Bob Sykes' Recognized as Retailer of the Year
The Alabama Retail Association, in cooperation with the University of Alabama at Birmingham’s Collat School of Business, recognized outstanding Alabama retailers representing 12 retail businesses with operations in 72 Alabama cities and 31 states as Retailers of the Year. The 12 winning Retailers of the Year were chosen from almost 50 nominees. The presentations were made at The Club in Birmingham during the 2013 Retail Day Luncheon on October 8th. This marked the 14th presentation of the Retailer of the Year Award since 1999.

Van Sykes, owner and corporate pitmaster for Bob Sykes Bar B Q Restaurant in Bessemer, earned the Gold Retailer of the Year Award in the Annual Sales $1 Million to $5 Million category. The second generation family business has been a Bessemer staple for 56 years. The Alabama Retailer of the Year judges commended the business for its longevity and the quality of its food, while lauding Van Sykes for his community commitment.

Sykes has been a member of the Bessemer Legacy YMCA board of directors for 25 years and has served two terms as the organizations president. The Rotary Club of Bessemer recognized his years of service with its Lifetime Award. He has been a member of the Bessemer Chamber of Commerce board for 30 years. In 2010, the Bessemer Chamber awarded Sykes with its Charles A. Long, Sr. Outstanding Civic Award. He also serves on the American Red Cross board of directors.

Promoting Bessemer along with the restaurant was the impetus for the Annual Bob Sykes BBQ and Blues Festival, a one-day event featuring a half dozen blues artists performing in DeBardeleben Park in historic downtown Bessemer. In its fourth year, the event achieved record attendance this summer. Besides promoting Bessemer, the festival this year benefited Hands On Birmingham and the Bessemer Education Enhancement Foundation. The 5th Annual Bob Sykes BBQ and Blues Festival is set for May 31, 2014.

Van Sykes says “instead of model trains, cowboy suits, and tricycles, Van’s first toys were mixing bowls, bus pans, and napkin holders.” He is the second generation of Sykes to run the restaurant founded by his parents, Bob and Maxine Sykes. The family business also has a third generation influence. Sykes’ nephew, Jason Jewell, manages the restaurant. Van Sykes says “I am very humbled by this prestigious award and it would not be possible without my hard working employees.”

Elaine Lyda, Van Sykes and Tippi Sykes receive Retailer of the Year Award.
THANK YOU to Our Ambassadors
Chamber Chairman Billy Parsons hosted a thank you dinner for our Ambassadors at the San Antonio Grill at Letson Farms. Over 20 attended and Billy handed out small gifts to each volunteer. Special recognition was given to Claire Mitchell and Nikki Jordan for leading the Ambassadors in 2013. Great food and camaraderie were enjoyed and the staff at San Antonio were excellent. When you see an Ambassador thank them for serving you and the Chamber.

Golf FORE a Success Because of Our Volunteers
Thanks to all of our volunteers for the successful Golf FORE Progress Tournament at Bent Brook on October 3rd. The Chamber staff, our Ambassadors, the Board and Bent Brook staff were outstanding in their support. Special thanks to the Golf Committee Chairman Eric Messer and to Joni Holt who both worked tirelessly to make it a great success. Make your plans now to join us in October 2014 for another great golf tournament.

CHILI COOKOFF AT CITY HALL!!!
Don't miss the first Bessemer Chili Cook Off on November 14th at Bessemer City Auditorium. Your business can win the title as best chili in Bessemer or you can enjoy outstanding food. The Chamber is sponsoring this event in conjunction with our last Business After Hours in 2013 and want to spotlight the great cooks we have in the area. Please go to the Chamber website for details or call the Chamber at 425-3253 or email mmilan1@bellsouth.net for more information.

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Trisston Wright Burrows, Moore Coal Co.
What Do Getting Divorced Nine Times and Firing Employees Have in Common?
by Glenn Shepard

A friend who's a divorce attorney told me about a client who had just gone through her ninth divorce. She lamented about the poor quality of men she had encountered all throughout her life. But it doesn't take a PhD in psychology to see that while she may have been married to less than perfect husbands, the first problem was her making poor choices. She reminded me of a woman who attended my seminar at Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth.

She was perplexed as to why she had to keep firing so many employees, and asked what she was doing wrong. She explained that she offered a great working environment, above average pay, generous benefits, and couldn't understand why she kept losing people.

As we talked, it became obvious that her problem wasn’t that she didn’t have good interviewing skills. It was that she had a rapidly growing company and was making the mistake every manager makes at some point – hiring in a hurry. She explained that she “just needed to get warm bodies to fill all the open positions”.

This is like putting a band aid on a wound that needs stitches. It might temporarily stop the bleeding, but eventually it'll start again. Even if it doesn’t, it can fester into a dripping, puss infected mess that can be more deadly than the original wound.

Hiring in a hurry is no different than jumping into a marriage without getting to know the person first. No matter how badly you need help, hiring when you're in too big of a hurry is always a mistake. There are certain times in life when you’re guaranteed to make wrong decisions. Those include when you’re scared, tired, hungry, intoxicated, angry and in a hurry.

