Chamber Connections

Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce

July 2023

Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County Class 31 and Leadership Dothan Class 41 members

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Your Cover Photo

Your cover photo features the Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County Class 31 and Leadership Dothan Class 41 members. For more information, see pages 4-5.

www.dothan.com

(334) 792-5138

United States Chamber of Commerce ACCREDITED

CCAA 2021 – 2031 ALABAMA ACCREDITED CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Events Calendar

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	**4**	**5**	6	7	8
9	10	**11**	**12**	**13**	14	15
16	17	18	**19**	20	21	22
23	24	**25**	**26**	**27**		29
30	31					

4 **Independence Day – Chamber Closed**

5 **LEADS Group 1 Biweekly Meeting – 8 a.m.**
Location: 102 Jamestown Blvd. (Chamber)

11 **Ambassadors and Diplomats Committee Meeting – 9 a.m.**
Location: 102 Jamestown Blvd. (Chamber)

Ribbon Cutting: Dothan Driving Range and Golf Shop – 4 p.m.
Location: 7600 U.S. Highway 84 West

12 **LEADS Group 2 Biweekly Meeting – 8 a.m.**
Location: 1740 S. Oates St. (Ray's Restaurant)

Ribbon Cutting: Aw Shucks & More, LLC – 11 a.m.
Location: 102 Jamestown Blvd. (Chamber)

13 **Wiregrass Women's Networking Lunch – 11:30 a.m.**
Location: 151 N. Foster St. (KBC)
*See page 14 for more information.

Ribbon Cutting: West End Marketplace, LLC – 2 p.m.
Location: 1829 W. Main St., Suite 2

19 **LEADS Group 1 Biweekly Meeting – 8 a.m.**
Location: 102 Jamestown Blvd. (Chamber)

Board of Director's Meeting and Industry Tour – 8:15 a.m.
Location: 808 Ross Clark Circle (Wayne Farms, LLC)

25 **Ribbon Cutting: C-S Collections, LLC – 1 p.m.**
Location: 1558 Montgomery Highway, Suite 4

26 **LEADS Group 2 Biweekly Meeting – 8 a.m.**
Location: 1740 S. Oates St. (Ray's Restaurant)

27 **Entrepreneurship Council Seminar: Financing Your Business – 5:30 p.m.**
Location: 102 Jamestown Blvd. (Chamber)
*See page 14 for more information.

Alabama Nail Co.
1445 Westgate Parkway
Dothan, AL 36303
Katelyn Peters
(334) 203-4303
www.alabamanailco.com
HEALTH & WELLNESS

NEW**NAME**
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400 Burt Drive, Suite E-75
Dothan, AL 36305
Emily Crutchfield
(334) 673-1972
www.dothanfarms.com
APARTMENTS

All Things Thrift Store
103 Pettus St.
Dothan, AL 36301
Stephanie Cronin
(334) 702-4712
SHOPPING / SPECIALTY RETAIL

Grandview Izell Reese Community Center Field
900 Sixth Ave.
Dothan, AL 36301
Izell Reese
SPORTS & RECREATION

Schedule A Ribbon Cutting!

Are you a new Chamber member? Has your business expanded or relocated? Are you breaking ground for a new facility? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may want to schedule a Chamber Ribbon Cutting or Goundbreaking event.

These events take place weekly on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Chamber staff will work with you to choose the date and time that best fits your schedule. Your event will be included in the Calendar of Events section of the *Chamber Connections* and your picture will also be featured in the newsletter after the event.

For more information or to book an event, contact Kendretta Thornton, membership coordinator, at (334) 792-5138 or **kthornton@dothan.com**.

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Dothan, AL 36303
Gina Crenshaw
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www.stayapt.com
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Meet Our Future Leaders

Foundation Holds Graduation Ceremonies

If there was ever any doubt that our community is filled with dedicated and strong individuals who would be willing and able to take on the role as area future leaders, then let us introduce you to the graduating 2023 Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County and Leadership Dothan classes.

Forty-three high school juniors from eight area schools in Houston County graduated from Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County Class 31. Held May 17 at Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center Inc's Sterling Event Services Rotary Hall, the guest speaker was Mayor Jesse Nelson, city of Lynn Haven, Florida, and a Youth Leadership Alumni. McKinley Watford from Dothan High School also provided attendees with an overview of the year's high from visiting the Wiregrass Safety Center during Public Safety Day to reading to students at Dothan City Schools Head Start Center during Education Day.

