



THE CHAMBER ADVOCATE

VOLUME I • SEPTEMBER 2019
SUMMER 2019 RECAP



The Lodge at the Gulf State Park
Photo by: Ryan Moberly

WELCOME!

BY: RYAN MOBERLY

In the past few months the Chamber team has been forming a plan to put together this monthly recap. I love our weekly *Chamber Chat* newsletter and feel that this newly launched *Chamber Advocate* will further communicate both the Chamber's goals as an organization, recap some of the great events that we've held, and highlight some of our hard working members and committees.

This month we look to recap the great summer we had here at the CABC. I hope you enjoy volume number one, and here's to many more to come!

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SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS

BY: PENNY HUGHEY

It was a busy summer as **over 100** new members joined us here at the CABC.

A big thanks in large part to this exciting news goes over to our friends at the Alabama Charter Fishing Association. With their help we have added a variety of charter boats in our area as chamber members.

We are very excited about this partnership as charter boats are a large part of our local industry.

If you'd like to join the chamber or are a current member that has questions about your membership, feel free to contact me at...
penny@mygulfcoastchamber.com



CEO'S MESSAGE

BY: GREG ALEXANDER

WE ARE GATEWAY!

Over the course of my first year as President of the Coastal Alabama Business Chamber, I have been tasked with addressing a number of challenges; none of which have been greater than the ADVANTAGE COASTAL ALABAMA initiative! It has taken time and many hours of hard work from a number of leaders. A combined group of stakeholders have worked diligently to generate a program that makes best use of all ACA investments; but just as importantly, will have a significant impact on our community for years to come.

Because we weren't being as successful as originally hoped, ACA was put on hold in order to improve. I am excited to share this update with you today. In late August, both the Coastal Alabama Business Chamber board and the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce board approved a plan that TOGETHER, we will expand the Gateway Initiative into a sustainable Regional Catalyst for economic and business growth. It is a comprehensive program containing goals, measurable outcomes and tangible results! It is a program that sets the precedent for the state of Alabama, the South East and even the country; a program to enhance our Tri-City Region & accelerate our economic vitality for decades to come. I encourage you to get involved and support this game-changing program. If you would like more information, please reach out to greg@mygulfcoastchamber.com.



Greg Alexander

SOUTH BALDWIN CHAMBER AND COASTAL ALABAMA BUSINESS CHAMBER FORM GATEWAY COLLABORATIVE ALLIANCE

BY: JESSICA VAUGHN

NOTE: This article originally appeared in Gulf Coast Media's The Onlooker on 8/28/19. The full online version can be viewed here... <http://bit.ly/GWTOL19>

After months of deliberation, the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce (SBCC) and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber (CABC) have announced a partnership between the two entities to expand South Baldwin Chamber's Gateway Initiative into a regional capital campaign that will benefit businesses throughout the southern end of Baldwin.

"The Gateway Initiative has been making an impact in our business community for nearly two years through a number of programs and partnerships," states the Gateway Media team. "To build on this success, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber have formed a collaborative alliance to increase bandwidth in order to make a larger impact on a regional business acceleration program.

"Originally, both chambers had separate capital plans: the Gateway Initiative for SBCC which kicked off in 2017 and Advantage Coastal Alabama for CABC which began in 2015.

"During Advantage Coastal Alabama, the Coastal Chamber suffered the untimely death of their president Ed Rodriguez and ACA was not able to be as successful as projected," said President of SBCC Donna Watts. After the loss of Rodriguez, the CABC put the capital project on hold until the time when a firm plan was in place. Invoices weren't sent and the account waited while the best plan of action was adopted.

In 2018 Greg Alexander became the president of CABC and began discussions with Watts on the accomplishments of the Gateway Initiative. It was noted how similar the two plans were. The five areas of concern for ACA were: support and advocate for existing businesses and industry; develop a highly qualified workforce; recruit and support new businesses and industry; improve infrastructure and transportation; and implement responsible and sustainable environmental programs. The Gateway Initiative's three areas of focus are: Business-Driven Talent Development and Recruitment; Community Betterment and Pro-Business Advocacy; and Existing Business Growth and Retention.

"We began asking why are we doing this separately when we could do it together, it just makes so much sense," Watts said. "We want to help the tri-city area and the South Baldwin region, we want to help all the businesses we can, so why should we put a burden on the businesses to invest in two different plans that may be doing very similar things when we could combine our efforts and resources and do more."

Along with Watts and Alexander, Vulcan CEO Tommy Lee, Director of Security/Operation at The Wharf Jim Bibby, SBCC 2019 Chairman Michelle Hodges with SH Enterprises, CABC 2019 Chairman Dec McClelland with Edward Jones Investments, Owner of Wolf Bay Restaurants & Catering Charlene Haber, Grant Wealth Management Founding Partner Matt Grant, Director of Human Resources and Public Relations at Perdido Beach Resort Penny Groux, and CEO of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism Herb Malone formed a group of directors for the partnership and began working with Funding Solutions, the original company behind the Gateway Initiative's conception, to rework the project with the combined forces.

