



THE CORNER

A SOUTHWEST MOBILE COUNTY CHAMBER PUBLICATION



DECEMBER 2025



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Joshua T. Woods

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE GROUNDS

CHAMPIONING INNOVATION, INSPIRING PROGRESS

As we close out another remarkable year in our community, I find myself reflecting on the tremendous strides we have taken together and the unwavering spirit that defines the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce. This year has been a testament to what is possible when businesses, leaders, volunteers, and community partners come together with a shared purpose. Your commitment, your participation, and your belief in the work we do have strengthened our Chamber in countless ways, and for that, I am truly grateful.

From the very beginning of the year, our focus on championing innovation, inspiring progress has guided our decisions, shaped our programs, and energized our mission. This theme has been more than just a phrase—it has been a daily reminder of the responsibility we hold to create opportunities for our partners and to support the continued growth of our region. As a Chamber, we have embraced new ideas, encouraged collaboration, and expanded our outreach to ensure that every business, from long-standing institutions to brand-new local entrepreneurs, feels supported and seen.

Over the past twelve months, we have celebrated major accomplishments across our community. We welcomed new partners into our Chamber family and continued to foster the success of our existing partners. Our monthly luncheons and networking events were filled with meaningful conversations and new connections that will undoubtedly lead to future innovation and shared success. We honored outstanding achievements through our awards programs, recognized individuals and businesses who are making a difference, and showcased the incredible talent, dedication, and resilience present within Southwest Mobile County.

Our Chamber remained steadfast in its commitment to economic development and advocacy, working to ensure that local businesses have the resources, visibility, and support they need to thrive. We strengthened partnerships with local organizations, schools, and civic groups—collaborations that have helped us amplify the positive momentum across our community. Our investment in youth leadership through the T.A.L.L. program continued to grow, inspiring the next generation to step confidently into leadership roles and empowering them to envision a bright future right here at home.

We also continued hosting the community events that make Southwest Mobile County such a vibrant and connected place to live and work—from our Kid’s Day festival and seasonal celebrations to our ribbon cuttings, business spotlights, and outreach initiatives. These events do more than bring people together; they remind us of the heart and humanity that fuel our Chamber’s mission. Every volunteer, every sponsor, every attendee plays a role in building the sense of belonging that makes our area truly special.

In this season of reflection and celebration, I ask each of you to take a moment to acknowledge the collective accomplishments we’ve achieved together. The success of our Chamber is not the work of one person or one organization—it is the result of a community that believes deeply in collaboration, service, and shared progress. The partnerships we’ve built, the initiatives we’ve launched, and the goals we’ve reached all speak to the extraordinary potential of our partners and the remarkable future that lies ahead.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and the Chamber staff, thank you for your trust, your involvement, and your dedication throughout this year. It is an honor to serve alongside you and to champion the vision we share for a stronger, more connected, and more prosperous Southwest Mobile County. As we close this chapter and prepare to welcome a new year, I wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season filled with peace, gratitude, and hope. Together, we will continue championing innovation, inspiring progress, and building a community where businesses and families can thrive for generations to come.

Josh Woods

SWMCC Board President

Cover Photos: AL.com

EVENT CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2025

1 Late Registration: Christmas Parade Application Deadline

Late registration for the Tillman's Corner Christmas Parade is open through Monday, December 1st. Please keep in mind late applications will incur a \$30.00 late fee.

6 Tillman's Corner Christmas Parade

We hope you will join us for our Annual Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 6th at 10:30 am! This year's theme is "How the Chamber stole Christmas" (Who-Ville/The Grinch).

3 Monthly Business Luncheon

Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Location: John C. Williams Auditorium
Speaker: Dr. Todd Lasseigne
Caterer: Naman's Catering

12 Christmas Giveback Deadline

Each year the SWMCC gives back by partnering with local schools to provide Christmas for children who would otherwise go without. The deadline to make a donation towards this outreach program is Friday, December 12th.

5 VIP Pancakes & Pajamas

Join us for our special VIP Pancakes and Pajamas with Santa... & the Grinch! Slip into your coziest pajamas and enjoy a delicious breakfast of fluffy pancakes. This exclusive experience includes meet-and-greet opportunities with Santa, fun activities, and festive surprises.

25 Merry Christmas!

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and hope you enjoy the holiday season with family and friends! The SWMCC and Tillman's Corner Community Center offices will be closed December 24th and 25th in honor of this holiday.

