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The POWER issue

20

A note from Robert Jackson, The Anniston Star's Executive Vice President

Calhoun County is fortunate to have many key leaders who strive to move the needle forward on any dial that points to excellence. Each of the honorees in this Power 20 publication exemplifies outstanding leadership in his or her respective industry.

Each business or organization represented in our Power 20 list impacts Calhoun County in a significant economic sense. Whether each leader's staff includes hundreds or 20, he or she leads by demonstrating hard work and the ability to make wise choices.

Each honoree is interested in motivating staff members to work in efficient and effective ways.

The Power 20 list also includes individuals who believe in giving opportunity and a helping hand to the citizens of Calhoun County.

No matter the hardships each leader has overcome, no matter how long each leader has prepared for his or her career, and no matter how many years each leader has worked, all lead by example and experience.

The Anniston Star is happy to share the stories and ideas of individuals who work to improve their industry and who contribute in countless ways to improve the lives of the people of Calhoun County.

BIZCalhoun County

Editor's Note

Calhoun County's leaders are such busy people that it was often a challenge to catch them for interviews and photographs. It is my hope that this Power 20 publication captures the essence of who these leaders are and how they serve our community.

As I interviewed seven of the honorees, their stories began inspiring me. Soon after I finished, the other writers began emailing me the same sentiments. All five of us, including Mike Stedham, Betty Wilkinson, Mike Abrams, Alice Duckett, and me, felt as if we knew these individuals better and that we could inform our readers. A special thanks to the writers and to the photographers, Trent Penny, Bill Wilson, and Steve Gross. They shifted their busy news assignments and included in their schedules the Power 20 honorees.

All of the honorees have impressive educational and work experience. They also show great foresight to plan ahead, help others, and encourage their employees. They dodge taking credit for success, but they are quick to give credit to their parents, mentors, families, and employees.

At a time when positive focus often seems minimal, my hope is that each reader will feel as enlightened as we writers did. Also, Robert Jackson, The Star's Executive Vice President, should be thanked for initiating the effort to allow us to hear from Calhoun County's brightest and most influential leaders.

-Sherry Kughn

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Louis Bass

Louis Bass CEO of RMC wants community engagement

By Betty Wilkinson



As CEO of RMC, Louis Bass wants to lead by example for his staff of 1,900. He invites them to give their input concerning the hospital. “We are all players on the same team,” he said, “and I like to get everyone’s ideas.”

Bass began his career by working in finance at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee then later in Alabama for a total of eight years. He was then hired as Director of Finance at Birmingham’s Lloyd Noland Hospital, moving to Chief Financial Officer before leaving 11 years later.

In 1998, he came to RMC as AVP of Finance and was later promoted to CFO. Bass has held

his current position as CEO for two years now. He has a plaque on his office wall that reads “Keep Calm and Carry On.”

“It’s good advice,” he said, “and I strive to hold on to those words, but I admit there are situations in which it can be a little difficult at times.”

RMC is the second largest employer in the region. Its annual payroll is in excess of \$82 million. RMC’s economic impact is around \$300 million each year. It is a nonprofit hospital, and money goes back into the community. When new businesses and industries are looking for areas in which to build, one of the main concerns is healthcare.

“I believe we have much to offer here at RMC with two hospitals and clinics located throughout our five-county service area,” said Bass.

Bass has been a resident of Calhoun County since 1992. He lives in Jacksonville with his wife Debbie. He was born in Albany, Ga., and has lived in numerous places. When his parents retired to Anniston, Bass moved also in order to attend Jacksonville State University.

Bass’s father was a military officer, and his father-in-law was a minister. Bass credits both for many of his leadership skills.

“They led the way by showing great character and represented servant leadership.” Two community leaders, Anthony Humphries, president and CEO of Noble Bank, and Bill

Meehan, former president of JSU, set guidelines of leadership. Bass called them the “ultimate professionals and great role models.”

Bass said RMC is well positioned for future growth. In March 2017, a new “arm” of RMC will reach out to the community called The Oxford Mediplex. It is located near Oxford Family Practice and The Surgery Center. The staff at the Mediplex will offer imaging and primary and specialty health services.

RMC employees and staff give of themselves by supporting a number of events each year. One activity Bass mentioned is the staff’s annual Christmas party given for the foster children of Seraj Family Home. Employees and staff will sponsor about 90 children. These sponsors go above and beyond in their giving, including hosting a big party at the Tyler Center and Santa Claus.

“You should see the faces of the children as they open their gifts. There is nothing like it,” he said.

Bass wants to see RMC’s staff and its board members continue to engage in the community in many ways.

“There is great potential in the area for new business and industry, better education and better jobs for our young people. We need to work together to make this happen. Citizens could help by approaching the community leaders so we can all work together to achieve growth.”

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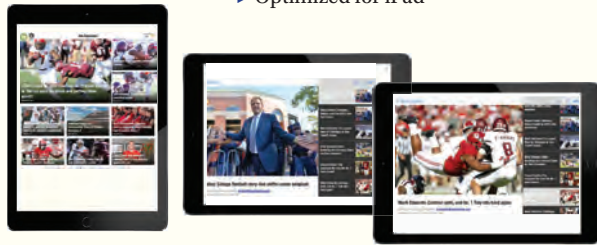
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John Beehler

Beehler, a leader with positive outlook

By Sherry Kughn



With his eye on the future, Jacksonville State University president John Beehler began his job in July of 2015 with ideas about how to make the community better.

“We made a very good move,” he said about the process of restructuring academic affairs at JSU.

He led university officials into creating six schools from the original four colleges. Now JSU is an umbrella for the following schools: (1.) Business and Industry (2.) Health Professions and Wellness (3.) Arts and Humanities (4.) Science (5.) Human Services and Social Sciences and (6.) Education.

“This positions us for growth in all areas,” he said.

Beehler’s grasp of how efficiently universities can engage with the economic environment of a community is supported by his background in

accounting, economic development, education, administration, and entrepreneurship.

He graduated from The Pennsylvania State University in accounting and went to work for Deloitte, an international accounting firm. He returned to school to obtain an MBA in finance from Indiana University where he taught accounting courses and also obtained a doctorate in accounting and taxation.

Beehler took his first full-time academic job at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, OK. Soon, he and his wife, Dr. Pamela Beehler, had a daughter and moved to the University of Texas in Arlington, where they both were faculty members. He became president of the faculty senate, department chair of accounting, and associate dean in the College of Business Administration. He then became dean of the Barton School of Business in Wichita State University in Wichita, Kan.; and, after several awards for his work there, he gained the attention of Northern Kentucky University that recruited him to become dean of the Haile/USA Bank College of Business and the Associate Provost for Economic Initiatives. His job was to promote the economic environment of the entire region of Northern Kentucky.

Next came an opportunity that would allow Beehler to use the entrepreneurial theories he taught: he became the founding provost for the University of North Texas in Dallas, Tex.

“I led the effort to start a new university from scratch,” said Beehler.

The successful venture led to Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh, Penn. Recruiting him to

serve as the dean of the business school where he led its international re-accreditation. It was there he successfully focused on preparing students for future careers and responsible citizenship, which peaked the interest of members of JSU’s search committee for a new president.

“We love it here,” said Beehler. “JSU has tons of potential.”

His inspiration for hard work and maintaining a positive focus is a philosophy of “servant leadership” taught to him from childhood. He defines the term as being “dedicated to facilitating the success of others.”

He feels that God has a plan for his life and that leading JSU is in that plan.

