



Ora H. Foster Community Service Scholarships Awarded

Three deserving high school seniors were honored by your Chamber with the annual Ora H. Foster Community Service Scholarship which recognized not only their scholastic achievement but also their involvement in the community. Receiving the awards for our three local high schools were: Aftene Taylor, Jess Lanier; Kamecia Bruce, McAdory; and Jessica Dickson, Bessemer Academy. These outstanding students and citizens represent the future of our area and they make us proud of our young people. In an ever more competitive and volatile business world these future leaders bring us hope that business will be in good hands.

Named for Ms. Ora Foster the scholarships are meant to epitomize the contributions to civic and community events, organizations, and individuals by the recipients. It is always an honor to mention Ms Foster who is selfless and hard working to better the Bessemer area. Her example should be a beacon for all that want to make the area what it can and should be. All three young ladies deserve our thanks and praise for a job well done.



Jessica Dickson is recognized for Community Service by Chamber President Ronnie Acker at Bessemer Academy

Bessemer Chamber Honors Bessemer City Schools Teachers of the Year

It is always a pleasure for the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce to recognize the teachers in the Bessemer City School System. As difficult as it is to select one from each school we do so knowing that they represent the outstanding and selfless service of so many. This year we presented a certificate and gift to the following very deserving and professional educators: Nakia Thornton - Browning (James A. Davis Middle School and System-wide Secondary Teacher of the Year), Armentress Robinson (Charles Hard Elementary and System-wide Elementary Teacher of the Year), Edith Hunter (Abrams Elementary), Michelle Box (Greenwood Elementary), Monique Bibbs (New Horizons Alternative School), Delmesa Callins (Jess Lanier High School), Susan Robertson (Westhills Elementary), and Jonerica Smith (Jonesboro Elementary).

Each of the recipients is well deserving and have earned our support and recognition. Take time to visit our local schools and thank the teachers who are providing the education to our next generation for the work force. The business community salutes each teacher and administrator who labor so hard in the education trenches.

(Article continued on page 4. Pictures on Page 5)



At Jess Lanier's Class Day, Chamber President Ronnie Acker presents scholarship to Ms. Aftene Taylor



McAdory's Kamecia Bruce is awarded Community Service Scholarship by Chamber President Ronnie Acker

"We will not waver; we will not tire; we will not falter; and we will not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail!" President George W. Bush

— Inside —

It's Your Business: Father's Day Honor	Page 2
Community News: Bessemer Marines Return Home	Page 3
Chamber News: Coffee and Contacts	Page 4
Chamber News: Teacher of The Year Pictures	Page 5
Business News: Police Join Business in Outreach	Page 6
Business News: Spotlight: Chamber of Commerce AA	Page 7

From the President

"Blessed indeed is the man who hears many gentle voices call him father", so wrote Lydia M. Child in *Philothea: A Romance* around 1836. And truly we can all say the same. Father is a blessed title, a title of respect, and a title that must be earned.

Famed baseball Hall-of-Famer Harmon Killebrew related the following example. My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, "You're tearing up the grass." "We're not raising grass," Dad would reply. "We're raising boys." This is true of girls as well. A Father raises boys and girls without any training to prepare him for the job. He earns his stripes so to speak each day, with each heartache, with each laugh, with each tear, with each proud moment and with each hug.

As businessmen and women, let's take a few moments this month to honor our Fathers, let them know that they matter to us. Whether they were perfect fathers doesn't matter, if they are still living let's give them a hug and if not spend some time remembering all they did for you.

There are bad Fathers just like there are bad Mothers, but if you were blessed with a good Father or like some of us if you were blessed with both a good Mom and Dad, you should thank God for your blessings.

If you are a Father, don't worry about your mistakes, we have all made them. Worry about today where you can make a difference in your son's and daughter's lives. Be the best Father you can today when you can control how you can be better at love and example. If you think I'll do it tomorrow, then make a difference by doing it today. Remember tomorrow never comes. Don't think about what if but rather think about what now. Johann Schiller stated, "It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us fathers and sons."