The Leadership Dothan's Class 41 had 40 graduates and held its graduation ceremony June 8, at the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens. During the evening event, course highlights were provided by class leaders Jared Cannon, Southern Nuclear Operations Co./Plant Farley. Closing remarks were given by Betsey Marshall, Leadership Dothan Steering Committee chair and Towne Place Suites.

Both leadership programs are operated through the Dothan Area Chamber Foundation and serve as important leadership resources to this area. These programs not only help raise a participant's awareness of the local issues and increase their understanding of different perspectives, but also help to encourage the individual to become involved in solving the challenges facing their community.

Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County is a seven-month training program that prepares high school juniors for leadership, involvement and participation in the future of the Wiregrass region. The program's goal is to interest students in civic and volunteer activities, encourage them to recognize their potential and assist them in identifying their special skills and talents.

Leadership Dothan is a nine-month program that focuses on community resources, education, local and state government, health care, public safety, agricultural and quality of life.

Each year, both classes are required to complete a community service project or fundraising effort to enhance the community. For their service project, Youth Leadership selected two community projects: volunteered at Landmark Park and at the 2023 Dothan Adolescent Community Youth Advisory Council's Feel Good Field Day.

Leadership Dothan's community service project was a Bags and Brews Cornhole Tournament held in downtown Dothan's Porter Park. Approximately 32 teams participated in the tournament, which raised over $16,030. The funds were donated to five nonprofit organizations: The Exchange Center for Child Abuse Prevent, Girls Inc. of Dothan, Wiregrass Angel House, Wiregrass Habitat for Humanity and Wiregrass 2-1-1.

Plans are currently underway for the 2023-2024 programs. If you would like more information about either of the classes, contact Linda Kelley, director of community development, at (334) 792-5138 or **lkelley@dothan.com**.

Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County Class 31 had 43 students complete the program.

Leadership Dothan Class 41 had 40 graduates.

Congratulations

Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County & Leadership Dothan Classes 2023 Graduates

Youth Leadership Dothan-Houston County Class 31

Mary Suzan Aman
Houston Academy

Harrison Autrey
Houston Academy

Reese Bienvenu
Providence Christian School

Adam Boyd
Houston Academy

Brynley Bradshaw
Ridgecrest Christian School

Katie Brown
Houston Academy

Marielle Burque
Houston Academy

Maci Caldwell
Houston Academy

Ashlinn Carmody
Houston Academy

Bella Danzey
Providence Christian School

Avery Dean
Providence Christian School

Allie DeVane
Houston Academy

Denton Dowling
Houston Academy

Amy Ezell
Houston Academy

Reid Farris
Providence Christian School

Andrew Gauldin
Ridgecrest Christian School

Avery Goocher
Providence Christian School

Veronica Gordillo
Dothan High School

Claire Griffith
Dothan High School

Braxton Hallmon
Providence Christian School

Brayden Hardy
Rehobeth High School

Kaitlyn Herrington
Dothan High School

Bella Hicks
Wicksburg High School

Moriah Hogans
Dothan High School

Landon Jenkins
Dothan High School

Sara Wellons Lee
Houston Academy

Amiah Lomnick
Dothan High School

Harrison Marsh
Rehobeth High School

Fran Morris
Houston Academy

Nikki Nimmagadda
Dothan High School

Tyler O'Bryan
Providence Christian School

Presley Parrish
Houston Academy

Marley Phillips
Wicksburg High School

Mitchell Piedra
Houston Academy

Tricia Rhodes
Providence Christian School

Gabby Richards
Rehobeth High School

Lauren Shapiro
Dothan High School

Ansleigh Smith
Houston Academy

Carter Stock
Providence Christian School

Tanner Strickland
Northside Methodist Academy

McKinley Watford
Dothan High School

Brody Williams
Houston Academy

Helen Williamson
Rehobeth High School

Leadership Dothan Class 41

Daniel Adams
Alabama Motor Express

Mary Beth Bigham
Girls Inc. of Dothan

Misty Bradley
Coleman Worldwide Moving

Nereida Bundy
Wiregrass Angel House

Kaelyn Calabretto
Southeast Plumbing & Electric, LLC

Jared Cannon
Southern Nuclear Operating Co.

