



## US Attorney Alice Martin Makes Annual Meeting a Big Success

2008 kicked off with a bang as US Attorney Alice Martin highlighted the 86th Annual Banquet of the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce. 2007 Chairman Kenneth Gulley welcomed the crowd of 348 attending and an inspirational rendition of our National Anthem by Ms. Bessie Shelton started the program off right. Rev. Doug Caddell gave our invocation and Chamber President Ronnie Acker led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Then it was time to view the 2007 video provided by Ricky Acker and Lawson State Community College while the crowd enjoyed some outstanding food catered by Cook Catering.

Kenneth Gulley, Lawson State CC, recognized the 2007 Board members, thanked everyone for their support and reported on an outstanding year, which saw the Chamber reach a good financial condition after 4 years of struggle. Specifically mentioning Joni Holt who led the way in several areas but especially in the annual golf tournament, he wanted everyone to know that the volunteers both board and ambassadors helped him immensely. He then passed the gavel (see Chamber news for more) and introduced our 2008 Chairman Jon Staggs, Alabama Power, who recognized the great leadership that Kenneth provided and presented him with a Chairman's plaque and gift from the Chamber. American Pride Trophies and Loyle Seymour Jewelry Company furnished the gifts.

Jon then recognized the 2008 Board members and made a special recognition of our Chamber Ambassadors. Providing direction for 2008 Jon briefly outlined what he hoped to accomplish then introduced the 2007 Charles A. Long Sr. Civic Award recipient, Ms. Helen Cooley, and the 2006 recipient, Anthony Underwood, who came forward to name the 2008 Civic Award winner. Before he named the winner Anthony made a special award to Carol and Larry Parsons of Loyle Seymour Jewelry recognizing their 50-year anniversary. He then named Gene Cochran, Buffalo Rock Companies, as the 2008 Charles A. Long Sr. Civic Award recipient. Gene is a very worthy nominee who has provided so much to the Bessemer community.

(Continued on Page 5)

## Gene Cochran Recognized as Charles A. Long Sr. Recipient

Stunned, humble, amazed and speechless describe Gene Cochran as the 2006 Charles A. Long Sr Civic Award recipient, Anthony Underwood, read of Gene's contributions to the community and finally called his name as the 2008 Charles A. Long Award winner. He is a very worthy recipient.

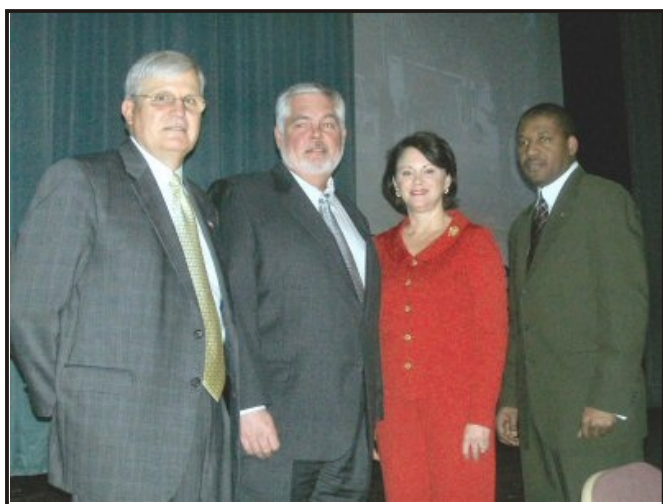
Gene attended both Bessemer High School and Jess Lanier High School and grew up in our community. He learned his work ethic and gained his great personality from loving parents, Gene & MaryAnn Cochran Sr., who he loves so much. He is married to Veda who has made Gene a much better man. They have four children: Jennifer, Josh, Russ and Katelyn. Also, the apple of his eye are his three granddaughters: Kimberly, Kamryn, and Karli. Gene has worked for Buffalo Rock Companies for 35 years representing that company with professionalism and dedication.

Gene serves the community having served on the boards of the Chamber, the Legacy YMCA, American Cancer Society, and Medical West. He donates untold time to the Boy Scouts of America, United Way, Dixie Youth ballparks, Save-A-Life, March of Dimes and to our local schools. He is active in his church and serves as Chairman of the Deacons and on the Property Committee. Gene is a great addition to the long line of business and civic leaders who have received the Charles A. Long Sr. Civic Award.