“There is nothing more fun,” he said, “than to move an organization and a community to greater levels of excellence.”

Beehler is at JSU’s helm with its more than 1,000 employees and with an economic impact of \$590 million per year, perfect for his desire to build on past success.

“We would like for JSU to be a premier regional state university, a shining star focused on students’ success and regional stewardship,” said Beehler.

He believes the latter is especially important, and he encourages the JSU faculty, staff and students to be engaged in all levels of serving others and improving the region.

“We have to look at the big picture,” said Beehler. “University isolation makes no sense. We must think of how we fit into the community. This will result in a better standard of living and improved lives for all in our region.”

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Greg Brown

Brown leads B.R. Williams Trucking with an eye on future

By Sherry Kughn



Greg Brown leads B.R. Williams Trucking Inc., a family-owned transportation, logistics and distribution company. As chairman of the board and CEO, he oversees 315 full-time employees, controls \$43 million in revenue, and maintains trucking locations located throughout Alabama and one in Florida. The main office is on Alabama Hwy. 21 near the Anniston Airport.

Raised in Weaver, Brown's home environment prepared him to run the company.

"My dad owned his own business, he was an

Exon jobber. He was the middle man between Exon company and service stations and had 10 employees. I grew up with his entrepreneurial spirit," said Brown.

Preparation did not end with childhood. Brown graduated from Jacksonville State University with degrees in accounting and mathematics. He became a certified public accountant and worked for four years before working at B.R. Williams as the controller. He pursued a law degree from Birmingham School of Law; and in 1992, he became president of the company.

The company has \$11 million in payroll. Brown has an administrative staff of 28 that helps run six locations in addition to the Oxford headquarters. They are in Piedmont, Eastaboga, Mobile, Tallahassee, Fla., and two different locations in Anniston.

Trucking is changing, according to Brown, with the imposition of new regulations, but the future indicates that trucks will stay the "main mode of transporting goods to the American public," he said. The industry will grow along with the GDP and the economy.

When the Panama Canal recently expanded, Brown and company officials saw opportunity. They realized that the expansion, which opened

in June, allowed goods that once went through the West Coast now to be brought into Mobile's port.

B.R. Williams' owners and employees are big supporters of dozens of worthwhile entities, especially the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce and United Way. Others include the Cheaha Criterion, Boys and Girls Clubs, Save-A-Life, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Soup Bowl, the Boy Scouts of Alabama, the Girl Scouts of Alabama, Empty Stocking Gala, and the Knox Concert Series.

"Giving is our responsibility," said Brown. "We take out of the community in the way of personnel and other services that we utilize, and it is our responsibility to give back a portion of what God has blessed us with."

Also, looking toward the future, Brown said Calhoun Countians could perhaps benefit once again by a program such as the former Forward Calhoun County program. It identified certain industries that we needed here concentrated on and spent money on marketing Calhoun County." He cited the Economic Development Council and the McClellan Development Authority as examples of positive support for business.

Trucking is changing, according to Brown, with the imposition of new regulations, but the future indicates that trucks will stay the "main mode of transporting goods to the American public," he said. The industry will grow along with the GDP and the economy.

Alton Craft

Alton Craft hopes to continue Oxford's rise

By Betty Wilkinson



Alton Craft took the oath of office as Oxford's mayor on November 17, 2016. However, he had been affiliated since he cut grass for the city when he was only 15 years old. He worked for the city in other capacities for 32 years. Prior to taking over as mayor, he acted as advisor to council president Steven Waits who temporarily served as mayor when Leon Smith retired in June 2016.

Craft was born in Tuscaloosa in 1960. His father worked for Bell Brothers Shoes and was transferred to Anniston in 1962. His grandfather was in military service; so the family lived with

his grandmother next to Oxford Lake. They later moved to Cheaha Acres in 1965. He has been married to wife Margie for 32 years and they have three children.

In the summer of 1982, Craft worked on the Latex Pipeline, which ran from Heflin to Rome, Ga.

"I mostly loaded pipe but did what you call 'grunt' work; whatever they wanted me to do."

From the end of 1983 to October 1984, he worked at Fort McClellan as a clerk and maintenance worker. When Leon Smith became Oxford's mayor, he hired Craft as a financial officer due to his having a degree in finance. In 1991, he was promoted to Financial Director and held that position until becoming mayor.

Hard work and faithfulness to his many jobs are important to him, but one of Craft's biggest inspirations is the Bible, which he credits for his leadership abilities.

"I guess it seems strange to say the Bible," said Craft, "but it is filled with courageous leaders who have character and principles that inspire me."

His other inspiration was Leon Smith. Their association began when Smith was Craft's football coach as a youngster.

"He was tough but fair," said Craft. "My parents and I liked and respected him."

Craft, who admits to being rather introverted, especially when younger, said Smith took him

"under his wing" when he appointed him as a financial officer.

"He never let me fail and encouraged me as I learned."

Now, as mayor, Craft manages a staff of about 300.

He believes the future growth of Oxford is limitless, and the leadership believes the infrastructure of the city is essential. There are plans for new roads, repair of current roads, and putting in new sewage lines.

"Infrastructure isn't just about those things," said Craft.

He said Oxford leaders have plans to have a fiber optic cable running from Leon Smith Parkway to Highway 78 and to Bynum Community Center.

"It will change business as we know it," said Craft. "People will have to be trained in this field, and the Oxford Library offers classes on this already as well as in other job areas. When industries are looking for cities in which to build, they will want qualified workers."

Craft is proud of the level of artists who have performed at the Oxford Performing Arts Center and the public's reception of the Choccolocco Park and new sports complex.

Craft said his door is always open.

"We need to come to a consensus of what we want, and get involved by contributing time and money to the community."

He believes the future growth of Oxford is limitless, and the leadership believes the infrastructure of the city is essential. There are plans for new roads, repair of current roads, and putting in new sewage lines.

Gayle Macolly Harris

Gayle Macolly Harris encouraged by local cities' willing attitudes

By Mike Stedham



For the past two decades, Gayle Macolly Harris has been working to clean up one of the biggest messes ever made in Calhoun County.

As part of the team tasked with the removal of PCBs and other toxins from the former Monsanto site in West Anniston, she has seen the damage done to the environment and the people who lived around the plant. She has also seen the resilience of those people and the community that has rallied around them.

For her, the story is about the recovery.

"There is a stigma that's been put on this area, but we have made a lot of progress on the environmental front," she says. "I don't think we talk about the progress enough so that people will realize that things are being done, and have been done, to make this area safe."

A Louisiana native, Harris graduated from LSU with a degree in environmental science and got her first job with an engineering consulting firm company in Atlanta. She came to Anniston in June 1996 as a consultant for that firm, which had been hired by Monsanto and its successor, Solutia, to assess and clean up the decades-old damage done by the plant.

In January 2008, Harris was hired by Solutia to be the manager of its remedial projects, with the Anniston PCB Site as her primary responsibility. In 2012, when Eastman bought out Solutia, her responsibilities expanded to include outreach efforts. She has company employees and numerous consulting firms brought in for various aspects of the cleanup project.

"Our site is very complex," she says. "We deal with human health risks, we deal with ecological risks, we deal with environmental risks as well as the engineering and science of the investigation. At any given time, I could have anywhere from a dozen to three dozen people working on this project."

Harris says her own leadership style is patterned after former bosses who are more than only engineers.

"They volunteered a lot in their communities. It was not just about the science – it's the people who are affected by the science," she says. "When I took on this position, I wanted to make sure we don't just look at the technical, science and engineering aspect of it, but we also look at the people and the community we're in."

