business community and advocate for policies that support a strong business climate and economic growth.

This statewide collaboration is important because it strengthens our collective voice. A concern facing a small business in SouthWest Mobile County may also be affecting businesses in communities across Alabama. By working together with other chambers and business leaders, we can help ensure that the needs and concerns of businesses—both large and small—are heard.

Each year, Alabama Chambers brought together chamber professionals, business leaders, and policymakers from across the state for Chamber Day at the Capitol, creating opportunities for direct conversations about legislative priorities and the issues affecting Alabama's communities and employers. These types of opportunities demonstrate the value of building relationships and maintaining an active presence in conversations that shape our state's future.

At the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber, we believe that strong businesses help build a strong community. As we continue strengthening relationships with our local and state leaders and working alongside organizations such as Alabama Chambers and the Business Council of Alabama, we remain committed to ensuring that our business community has a voice.

Advocacy begins with relationships, and relationships create opportunities for meaningful conversations, collaboration, and progress. We are proud to represent Southwest Mobile County and will continue working to build connections that support our businesses, strengthen our community, and help shape a brighter future for our region.

When your business joins the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber, you are not simply gaining access to events and networking opportunities—you are becoming part of a collective voice for Southwest Mobile County. Chamber partnership gives local businesses the opportunity to connect, collaborate, stay informed, and have a seat at the table as we advocate for issues that impact our business community. We encourage businesses of all sizes to join us in strengthening our local economy, supporting one another, and building a stronger future for Southwest Mobile County. Together, we can make a greater impact.

Best regards,

SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce
Executive Director



If you're struggling, you don't have to go through it alone. Talking with a counselor can provide a safe, confidential space to share what you're feeling and find support.

It's okay to reach out. You're not alone.

Reach out for help: (251) 450-2211

altapointe.org

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION



The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber is proud to recognize Family Security Credit Union as a valued

chamber partner and a business that understands the importance of investing in the community. With a focus on helping individuals and families achieve their financial goals, Family Security Credit Union offers a wide range of financial services, including checking and savings accounts, home and vehicle loans, credit cards, investment services, and financial education resources.

Family Security Credit Union's commitment extends beyond financial services. Through community partnerships, sponsorships, scholarships, volunteer efforts, and programs such as CU Cares in the Classroom, the credit union supports education, financial well-being, youth, and local organizations. Their community-focused approach reflects the credit union philosophy of "People Helping People" and demonstrates the positive impact a business can make when it invests in the people and communities it serves.

We are grateful to have Family Security Credit Union as part of the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber and appreciate their continued commitment to supporting local businesses, families, and the communities that make Alabama stronger.

GUIDING THE GROWTH



Apryl Sessions Crowder has served on the Board of Directors of the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber since 2024. She has served as Treasurer for both the 2025 and 2026 calendar years.

Apryl has served as the Office Manager for Coca-Cola Bottling Co. UNITED, Inc. at the Mobile, Alabama facility for the past eight years. In her role, she is responsible for directing, coordinating, and planning community involvement, while also managing a team in sales administration and service for the Mobile facility.

With more than 25 years of experience in her field, Apryl's professional journey has taken her from Tucson, Arizona, to Columbia, South Carolina, and ultimately back to Alabama. She thrives on fostering teamwork, improving efficiency, and remaining actively involved in her community.

Apryl is the proud mother of one son, Alex Powers, and devoted wife to her husband, Jim Crowder. Originally from Grand Bay, Alabama, she now resides in West Mobile with her husband. Together, they enjoy traveling, fishing whenever possible, and spending time with family, who are all located in the Mobile area.

Get to Know GrowthZone

Did you know that every SouthWest Mobile County Chamber partner has access to a GrowthZone account? As we approach our annual billing period, now is a great time to log in, review your account, and make sure your business information and contacts are up to date.

Your GrowthZone account is your connection to the chamber and is an important tool for managing your partnership. It allows you to keep your business listing current in our online directory, manage the individuals connected to your business, and make sure the right people at your organization are receiving chamber communications, event information, sponsorship opportunities, and other partnership benefits.

Through your GrowthZone account, you can:

- Update your business address, phone number, website, and company description
- Manage the contacts associated with your business
- Add or remove employees and other related contacts
- Make sure chamber communications are reaching the appropriate individuals
- Review your business information as it appears in the chamber's online directory
- Access information related to your chamber partnership

How to Access Your Account

To access your GrowthZone account, visit the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber homepage and select the Partner Portal login. If you have not logged in recently or do not remember your password, you can use the password reset option to regain access.

Once logged in, select "My Info" from the left-hand menu to review your business profile and make any necessary updates. You can also select "Related Contacts" under "My Info" to add new contacts, update existing contacts, or remove individuals who are no longer with your organization.