6 Pancake Breakfast with Santa

Join us for a delightful Pancake Breakfast with Santa from 8:00 am to 10:00 am prior to the Tillman's Corner Christmas Parade!

Children 10 & Under: FREE
Adults: \$5.00 per person

26 January Luncheon Preregistration Deadline

The deadline to purchase an online ticket for the January Luncheon is December 26th at 5:00 pm.

No tickets will be sold at the door.



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NETWORKING

DECEMBER 3RD, 2025

SPEAKER:



Dr. Lasseigne serves as Executive Director Bellingrath Gardens and Home, a position he started in September 2020. He joins a team of board members and professional staff working to bring forward the legacy of Walter and Bessie Bellingrath at their renowned estate and gardens located on the Fowl River south of Mobile.

Prior to coming to Bellingrath, Todd was President and CEO of Tulsa Botanic Garden (Tulsa, Oklahoma), an institution he led for over nine years, working to build it from the ground up with over \$20 million raised and invested during his tenure. Dr. Lasseigne also served as the founding Executive Director of Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden (Kernersville, North Carolina) from 2005 through early 2011, and as Assistant Director of the JC Raulston Arboretum (Raleigh, North Carolina) for 5 years.

Todd is a highly respected plantsman, horticulturist, and public garden leader. He is widely recognized as a leading expert among nursery professionals and in the public garden world. He has delivered invited lectures across the U.S., in Japan, South Korea, and Mexico. Todd has visited over 450 gardens around the world during his career. He lives with his wife (Heather) and four cats in Grand Bay, Alabama.



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BUSINESS OF THE MONTH



The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce is proud to recognize Integrity IT Services as our Business of the Month. Their commitment to excellence, customer care, and forward-thinking solutions has made them a trusted partner for businesses across our region.

Integrity IT Services has built its reputation on a foundation of reliability, responsiveness, and integrity—values reflected in both their name and their daily operations. As technology continues to evolve, their team remains dedicated to helping organizations navigate today's digital landscape with confidence. From managed IT support and cybersecurity to network optimization, system upgrades, and strategic technology planning, Integrity IT Services consistently delivers high-quality service tailored to the unique needs of each client they serve.

One of the defining strengths of Integrity IT Services is their customer-first approach. Whether assisting a small business with essential systems or supporting a larger organization through major upgrades, their team works with professionalism, transparency, and a genuine desire to see their clients succeed. Businesses in our community know they can rely on Integrity IT Services not only to solve problems quickly, but also to help prevent them through proactive monitoring and thoughtful technology guidance.

Beyond their exceptional technical work, Integrity IT Services continues to demonstrate a deep commitment to community involvement. They support local initiatives and invest in relationships that strengthen the fabric of Southwest Mobile County. Their engagement with chamber programs and community activities reflects their belief that strong businesses build strong communities.

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COLUMN

THE NEXT LEVEL

THE

As we prepare to close the chapter on another year, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we have shared as a Chamber and as a community. This past year has brought with it challenges, opportunities, and meaningful moments of progress that continue to shape the future of Southwest Mobile County. Each step forward has been made possible through the dedication of our partners, the enthusiasm of our volunteers, and the unwavering support of our community partners. For all of this, I extend my deepest appreciation.

When I consider the growth we have witnessed this year, I am reminded of the value of connection and the strength that comes from working together. We have celebrated new business openings, supported expansions, encouraged professional development, and fostered collaboration between industries, organizations, and individuals who share a vision for a thriving community. Our Chamber has been proud to host a wide range of events—from our signature luncheons and networking programs to community celebrations, educational workshops, and special initiatives that highlight the best of Southwest Mobile County. Each event reflects the heart of our mission: to create an environment where businesses can connect, grow, and succeed.

This year, we continued our commitment to investing in emerging leaders, supporting local workforce development, and empowering small businesses—the backbone of our local economy. We strengthened our partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and civic organizations, recognizing that a strong community is built not only by economic success but through shared values and collective effort. Whether it was through the Tillman’s Corner Area Learning Leadership (T.A.L.L.) Program, our youth-related outreach, or our involvement in regional initiatives, we remained focused on creating opportunities that enrich the lives of residents and support long-term success for businesses of all sizes.

Looking ahead to the new year, we are excited about the possibilities before us. We are preparing to launch new programs, expand partner benefits, and further enhance the visibility and value we offer to our partner businesses. Our Chamber is committed to staying current, relevant, and responsive to the needs of our community. The landscape of business continues to evolve, and our mission is to ensure that our partners have the resources, relationships, and support they need to not only adapt—but to thrive.