Phil Childree
Flowers Hospital

Cayla Cobb
City of Dothan

Travis Cobb
Alabama College of Osteopath Medicine (ACOM)

Kerrie Cox
Southeast Health

Marc Cronin
Wiregrass 2-1-1

Jackson Dennis
Tom West Co.

Michelle Enfinger
Seay, Seay & Litchfield Inc.

Caitlin Faulker
Wiregrass Home Team

Maj. Will Glover
Dothan Police Department

Lilly Gordon-Flowers
Exchange Center for Child Abuse Prevention

Leah Gunn
Dothan Housing Authority

Connie Hauss

Pam Hudgens
Southeast Alabama Community Action Partnership

Lois Katherine Jackson
WINCO, LLC

Lawrence Johnson
Friend Bank

Amanda Jones
Encompass Health

Kimberly Lebl
AALOS at Dothan Brace Shop

Lisa LeNoir
Wiregrass Electric Cooperative

Stetson Nichols
Northstar Engineering Services

Scott Parker
Family Heritage Division of Gobel Life

Katelyn Peters
Waxing the City

Justin Phillips
PRemployer Inc.

Shawn Reaves
Dunbarton Corp.

Amelia Shelley
Wiregrass Wealth Management

Shaun Simon
Construction Partners Inc.

Teresa Skipper
Century 21 James Grant Realty

Trevor Thigpen
All in Credit Union

Mikhele Trice
Larry Blumberg & Associates (LBSA Hospitality)

Katie Turner
The Pepi Companies

Courtney Vieira
Synovus Mortgage

Dr. Chase Walters
Southeastern Chiropractic Associates, PC

Ali Watford
Five Star Credit Union

Melanie Weed
Jackson Thornton

James Williams
Dothan Preparatory Academy

Vision Center South
Expert Eyecare. Latest Eyewear.

Vision Center South

Describe your business/organization, including its history and the services you provide:
Vision Center South is a full-service optometric center with six locations in the tri-state region. We specialize in providing comprehensive eye exams, prescription glasses and contacts. With locations in Dothan, Enterprise, Brewton and Wetumpka, Alabama; Marianna, Florida and Bainbridge, Georgia, we offer convenient and affordable primary vision care to communities throughout the Southeast. Each of our locations offers an Optical Boutique with a variety of stylish frames and lens options to fit your lifestyle. We also have a large selection of specialty contact lenses. Vision Center South is an optometric division of Eye Center South, a trusted 44+ year multi-clinic Ophthalmology practice widely respected for providing world class surgical eyecare. You can expect the same gold standard of excellence in primary vision care at Vision Center South.

What makes your business organization stand out?
Our Dothan location of Vision Center South boasts over 23,000 square feet of luxurious optical boutique space and modern clinical office space. This space was meticulously designed to optimize your patient experience. Our well-trained staff focuses on making your clinical exam experience, as well as your shopping experience, a memorable one. This location offers many exclusive designer brands like Karl Lagerfeld, Chloe and Tom Ford in a luxurious optical showroom. The Dothan location also houses an all-digital laboratory to custom make your lenses often in 24 hours or less. This laboratory supplies custom lenses to all six Vision Center South locations. We invite you to come see the difference with Vision Center South. You can also enjoy breakfast, lunch or specialty coffee at The Cellar Café located conveniently across from our clinic. Come see why Vision Center South was voted "Best Optometry Center" multiple years in a row in the *Dothan Eagle's* Best of the Wiregrass contest.

Describe an exciting recent highlight for your business/organization:
Our flagship Vision Center South location in Dothan recently celebrated its one-year anniversary in the Health Center South Medical Tower. We relocated from the downtown location in mid-June of last year (formerly the Denney Vision practice). We have seven licensed optometrists serving this clinic, each of whom specialize in providing exceptional vision care to families.

How has your business/organization changed in the last 12 months, and what do you see for the future?
Vision Center South was founded in 2019 and rapidly grew into a thriving multi-clinic optometric center. Over the last year, our Dothan location unveiled an in-house laboratory adding new equipment to expand our lens coating options. Each lens goes through a rigorous quality control process to ensure superior quality in the final product dispensed to patients. Over the last year, we scaled up our lab operations to support all six Vision Center South locations. We increased our lab staff to service the increased production of lenses. We also hired a new optometrist, Dr. Bentley Hill, a Rehobeth native who wanted to return to the Wiregrass to build her practice. The future is bright for Vision Center South, with plans for expansion throughout the Southeast.