Your GrowthZone account is also where you can stay connected to your chamber partnership throughout the year. As you become familiar with the Partner Portal, you will have an easier time registering for chamber events, managing your business information, connecting with chamber opportunities, and keeping track of the ways your business can stay involved.

Before annual billing, we encourage every chamber partner to take a few minutes to become familiar with their GrowthZone account and make sure everything is accurate. Keeping your information current helps ensure your business remains visible, connected, and informed while allowing you to get the most out of your chamber partnership.

If you need assistance accessing your account or updating your information, please contact the Chamber office at info@swmcchamber.com or (251) 666-2846.

GUNS & GIFTS TICKETS

The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber Foundation's Guns & Gifts Raffle is back, giving you the chance to win while supporting projects that make a lasting difference in our community. Tickets are \$50 each, with only 200 tickets available, making this a limited opportunity to participate. Once all tickets are sold, no additional tickets will be available. Drawings will take place November 1st–10th, with a winner selected each day.

But the raffle is about more than the prizes. Proceeds benefit the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber Foundation and help support initiatives such as the Gateway Initiative, which focuses on beautification and community improvement throughout Southwest Mobile County. From enhancing entrances and corridors to improving landscaping, signage, and the overall appearance of our community, the Gateway Initiative is helping create a more welcoming and attractive environment for businesses, residents, and visitors.

By purchasing a Guns & Gifts ticket, you have the opportunity to take home a great prize while helping fund projects that improve the place we all live, work, and do business. It is a simple way to have a little fun, support the Foundation, and play a part in the continued beautification of Southwest Mobile County.

With only 200 tickets available, don't wait to get yours. Purchase your Guns & Gifts ticket today and help us build a stronger, more beautiful community.

SOUTHWEST MOBILE COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**GUNS N
GIFTS** RAFFLE

DAY 10:

DAY 7: DAY 8: DAY 9:

DAY 4: DAY 5: DAY 6:

DAY 1: DAY 2: DAY 3:

Alabama vs. Auburn Food Drive

The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber Foundation is bringing the community together this fall for our Alabama vs. Auburn Food Drive, helping local families enjoy a more meaningful Thanksgiving. While the rivalry may be strong on the field, this is one competition where everyone wins when our community comes together to give back.

Businesses, organizations, and individuals are encouraged to participate by donating nonperishable food items or sponsoring a family for \$100. A \$100 sponsorship allows the Chamber Foundation to shop for and provide a fully packed Thanksgiving food box for a local family in need. For those who would rather donate items, a list of needed food items is available to help ensure families receive the staples needed for a Thanksgiving meal.

Whether you fill a box, make a monetary donation, or encourage your employees and coworkers to participate, every contribution helps. This is a great opportunity for local businesses to engage their teams, give back to the community, and help make the Thanksgiving holiday a little brighter for families in Southwest Mobile County.

Choose your team, bring your donations, and help us make this year's Alabama vs. Auburn Food Drive a win for our community!



Small Steps CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Join the Accordia Health team on Saturday, October 31, for the American Cancer Society's **Making Strides** event.

Leading our team is Kathy Hintz, MHS, PA-C, a breast cancer survivor and Accordia Health provider at our Bayou La Batre office. Kathy knows firsthand the importance of early detection and being proactive about your health.

Don't wait for a reason to see your provider. Take that first step now: schedule an appointment, talk about your breast health and stay up to date on recommended screenings.



Kathy Hintz, MHS, PA-C

Event: Making Strides Against Breast Cancer of South Alabama

Date: Saturday, October 31, 2026

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Location: Spanish Plaza Park, Mobile, AL



[Accordia-Health.org](https://www.Accordia-Health.org)



SCAN ME

Walk for awareness. Walk for hope. Walk for your health.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Deputy of the Month:

The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber is proud to recognize Detective Shaun Wood for his dedication, professionalism, and commitment to serving and protecting our community. His work with the Mobile County Sheriff's Office reflects the importance of having dedicated law enforcement professionals who work each day to help keep our communities safe.

Detective Wood's service is a reflection of the many men and women who go above and beyond in their roles to make a positive difference throughout Mobile County. We are grateful for his continued commitment, hard work, and the impact he makes through his service.



Officer of the Month:

The SSWMCC is also proud to recognize Officer Daniel Tyler for his dedication, professionalism, and commitment to serving our community. His work with the Mobile Police Department demonstrates the importance of having officers who are committed to protecting others and making a positive difference each day.

We are grateful for Officer Tyler's service and the role he plays in helping keep our community safe. His commitment is a reflection of the many law enforcement professionals who work tirelessly to serve the residents and businesses of our community.



Brought to You By:

The SWMCC would like to extend our sincere thanks to Century Bank for sponsoring these recognition programs. We greatly appreciate their continued support and commitment to honoring the outstanding individuals who serve and make a positive impact in our community.