Harris says her company has already spent \$150 million on its cleanup and outreach efforts to the

community.

"We actually are completing the final remedies for the plant site itself by the end of this year," she says. "We have cleaned up all of the residential property that we were able to obtain access for. We've completed almost all the investigation for the Snow Creek floodplain area and for the Choccolocco Creek floodplain area."

The next step in the project will come when the EPA comes up with its proposed remedies for those floodplain areas, and her company will decide how to carry out those remedies, which could cost \$80 million or more.

Working on the cleanup project has brought Harris into contact with many of the area's political, government and social leaders. She says one aspect of community life that could be improved would be better communication among those leaders.

"I have seen an improvement in the way various municipalities work with us," she says. "I see the different cities working with each other more so now than they have in the past."

Another challenge she cites is the need for local school systems to find better and more effective ways to teach their students.

"Everybody wants to help fix education, but we haven't been able to coalesce and get a common path forward that's really going to be progressive."

"This place is wonderful. The community is wonderful. The people are wonderful. All of the things we have to offer around here: the bike trails, the creeks, the waterways, and the natural beauty of everything. We don't get enough credit for all the positives."

"I have seen an improvement in the way various municipalities work with us," she says. "I see the different cities working with each other more so now than they have in the past."



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Linda Hearn

Bright minds inspire Chamber manager

By M.B. Abrams



Hard work, devotion, and having a strong passion for all things Calhoun County defines Linda Hearn's tenure at the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce.

As a relative newcomer to this area when she started her career at the Chamber 26 years ago, Hearn relied on the relationships she developed while employed at the United Way of East Central Alabama to help her become successful with her initial position within the Chamber. That job, Chamber membership director, started in November 1990 and lasted a dozen years.

As a member-driven organization, the Chamber is an invaluable resource for professional networking and development. Hearn's career growth is a testament to applying those organizational values

during her tenure at the Chamber.

As relationships developed and hard work led to professional growth, other responsibilities were added and job titles changed. Then, in 2011, Hearn's record of dedication to the Chamber membership and mission was recognized by her being named the manager.

Day-to-day operations keep Hearn focused on the Chamber and its members. The Chamber's staff, she says, works as one "making sure we continue to be the servants of the communities and businesses we serve."

Hearn said, "We are always connecting our communities, our municipalities, our people, our businesses, and our schools."

The Chamber's members and staff keep Hearn's life interesting in a positive way. "We have a diversified group in our membership and in the staff," she said.

"This environment accentuates the positives that different people bring to the Chamber and our community."

Hearn said, "People walking through our doors from out of town, or from out of state, sense the positives the Chamber represents through our diversified membership. We are constantly growing and evolving."

The challenge of adapting to an evolving business climate is one shared by not only the Chamber but also in varying degrees by its members. The Chamber has and continues to provide informative programs as diverse as social media marketing to

workplace safety initiatives.

What is not new is the fact that the Chamber, according to Hearn, is an indispensable resource for visitors and for people in the area. "We are the voice of the business community. And we are a mirror of the community reflecting our positive quality of life."

Hearn is a Kansas native and graduated from West Topeka High School. Her success at tennis led to an opportunity to play tennis at the University of Arkansas on an athletic scholarship. She moved to Calhoun County with a marketing degree.

"We represent over 1,100 businesses and members. That covers more than 75 percent of the Calhoun County work force. We concentrate on strengthening partnerships with those who make our area stronger, which is our members."

Hearn's husband Mark is a professor at Jacksonville State University. Her daughter Rebecca is a junior at Jacksonville High School, and her son Braden is a sophomore at JSU.

During her career at the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, Hearn says many business leaders who have held leadership roles as Chamber board members and chairmen have inspired her. However, her father has been most influential in Hearn's life and career. "My father told me 'Remember who you are and who you represent,'" she said.

As chamber manager, Hearn strives every day to lift up Calhoun County, resulting in the promotion and sustainment of economic growth in this region.

"We represent over 1,100 businesses and members. That covers more than 75 percent of the Calhoun County work force. We concentrate on strengthening partnerships with those who make our area stronger, which is our members."

Jay Hinesley

Jay Hinesley enjoys ‘steering’ the ship of Stringfellow Hospital

By Betty Wilkinson



Jay Hinesley has been at the helm of Stringfellow Memorial Hospital since June of 2014 as CEO. He and his family have lived in Alabama since 2011 when he was CEO of Cherokee Medical Center located in Centre. His wife is named Catherine, and the couple has three children, ages five, three and one.

Before moving to Alabama, Hinesley went to school at the Medical University of South Carolina where he received a bachelor of science degree and later earned a master's degree in healthcare management. From there, he went on to complete his residency in administration at

Roper Saint Francis Health Care in Charleston, S.C. His last management position before coming to Alabama was at a tertiary care hospital, also in Charleston. Tertiary care hospitals specialize in treating patients with a staff of only specialists.

Hinesley's father was a career-school board superintendent, and his grandfather was a small business owner.

“These men taught me discipline, good values and integrity. I wouldn't be who I am today without them,” he said. It is lessons in character building that Hinesley best remembers, such as when a person purchases something and is given too much change in return. No one else may know about the mistake, but a person of character will correct the mistake.

There are approximately 350 employees at Stringfellow, which pays about \$22 million in taxes annually and invests around a million yearly in capital improvements. Hiring construction workers and other vendors contributes to the local economy. For those seeking employment, jobs are posted online. Applications can also be filled out online. For applicants who do not have a computer, Stringfellow will assist them in the application process.

The hospital and its employees give back to the community by taking part in Relay for Life,

the United Way Campaign, and the Rocky Hollow Neighborhood Association. Employees assist the Anniston Runners Club with the Woodstock 5K race each year.

“Many people don't know this” said Hinesley, “but our hospital makes the food for the Meals On Wheels program for our area.”

These meals are sold at a highly discounted rate for those who qualify. Stringfellow makes no profit from this program.

Hinesley is a positive thinker and believes the future for economic growth in the community looks good, especially for Stringfellow.

“Stringfellow is always in ‘growth mode’ and has some good facilities already,” said Hinesley, “Our Chest-Pain Center and Bariatric Center are both accredited. We are affiliated with Community Health Systems and are a Center of Excellence,”

Stringfellow has a large impact on the local economy and the community's way of living. The hospital looks forward to growing with the county.

“Many people drive to other cities when we have good area health facilities available,” said Hinesley. “It would help our growth if patients would frequent these establishments whenever possible.”

Hinesley stays busy in his job, but he strives to delegate responsibilities to his qualified staff.

“Many people drive to other cities when we have good area health facilities available,” said Hinesley.

“It would help our growth if patients would frequent these establishments whenever possible.”

Don Hopper

First impressions, lasting commitments, developing the economy, creating wealth

By M.B. Abrams



It may be a letter in the mail, a message in an email inbox, or a voice message on the telephone. The “request for information,” known as an RFI to the executive director of the Calhoun County Economic Development Council (EDC), is highly perishable. Without attention, a business deal worth hundreds of millions of dollars could quickly vanish.

Adding to the stress and pressure of the executive director’s job is the knowledge that a missed opportunity does not only impact the corporate board room. It impacts the hopes and dreams of families who call Calhoun County home, even if those families are unaware of specific efforts under way on their behalf.

