



**Eastern Shore
Chamber of Commerce
Annual Report
July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009**

**Daphne . Fairhope . Spanish Fort . Barnwell . Blakeley . Belforest
Malbis . Montrose . Point Clear . Weeks Bay**

Introduction

Despite the economy, the Eastern Shore Chamber is working hard to support local business help them to gain strength and be successful.

The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 85th year of representing and building businesses along the Eastern Shore. Committed to Economic Development, the Chamber's mission is to support stability and growth for the business community by providing services that cultivate economic expansion and community development. The Chamber enables businesses to accomplish collectively what each of us cannot do individually.

The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce provides the business leadership needed to foster an economic and cultural climate favorable to all businesses in order to create a higher quality of life for all residents. That is why the Chamber leadership chose to create a professional strategic plan for the Eastern Shore that defines the role of the Chamber for five years. The six areas identified by the plan are: Transportation/Infrastructure, Tourism, Economic Development, Education, Governmental Affairs and the Environment. Working together in partnership with our cities and county governments, as well as other partners within each group, the Chamber is ready to take a proactive role in maintaining and accomplishing the goals set forth in this plan.

The Chamber forms and supports legislation for the business community. The Chamber arranges and hosts meetings with legislators and other elected officials as well as members. It also formulates a Legislative Agenda every year, with those issues identified that will affect local businesses.

The Eastern Shore Chamber Business Development Council is also very aggressive and working on many projects. One project is interviewing existing businesses to plot future business growth and to identify their needs for the future. This helps the Chamber to pin-point the issues that will need to be addressed to help our growing businesses along the Eastern Shore.

Teamwork is the name of the game. Starting, expanding or relocating a business are not simple tasks. They require long hours of hard work, careful preparation and detailed planning. With well laid groundwork, your business has a better chance of success.

Major industries in the region include farming, forest products, aviation, software development, and computer equipment. The largest industries along the Eastern Shore are medical, financial and tourism.

While a large part of Baldwin County is made up of rolling rural farmland, the Eastern Shore has over 1,500 businesses employing close to 13,000 people. Some of the largest employers include: Thomas Hospital, Mercy Medical, the two Wal-Marts, Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club and Spa in Point Clear, and the retirement complex of Westminster Village in Spanish Fort. Print Excel, a national business, has its headquarters located on the Eastern Shore in Montrose, along with many others.

The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce plays the lead role in promoting of our Eastern Shore area. Working with media, conventions, FAM tours, and writers, we work with any and all to get the word out. ESchamber.com received over 1.5 million visitors this past year, and the Chamber has the only privately run welcome center on I-10 in Alabama, open seven days a week illustrating its proactive efforts to promote the area. This is in addition to the over 100,000 phone calls answered, and the thousands of visitors that are helped in the downtown Fairhope office.

There is so much more that the Eastern Shore Chamber works on. Bottom line - the business community is active and part of the process of creating a better place to live, work and play. Together we are stronger!

2009 ~ 2010 Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Hugh McCoy
Chairman
White-Spunner Construction, Inc

Joe Bullock
Past Chairman
Engineering Development Services

Jim Byrd
Chairman Elect
Safe Harbor Financial Services

Greg Strachan
Treasurer
Bryant Bank

Howard Holcomb
Vice Chairman
Economic Development Council
Thomas Medical Center

Linda Scott
Vice Chairman
Member Value
Scott & Associates

Ben Meisler
Vice Chairman
Tourism Council
Holiday Inn Express-Daphne

Darrellyn Bender
President / CEO
Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce

EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS:

City of Fairhope Mayor Tim Kant
City of Daphne Mayor Fred Small
City of Spanish Fort
Mayor Joseph Bonner

David Ed Bishop
Commissioner Baldwin County

BOARD MEMBERS:

Hank Burch
5 Rivers Delta Resource Center

Mickie Russell
Dauphin Realty of Baldwin County

Tim Rosson
BBVA Compass Bank

Elizabeth Citrin
Elizabeth A. Citrin, PC

Dr. Phil Norris
University of South Alabama-Baldwin

Sharon Wright
White-Spunner & Associates, Inc.