As we plan and set priorities for the coming year, one of the most important ways you can support our mission and deepen your involvement is through our annual Business Investment Sponsorships. These sponsorships help fuel the Chamber’s ability to serve the business community, expand our offerings, and maintain the high-quality programs and events we provide year-round. They also give our partners consistent and meaningful exposure throughout the year, allowing businesses to align their brand with community leadership and engagement.

Our Business Investment Sponsorship packages are designed with flexibility in mind, offering options that fit a wide range of goals and budgets. Whether a partner is looking for increased marketing and advertisement opportunities, yearlong visibility, event sponsorships, community recognition, or involvement in some of our most well-attended Chamber programs, there is a package that meets those needs. These sponsorships allow your business to be woven into the fabric of everything we do—from monthly programming and annual celebrations to outreach initiatives and community development efforts. It is an investment that extends well beyond a single event or moment in time; it is a partnership that amplifies your presence and strengthens the collective impact of our Chamber for an entire year.

When a business chooses to become a Business Investment Sponsor, they are not simply supporting the Chamber—they are contributing to a stronger, more vibrant Southwest Mobile County. They are investing in a future that values collaboration, innovation, and progress. They are helping elevate the voices of small businesses, empowering the next generation of leaders, and fostering an environment where growth is achievable for all. And in return, they gain visibility, relationship-building opportunities, and the chance to be recognized as a champion of local business.

As we wrap up the year and look toward the future, I encourage each of our partners to consider how they can deepen their involvement and join us in this meaningful work. Your investment, your presence, and your engagement truly make a difference. Together, we can continue building a Chamber that not only serves its partners but uplifts the entire community.

Tina Peiroux

Executive Director

SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce

STUDENT PROGRAMS

EMPOWERING SUCCESS

STAR STUDENTS

Each month, the SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce recognizes students from local elementary schools for their dedication to learning. This Program would not be possible without our Star Student Sponsors. Congratulations to the following students who were recognized on Wednesday, November 5th, 2025:

- **Michelle Owens** from Bright Academy sponsored by Payroll Vault
- **Avery Wade** from Cottage Hill Christian Academy sponsored by Brian Lancaster, State Farm
- Hollinger's Island Elementary sponsored by Evonik Corporation
- **Xuan Nguyen** from Meadowlake Elementary sponsored by Pilot
- **Mikaela De La Cruz Pagan** from Nan Gray Davis Elementary sponsored by BLP Mobile Paint
- **Easton Edwards** from Pearl Haskew Elementary sponsored by Roberts Brothers - The Sessions Team
- **Gabriella Popple** from W.C. Griggs Elementary sponsored by Alabama Power



HANKINS SPOTLIGHT

The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce is proud to recognize Giavana Tortora as this month's Hankins High Achiever, sponsored by The Grounds. Giavana has exemplified what it means to be a hardworking, motivated, and compassionate student, and we are thrilled to celebrate her accomplishments.

Giavana has maintained straight A's so far this school year and continues to set the bar high through her outstanding work ethic and commitment to excellence. Her near-perfect attendance reflects her dedication to her education, and she consistently approaches each day with a positive attitude and readiness to learn.

Her science teacher shared high praise, noting, "Gia is an excellent student who truly cares about her schoolwork and gives 100% effort all the time. She has a beautiful smile, is always helping others, and demonstrates kindness in everything she does." It is clear that her academic success is matched by her character, making her a role model to her peers and a student her teachers can rely on.

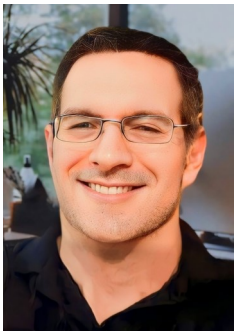
Giavana's kindness, leadership, and willingness to support others speak volumes about the type of person she is—thoughtful, dependable, and driven. These qualities, along with her dedication in the classroom, point to a bright and promising future ahead. We have no doubt she will continue to excel and make an impact wherever her path leads.

The Chamber is proud to honor young leaders like Giavana and is grateful to The Grounds for their sponsorship and helping to make this recognition program possible. Congratulations, Giavana, on being selected as this month's High Achiever. We look forward to seeing all the wonderful things you will accomplish in the years to come.