DON'T hire in a hurry. You need good employees, not just warm bodies to fill the positions.

Do You Remember When . . .
- Every kid didn't get a trophy
- Everyone wanted to win
- Birds tweeted and people didn't
- Your first TV, round screen, black and white picture only with just three channels
- Women wore panty hose, men wore ties, and no one wore blue jeans to church
- Only men had tattoos and most of them were sailors
- Only women had earrings
- We used slide rules until calculators came out
- We took care of bullies in our own way
- Teachers had paddles and students didn't have guns
- Students prayed in school and they didn't have guns
- Long distance calls were expensive and gas was cheap
- The hottest woman on earth was Farrah Fawcett
- The coolest cars were the '57 Chevy and later the Trans Am on "Smokey and the Bandit"
- Phone directories, dictionaries, and encyclopedias were in books, not on websites
- VCR’s, DVD’s, CD's, MP3 players, personal computers, cell phones, the Internet, and E-mail were introduced
- People panicked over gas rationing in 1973 and over Y2K in 1999
- No one wore seat belts and kids rode bikes without helmets

ALERT: BEEF Benefit Gala

The Bessemer Education Enhancement Foundation will be hosting an elegant evening of fine dining and live entertainment to honor some of our local citizens who “Shine Bright Like A Diamond”. To be held on December 5, 2013 at the Bessemer Civic Center, the event is formal attire with all proceeds going to support the Bessemer City School system. To reserve a table, buy tickets or for more information please call (205) 527-5502.
“It’s not my fault, it’s theirs or yours, but not mine.” Sound familiar? Taking responsibility for our actions is one of the major problems society has today. Persons of either gender, any race, and any societal status have the same equal responsibility for their actions. We as individuals are unique and are not the same completely in any of these respects, but we are equal especially in responsibility for our actions.

We have people that in the name of equality want to erase the meanings of many of our differences such as masculine and feminine. They want us to believe that a male and a female are the same. That is just not physiologically the case. Men and women are not the same but they are equal. Men can do many things that it is impossible for a woman to do and women can do many things that it is impossible for a man to do. They both can do many things equally. However, both are equally accountable for their actions. Is it the woman's fault that she got pregnant by mistake? Yes but an equal share falls on the man. They both had to act for the pregnancy to occur. Why then does society have to bear responsibility for the children? The parents (male and female) are responsible, the parents should take accountability for their actions.

I will challenge you to look at your own problems, your own past, and compare it to another person's situation. Nine times out of ten you will want to keep your own problems and not trade places with someone else no matter their gender, race or societal standing.

We need to understand that responsibility is gender, society level and race neutral. You are just as responsible for your actions as I am for mine. No more no less. We need to accept responsibility for our actions and our decisions. Man has a role in this world and Woman has a role in this world, and sometimes they are same. They are equal but different. Each individual is different in some way from another. We need to understand our differences and not use them as an excuse. We need Men and we need Women. We need all races and societal levels. We need each other.

Quoting a woman I much admire, Margaret D. Nadauld about the need for women: “The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. There are enough women who are coarse; we need women who are kind. There are enough women who are rude; we need women who are refined. We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith. We have enough greed; we need more goodness. We have enough vanity; we need more virtue. We have enough popularity; we need more purity.” We can make the same statements about men. We need men and women to take responsibility.

**COMMUNITY EVENT CALENDAR**

**Saturday, Nov. 16th and Sunday, November 17th - Trade Days**
Tannehill State Park at 12632 Confederate Pkwy, McCalla ~ Call 205.477.5711 for more information

**Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013 from 4 - 6 pm - Delta Aires Concert**
Bessemer Civic Center’s Main Hall

**Friday, Nov. 29th and Saturday, Nov. 30th – Crafters Open House**
Tannehill State Park at 12632 Confederate Pkwy, McCalla ~ Call 205.477.5711 for more information

**Sunday, Dec. 8th at 1 pm and 4 pm – Annual Christmas Heritage Tour of Pioneer Homes**
Featuring the Sadler, Owen and McAdory Homes [Located along Eastern Valley Road in McCalla, AL (Exit 1 off I-459)] and the Bessemer Hall of History Museum (located in downtown Bessemer) *Come and enjoy natural decorations, refreshments, period music, craftsmen, period costumes and quilters.*
Please call 205-426-1633 for more information.

**Saturday, Dec. 14th at 2 pm – City of Bessemer Christmas Parade**
Downtown Bessemer – Come by the office to pick up a registration form or go to www.bessemerchamber.com and download from our calendar.

**NEW MEMBERS - OCTOBER**

Ms. Louise Alexander
Alexander Unity Flowers & Gifts
2301 Ninth Avenue, N., Bessemer, AL 35020
PH 205-425-5700
Florist

Ms. Sharon M. Otey
Bessemer Towing Service Inc.
1300 Alabama Avenue, Bessemer, AL 35020
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bessemertowingservices@yahoo.com
Towing

Ms. Sherri Kennedy
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Real Estate Investments

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Catering

Mr. Patrick McKinney
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