A father carries pictures where his money used to be so says an unknown author and that is true. Money matters little when compared to the pride a Father has in his sons and daughters. And finally, Mark Twain wrote, "When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years." Remember your Fathers not just because it is June but because it's your business.



President



The Western Star

National Day of Prayer Observed Downtown

Bessemer participated in the National Day of Prayer with a downtown observance at the First Presbyterian Church. Rev. Kim Pilkington, First Christian Church, conducted the event and the monthly City wide Prayer Breakfast was the sponsor. Guest speaker was Birmingham Police Chief A.C. Roper and he was joined on the stand by Bessemer Police Chief Nathaniel Rutledge and Mayor Ed May. It was a blessed event with those attending being inspired to be better people and community servants. Lunch followed in the recreation hall.

FOP's Annual Clutch Concert Rocks

Sachi was back and the show went on like it does every year with great music and lots of smiles and laughter. CLUTCH, out of Panama City, performed their annual show at the Bessemer Civic Center sponsored by the Bessemer Fraternal Order of Police. Music from the 50s, 60s and 70s highlight their performance but the real show is the audience. Old timers to young teens joined together to make another hit show for the FOP. Cliff Vassar emceed the event and did a very professional job. Elected officials seen at the event were Commissioner Bobby Humphries and Circuit Judge Tom King along with Buffalo Rock's Gene Cochran, an event sponsor. If you get the opportunity to see this group and at the same time support our local FOP please take advantage and enjoy a great evening.

Bessemer Marine's Return Home

Spending months away from your family is both lonesome and stressful. 26 local Marine reservists from Bessemer's own reserve center were welcomed home by family, friends, and local press. Your Chamber was there to lend our support to all the thanks and appreciation that these heroes deserve. Banners, signs, flags and more were visible as the bus pulled into the reserve center entrance. The entrance was lined by members of the Patriot Guard Riders, a group of military veterans who ride motorcycles with patriotism and pride. Wives and children ran to their loved ones and hugs, kisses, and tears filled the area. It was a proud day and it was made even more worthwhile as other reservists came out of the reserve center to welcome their comrades in arms. Hearts were full and happiness abounded as this group made it home safely. When you see one of our service personnel, thank them for their service and sacrifice, they voluntarily stand between us and oppression.



Military bus enters Bessemer Reserve Center parking lot with Patriot Guard Riders lining the route

Alabama Truckers Hold Annual Competition in Bessemer

Motels were full, restaurants were busy and the Bessemer Civic Center was covered up with big rigs. The annual Alabama Truck Driving Championship was held on May 9-10th in Bessemer. The Alabama Truck Driving Championships are an exciting, family event that pits the industry's best drivers against one another in a test of road knowledge and driving skill. The championships recognize the association's best drivers in eight different classes, and each member company can enter up to two drivers in each class. In order to compete in the championships, a driver must be accident-free for the previous 12-month period and work for an association member company.

The competition is scored by points given in each of four different areas, a written exam can earn up to 40 points, a personal interview is worth a maximum of 10 points, a pre-trip inspection earns up to 50 points with 10 bonus points available, and the all-important skills course is worth a maximum of 300 points. Contestants earning the most points in each class are declared champion.

Winners in each class who qualify can then go on to represent Alabama in the National Truck Driving Championships sponsored by the American Trucking Associations in August. Classes include straight truck, twins, three-axle van, four-axle van, five-axle van, sleeper berth, flatbed and tanks. Association Chairman Bill Scruggs and Gene Vonderau, Director of Member Services & Safety, welcomed the several hundred participants, supporters and family members to what proved to be another outstanding event. We look forward to another great event next year.

Strategic Planning at Davis Middle School-A Student Today, A Leader Tomorrow

The Chamber and local business people were invited to participate in a Strategic Planning Kick-Off at James A. Davis Middle School on May 28th with principal Albert Soles and coordinator Dr. Carole Tull leading the presentation and discussion. A survey was completed, statistics touted (68% of Davis 7th and 8th graders met or exceeded reading, writing and math scores), and great food was served by the outstanding cafeteria staff. This meeting was held in preparation for SACs Accreditation. Mr. Soles has done a great job in improving the teaching and learning at Davis and with the help of Dr. Tull this will get even better. Technology is the shortcoming for the school, needed computers, teaching tools and hard/soft ware are not available. The business community can help so please contact Mr. Soles or Dr. Tull and let them know what you can do and ask them what they need.