BY : RON SIVAK

THE REAL ESTATE CORNER



Bienville Orthopedic Specialists recently opened a new clinic in Grand Bay, its first location in Alabama and latest expansion of the Mississippi-based practice. The clinic will serve residents of South Alabama, West Mobile and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Founded in 1981, Bienville operates six locations across Mississippi and now Alabama, employing more than 370. The practice offers a range of orthopedic services, including joint replacement, spine care, sports medicine, hand and wrist care, and foot and ankle treatments, as well as physical and occupational therapy. The Grand Bay clinic is led by board-certified sports medicine surgeon Dr. Christopher Patton, who specializes in shoulder, knee, and ankle injuries. The clinic also treats general orthopedic and workplace-related injuries. The clinic is designed to provide local access to a range of orthopedic care without requiring travel to central Mobile or Mississippi locations. “Expanding into South Alabama allows us to provide care closer to patients in this region,” Lee Bond, CEO of Bienville Orthopedic Specialists said. The clinic is found at 10075 Grand Bay Wilmer Road and is part of Bienville Orthopedic Specialists’ continuing efforts to provide regional access to rehabilitation services.

Last month the Dauphin Island Sea Lab announced construction on a \$14 million dormitory to expand student access to its educational programs. The two-story building will include 15,000 square feet on the first floor, with space for 63 people. The second floor will offer two-bedroom apartments for an additional 36 students. The new facility addresses a long-standing housing shortage at the Sea Lab, which occupies a former U.S. Air Force radar base dating to 1972, with some aging buildings losing dormitory status due to hurricane damage. DISL leaders reported that the dorm will relieve pressure on student housing, especially for graduate students, and open up new revenue sources by hosting scientific meetings. The space may also accommodate faculty for summer courses, interns and visiting researchers.

The National Maritime Museum of the Gulf will soon debut “Son of a Son of a Sailor: The Jimmy Buffett Experience” in September 2026, city officials announced. The 6,000-square-foot exhibition will celebrate the life and career of the iconic musician with more than 130 mementos, including family photos, handwritten lyrics, several guitars and a statue from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, museum director Karen Poth reported. Alongside the memorabilia, the exhibit will showcase exclusive concert footage, interviews and rare audio recordings, offering fans a rare look into Buffett’s legacy. Many of these materials are being shared with the public for the first time through a partnership with Buffett’s longtime business partner.

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



Welcome Dr. Cameron Kilpatrick

Cameron Kilpatrick, MD, MPH, has joined the healthcare team at Accordia Health in Bayou La Batre. A board-certified family medicine physician, Dr. Kilpatrick provides comprehensive medical care for adults and children of all ages.

She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology before completing both her Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health degrees at Tulane University. Dr. Kilpatrick went on to complete her family medicine residency at the University of New Mexico–Santa Fe program.

As a National Health Service Corps Scholar, Dr. Kilpatrick is deeply committed to caring for patients in underserved communities within the Federally Qualified Health Center setting. Dr. Kilpatrick is currently accepting new patients.

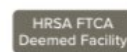
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FIRST RESPONDER SPOTLIGHT

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber is proud to recognize Deputy Jordan Towery of the Mobile County Sheriff’s Office as our Deputy of the Month.

Deputy Towery’s dedication, integrity, and exceptional service to the citizens of Mobile County truly reflect the highest standards of law enforcement. His professionalism, commitment to safety, and willingness to go above and beyond in the line of duty make a meaningful difference in the lives of those he serves each day.

We are grateful for his continued efforts to protect and support our community. This work reminds us of the impact our law enforcement has on maintaining a safe and thriving Mobile County.



The SWMCC is honored to highlight Officer Justin Conner of the Mobile Police Department as our Officer of the Month.

Officer Conner’s dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to serving the citizens of Mobile make a remarkable impact on our community. His consistent effort to go above and beyond in the line of duty reflects the highest standards of public service and reinforces the strength of our local law enforcement.



We extend our sincere appreciation to Officer Conner for his hard work, his integrity, and the positive example he sets each day. His service helps keep our city safe and strengthens the bond between officers and the community they protect.