Ms. Ora Foster and State Representative Priscilla Dunn congratulate Gene Cochran

*Drive thy business or it will drive thee.  
Benjamin Franklin*



President Ronnie Acker, 2008 Chairman Jon Staggs, US Attorney Alice Martin, and 2007 Chairman Kenneth Gulley

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## 2 *It's Your Business*

### *From the President*

"I never thought it would happen to me!" That is a familiar phrase all of us have used at some time in our life when something unexpected or bad occurs. But we all know that no matter what it can happen to us. Whether good or bad it can happen and more often than not it does happen. The same can be said about your business. So what can you do to manage those never thought it would happen events?

The Boy Scouts motto: Be Prepared, is wonderful advice. You can have insurance, back up systems, redundant systems, alternate vendors, emergency plans and practice runs on all that your business has, but are you prepared? It takes more than things to be prepared as an owner or manager. You have to be mentally and physically prepared also.

If a catastrophic event occurs are you mentally and physically prepared to face it? Even a good event may require you to be mentally and physically prepared. You take as much attention as your inventory, your employees, your data, and your facilities.

You are the most important asset you have and then come your employees. Protect this asset as you would your facility, data and inventory. I have always been taught that if I was not healthy, mentally and physically, I could not help others. That is so true in your business.

Take time to sharpen the saw, as Stephen Covey would say. Sharpen the saw focuses on balanced self-satisfaction: regain what Covey calls "production capability" by engaging in carefully selected recreational activities. You need to relax, recreate, clear your mind, use your body and stay healthy. In order to be the best you can be you need to resharpen your competitive self and enjoy life with your family. Never neglect yourself or your family for work. If you are not healthy you can't lead.

So remember as you get caught up in all the details of running your company, you need to take a break. Relax so you can be a better owner or manager. Be your best and healthiest, mentally and physically, because it's your business.



President

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## Kiwanis Club Welcomes Jabo Waggoner

State Senator Jabo Waggoner came to Bessemer and spoke at the Kiwanis Club meeting on January 16th. Held at Medical West the meeting was a great way to hear an elder statesman of the State of Alabama update the group on the happenings in Montgomery. Senator Waggoner is well acquainted with the Bessemer area and has done so much to make the state a better place. Wes Russell introduced the Senator and as usual the meal at Medical West was outstanding.

## Jess Lanier HS 2nd Annual Science Fair

On February 28th the Science Club at Jess Lanier High School will present it's 2nd Annual Science Fair at the school. The theme of this year's fair is "Waiting on the World to Change". Beginning at 5:30 pm there will be set up displays, door prizes, and refreshments for business leaders. Ms. Harriet Westbrook would like to invite all business people in the area to participate and attend. You can contact Ms. Westbrook at [jlscienceclub@gmail.com](mailto:jlscienceclub@gmail.com).

## Bessemer Maps Available at Chamber

The newest promotional map for the City of Bessemer is now available at the Chamber and soon at any of the maps advertisers. Maps are a great way to introduce newcomers to the area and to help visitors have an enjoyable visit. If you need maps please contact the Chamber at 425-3253 or email [mmilan1@bellsouth.net](mailto:mmilan1@bellsouth.net).

## Spanish Classes for Business

The Baptist Church at McAdory will sponsor Spanish language classes beginning February 5th from 5:30-6:30 pm at the church. The money raised will go to children that want to go to camp but can't afford it. ALL the money will go to the kids at the Hollins Baptist Church to go to Shocco Springs Christian Camp. The classes will cost \$225.00 for 21 weeks (books included in the cost with CDs). Certificates of completion will be presented to those who complete the course. For information or to register call 205-477-8265 or 256-816-7939 or email [Spanishandmore1@aol.com](mailto:Spanishandmore1@aol.com).

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## Jon Staggs Takes Over as Chairman of the Board from Kenneth Gulley

Jon Staggs has served the Bessemer Area Chamber over the last several years with dedication and hard work. His leadership will be valuable to even more progress. The Chamber thanks Kenneth Gulley and his great job as our Chairman and appreciate the time that Lawson State CC and Dr. Perry Ward allowed him to lead our business community. We also thank Yvonne, his wife, for supporting him while he served us. We have some outstanding leadership in western Jefferson County!