Bessemer Chamber Honors Bessemer City Schools Teachers of the Year

(continued from page 1)

Each of the recipients is well deserving and have earned our support and recognition. Take time to visit our local schools and thank the teachers who are providing the education to our next generation for the work force. The business community salutes each teacher and administrator who labor so hard in the education trenches.

Chamber Receives BIG Check from Craftsman Printing

Chairman Jon Staggs happily received a check for \$10,000 from Craftsman Printing for the 2008 Bessemer Magazine. You made this possible with your purchasing of ads and other support. We appreciate the professionalism of Craftsman and the product that they produced. Look for the magazine as you are around Bessemer, they are in as many places as we could put them. We only have enough to resupply the hotels and provide for the demand coming directly to the Chamber. If you would like a copy/copies call us and we will get them to you.



Mark Stites, Chamber Chairman Jon Staggs, and Craftsman's Debbie Patton show off check

Premiere Chevrolet Hosts Coffee and Contacts

It was early and it was beautiful, a great day to meet and network. Ken Gallo and Doug Green at Premiere Chevrolet hosted another outstanding early morning get together for the Chamber. The biscuits were delicious sausage, ham and smoked sausage all included. The donuts made you want to eat more than you should. Also, we got to look at all the new cars that Premiere sells and wish we had one of each. All of the sales people, management and staff at Premiere made everyone feel at home. Hopefully, we can do this again next year. The Chamber Ambassadors were out in force with Ambassador Coordinator Diane Sparks leading the way. The Chamber thanks corporate sponsor Premiere Chevrolet for a great event.



Premieres Ken Gallo, Chamber President Ronnie Acker and Sales Manager Doug Green at Coffee & Contacts



TOWN & COUNTRY



"A New Attitude"

ITT

ITT Technical Institute



WATERMARKPLACE



Bessemer Chamber Honors Bessemer City Schools Teachers of the Year

(Continue from page 1)

Chamber VP Latasha Cook presents Nakia Thornton-Browning of Davis Middle School with certificate



Armentress Robinson from Hard Elementary receives certificate from Chamber President Ronnie Acker



Abrams Elementary's Edith Hunter receives certificate from Chamber's Latasha Cook



Michelle Box, teacher at Greenwood Elementary, received teacher of the year award



Monique Bibbs, New Horizon Alternative School, with Ms. Johnson shows certificate



Delmesa Callins receives certificate from Ronnie Acker at Jess Lanier's Class Day



Jonesboro Elementary's Jonerica Smith shows her certificate



Susan Robertson from Westhills Elementary awarded certificate by Latasha Cook



Local Executive Attends International Business Incubation Conference

Devron A. Veasley, Director of the Bessemer Business Incubation System in Bessemer, Alabama, attended the National Business Incubation Association's (NBIA) International Conference on May 3-8, in San Antonio, Texas. Mr. Veasley serves as Chairman of the Board for NBIA. As Chairman of the Board, Mr. Veasley presided over the conference that was attended by 660 people representing 45 nations.

Mr. Veasley also represented the United States business incubators in a meeting of the Global Business Incubation Network (GBIN), a group of business incubator regional and national professionals from 27 countries. The 15 GBIN countries represented at this meeting included Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Sweden, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. The delegates of the 15 countries represented over 3,000 incubators with the United States being home to 1100 of that number. There is an estimated 6,000 business incubators worldwide.

The Bessemer Business Incubation System (www.bessemerincubator.com) is a general use incubator housing and counseling businesses involved in the service, information technology, wholesale/distribution and light industrial industries. The incubator provides business counseling, research, funding and a shared location to those businesses that qualify for its programs. The incubator can be contacted at 205.481.2000 or at bessemerincubator@yahoo.com.