Rod Platt
Red Drum Marketing

Bob Baumhower
Baumhower's Wings

Donna Givens
Baldwin EMC

Rance Reehl
Coldwell Banker Reehl Properties, inc.

Anthony Sampson
Individual Member

David Sutley
Bank Trust

Jason Tickle
The Colony at the Grand

Chris Tulloch
Bass Pro Outdoor World, LLC

Brandon Simpson
First South Farm Credit

Chamber Staff:

Darrellyn Bender - President/CEO

Kathie Barton - Communications Coordinator
Cathi Demers - Director of Development &
Youth Leadership Coordinator
Amy Dial - Membership Coordinator
Lori Edson - Tourism Information Asst.
Rose Hall - Information Specialist
Jay Hasting - Director of Tourism &
Special Events Coordinator
Michael Maxwell - Director of Business Development
Sue Patterson - Tourism Information Asst.
Flo Stanton - Information Specialist
Sandra Weekley - Tourism Information Asst.
Judy Wilson - Information Manager
Jo Wylly - Accounts Manager

Economic Development Council

The Economic Development Council, which is part of the Chamber's *Blueprint for Tomorrow* (BFT) initiatives, was led by Jim Byrd during FY 08/09. The Council had a very productive year. All of the task forces accomplished initiatives that community leaders identified as important. BFT partners, members of the Board of Advisors, members of the Board of Directors and elected officials were given updates from the four task forces during the 3rd Annual Economic Development Reception.

Technology/Research Park Task Force

The Technology/Research Park Task Force is led by Scott Koser. The task force revealed the results of a feasibility study of building a technology/research park on the Eastern Shore developed by George, Henry, George Partners, LLC. Interviews from Florida to Mississippi were conducted. Stakeholder interviews with local businesses and political leaders were also conducted. Steps were identified to move forward. A partnership with BCEDA was formed. The results were presented to Baldwin County elected officials, Spanish Fort, Daphne and Fairhope city councils.

Business Academy Task Force

The Business Academy Task Force, chaired by Eric Nager, provided a wide variety of quality professional development programs. A full schedule was published and online registration was available. Learn@Lunch seminars exceeded expectations.

Local Business Research Task Force

The Local Business Research Task Force, chaired by Philip Webb, actively conducted Synchronist Surveys of local businesses. They reached their goal to complete 50 surveys to gather data specific to economic development and workforce issues. Results were reported to attendees at the Economic Development Reception, as well as to the three cities and county commission.

Transportation/Infrastructure Task Force

The Transportation/Infrastructure Task Force was led by Paige Thatcher. A transit study commissioned by the Eastern Shore Chamber was developed by Gresham Smith and Partners. It was recommended that an action plan be formulated to expand the existing van pool into the Eastern Shore and develop a park-n-ride system. Commute Smart was activated for Baldwin County. Thanks in large to BFT, the cities of Spanish Fort, Daphne and Fairhope along with BRATS are working together to place three transit hubs for buses in the area.

Governmental Affairs

Led by Rob McElroy, the committee developed the "Get Out the Vote" campaign. The fifth Eastern Shore Legislative Agenda covering local, state and federal issues was distributed to elected officials and members. The Chamber facilitated two city-wide neutral candidate forums. Candidate answers to business related questions were distributed to businesses and the community at large for all three cities. The Governmental Affairs Enews was developed and sent out to alert members about key issues. The committee visited Montgomery to educate elected officials of issues facing the local business community.



Blueprint for Tomorrow Vision

By the year 2010, the Eastern Shore will be the residential, retail and corporate center of Southwest Alabama. Safe streets, beautiful parks, abundant recreational opportunities, exciting social and cultural programs and an exceptional education system will entice our young people to stay in the area, start a career and raise a family. Renowned as a cohesive group of unique communities working together, the Eastern Shore will attract a diverse mix of visitors, new residents and a growing retirement population. During the next five years, the Eastern Shore will experience strong economic development compatible with its natural environment while still preserving its small town atmosphere. Infrastructure improvements, effective government and a superlative quality of life will establish the Eastern Shore as a model for other coastal communities as well as the Southeastern United States.