Moving forward in 2008 is Jon's primary emphasis, making the Chamber better and more capable of serving the area's business community. A manager with Alabama Power Company, Jon represents one of the State of Alabama's premiere companies. His personality and sincere interest in the western Jefferson County region make him a devout promoter of not only the Bessemer Area Chamber but the whole county area. Jon regularly hosts the western Mayors meeting at his office and works closely with each of the 13 mayors. He is married to Cathy, who is also employed by Alabama Power.

## Pictures From The 86th Annual Banquet



*Kenneth Gulley receives gift from Jon Staggs as they pass the gavel*



*Rev. Doug Caddell, Officer Mike Roper, Matt Caddell (University of Alabama), Minnie Roper and Bobbie Caddell*



*City Council President Jesse Matthews, US Attorney Alice Martin, Pro Tem Jimmy Stephens, and Councilman Albert Soles*



*Ambassadors pose during annual banquet*



*Past Chairman Kenneth Gulley and Kaylyn*



*Jack White, Ora Foster, and Connie Fuell*

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## US Attorney Alice Martin Makes Annual Meeting a Big Success

(con't. from pg 1)

Ronnie Acker, President of the Chamber, then introduced US Attorney Alice Martin. She was outstanding. Addressing the topic of business ethics, she emphasized that if you do the right things you would never have to worry about her. She was a dynamic speaker using current litigation to emphasize her points. Ms. Martin is a professional prosecutor and her points regarding officials who are entrusted with the public's trust and therefore being held to a higher level of ethical behavior was received enthusiastically by the business community. She was great! All comments after the meeting were very positive and several made the statement that this was the best banquet they could remember.

Bessemer Mayor Edward E. May made the final comments, City Council members present were honored (Council President Jesse Matthews, Pro Tem Jimmy Stephens, Sarah Belcher and Albert Soles) and the banquet was adjourned. Those at the head table were Mayor May and his wife Patricia May, Jon and Cathy Staggs, Rev. Doug and Bobbie Caddell, Kenneth and Yvonne Gulley, Mrs Alice Martin, and Ronnie Acker. A special thanks to Kosta Sarris, Joe Lovoy and the staff at the Bessemer Civic Center for another great job of hosting this annual event. There were several elected officials present and we have listed all those that signed in under the Chamber section of the newsletter. Thanks again to all!

## List of Those Who Signed in at the 86th Annual Banquet

Speaker: Alice Martin, US Attorney

Elected Officials: Mayor Edward E. May (Bessemer) and Patricia May, Mayor Delor Baumann (Hueytown) and Kelly Baumann, Circuit Judge Tom King, Bessemer City Council President Jesse Matthews, Bessemer City Council Pro Tem Jimmie Stephens, Bessemer City Councilors Sarah Belcher and Albert Soles, District Attorney Arthur Green (Bessemer Chamber Board Member), Bessemer Board of Education Members Bessie Pippens, Christine Knight and Hattie J. Aikerson, Hueytown City Councilors Carole Marks and Phifer Crane, State Representative Priscilla Dunn

2008 Bessemer Chamber Board of Directors Recognized and In Attendance: 2008 Chairman Jon Staggs, Past Chairman Kenneth Gulley (2007), Doug Caddell, David Darby, Randy Donaldson, 2008 Treasurer Joni Holt, Chairman Elect Deborah Horn (2009), Howard Johnson Jr., Sunny Lippert, Tom Nicholson, Rupesh Patel, Keith Pennington, Allen Rice, Steve Self, Thelma Vanderburg and Nelda Weaver

Outgoing Board of Directors Recognized and In Attendance: Pam Nichols and Tim Thornton

2008 Bessemer Chamber Ambassadors Recognized and In Attendance: Coordinator Diane Sparks, Co-Coordinator Regina Doriety, Secretary Nelda Pate, Kay Baggett, LeeAnn Best, Ora Foster, Connie Fuell (2007

Coordinator), Louise Hickey, Doris Lewis, Susan Majors, Claire Mitchell, Minnie Roper, Sarah Smith, Margaret Snider, Katherine Taylor, Lula Walter

2008 Charles A. Long Award Recipient: Gene Cochran Jr. (Bufalo Rock Co.)

Bessemer Chamber Staff: President Ronnie Acker, Vice President LaTasha Cook, Mary Milan and Jean Brown