Bessemer Police Join with Business in Outreach

On June 2nd, please join the Bessemer Business community as they are hosted for lunch in the park with the Bessemer Police Department to meet, ask questions and voice concerns about safety, security, emergencies, crime, etc. This is your opportunity to meet face to face with our police force, to let them meet you, and to provide them input so they can serve our business community better. The event will begin at 11:00 am and has been coordinated by Officers Mike Wood and Gary Carmichael and they have done an outstanding job. Also, security vendors will be in the park before and after the event for you and your staff to learn the latest on security measures.



Seafood Harbor Cuts Ribbon at Letson Farms

Howard Johnson and the staff at Seafood Harbor, the newest seafood restaurant in Bessemer, opened their doors to a hungry crowd of Chamber Ambassadors, local officials and well wishers on May 12th. Mayor Ed May, Council member Sarah Belcher, BBOE Superintendent Deborah Horn, and Chamber board member Doug Caddell helped cut the ribbon to open the facility. The menu included great seafood, fried or broiled, gumbo, hush puppies and more! If you are hungry and want to take your food home the take out window will make it easy for you. When you get a chance go by Seafood Harbor in the Letson Farms shopping center and enjoy some great food.



Mayor Ed May and Seafood Harbor's owner, Howard Johnson, cut the ribbon.

Home Depot Breaks Ground at JefMet McCalla

On May 7th Jefferson County Commissioner Bobby Humphries, State of Alabama's Neal Wade and Jefferson County Economic and Industrial Development Authority Chairman Ronnie Acker welcomed the new Home Depot Distribution Center, which is being built in the JefCo Metropolitan-McCalla Industrial Park. Home Depot's thanked everyone for the warm welcome which included the other companies in the park and community leaders including City of Bessemer Councilperson Sarah Belcher. Home Depot is a great addition to an already outstanding area development. Thanks to the work of local, county and state officials such as JCEIDA Executive Director Deborah McGill, the facility will add 150-200 jobs to the local area and increase the already great reputation of western Jefferson County as a place to locate business. Utilizing the Executive Center at the park a good crowd enjoyed great food and made their newest addition feel right at home.

Spotlight on: Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama



NOTE TO MEMBERS: This monthly article presents the thoughts and suggestions of members of the Chamber about business related topics.

In 1937, as Alabama found itself recovering from the economic crisis of the Great Depression, the time had come for the business community of this great state to bring together allies of a common nature to help fulfill the need of an advocate for the men and women who helped provide the fuel of government-commerce-in all its varied forms and locations. Chambers of Commerce had long filled this role since their formation in England in the 1700's as an extension of the European craft guilds, but the realization that city and county economies were bound by more of a regional or statewide nature than had been previously led the leadership of the Birmingham, Montgomery, Huntsville, Mobile, Dothan, Tuscaloosa, Alexander City, Anniston, Selma and Demopolis Chambers of Commerce, as well as representatives from allied organizations such as Alabama Power Company and The Montgomery Advertiser to form what was then known as the Alabama Association of Commercial Organizations. The original intent of this group of representatives of local business communities was to "foster the commercial, industrial, and recreational welfare of the State".

In 1997, sixty years after its formation, and realizing that Chambers of Commerce were still the premier local business advocate, the appellation Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama (CCAA) was adopted. Along with this name change began the effort to bring this alliance from a part-time, volunteer-led group of Chamber executives to a true full-time, professionally-led association that represented the needs and issues that affect the over 110 Chambers of Commerce in that make up its membership.

In 1999, after carefully marshaling funding and support, the Board of Directors of CCAA hired its first professional director to head the organization. Ralph Stacy, former Executive Director of the Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce, was hired to guide CCAA on its mission of "building a better Alabama...through strong Chambers of Commerce". Stacy still heads the organization as its President and Chief Executive Officer, having earned during his tenure the prestigious Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation from the American Society of Association Executives.

While CCAA made headway in representing the needs of local Chambers and their professional staff, as well as providing training and conference opportunities for all Alabama Chambers, the potential of the strength of local Chambers came to the forefront with the hiring of William J. "Billy" Canary as the President and CEO of the Business Council of Alabama (BCA). The BCA was formed in 1985 with the merger of the Alabama Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Industrial Manufacturers. BCA is recognized as the State Chamber for Alabama by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. BCA and CCAA had always maintained cordial relations, but the linkage between local Chambers and BCA was somehow incomplete in its delivery method.