Don Hopper is that executive director. Working in a small office within the Calhoun County

Chamber of Commerce, he sits through an interview and negotiations worth potentially hundreds of millions of dollars with the confidence of Clark Kent. However, when needed, he can become Calhoun County’s superman of a negotiator, able to close a deal.

Hopper is, in many ways, the gatekeeper of Calhoun County first impressions. His mission covers more than 600 square miles and affects close to 118,000 people.

With the mind of an accountant and the heart of a servant, Hopper can quote numbers and cite statistics an industrial expansion or relocation that will translate into higher paying jobs, security, and confidence that dreams can be fulfilled in the near future.

Hopper said, “A typical project may be referred to us by the Alabama Department of Commerce. They market the state’s industrial prospects to consulting firms in places like Chicago or Ohio. We may be one of six or seven sites under consideration in Alabama, or we could be competing with sites from several different states.”

The EDC owns property in Anniston, Piedmont, Ohatchee, and Oxford. Some of the sites include buildings that are ready for the right investor. However, Hopper is not limited to those properties.

“This is a great place to live and work,” he said. “We hope we sell this community with a passion.”

Sharing his passion is the EDC staff.

Hopper said, “I could not sell anything without the dedicated support of Mary Katherine Ginn, our administrative assistant, and researcher

Lucas Gockel.”

How does Hopper measure his success? “Since 2012, we have added 2,000 new jobs. We have seen \$600 million in investments.”

He is also proud of the small numbers that have a big impact on individual families. New jobs, he said, means a single mom will be able to provide a better, more stable environment for her family. The children may have a better Christmas.

“We deal predominantly, almost exclusively, with industrial and warehousing developments. Our projects are not commercial or retail sites,” he said. “Manufacturing creates wealth. It doesn’t transfer wealth.”

Hopper earned his bachelors degree at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., then a masters at the University of Mississippi. He moved to Livingston, Ala., in 1987 to be the director of the Small Business Development Center at what is now the University of West Alabama. He has been the EDC for almost 15 years.

The EDC includes an 11-member board of directors, business people from around Calhoun County. Chairman is Larry Deason.

“I am convinced,” he said, “when we get people to visit our sites we will be successful because of the relationships we have throughout the county.”

Hopper said, “We’re spending money developing our sites. We are making them industrial sites, not hay fields. We have seen a lot of activity. That is good for the area.

“I hope what we are doing is improving our quality of life one prospect at a time.”

“We deal predominantly, almost exclusively, with industrial and warehousing developments. Our projects are not commercial or retail sites,” he said. “Manufacturing creates wealth. It doesn’t transfer wealth.”

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Anthony Humphries

Humphries believes in giving more than expected

By Betty Wilkinson



Anthony Humphries has held the position of president and CEO of NobleBank & Trust since its opening in October 2005. He has worked for several local banks over the years beginning in 1977. The Bank has branches in Piedmont and in Birmingham.

Humphries takes pride in that NobleBank & Trust is dedicated to its customers and staff. It helps the economy of the community by giving loans for houses, cars and new businesses. He knows the importance of creating more jobs for the area, and NobleBank has 51 employees. In 2015, the bank paid \$2.6 million dollars to their employees, and paid \$2.5 million through September this year. This creates economic growth as the employees shop with

our local merchants and establishments. The corporation and staff also pay thousands of dollars in federal, state, and local taxes each year stimulating the economy as well.

Humphries, a Louisville, Ken., native, spent his childhood moving from place to place because his father was a minister. He has lived in Oxford for the past 39 years. His wife is Cristy, and they have three children and three grandchildren.

Humphries credits his faith for the development of his leadership abilities, and emulating Christ is his goal when dealing with others.

“Even though this is my goal each day, there are days when I come to work and may have a lot on my mind or maybe don’t feel well and fall short of this goal, but I strive for it every day,” he said.

Former governor Bob Riley mentored Humphries. When Riley was elected to office, he appointed Humphries as State Superintendent of Banking, a job he held between 2003 to 2005. He spent a great deal of time with Riley and said his leadership abilities were immense.

“He helped me see that even though I was just one person I could have influence,” said Humphries.

One of his favorite authors and speakers is John Maxwell who defines a leader as “having influence; therefore we are all leaders.”

The future of Noble Bank looks bright when

Humphries considers its core values.

“It can be difficult to thrive in our current economy,” he said, “but we have a good foundation and capitalize on our people and customers who are committed to us.”

The NobleBank staff gives back more than money to the community. They are very active in civic and charitable events and will give back more than \$100,000 this year. Just recently, they sponsored the first Martha Vandervort Golf Classic in which the proceeds of more than \$50,000 will go to faith-based charities. The bank sponsored the Broadway series for the Oxford Performing Art Center, as well as the Knox Concert Series. Humphries is a past vice chairman of Knox. He is also on the board of the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce.

Humphries believes Calhoun Countians can improve their future by working together.

“Our citizens need to encourage the leaders of our various municipalities to do the same,” he said. “There is so much potential in our area for economic development.”

A portion of the bank’s mission statement confirms Humphries’ dedication to Calhoun Countians. The statement is that they “exceed customer expectation.” Humphries referred to the French Creole term “lagniappe” (pronounced lanyap). It means “a little extra, an unexpected benefit.”

Visit www.noblebank.com.

Humphries credits his faith for the development of his leadership abilities, and emulating Christ is his goal when dealing with others.

Linda Jenkins

Linda Jenkins promotes financial education

By Alice Duckett



Linda Jenkins is president and the consumer banking manager at Regions Bank in Anniston. She learned the banking business “coming up the ropes” starting in 1975. Jenkins attributes her success today to some of Anniston’s great banking leaders who mentored her starting as a teller at Anniston National Bank (later Regions).

“I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work in several different areas of the bank, each with increasing responsibilities. My mentors showed me the value of knowing your customers, identifying their individual needs, and delivering customized financial solutions to help them reach their goals.”

Jenkins is originally from Roanoke, Va., and moved to Anniston in 1963. When she isn’t

working at the bank, she enjoys leisure time activities at Lake Wedowee and visiting in Mobile with her three grandsons. During football season, Jenkins enjoys attending games to watch a son coach.

Leisure aside, she also enjoys her job.

“I love serving our customers just as much today as I did when I started in 1975,” she said. “It is truly rewarding whenever you can serve a role in helping a member of the community reach his or her financial objectives. As I’ve grown in experience, I’ve also enjoyed the opportunity to serve as a mentor to newer associates. We have incredible people who are deeply committed to our customers in East Alabama, and it is gratifying to see associates I have mentored reaching full potential.”

Being responsible for growth of deposits, loans, and revenue at Regions in Calhoun County, and also in the counties of Talladega, Etowah, St. Clair and Cherokee, Jenkins feels she can serve customers because of her local experience and hometown service.

“I provide a business relationship where my customers’ needs come first. Further, I provide a voice in the broader financial services world on behalf of my local customers. With all of our customers, whether it’s an individual with a basic checking account or a large business with multiple account, the goal is really the same. We want to help each of our customers succeed financially. That’s the impact I hope to have. The reward is

seeing our customers succeed financially. When our customers and our communities succeed, then we succeed.”

Jenkins pointed out that innovative changes are taking place in the banking business and that includes Regions Bank, especially in online and mobile-banking capabilities. “We recently rolled out a redesigned website, as well as updated mobile-banking apps that give our customers greater access, information, and resources for managing their money. Also, digital banking has grown to meet the needs online. In recent months, Regions has launched partnerships with online lenders. These services show our customers that we are growing and adapting to meet their needs.”