What advice would you offer to someone looking for the type of services your business/organization provides?
Our expert team of optometrists at Vision Center South would encourage everyone from age five beyond to schedule annual eye exams. This is critically important to detect abnormalities impairing your vision that can impact your quality of life. Many eye disorders are slow progressing and may be undetectable to the patient. Annual eye exams ensure that your eyes remain healthy. With increased usage of digital devices, eye strain is also on the rise. We can help. We offer Blue Light Lens technology that blocks the harmful light from digital devices. Don't forget to protect your eyes from harmful UV Rays. We offer polarized lenses that are perfect for people who love the outdoors. We invite you to visit the Vision Center South in Dothan where our expert team treats you like family. Schedule your vision appointment today by calling (334) 793-2633.

Business Spotlight Presenting Sponsor
Krispy Kreme DOUGHNUTS

New**Members**

Clip and add these to your Membership Directory.

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(334) 798-2169
www.changemymindconsulting.com
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1-4 Years
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Hank's Furniture
America's Car-Mart of Dothan

Ambassadors**&Diplomats**

Star Of The Month

Blake Seymour
Edward Jones - Brandon Apida, Financial Advisor

The Star of the Month is awarded to the DACC Ambassador or Diplomat who has achieved the most points during the month for attending Chamber events, performing renewal calls, recruiting new members and delivering new member packets.

Adra Talbot
Harley-Davidson of Dothan

The Ambassador and Diplomat Spotlight of the Month is awarded to the DACC Ambassador or Diplomat who has received the most nominations from their peers for going above and beyond the general duties as an Ambassador/Diplomat during the month.

LOVE DOTHAN

Dothan Continues To Offer Low Cost Of Living In US

ACCRA Cost of Living Index First Quarter 2023

Among the 271 urban areas that participated in the first quarter 2023 Cost of Living Index, the Dothan area is in the top 25 percent for lowest cost areas in the United States. Published quarterly by The Council of Community and Economic Research, the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce participates in this study periodically.

The Dothan area came out with an overall cost index of 89.3, which represents 10.7 percent below the national average of 100 percent. To put this in perspective, Manhattan, New York, had an overall index of 222 and when compared to Dothan, it is more than two times the cost to live there than in Dothan.

"The Cost of Living Index is important research for our economic and community development efforts as it provides timely and comparable information to business prospects and persons moving or considering moving into the area. It is also important to note that this quarter's report indicated the Dothan area was the lowest cost area in Alabama to purchase a can of peaches, get a tire rotation and total overall energy costs for utilities. Our area continues to shine by providing low costs in housing, health care and utilities," said Colton Cureton, DACC's vice president of economic development.

The COLI measures regional differences in cost of consumer goods and services, excluding taxes and non-consumer expenditures, for professional and managerial households in the top income quintile. Covering 61 different items, prices are collected quarterly by chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and university applied economic centers in each participating urban area. The composite index is based on six component categories – housing, utilities, grocery items, transportation, health care, and miscellaneous goods and services.

Chamber Names Executive Committee, New Board Members

At the June Board of Directors' meeting, the past five board chairs of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce presented the following slate of officers to be accepted for the FY 2024 Executive Committee beginning Oct. 1, 2023:

Walter Hill
Wiregrass United Way
Chairman

Jeff Williams
SmartBank
Chairman-Elect

Michelle Lewis
AAA Cooper Transportation
Immediate Past Chair

Bob Woodall
Bob Woodall Air Care Systems Inc.
Grow Dothan Co-Chairman

Mike Schmitz
Mike Schmitz Automotive Group
Grow Dothan Co-Chairman

Kerri DeShazo
Synovus
Treasurer

Gina Grant
Century 21 James Grant Realty
Community Development Council Chair

Samuel Crawford
Housing Authority of the City of Dothan, AL
Education and Workforce Development Council Chairman

Blake Seymour
Edward Jones - Brandon Apida, Financial Advisor
Governmental Affairs Council Chairman

Walt Ellis
Troy Bank & Trust
Membership Development Council Chairman

Also at the June meeting, the Chamber's Nominations and Elections Committee, chaired by Brad Kimbro, Wiregrass Electric Cooperative and immediate past-chairman, presented the following slate of nine candidates as incoming board members who will serve three-year terms of office beginning Oct. 1, 2023:

Troy Fountain
Wiregrass Foundation

Andy Hoekenga
Larry Blumberg & Associates (LBA Hospitality)

Stephen Holland
Property Champions Real Estate

Lawrence Johnson
Friend Bank

Dr. Carmen Lewis
Alabama Community College of Osteopathic Medicine (ACOM)

Valerie Russell
WTVY-TV Gray Television Inc.