Tourism Council



The Tourism Council Task Force, another *Blueprint for Tomorrow* initiative, was chaired by Bill Tunnell this past year. The Council is promoting the entire Eastern Shore with representation from the three cities and the county. The "Eastern Shore Offers More" Web based program was implemented to market members offering discounts to locals and tourists. The service is free to chamber members.

57th Annual Arts & Crafts Festival

The Arts & Crafts Festival in Fairhope, co-chaired by Elizabeth Stone and Lee Teumer, was ranked #14 out of 100 Best Predominantly Classic & Contemporary Craft Shows in the nation by *Sunshine Artist Magazine* and was also voted one of the top attractions by the Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel. Approximately 200,000 people attended the three-day festival. This year, the festival artwork was created by a local artist, Alletta Brown.

20th Annual Jubilee Festival

Sally Wagner and Barbara Ladnier chaired the 2008 Jubilee Festival in Daphne, which was a great success. The festival's exposure for the exhibitors continues to grow. Approximately 25,000 people roamed Main Street in Olde Towne Daphne during the festival in support of the event. As in previous years, the Kids' Art section has become very popular. The official art was created by Susan Godwin and was used on all festival merchandise.

25th Annual Mayors' Prayer Breakfast

The Mayors' Prayer Breakfast, held on May 7, 2009 the National Day of Prayer, united the Eastern Shore community for an inspirational and uplifting breakfast while recognizing our three mayors. Benji Hughes and Neil Beasley were co-chairs of the event. This year's keynote speaker was Bill Canary of the Alabama Business Council. The breakfast was held at the Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa. Approximately 450 community business leaders attended the event.

Eastern Shore Chamber Foundation

Environmental Committee

Walter Ernest, IV was the chairman of the Environmental Committee. The group planned a special program for the September 2009 Eggs & Issues and an environmental expo in October at the Business After Hours. The committee sought nominations for the Chamber's Environmental Award in spring 2009. The Chamber awarded the 10th Annual Environmental Award to the Grand Hotel Resort, Golf Club & Spa for their efforts in implementing the "Green Grand" program. In addition to receiving a plaque to hang in their business, a 15-foot live oak tree will be planted in their honor.

Business Education Committee

The CHOICES program was presented in 36 classes of middle school students in the spring of 2009. Eleven volunteers conducted the presentations to the 7th graders. The students learned "Life Skills", such as basic time and money management, the value of continued education, future career planning, discipline, and much more. The program will be offered again in the spring of 2010.

Youth Leadership Committee

The Eastern Shore Chamber Youth Leadership Committee, chaired by Taylor Strunk and Program Administrator Carolyn Walthall, organized and implemented an innovative program for the 7th Annual Youth Leadership class. The year kicked-off in September 2008 with a class of 40 students representing the entire Eastern Shore. The program included seminars on topics and activities to help participants develop the skills they will need to become community leaders and engaged, productive citizens. Student Leadership 101, a workshop designed for students involved in extra-curricular activities to enhance and sharpen their leadership skills, was conducted for students not selected for the Youth Leadership Program.

Workforce Development Task Force

This task force was established in the fall 2008. Sixteen volunteers developed a week-long program S.T.E.P. (Student Training & Exploration Program), which will be implemented in the summer of 2010 to rising 10th graders, 11th and 12th graders. Principals and counselors of area high schools will be provided applications in January. The program provides an awareness of careers that are in demand.

8th Annual Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament

Mark Stesjkal chaired the 8th Annual Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament. Held at Lakewood Golf Club on May 22, the event is a great way for businesses to network. It is also a great venue to promote businesses to other key players in the community. Twenty-nine teams participated. A percentage of the funds raised went to fund the Youth Leadership Program.