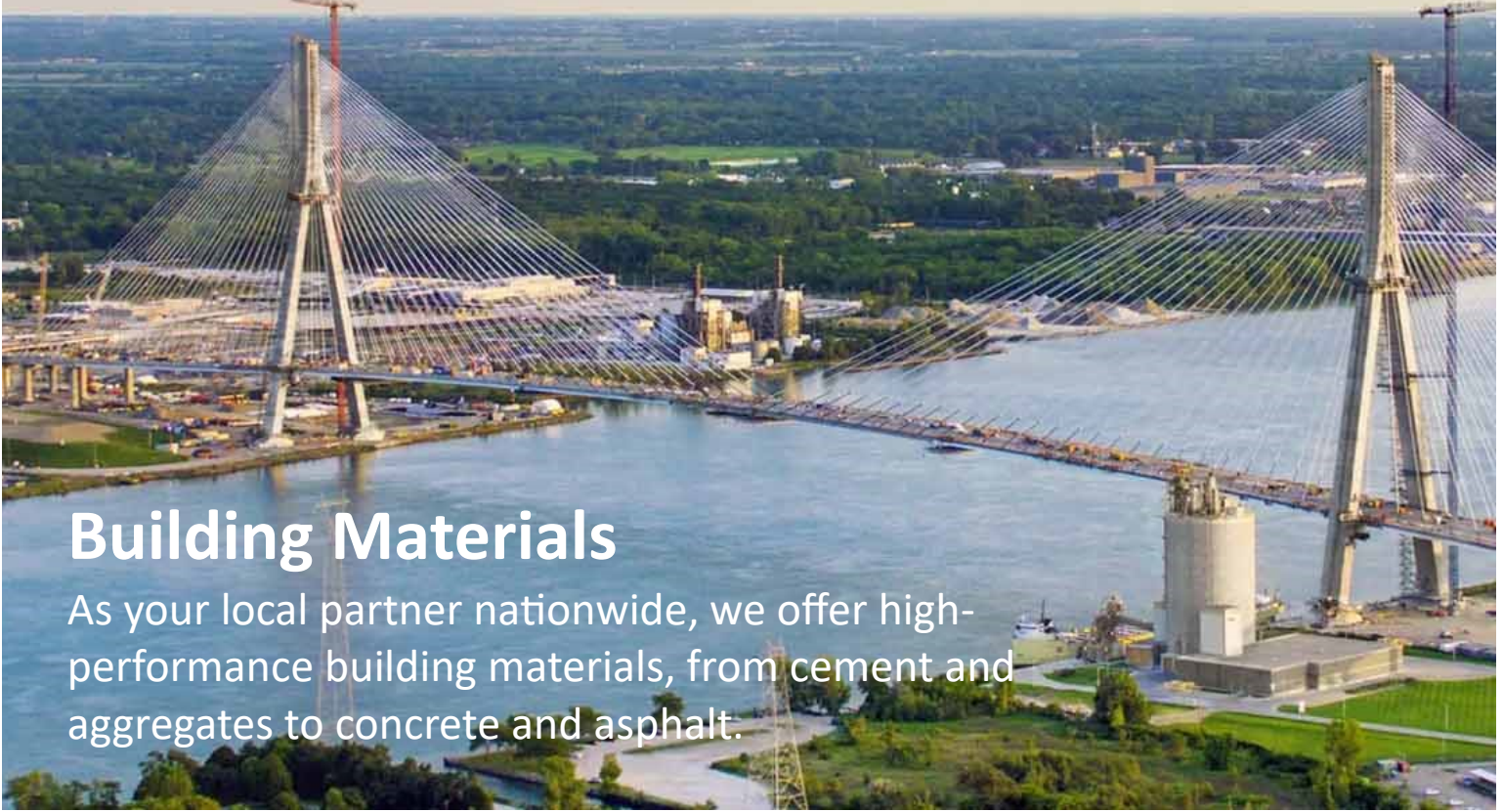


SPONSORED BY

The SouthWest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce would like to thank Century Bank for sponsoring our Officer of the Month and Deputy of the Month Programs. We so appreciate their willingness to continuously recognize such outstanding members of our community.

“Century Bank is a proud member of the communities we serve. Our involvement in extracurricular activities, fund raisers, organizations and other local events is a priority for directors, officers and employees of Century Bank.”





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CHRISTMAS AT THE CHAMBER

The season of holiday magic is here, and the SouthWest Mobile County area is brimming with opportunities to celebrate — thanks to the events organized by the Southwest Mobile County Chamber of Commerce. From breakfast with Santa to the parade, there's something festive for everyone.

VIP Pancakes & Pajamas with Santa - Friday, December 5th

A fun, cozy evening event where participants are encouraged to wear pajamas and enjoy pancakes along with a meet-and-greet with Santa Claus... and the Grinch.