"We broke into four different task groups to accomplish that goal," said Mike Dryden with Funding Solutions. "One created a memorandum of understanding, which both chamber boards approved, on how they wanted to work together, what the agreement was, and how the collaboration would work. The second group discussed what the workforce program was going to look like, while the third was program startup and ongoing communications. The fourth considered outcomes and what we were going to achieve with the partnership."

Since beginning in 2017, the Gateway Initiative has been very successful. The campaign began with interviewing 60 different businesses, both in the area and neighboring counties, chamber members and non-members, to get an idea of what was needed in our community. The three initiatives were then created, and two new hires were made: Ed Bushaw as director of Talent Development and Recruitment and Sally Westendorf as director of Community Betterment and Pro-Business Advocacy. Travis Valentine was realigned to Vice President of Investor Relations and Business Growth & Retention.

In only two years, the Gateway team has met with multiple businesses in the area to discuss their needs and assist in creating solutions; created Training Academies to help ensure the workforce is properly trained and ready to work, with over 350 professionals trained since 2017; hosted Gateway to Great Customer Service Training; brought youth and adult apprenticeships to the area in professions and industries relevant to South Baldwin; hosted an extremely successful Signing Day as part of the youth apprenticeship program; and much more. Investors were kept updated along every step of the way on how their money was being spent and the accomplishments of the Gateway team and where they were going next. Gateway has 58 investors investing a total of \$1,453,000 over the five-year campaign. With the combined forces of the chambers, it brings the total number of investors to 110.

Both chambers stated that there would not be any merger of organizations going along with the partnership, and both chambers want to continue with their separate programs and events. The partnership will only be in the form of a capital campaign to benefit both chamber's areas.

FEATURED COMMITTEE -



LOWER ALABAMA
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

LAYP JUNE SOCIAL IS A HOLE-IN-ONE

As they approached the one year anniversary of their formation, the Lower Alabama Young Professionals (LAYP) sought out to help out a worthy cause in the area, the Miracle League of Coastal Alabama, through one of their quarterly social events.

Teaming up with new Foley business Creekside Mini-Golf, the LAYP were able to provide attendees a night of games, food, and fun, all while raising money for the Miracle League.

The group later presented 100% of proceeds from the social during the August 1st groundbreaking ceremony for the Miracle League in Summerdale, totaling \$1,200. The Miracle League looks to complete their all-inclusive baseball field project in January of 2021.

From the beginning the goal of the LAYP has been to connect the young minds in Coastal Alabama and to make significant contributions to the area. With summer having come to a close, the LAYP recently furthered their community impact with a Summer End Soirée at Craft Farms Golf Resort which was held on September 12th. 100% of proceeds collected at the event will go towards arts scholarships to benefit graduating area high school seniors.

For more information on the Lower Alabama Young Professionals, visit...
facebook.com/LowerAlabamaYP

For more information on the Miracle League of Coastal Alabama, visit...
facebook.com/miracleleaguecoastalalabama

"I'm really proud of the work we've done and goals we've set for the upcoming year."

- Ayla Green, LAYP Communications Chair



Having a ball at the June LAYP social!

RECOGNITIONS

BEACH HOUSE UP FOR CUSTOMERS' CHOICE AWARD NOMINATION

BY: RYAN MOBERLY

Gulf Shores restaurant *The Beach House Kitchen & Cocktails* has been nominated for the Alabama Retail Association's Customers' Choice Award.

The West Beach eatery is owned by Coastal Alabama Business Chamber board member and Vice Chairman of Small Business, Brent Sexton. Sexton's menu boasts dishes featuring fresh Gulf seafood from Bon Secour, Alabama and a variety of carefully crafted cocktails.

"I am so happy to see the success that Beach House has had and I hope that the Alabama Retail Association and its followers can see the same," said Greg Alexander, CABC President and CEO, "We as a chamber are lucky to have thriving business owners like Brent representing us on our board of directors."

The Alabama Retail Association recently took to social media and asked for followers to vote on which business they felt was best deserving of the Customers' Choice Award. All comments and votes given will be presented to an independent panel of judges. Once decided, the winner will be announced at the Alabama Retail Day Awards Program on October 22nd.