The Real Estate Corner:

In September, Mobile-based Infirmary Health received more than \$5.3 million through the Alabama Rural Health Transformation Program to expand women's health services, improve coordination among rural and regional health care providers and train physicians across southwest Alabama. Headquartered in West Mobile, Infirmary Health employs more than 7,000 and operates four hospitals, two post-acute care facilities and more than 60 physician practice locations across the Gulf Coast region. The funding includes \$3.5 million to connect Infirmary Health with rural hospitals and clinics in Clarke, Mobile and Washington counties and more than \$1.5 million for women's health initiatives serving Baldwin, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia and Washington counties. Planned services include a weekly women's health clinic in Millry, expanded prenatal services in Jackson and a mobile, telehealth-enabled program through North Baldwin Infirmary. An additional \$342,147 will establish rural clinical rotations for internal medicine residents in Baldwin, Clarke, Escambia, Mobile and Washington counties. The funding was part of 138 awards totaling more than \$144 million through the Alabama Rural Health Transformation Program.

Last month it announced that Mobile Mayor Spiro Cheriogotis' administration is developing plans for a covered train station in downtown Mobile to serve Amtrak's Mardi Gras Service. Cheriogotis said a concept for the station could be unveiled within the next two to three months, while some City Council members have expressed interest in incorporating the station into unused space beneath the Mobile Convention Center. The proposal comes as city officials prepare for future discussions over funding for the passenger rail service, including whether the state should assume a larger role in operating subsidies after current funding expires in two years. Cheriogotis said development of a permanent station should be considered separately from future operating support and that he plans to seek state participation in funding the project.

In September, Mobile-based Automation + Controls Engineering leased approximately 6,400 square feet in the historic Buick Building located at 455 St. Louis St. in downtown Mobile, according to Cummings & Associates Inc. The company, which employs about 40 people, provides automation and control systems engineering and electrical and instrumentation engineering services to clients across a range of industries. The historic property combines preserved architectural features with modern office space in downtown Mobile. Marl Cummings IV of Cummings & Associates handled the lease transaction.

In an update, Mobile County announced completion of an \$11.7 million expansion of the Mobile County Sportsplex Soccer Complex in West Mobile, adding four lighted fields, a concession and restroom building and 300-space parking lot. The project increases the complex from three to seven operational fields.

For questions or news tips about local real estate, please email ron@hflend.com or call/text 251-219-8914.

By: Ron Sivak

Learning Leadership

Star Student Program:

Throughout the school year, the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber recognizes outstanding students from local elementary schools for their dedication to learning and commitment to doing their best. This program would not be possible without the generous support of our Star Student Sponsors, and we are grateful for their commitment to recognizing the achievements of our local students. Congratulations to the following students who were recognized on Wednesday, September 2nd, 2026!

- M.J. Mahoney from Bright Academy sponsored by Payroll Vault
- Imani Obongo from Cottage Hill Christian Academy sponsored by the Women's Resource Center
- Jacob Terry from Hollinger's Island Elementary sponsored by Evonik Corporation
- Haleigh Best from Meadowlake Elementary sponsored by Pilot
- Bianca Tortora from Nan Gray Davis Elementary sponsored by BLP Mobile Paint
- Chloe Bodin from Pearl Haskew Elementary sponsored by Roberts Brothers - The Sessions Team
- Isabelle Seaman from St. Elmo Elementary sponsored by Roto-Rooter Plumbing & Water Cleanup
- Kensleigh Sullivan from W.C. Griggs Elementary sponsored by Alabama Power



Hankins High Achiever

Congratulations to Alexander West, our first Hankins High Achiever Award recipient of the school year from Hankins Middle School!

Alexander was selected based on outstanding nominations from his teachers, who describe him as respectful, kind, studious, and well-mannered. He consistently completes his work, volunteers to help others, and sets a positive example for his classmates. His teachers believe he has a bright future ahead, and we are proud to celebrate his accomplishments.

A special thank you to Polysurveying for partnering with us to support the Hankins High Achiever Award and for investing in the future of our community by recognizing and encouraging outstanding students.

T.A.L.L. Scholarship Program

As part of the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber's T.A.L.L. (Tillman's Corner Area Learning Leadership) Program, students recently visited Government Plaza for a firsthand look at local government, leadership, and the legislative process. During their visit, students had the opportunity to meet with Mayor Spiro Cheriogotis and members of the Mobile City Council, learn more about their roles and responsibilities, and sit in on a City Council meeting to see local government in action.

The experience gave students a better understanding of how decisions are made at the local level and how those decisions can impact residents, businesses, infrastructure, and the future of our community. We are grateful to Mayor Cheriogotis, the Mobile City Council, and the City of Mobile staff for welcoming our T.A.L.L. students to Government Plaza and taking the time to share their knowledge and experiences. We appreciate their investment in our students and their willingness to help prepare the next generation of community leaders.



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