As one of the “Power 20 Business Leaders of Calhoun County,” Jenkins lives up to the honor by displaying her enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to her job in the banking industry. She is progressive in her ideas about the future.

“Our goal is to meet the needs of our customers when, where, and how they want to be served, whether that’s in a branch office, on a computer screen, or on a smartphone in the palm of their hand. The services offered are not just checking accounts and loans. We also provide cost-free financial education to help clients reach long-term goals. We work with people one-on-one to give them a financial roadmap to where they want to be. Success is the goal, and wherever there is a way, Regions can help bring about that success. That’s where we’ll be.”

“We want to help each of our customers succeed financially. That’s the impact I hope to have. The reward is seeing our customers succeed financially. When our customers and our communities succeed, then we succeed.”

Col. Martine S. Kidd

Depot commander driven to succeed

By M.B. Abrams



U.S. Army Col. Martine S. Kidd is Calhoun County's \$1 billion soldier.

As the commander of Anniston Army Depot, Kidd leads an organization that employs some 4,000 Army civilian employees and contractor personnel. Between payroll, local purchases, and major contracts, the Army injects more than \$990 million into the local economy every year.

The Depot is known locally and throughout the Department of Defense for its reputation of meeting or exceeding all standards associated with the maintenance and overhaul of combat vehicles, weapons systems, and ammunition in support of soldiers and other military personnel. That reputation is built on a foundation 75 years in the making.

Through on-going training and professional

development, the Army spent some 26 years preparing Kidd to be the 34th commander of the depot. That investment in a former radio broadcaster from Seattle, Wash., is, by all accounts, paying great dividends for Calhoun County and the Army.

As a student near Seattle, Kidd was making a name for herself as an athlete. She raced BMX bicycles, played basketball, softball, volleyball, and even badminton. Then she worked in radio for nearly 10 years.

Kidd wanted more. She joined the Army Reserve in 1989 and became a supply specialist.

Still not satisfied, Kidd moved from Washington to Fayetteville, N.C., where she entered Methodist College. She also became an ROTC Cadet. She graduated in 1994 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army's Quartermaster Corps.

Her Army career over the next 21 years landed her at several posts including Germany, New York, Texas, Kuwait, Iraq, and Virginia. She was successful in each position and was rewarded with better follow on assignments with increasing responsibilities.

"Commanding Anniston Army Depot," Kidd said, "is the pinnacle of my career.

Kidd said, "The Anniston team is patriotic. They are dedicated. I want to help them achieve personal goals, and I want to be their champion for the Army."

The colonel is not bashful about her praise of the Depot team. She said, "Anniston is a national

treasure, truly a crown jewel. It is part of our national insurance policy."

Kidd's praise of the Depot and of the team includes a cautionary note. She said, "We have to make sure we steward every dollar. We have to monitor all of our metrics. We have to carefully monitor and manage our costs, the schedule and performance.

Kidd acknowledges she has benefited from many great leaders and mentors. She hopes she is able to pay it forward with the depot team.

Another source of inspiration for Kidd is Daniel H. Pink and his book "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us." Instead of rewards and fear of punishment, Pink argues motivation can be divided into autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

Kidd's personal success is tied to the success of the Depot team. With that focus, she wants to continue great leader development, team building, continue to build on the value of each team member to another, make sure the equipment leaving the Depot is the best quality product for soldiers who are serving in potentially dangerous places, and that the equipment the Depot ships out helps bring those soldiers home to their families.

Kidd is a highly decorated officer. During the course of her career, Kidd has received the Legion of Merit Medal, two Bronze Star Medals, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, three Meritorious Service Medals, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, three Army Commendation Medals, and the NATO Medal.

"The Anniston team is patriotic. They are dedicated. I want to help them achieve personal goals, and I want to be their champion for the Army."

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Everett King

King leads award-winning real estate company

By Sherry Kughn



Everett King, president and owner of ERA King Real Estate company, has followed his father Jack's path and moved the company forward for almost five decades. Jack King started the company in 1947 with three employees. He paved the way for his son to lead a company that now has seven offices, 24 staff members, and 140 agents.

"We have built a plan for not only today but also for the future," said King.

King graduated from the University of Alabama in 1978 with a degree in communications, a major in advertising, and a minor in sales management. After graduation, he joined the family business and took over the company in 1990.

King takes pride in his agents' desire to stay on

top of changes and improvements in the industry. The senior management team is the youngest the company has had, but they are among the most enthusiastic.

"We go to everything we can to stay ahead of the market for our buyers and sellers," said King. "The team attends everything possible for continued success through customer service, technology, and agent services. We are in a continuous state of change based on what our consumer is asking for."

King's company has many accolades. The company was honored with a proclamation by the Calhoun County Commissioners for its accomplishments in making a better community through their support for high school athletics. The Alabama House of Representatives commended King in Resolution HIR308 for his commitment to young people.

In addition, the company holds the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime Achievement Award and Small Business of the Year from Calhoun and Etowah Counties. The leadership of the United Cerebral Palsy named King Realty as Company of the Year and honored it with the Best Event Award for three consecutive years for its work with the UCP Charity Golf Tournament. The company holds five nominations for the Gene Francis Award of honoring the top five overall ERA companies in America, and it won that award in 2007.

King promotes Calhoun County in many ways,

and he would like for the future to have a more centralized government that speaks with one voice. He is also involved in giving back to the community.

"I am extremely proud of our Twelve Months of Giving Charity Program," said King.

Each month, each of the offices chose a non-profit organization or individual to help. Collectively, the company has give more than \$400,000 to more than 100 organizations, not to count the volunteer honors. This year, the company won the ERA Franchise Circle of Light Award for their charitable contributions,

King serves on many local, state, and national boards, both for his industry and for various charities. These include serving on the boards of the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club. He served as chairman of the Sunny King Charity Golf Tournament and raised more than \$200,000. King has served for many years on the National Advisory Committee for the ERA Franchise Systems, and the ERA Broker Council for Alabama, Cal. Co. Chamber of Commerce. He is president of the Business Council of Alabama,

King's company is the only Cartus/USAA Platinum-recognized company in the state.

He and his wife Anna are the parents of three sons, Jackson, Josh and Jeremy.

"My dad always said 'do the right things for the right reasons,'" said King, "and giving back to our communities is a big part of that."

"The team attends everything possible for continued success through customer service, technology, and agent services. We are in a continuous state of change based on what our consumer is asking for."

Patty King

Patty King's company, 94 years of positive impact

By Sherry Kughn



A Cedartown, Ga., native, Patty King has made Anniston her home for the past 46 years. Her impact as chairman of the board of Sunny King Automotive Group is immeasurable in influence, in both the areas of the economy of Calhoun County and the number of individuals that have benefitted from the charities supported by the company.

The automotive group includes three separate corporations; Sunny King Ford, Sunny King Honda and Sunny King Toyota. King appreciates that the company has made a positive difference in the community since its incorporation in 1922. For 94 years, Sunny King Automotive Group has purchased

goods from local vendors, banked with local banks, supported local institutions of all types, and paid tax revenues.

“Our business makes a significant impact on our economy,” said King. “We have a commitment to our local charities and other worthwhile events.” She points to the company’s engagement in local schools, churches, and families.

Sunny King Automotive Group has raised more than two million dollars for charity with the Sunny King Charity Classic. In addition, it supports the Sunny King Criterium/Alabama Cycling Classic, a professional road tour that brings riders from around the world, The American Cancer Society, Knox Concert Series, Cerebral Palsy Center, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Alabama Baptist Children’s Home, and others.