Chairman's Gala

Regina Hanberg chaired the 2009 85th Annual Chairman's Gala Committee. The event took place July 9. The Gala was held at The Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club & Spa. The evening provided over 250 members the opportunity to network, enjoy a wonderful meal and celebrate the accomplishments of the fiscal year. Awards were presented to members in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the Chamber and to the community.

Ambassadors

Linda Scott led the Ambassadors Committee in 2008-09. New initiatives were undertaken during the year which focused on retention of members. Ambassadors were introduced to various Chamber staff in an effort to broaden the understanding of who a member might need to contact with a particular concern. Many hours were spent volunteering time to attend ribbon cuttings, delivering plaques to new members, attending Chamber monthly meetings and assisting with projects.

Eastern Shore Chamber Young Professionals

A concerted effort has been made to integrate young professionals within the Chamber into various programs and events. These young professionals are contacted by print and electronically to ensure their awareness of activities. The Young Professionals Group enjoyed several socials last fiscal year..

Standing Networking Opportunities: Eggs & Issues, Business After Hours & Morning Marketing

These events and activities took place each month and provided many educational, networking and marketing opportunities.

Administration



New Web site enhanced. Since launching the new Web site during the latter part of FY 06/07 many enhancements and changes have been made. The Web site received over **1.6 million hits** in FY 08/09, approximately 70 percent of which included visits to the Chamber directory.

- **The Chamber produced 29 publications and brochures** that highlight the advantages of living, investing in, as well as visiting, the Eastern Shore. These publications are sent out to prospective new industries, businesses, and individuals looking to relocate to the area, as well as to potential tourists. Most of the Chamber's printed materials are also available on the Web site.
- **The Chamber worked closely with SCORE** throughout the year, and scheduled **176 counseling sessions** for those seeking to start their own business or seeking advice on an existing business.
- **The Chamber** received an average of **100,000 calls** last year.
- **The Scenic Overlook Visitors Center** registered **20,176 visitors** during this past fiscal year, **540** were international **visitors**. During the same fiscal year **4,169 visitors** were recorded at the office in **Fairhope**.
- **The Chamber** provided packets of information to more than **3,791** people visiting our area for various conventions and group tours.
- **For the 2008-2009 fiscal year** the chamber sent out **281 information packets** for people relocating to our area, people inquiring about retirement opportunities, and people interested in visiting our area. The Chamber also assembled packets for schools and miscellaneous projects. Most people visit the Chamber's Web site to obtain information.
- **The Chamber** distributed over **10,000 copies** of the Eastern Shore Magazine/Chamber Directory during FY 08/09. This was the first year for the magazine to be available online.

Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSTION
ASSETS

	Unaudited June 30, 2009	Audited June 30, 2008
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalent	129,711	\$192,950
Accounts receivable	30,541	11,581
Prepaid expenses	9,973	5,050
Inventory	-	13,279
	170,225	222,860
Total current assets	170,225	222,860
Net Property and Equipment	102,233	106,859
Other Assets		
Intangible assets - Web site	24,058	24,058
Accumulated amortization	(20,400)	(12,381)
	3,658	11,677
Total Assets	276,116	\$341,396

Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSTION
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

	Unaudited June 30, 2009	Audited June 30, 2008
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$20,693	\$22,359
Accrued expense	3,484	7,138
Deferred revenue	3,825	41,270
Line of credit	-	-
	\$28,001	70,767
Total Liabilities	\$28,001	70,767
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	248,115	270,629
Total Liabilities and net Assets	\$276,116	\$341,396

Mission of Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce is to support stability and growth for the business community by providing services that cultivate economic expansion and community development.

Founded in 1924, the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce is the community's leading advocate and champion for business. Its primary objective is to create a climate of growth and success in our community. The Eastern Shore Chamber provides leadership programs and opportunities as well as volunteer programs and business-building initiatives that focus on the critical priorities of the community. By combining the support, talent and resources of its members, the Eastern Shore Chamber is one of the leading organizations helping to improve the economic vitality and quality of life for everyone on the Eastern Shore.



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