Photo courtesy of:
The Beach House Kitchen & Cocktails

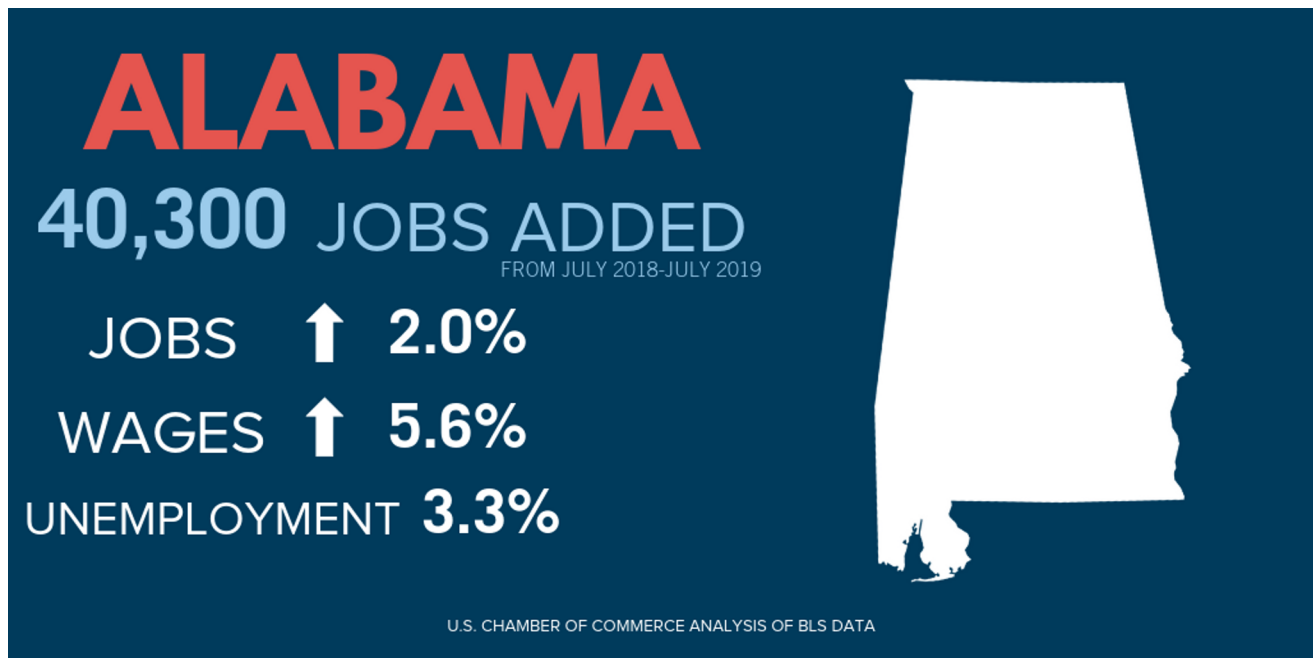
the BEACH HOUSE

kitchen & cocktails



Photos courtesy of:
Alabama Retail Association Facebook

GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC POLICY, AND ADVOCACY



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF:
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HELPFUL LINKS

City of Orange Beach Community Newsletters -

<https://www.orangebeachal.gov/community-newsletter>

City of Gulf Shores Civic Alerts -

<https://www.gulfshoresal.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx>

Baldwin County Sales Tax Newsletter -

<https://baldwincountyal.gov/departments/sales-use-tax/newsletters>

Business Council of Alabama Website -

<https://www.bcatoday.org/>

GETTING SOCIAL – SUMMER 2019 EDITION

Follow us on social media!

Facebook - Coastal Alabama Business Chamber

Twitter - @BizChamberAL

YouTube - Coastal Alabama Business Chamber

CABC - FACEBOOK



IF YOU MISSED THE RIBBON CUTTING, YOU CAN STILL COME DOWN TO SANDSHAKER AT THE WHARF FOR AN ACTION PACKED FRIDAY NIGHT 🍷

TIM LOWER - FACEBOOK



YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOUR GOING TO RUN INTO AT A COASTAL ALABAMA BUSINESS CHAMBER AFTER HOURS! AWESOME CHAMBER & GREAT PEOPLE 🍷

CABC - FACEBOOK



IT IS ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL DAY HERE IN COASTAL ALABAMA!

ELLEN MURPHY - FACEBOOK



LOVE, LOVE, LOVE BEING ON THE COASTAL ALABAMA BUSINESS CHAMBER'S ISLAND SPIRIT COMMITTEE!

CABC - FACEBOOK



CONGRATULATIONS ALVITA RUSSELL, WHO WAS RECENTLY NAMED COASTAL ALABAMA BUSINESS CHAMBER DIPLOMAT OF THE MONTH FOR MAY 2019!

DRUNKEN SHRIMP - FACEBOOK



WE HAVE BEEN PRESENTED WITH THE COMMERCIAL BEAUTIFICATION AWARD FOR THE BEST YARD IN GULF SHORES! THANKS FOR CHOOSING US AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THANKS TO MY MAMA!