“It’s the right thing to do,” said King. “Historically we have always been good corporate citizens. This is our home and we want to be a part of making our world a better place.

King believes it is important for all citizens to buy locally, support local government, and invest time and energy into the state. She hopes citizens will approach improving the economy by viewing it on a regional basis with a “long-term outlook.”

“Honda Manufacturing of Alabama is an amazing company in our area, We are so fortunate to attract the many suppliers that have come our way because

of Honda’s location in our midst,” said King. “There may not be that many big industries, but we can work together with long-term goals and bring smaller industries to have a long-term impact.”

Looking to the future is one way Sunny King Automotive Group has stayed viable throughout its history. Industry forecasters have predicted national sales of 17.5 million cars and trucks for 2016. The industry is changing in ways that benefit all Americans, such as making vehicles more energy efficient and safe; and King believes the industry offers many opportunities for growth.

“We are very blessed with great products that our customers love and want to purchase,” said King.

As busy as King stays heading one of Calhoun County’s leading companies, she also contributes to the automotive industry. She is a member of the Automobile Dealer Associations on the state, national, and international levels and the Society of International Business Fellows. Awards include the recently received Heart of an Eagle Award from Boy Scouts of America, and she holds a Paul Harris Fellow Award from the Rotary Foundation. She travels, reads, and enjoys her home, membership at Grace Episcopal Church, and friends and family, the latter of whom live in Auburn, Birmingham, and the state of Tennessee.

“My life is good,” said King. “I enjoy so many things.”

King believes it is important for all citizens to buy locally, support local government, and invest time and energy into the state. She hopes citizens will approach improving the economy by viewing it on a regional basis with a “long-term outlook.”

Dr. Martha Lavender

Lavendar considers being president of GSCC a gift

By Mike Stedham



Dr. Martha Lavender is a unique community leader who is at home in the delivery room, the classroom, and the boardroom.

As president of Gadsden State Community College, her mission is to make sure that the young people of this area receive the same opportunities for success that she did.

A lifelong Alabama resident, Lavender graduated from Hokes Bluff High School and enrolled at Gadsden State Junior College to pursue an associate degree in nursing. She began her nursing career in what is now Gadsden Regional Medical Center.

“My clinical passion was pediatrics and neonatal nursing,” she says. “At the same time I started my nursing career, I enrolled in transfer courses at Gadsden State that would fulfill requirements for a

baccalaureate degree in nursing from Jacksonville State University.”

Education quickly became another passion, and Lavender began teaching professional education while managing a state-funded grant for the JSU College of Nursing.

“At JSU, I served as a perinatal outreach coordinator, faculty, assistant dean, and dean of Nursing Health Sciences,” she says.

Next she was given the opportunity to work at the Center for Domestic Preparedness as a government contractor with a corporation providing emergency preparedness training for first responders across the nation. She later returned to Gadsden State as director of the college’s new campus in Cherokee County.

“Returning to the college was a gift – an opportunity to give back to the organization where my career began,” she says. “I made the decision to retire in 2011 only to return in 2014 to serve as the interim president, and later the president of GSCC.”

Lavender says the first people to inspire her to become a success were her parents, Burt and Zell Griffith.

“My sisters and I understood that we were expected to work hard, make good grades, and pursue a college degree.”

She also lists several nurses and educators who were giving her the inspiration to become a leader.

“These powerful and influential women have been and continue to be mentors and role models,” she says.

As president of Gadsden State, Lavender oversees a staff of 824 full-time and part-time employees. The school has more than 5,100 students enrolled at its six

campuses in Calhoun, Etowah and Cherokee counties.

“Our most recent economic impact study indicated Gadsden State had a total economic impact, which includes direct and indirect spending, of \$191,010,625,” she says. “The direct spending by the college for employees, the college itself, and students is \$86,787,508.”

But the biggest impact Gadsden State has on the area’s economy comes from its graduates who work for area businesses. Lavender says that for every seven jobs that require some college training after high school, only two demand a bachelor’s degree and one requires a graduate degree.

“We are dedicated to our statewide directive to build Alabama’s workforce by providing quality career technical dual enrollment opportunities for high school students in our area, she says. “In these high-demand, high-wage fields, students are awarded dual credit necessary for both high school and college. Some actually earn a high school diploma at the same time they complete a college certificate or degree.”

Lavender says education is the doorway to the middle class, and the community needs to help students overcome such challenges as lack of finances, poor study skills and unreliable transportation.

“We all need to encourage and promote ‘some college’ for our high school graduates and non-traditional students,” she says. “We need to be informed about the current job market and the skills required for employment. And, we need to be actively mentoring, coaching, and supporting students in their quest for education.”

“We are dedicated to our statewide directive to build Alabama’s workforce by providing quality career technical dual enrollment opportunities for high school students in our are.”

Jennifer Maddox

Maddox, a student of philanthropy

By Alice Duckett



Jennifer Maddox, the CEO of the Foundation of Northeast Alabama, works in its headquarters in Anniston, but with her staff of eight, she serves Calhoun County and eight surrounding counties in philanthropy endeavors. She partners the Foundation with donors and non-profit organizations to achieve charitable goals.

“Calhoun County benefits from our Foundation on many different levels as we provide opportunities in different directions,” said Maddox. “Our Foundation provides help for scholarships, community partnerships, and grant-making and charitable projects. We distribute \$1 million dollars annually in the nine-county service area in grants and scholarships. Our assets under management have increased from twenty-seven million in 2011 to forty million.”

She has experience and diversity as head of the Foundation. A native of South Bend, Ind., she has also lived in Florida and Texas. Her career path includes Administrator of Criterion Investment Management Company, Director of Development of the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, Executive Director of Mental Health Association of St. Joseph’s County, Inc., Manager of Administration and Finance at the University of Notre Dame (Department of Physics) and CEO of Marshall County, Indiana Community Foundation.

It is in Calhoun County, though, where Maddox most proud of her achievements.

“The impact financially is measurable in terms of the amount of money that goes into the community each year for charitable purposes and immeasurable in terms of the people whose lives have been positively impacted and/or changed because of the generosity of caring, giving people,” said Maddox.

Maddox mentioned two of the numerous projects funded through the Foundation. One example is the Region 2 Workforce Development Council/Network that works to offer a project called “Worlds of Work” for high school students. Another example is offering SAT prep courses at some high schools. The Foundation also partners with businesses, churches, not-for-profit organizations, and individuals to create endowed funds that will benefit a community forever.

“I have a fantastic group of board members, experienced staff and wonderful donors who help

make my job at the Foundation such a joy,” said Maddox. “I love living in the South, especially Alabama. People are polite and display their manners. Neighbors help each other. People are social and friendly, and food is always important for any occasion.”

“I live in a very diverse neighborhood near Stringfellow Hospital and Anniston High School where residents have achieved amazing progress in taking back their neighborhood,” said Maddox. “All this goes to point out that to improve our way of living in Calhoun County, we need to return to ‘front porches.’ In other words, we must know our neighbors and what is going on around us, be willing to speak up, and be willing to be part of the solution. Think in terms of we and us versus me and them. Try new things. Get involved. Look at the big picture of the needs of the county. Improving our county is going to take all of us pulling together to make that happen.”

Maddox travels and maintains a tight schedule. She serves on several boards, enjoys Junior League, and is president elect of the Noon Rotary Club. She is working on a Girl’s Graduate program at Anniston High School.