Pancake Breakfast with Santa & Parade Morning - Saturday, December 6th

Time: Pancake Breakfast starts at 8:00 AM; Parade begins at 10:30 AM.

Parade Theme: "How the Chamber Stole Christmas" — inspired by Who-Ville / The Grinch.

Parade Details: Floats, walking groups, antique vehicles, wrapped business vehicles, motorcycles, and golf carts are all welcome to participate. Entry fees vary depending on category, and all participants must pre-register.

A Season of Giving & Community Spirit

More than just lights and parades — these events reflect the true spirit of the season for Southwest Mobile County. The Chamber also have its Christmas Giveback Campaign. Through this campaign, local elementary school children receive Christmas toys — helping ensure that the season stays bright for families throughout our community.

By encouraging local businesses, organizations, families and community members to participate, the Chamber creates a sense of togetherness and holiday joy that brings our community closer.

A festive poster for the Christmas Parade. At the top left is a cartoon dog on a leash. The text reads: 'SOUTHWEST MOBILE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CHRISTMAS PARADE "HOW THE CHAMBER STOLE CHRISTMAS"'. Below this is a QR code and event details: 'Tillman's Corner Christmas Parade Saturday, December 6th, 2025 10:30 AM 5055 Carol Plantation Rd, Mobile, AL 36619'. It also lists 'Breakfast with Santa: 8:00 AM Theme: Who-Ville/The Grinch' and contact information. At the bottom, there's a cartoon illustration of the Grinch in a Santa suit and a pink banner that says 'Welcome to the Chamber' over a winter scene with a tree and gifts.

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT



Alabama Power

For more than a century, Alabama Power has been a driving force behind economic development, innovation, and community support throughout our state—and the Tillman’s Corner area is no exception. As one of the region’s most influential industries, Alabama Power continues to play a vital role in shaping the growth and success of our local businesses and neighborhoods.

Alabama Power’s commitment to reliable energy is the backbone of many of the services, industries, and small businesses that make this community thrive. Through state-of-the-art infrastructure, continuous system improvements, and a strong focus on safety and reliability, the company ensures that residents and business owners can depend on the power they need to operate, innovate, and expand.

But their impact reaches far beyond electricity. Alabama Power is deeply invested in strengthening the SouthWest Mobile County region through community engagement, educational partnerships, and support for economic development initiatives. Their involvement in local programs—ranging from workforce development to environmental stewardship—demonstrates a true dedication to building a brighter and more sustainable future for our area.

As a longstanding partner in the Tillman’s Corner community, Alabama Power continues to prioritize service, innovation, and collaboration. Their efforts not only energize our homes and businesses but also empower opportunities for growth, progress, and shared success.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The SWMCC is proud to recognize Elaine Sessions as the 2025 Citizen of the Year. Elaine is an associate broker with Roberts Brothers Realtors and has been serving the real estate community for 48 years. She began her career while teaching high school in Grand Bay and Theodore, later going on to teach real estate classes for more than 35 years. Today, she leads and mentors a successful team of agents.

Elaine and her family are deeply involved in local ministries, and she is quick to credit them for supporting all that she does. She serves on the board of McKemie Place, a homeless shelter for women, where she and her husband Al prepare weekly meals and provide clothing and essential items. Their garage often doubles as a sorting hub for McKemie Place, Our Sisters’ Closet, and the Tillman’s Corner Homeless & Needy Outreach. When a resident transitions into permanent housing, Elaine helps furnish and set up their new home.

Elaine has been a mentor in the Big Brother/Big Sister program for over a decade, guiding her “little” from second grade to now a college freshman. She has also mentored several high school students through career-shadowing opportunities and is a strong advocate for the Chamber’s T.A.L.L. Program. In addition, she sponsors Pearl Haskew Elementary’s Star Student, encouraging academic excellence and good citizenship.

Elaine and Al host a weekly Bible study in their home, assist with monthly meals at the Ronald McDonald House, and support organizations including St. Jude, the Child Advocacy Center, Samaritan’s Purse, Waterfront Rescue Mission, Seaman’s Center, the Salvation Army, and the Alabama Baptist Children’s Home. They are active members of Dayspring Baptist Church, where Elaine is part of the Women’s Ministry.

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Chamber and Community Center Staff

Executive Director

Tina Poiroux, AACE
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Administrative Assistant

Hope Driskell
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Event Coordinator

Jillian Baxter
jbaxter@swmccchamber.com

Event Specialists

Calvin Dickerson and Catherine Hartsock

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