Guests: Gene & MaryAnn Cochran Sr., John & Dee Hayes, Veda Cochran, Russ Cochran, John & Jennifer Roberson, Katelyn Chandler, Josh Chandler, Erica Boozman, Anthony Underwood (2006 Charles A. Long Recipient), Yvonne Gulley, John Nichols, Ed Vanderburg, Eddy Davis, Bobbie Caddell, Susan Darby, Quitman Mitchell, Don & Janie Holmes, Preston Huddleston, Larry & Carol Parsons, Jena Large, Helen Cooley (2007 Charles A. Long Recipient), Jack White, Jordan Frazier, Allen & Muriel Farley, Dale Jones, Jay Howton, Jim & Mert Byram, Bill Winn, Jimmy Hyche, Gene & Mary Vonderau, Cynthia Anthony, Aleshia Witherspoon, Gary Smith, Judy Mathis, Shirley Horn, Olivia Richardson, Diane Hyche, Bonnie Norred, Leigh Foster, Mildred Posey, Steve Woodward, Holli Parker, Wayne Holmes, Dan DeLong, Lynn Joyce, Charles Murray, Randi Passmore, Willie & Lillie Thomas, Valerie Stewart, Tim Benefield, Mark LaCroix, June Holmes, Stacey Thompson, Laura Robinson, Lee Morrison, Pennee Barron, Darlene Seiffert, Linda Parish, Paul Province, Kenny Smith, Ray & Janice Roberson, Laverne Baumann, Helen Cooper, Elma Tolbert, Sheila Handley, Jerome Handley, Bruce Crawford, Sharon Crews, William Odom, Alfred Mooney, Mary Moore, Charlene Jordan, Gannon Davis, Willie & Vicki Vines, Stephanie Borden, Daphne Levert, Debbie Shirley, Donnie Pinkard, Geri DeFrank, Allison Waldrop, Debbie Long, Carol Jean McAlister, Walter McAlister, Bea Camathan, Carolyn Thompson, Emily Creel, Carolyn Boateng, Helen Cooper, Brian Waters, Susie Whitely, Roxanne Crane, Kelly Thomas, Chad Jaynes, Fred & Renee Ross, Joe Openshaw, Bobby Prince, Miriam Koerner, Alex & Ruby Cheeks, Amanda Maize, Stephanie Hughes, Valerie Holt, Owen Holt, Blake & Beverly Norwood, Mona Moore, Analee Huffman, Betty Smith, Daryl Smith, Seth Holloway, Rene Taylor, Terri Carroll, Karen Stewart, Steven Miranda, Rosie Harris, Dante Jelks, Pete Sarris, Mary Porter, Mildred Cook, Terry Smiley, Karen Saye, Mary Hicks, Casandra Riedel, Kyoka Akers, Shayla Frazier, Sherri Davis, Stan & Pat Bussey, Verda & Austin Wells, Larry & Evelyn Wells, Viola Jones, John Allman, Katherine Frazier, Anita Bryant, Valerie Holmes, Jacque Phillips, Felicia King, MaKeitha Moore, Sherry Hudson, Doris Watkins, Sandra Jackson, Brenda & Lynn Baswell, Donnell Perry, Jeff Popovnak, Herb Ritchie, Bessie Shelton, Diane Clayton, Ronald Clayton, John & Melody Bailey, Dennis & Diane McDonald, Julius Spain, Dale Weaver, Teyonah Weaver, Evelyn Moon, Juanita Banks.

## JEFCo BOE Superintendent Speaks to Hueytown Chamber Luncheon

Dr. Phil Hammonds, Jefferson County Superintendent, stood before an overflow crowd at the Hueytown Chamber's monthly meeting to discuss the much anticipated new high school to be built on 15th Street next to North Highland Baptist Church. Mayor Delor Baumann introduced him after Hueytown Chamber President Jena Large welcomed everyone. Dr. Hammonds had a rendering of the new school and mentioned several areas that would be in it such as a performing arts center, computer labs, science labs, and a new gym. It was a great meeting with so much interest from the members. This will be a great addition to a growing and progressing City of Hueytown.



## SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS: SENATOR JEFF SESSIONS



*NOTE TO MEMBERS: This monthly article presents the thoughts and suggestions of members of the Chamber about business related topics. This year we are learning more about our State and Federal elected officials.*

Jeff Sessions was born in Selma, Alabama on December 24, 1946, and grew up in Hybart, the son of a country store owner. Growing up in the country, the Senator was instilled with the core values of honesty, hard work, belief in God and parental respect that define him today. In 1964 he became an Eagle Scout and has received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award. After attending school in nearby Camden, the Senator worked his way through Huntingdon College in Montgomery, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969. He received a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Alabama in 1973.