She loves to travel. She and her husband Mark Stevens have visited 12 countries and 20 states in the past 12 years, not to mention visiting their children and families in Texas.

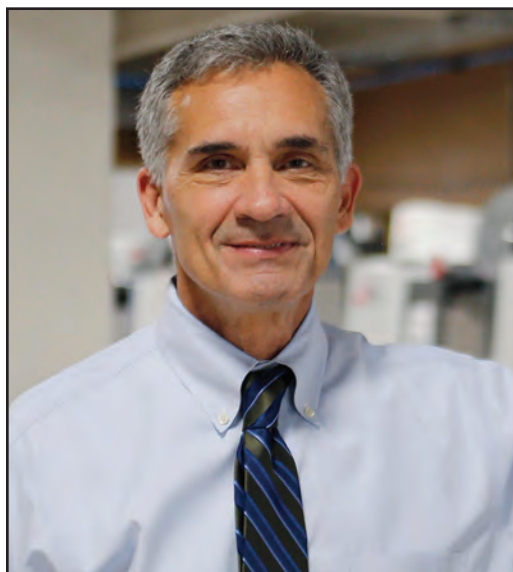
Never content with achievement, Maddox is taking on-line courses to earn accreditation as a Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy.

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Del Marsh

Sen. Del Marsh is a project-oriented leader

By Sherry Kughn



Someone once wrote the words “retired businessman” in the same sentence as Del Marsh. However, this busy senator, who also serves as President Pro Tem of the Alabama State Senate, has been busy this year planning and founding a new machine shop in West Anniston named Soteria. The project follows the start of another new business, the purchase and renovation of one of Anniston’s historical homes. The former Victoria Inn is named The Finial Hotel. It is at 1600 Quintard Avenue.

Marsh, an Auburn graduate, is serving his fifth term as a Republican senator. He was elected President Pro Tem in 2010.

While in college, Marsh, who grew up in Birmingham, majored in Industrial Management and started a business customizing cars. He landed a contract with auto dealerships in Auburn and Opelika. The endeavor started him on a path of entrepreneurship. He moved to Anniston after he married Ginger Suddeth and went to work with his father-in-law, Bill, in 1981, at Industrial Plating Company. In 1988, he realized that steel and textile business was declining. That is when I diversified into the aerospace industry,” said Marsh, “and did work for Garrett Airlines in Anniston, which later became Honeywell.”

Eventually, Marsh’s company did work for major airline companies, including Delta. He also entered into the real estate market and developed Meadow Lakes Subdivision in Oxford, among other real estate projects. In 2011, a Utah company asked if he would sell his aerospace company. By then, his service to the state senate, which began in 1998, was taking up much of his time; so he sold the business.

“Starting a new business is a process,” he said. “I like making things work, allowing people to move forward. I like to customize a business plan, bring the right people on board, and set and obtain those goals.”

Marsh compares political service to starting a business. Both are a good fit for a project-oriented person like himself.

He compared the process of building a business

to a recent political project. During the last special session, the Medicaid issue needed resolution. He strove to build consensus with the senate members, bring a vote about, and get a temporary solution.

“At least we got the money into Medicaid until 2017,” said Marsh. “Sometimes our burdens weigh heavily, and we have limited funds. We do the best we can.”

Marsh said he still enjoys his political service, watching over his real estate holdings, and creating the new business. He and Ginger have two children who are grown.

“Ginger and I understand the value of community,” said Marsh. “The hotel project was not a savvy business deal, but we thought it was important to the area, and it helps provide jobs. Will I ever see a return on my investment? I don’t know.”

Marsh hopes Calhoun Countians will work to improve education in the area. He wants to see innovation and improvement in the way students learn on all levels, from public education to charter school students to adult education.

“We have to stay open minded,” said Marsh. “We must be willing to listen and do what we can for students because education has a huge impact on our lives. It means less crime, better jobs, and more opportunities to attract new businesses to our area.”

“Starting a new business is a process,” he said. “I like making things work, allowing people to move forward. I like to customize a business plan, bring the right people on board, and set and obtain those goals.”

Julia Segars

Segars seeks varied approach to problem solving

By Sherry Kughn



Alabama Power's vice president of the state's Eastern Division is Julia Segars. She majored in journalism at the University of Alabama and eventually worked in the communications department of Alabama Power. Early on, she learned to explain various aspects of the company to a wide variety of individuals, from students to nuclear engineers. She credits that experience with giving her a broad perspective of the company, a key competency in her success as a leader.

A creative thinker, she feels fortunate that the

company was open to new perspectives and ideas.

"Alabama Power was changing and growing and looking to broaden our talent diversity in the areas of thought, approaches, and in other kinds of demographics," said Segars.

Segars is responsible for customer service operations in 12 counties, with cities that include Anniston and Gadsden -- two communities with similar populations, but unique industrial interests and political landscapes. The Eastern Division has 342 employees and 227,000 customers. The industry of electrical utilities includes residential, commercial, industrial, street lighting and other small interests. There are 18 offices in her district that generated revenues of \$737,000,000 last year.

In Segars' view, the future of Alabama Power will see more innovation, finding ways to not only provide customer service but also new fuel sources. "We are not an old-fashioned utility company anymore," she said. The company encourages innovation among its employees, in such areas as electric vehicle technology and electric solutions to industrial manufacturing needs. Southern Company is a leader in helping to create a national energy policy not only for customers but also to help the country achieve industrial independence.

Alabama Power Company, according to Segars, gives back to the community by striving to invest in education and workforce development. "We are trying to marry up workforce development with students from high schools and middle schools in the areas of math and science," she said. "Also, we want to be involved with two-year colleges and help create a skilled workforce."

Segars sets an example for employees of Southern Company with her involvement on such boards as the Calhoun County Economic Development Authority and Knox Concert Series; and she is chair of the Longleaf Botanical Gardens Board. "All of our folks are involved," she said, citing as examples the company's support of educational and environmental efforts and United Way. Alabama Power Co. wants to be seen as a leader in areas that strengthen the community in the areas of "health, human service, education, and partnership with other business," she said.

Segars believes that Calhoun Countians can work together to improve their way of living by taking a regional approach to solving problems from an economic standpoint, such as bringing in jobs, increasing wealth, and aiding educational efforts. "We can't operate as an island," she said.

Early on, she learned to explain various aspects of the company to a wide variety of individuals, from students to nuclear engineers. She credits that experience with giving her a broad perspective of the company, a key competency in her success as a leader.

Phil Webb

Webb a positive thinker and public servant

By Alice Duckett



Phil Webb, owner of Webb Concrete and Building Materials, says the influence of his grandfather and dad led him into the business world. He had planned to attend college at the encouragement of his father. However, during his senior year in high school, he started to work part of the day in the family business after his required classes.

“I fell in love with the hardware, building supply store, and concrete company my grandfather had started,” said Webb. “Suddenly I knew what I wanted to do with my life, and it didn’t include going off to college.”

Webb began working full time in the family the day after graduation, and the rest is history. He has spent his career making successful decisions by expanding into nearby towns and counties.

Today, the company, Webb Concrete and Building Materials, is based in Heflin but has concrete and ready-mix sales and/or showrooms for flooring, hardware, and building materials in Pell City, Centre, Roanoke, Anniston, Oxford, and Rome, Ga. Future expansion is being planned for Birmingham.

The size of the staff for all locations is between 135 to 140 employees.