Canary, former White House staffer under President George H.W. Bush, and former President of the American Trucking Association, immediately began forging a stronger alliance with CCAA through increased interaction and participation in local Chamber events and with local Chamber executives. This led to the formation in late 2003 of The Partnership, a formal document signed by BCA and CCAA leadership which linked together, for the first time, the power of BCA's 5,000 members with the nearly 60,000 local businesses represented by Chambers. This has created a voice for business unlike any other in America.

Not only was this a bold move by both organizations, it also proved to be the first of its kind in America. It has been recognized by both the U.S. Chamber and the American Chamber of Commerce Executives as being a unique program, and is currently under implementation in other states as a model for state Chamber association operations.

CCAA continues to serve its members by providing information on governmental affairs, including hosting a joint conference call every fifth legislative day with members of the BCA's Governmental Affairs staff and local Chamber professionals; by communicating through its website (www.alabamachambers.org) issues.

**BESSEMER AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Jon Staggs
Chairman of the Board
Alabama Power

Kenneth Gulley
Past Chairman
Lawson State Community College

Deborah Horn
Chairman Elect
Bessemer Board of Education

Joni Holt
Treasurer & Chairperson of Finance
Holt Insurance

Doug Caddell, Canaan Baptist Church
David Darby, BankTrust
Randy Donaldson, Alabama Gas Company
CeCe Doss, Wilson Pallet & Packaging
Arthur Green, JeffCo District Attorney, Bess. Div.
Howard Johnson Jr., Johnson Funeral Home
Sunny Lippert, Attorney
Ross Mitchell, Baptist Health System
Tom Nicholson, US Pipe & Foundry Co.
Rupesh Patel, Hampton Inn
Keith Pennington, Medical West
Allen Rice, ITT Technical Institute
Steve Self, Buffalo Rock Company
Hank Tyler, Henry H. Tyler Enterprises
Thelma Vanderburg, First American Bank
Nelda Weaver, Weaver Land & Realty, Inc.

Calendar of Events June 2008

June	2	BPD Business Outreach	11:00 A.M.	Debardeleban Park
June	3	City Wide Prayer Breakfast	7:30 A.M.	Medical West
June	3	Ambassadors Meeting	8:15 A.M.	Chamber
June	10	Business After Hours	5:30-7:30 P.M.	WaterMark Place
June	12	Spaghetti Luncheon	10-2:00 P.M.	1st Presbyterian
June	13	Maurice's Ribbon Cutting	11:00 A.M.	Colonial Tannehill
June	17	Executive Committee Meeting	11:30 A.M.	Chamber
June	17	Board of Director's Meeting	Noon	Chamber
June	18	Bessemer Business Awards	Noon	Lawson St./Bess
June	22-25	EDAA Annual Conference	All Day	Orange Beach

Welcome New Members for May

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE CHURCH

Kevin Bufford
PO Box 476
Bessemer, AL 35021
Phone: 205.426.5017
Pastor.KDB@hotmail.com
thefountainoflifechurch.com
*Church - Non Denominational

LANE BRYANT/PETITE SOFISTICATE

Stacey Thompson
4500 Katie's Way
Bessemer, AL 35022
Phone: 205.424.3147
Fax: 205.425.4520
ssathompson@bellsouth.net
lanebryant.com
*Retail Clothing

www.bessemerchamber.com

BESSEMER AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P.O. Box 648
Bessemer, Alabama 35021-0648

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
Phone: 205-425-3253 Fax: 425-4979
Toll Free: 1-888-4BESSEMER (Toll Free)

www.bessemerchamber.com

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

YOUR CHAMBER STAFF

Ronnie Acker, President
LaTasha Cook, Vice President
Mary Milan, Administrative Specialist
Jean Brown, Accounting Specialist



Celebrating 86 Years of Service

Cut out this logo to place in your ads for higher name recognition