He served in the United States Army Reserve from 1973 to 1986 ultimately attaining the rank of Captain. He still considers that period to be one of the most rewarding chapters of his life. His interest in the law led to a distinguished legal career, first as a practicing attorney in Russellville, Alabama, and then in Mobile, which he now calls home. Following a two-year stint as Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama (1975-1977), Sessions was nominated by President Reagan in 1981 and confirmed by the Senate to serve as the United States Attorney for Alabama's Southern District, a position he held for 12 years. He was elected Alabama Attorney General in 1995, serving as the state's chief legal officer until 1997, when he entered the United States Senate.

As a United States senator, Jeff Sessions has focused his energies on maintaining a strong military, upholding the rule of law, limiting the role of government, and providing tax relief to stimulate economic growth and empower Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money. Senator Sessions has used his membership on the Senate Budget Committee to restrain the growth of federal spending and make permanent tax cuts that benefit American families. He serves as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, chairman of the Judiciary Administrative Oversight and the Courts Subcommittee, member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Senator Sessions has served as a lay leader and as a Sunday school teacher at his family's church, Ashland Place United Methodist Church, in Mobile. He served as the Chairman of his church's Administrative Board and every year since 1987, Sessions has been selected as a delegate to the annual Alabama Methodist Conference. He and his wife, Mary Blackshear Sessions, originally of Gadsden, Alabama, have three children, Mary Abigail Reinhardt, Ruth Sessions Walk, and Sam. Together they welcomed the arrival of their first granddaughter, Jane Ritchie, this summer.

## Dudley Eye Care Opens on Parkwood

On January 18th, Dr. Parisa Dudley welcomed a large crowd of well wishers to the grand opening and ribbon cutting for her new eye care clinic located at 3985 Parkwood Road just off the Morgan Road exit on I-459. Dr. Dudley had her family with her and many patients, friends and Chamber Ambassadors to join her in making the day special. She especially thanked her father who helped in the decorating the interior and whom you could tell means the world to her. Representing the Mayor was Assistant Camillo Fuller who made a special welcome to Dr. Dudley. Ambassador Coordinator Diane Sparks presented a recognition certificate and the crowd enjoyed the great refreshments. If you live in the Parkwood/Morgan Road area be sure to call Dudley Eye Care at 424-9608 for any eye related questions.



*Dr. Parisa Dudley and a very large crowd cut the ribbon at Dudley Eye Care*

## Commissioner Carns Emphasizes Grease Control Program

In October of 2006, the Jefferson County Commission adopted a Grease Control Program to comply with a federal consent decree compelling the County to prevent sewer overflows. These sewer overflows are hazardous and mainly caused by grease blockages. All restaurant owners are affected by this program. It is apparent that it would serve our Chamber members well to have an expert from Commissioner Jim Carns office speak on this new program. Commissioner Carns office would provide the necessary information on the program while answering any questions our members may have. Please contact the Chamber with suggested dates and time of the day that would be best. Call the Chamber at 425-3253 or email [mmilan1@bellsouth.net](mailto:mmilan1@bellsouth.net). We hope to have this meeting set up in the very near future.

## State of the Region Luncheon

A packed house at the Harbart Center in Birmingham listened to area leaders including Hoover Mayor Tony Petelos highlight the Birmingham/Hoover Metropolitan Region. Hosted each year by the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, this luncheon is always an anticipated event. Your Chamber was represented by Chairman Jon Staggs, Board member Randy Donaldson, President Ronnie Acker, City Council members Sarah Belcher and Earl Cochran, and Mayor Ed May. The event was positive and insightful.



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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 February 2008

February 5	City Wide Prayer Breakfast	7:30 A.M.	Medical West
February 5	Ambassador Meeting	8:15 A.M.	Chamber
February 7	Board/Ambassador Recognition	4:30-5:30 P.M.	Chamber
February 19	Executive Committee Mtg.	11:30 A.M.	Chamber
February 19	Board of Director's Mtg.	Noon	Chamber
February 20	First Responders Recognition	Noon	Lawson St-Bess

*Welcome New Members for January*

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