“I have good employees and good customers, so now I want to give back to these communities,” said Webb. “I am more involved in Calhoun County—I live in Anniston—where I serve on a number of boards. I want to bring people together, to help them, and to contribute. I love challenges and can identify strong people. I want them around me and to put them to work. Whether it’s fundraising, getting people to serve on boards, or hiring them to work for Webb Concrete, I’m always looking for people who can get the job done.”

Webb says he learned much from his grandparents who started the business. “They were here for me when I took over the business from my dad. They came everyday and supported me,” he said. “They shared their knowledge with me. Out of respect for them and my dad and to prove that my brother and I could carry on and grow the business, I hit the floor running everyday.”

Webb has been in business 33 years and wishes his grandparents could see how successful the

business has become.

He is grateful for his supportive wife Denise, who encourages him to serve others with his involvement in community activities.”

Webb serves on many boards: Calhoun County Home Builders Association, JSU Foundation, Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce and Noble Bank and Trust. He is a member of the Calhoun County Quarterback Club, the Anniston Rotary Club, the JSU College of Commerce and Business Administration Board of Visitors. Also Webb is chairman of the McClellan Development Authority, the Knox Concert Series, and the YMCA of Calhoun County. On a state level, he serves on the Board of Directors of the Business Council of Alabama and the Alabama Concrete Industries Association, plus he’s a member of the Executive Board of the Greater Alabama Council of Boy Scouts of America and a member of the Governor’s Circle.

Webb still makes time to attend college football and basketball games. He has one son, Vince, a daughter-in-law, Laurel, and two granddaughters, Madeline and Emma.

Always a positive thinker, Webb wants to see Calhoun Countians working closer together and getting more involved in their community.

Webb is proud of Calhoun County’s features, such as Jacksonville State University, Anniston Army Depot, the business development along I-20, good medical facilities and McClellan’s potential.

“Our area has a lot to offer,” he said.

I love challenges and can identify strong people. I want them around me and to put them to work.



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Jeffery Williams

Civic-minded Williams serves those in grief

By Betty Wilkinson



The owner of Anniston Funeral Services, Jeffrey Williams, once worked as a correctional officer, counselor, and a chaplain before his uncle, Russell Williams, encouraged him to become a licensed funeral director at age 27. When Russell died in 2006, he passed the funeral home down to his nephew. Now Williams operates the funeral home, which has a staff of about 20 employees. The funeral home is located at 630 South Wilmer.

Williams also owns and operates Eden Hills Cemetery.

“We appreciate those who are bereaved who have put their trust in us for the past forty years,” said Williams, “by allowing us to serve them with compassionate and dignified service.”

Williams, a Thomasville, Ga., native, once worked as a correctional officer and, later, as a counselor, at the Alabama State Correctional Prison. Then he worked at Talladega College as a chaplain and residential life director over the dorms. From 2009 to 2013, he was the minister at Smith Metro AME Zion Church.

Williams credits his uncle and parents for inspiring him to help others. Both parents were educators, and his father was also a minister. He also said that his father set a historical precedent in Thomasville by being elected in 1986 as its first Afro-American mayor.

“Christian principles and values were stressed, along with education,” said Williams of his childhood.

These values still motivate Williams. He and his staff are active participants in community activities. They host a “Penny Drive” program on radio station WHMA to help needy families at Christmas. Williams is a member of the masonic group Pot of Manna Lodge #478. One of the projects hosted by the group is to feed the needy each Thanksgiving at the Carver Community Center.

Williams is especially interested in contributing to the efforts to find a cure to help Alzheimer’s patients. Both of his parents suffer from the disorder.

“It is really hard when your parent looks at you and does not recognize you,” said Williams.

Anniston Funeral Services hosts a television program that airs on Cable One channel 169 on Sundays at 7:30 p.m., and it airs on Channel 24 on Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. Williams often hosts guest ministers and politicians for the purpose of dispensing information to the community about improving the spiritual and civic lives of Calhoun Countians. Williams also has a radio program on WHMA A.M. channel 1390. He feels the \$25,000 spent on advertisement is worth the money to offer positive words of encouragement to the listeners, and he is proud to support the local communications industry.

Williams goes beyond operating a funeral home that not only seats more than 300 in the chapel but also has two conference rooms and two viewing rooms. The funeral home has another room designed to help families in grief.

“We have added a fellowship room where families can have a meal, and it also serves as an overflow room.”

Williams hopes to see progressive growth in Calhoun County.

“We need to stimulate economic development and encourage people to stay in the area, especially our young people by investing more in our city school system.”

The motto at Anniston Funeral Services, “Where service begins and never ends”, and “Love is what love does” applies to Williams’s life, civic work, and business.

“We appreciate those who are bereaved who have put their trust in us for the past forty years,” said Williams, “by allowing us to serve them with compassionate and dignified service.”

Brian Young

Piedmont's Brian Young leads third-generation company

By Sherry Kughn



Brian Young appreciates that his grandfather, M.V. Young, who died before he was born, founded Young Oil. Young's father, Millard, took over and ran it until his retirement. Young is now vice president of the company, co-owned by siblings Vernon and Pam. He is also the former mayor of Piedmont, serving between the years 2008-2012.

The business is diverse, with its oil distribution company consisting of a base of petroleum-related accounts with gas stations and farm and industrial entities. The Young family has diversified the company throughout the years. They operate Grub Marts, a chain of convenience stores; and they also lease convenience stores. They lease additional commercial buildings for

several restaurants and operate a few warehouses. Operating such a diverse company led Young to seek outside assistance.

In 2001, he and his siblings joined Study Groups: Tools for Benchmarking, an advisory company for petroleum-related businesses. They and several other families in the industry meet five times within two years to share information on keeping the company efficient.

This kind of open-mindedness is what also led Young to serve as mayor of Piedmont. During his tenure, he learned how to work with other business owners with varied interests; and he lent his own managerial skills to the job.

"Rebranding Piedmont was a goal of our administration with a heavy concentration on education," said Young. "Great work by our students, teachers, administration, and the current city administration led Piedmont to become a leaders of innovative education in Alabama."

Young Oil has about 100 employees located from Auburn to Centre.

Young sees change coming in the oil and gasoline industry, especially as it relates to automotive infrastructure. The taxes paid by oil companies support the highway and roadway structures in America, which was fine in the past and which is fine for the near future. However, the government's Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards require automotive companies to meet a goal of creating cars that get 54.5 mpg by 2025.

The drop in gallons of fuel sold will lower tax revenue for maintaining and building roads.

Understanding and running an oil company has made Young Oil Inc. to remain viable for three generations, and there are more Youngs to come. Young has two children, Davis and Hayden. Vernon has two; and a fourth sibling, Karen, has four. In addition to Pam, family members are Young's wife, Jennifer, and mother, Ann.

Young said he is happy that his company has been able to give back to the community. The company has supported several Jacksonville State University programs; public schools and sports programs throughout the state; and charitable groups, such as the Venecia Foundation in Piedmont.

Young believes the best way to improve Calhoun County and the state is to focus on improving the access for students to attend schools of higher education. He believes the state needs more students with degrees in math and science.

"We need more offerings at JSU," said Young, "and a lot of kids in our area do not have the money to attend college."

Young's hope is that the economic situation in rural America will improve in the near future, which would help more students have families who could afford to send them to college.

"A lot of good folks and kids are smart enough to excel," said Young, "and we need to create the opportunities."

This kind of open-mindedness is what also led Young to serve as mayor of Piedmont. During his tenure, he learned how to work with other business owners with varied interests; and he lent his own managerial skills to the job.



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