Blake Seymour
Edward Jones - Brandon Apida, Financial Advisor

George Stringer
Buffalo Rock Pepsi

Melinda Sykes
Waxing the City

The Chamber's board determines policies and set goals aimed at advancing economic and community development in the Dothan area.

YourChamber

Are You A New Chamber Member?

As a return on your investment as a Chamber member, you are entitled to one business card ad within 90 days in the Chamber's monthly newsletter, *Chamber Connections*.

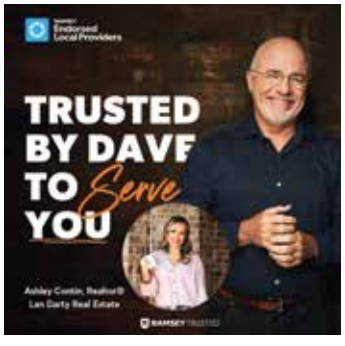
Spotlight your business and boost its exposure! For more information, contact Melia McKean at (334) 792-5138 or **melia@dothan.com**.

#SaveTheDate

DAYP DOTHAN AREA Young Professionals 20 under Forty

Thursday, Aug. 29, 5:30 p.m.
Health Center South Medical Tower

Hors d'oeuvres • Champagne Toast • Business Casual
Tickets $20 per person
Deadline to purchase tickets Tuesday, Aug. 15, at noon
(334) 792-5138 • **kthornton@dothan.com**



Dave Ramsey Endorses Local Realtor

Congratulations to Lan Darty Real Estate and Development realtor, Ashley Contin, who was recently vetted and chosen as a trusted Wiregrass real estate agent by Dave Ramsey, eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show.

Based on providing top-notch service, having the heart of a teacher and working with the Ramsey team to meet the highest standards, Contin is now an Endorsed Local Provider for all an individual's real estate needs.

"I am so excited to be endorsed by Dave Ramsey, what an honor," said Contin. "I plan on attending his podcast later this summer and having the opportunity to meet both Dave and his team."

For more information, contact Contin at (334) 221-8239, **ashleycontin316@gmail.com** or visit **www.landarty.com**.

YourChamber

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All In Credit Union To Acquire SunSouth Bank

All In Credit Union announced recently that it has entered into an agreement to acquire SunSouth Bank, the banking subsidiary of SunSouth Bancshares Inc. The transaction will be structured as a purchase and assumption transaction, and the consideration will be all-cash.

Founded in 1954 and rebranded in 2002, SunSouth Bank is a full-service community bank with total assets of nearly $115 million providing localized service to clients in its Wiregrass markets. Upon completion of the transaction, All In will have total assets of approximately $3 billion and 33 locations across southern Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.

"We are delighted at the combination of these two institutions. Southeastern Alabama is our home base and we are excited to expand our presence in this part of our footprint. We look forward to welcoming SunSouth's employees and customers to the All In family," commented Bobby Michael, All In president and CEO.

Monty Weigel, SunSouth Bank president and CEO, added, "We are thrilled to join forces with All In. Both institutions have a long history of serving Alabama's Wiregrass region, and we believe this partnership will provide our team members and customers with opportunities for continued growth and success."

The transaction, which has been unanimously approved by the Board of Directors of both institutions but remains subject to customary conditions including the approval of SunSouth Bancshares Inc.'s shareholders and the receipt of required regulatory approvals, is expected to close no later than the first quarter of 2024.

For more information, contact Michael at (334) 598-4411, Weigel at (334) 836-4105 or visit **www.allincu.com** or **www.sunsouthbank.com**.

Alabama Kidney Walk Exceeds Goal

The Alabama Kidney Foundation is proud to announce that it not only met, but exceeded its $115,000 goal at this year's annual kidney walk celebration.

"Held on a beautiful April Saturday, our 10th year was filled with wonderful corporate sponsors, community teams and lots of kidney love," commented Lisa Baity, AKF regional director - Wiregrass area. "It was a true win-win for all our local kidney patients. There were 450 in attendance enjoying educational vendors, children's activities, a wonderful breakfast and music."

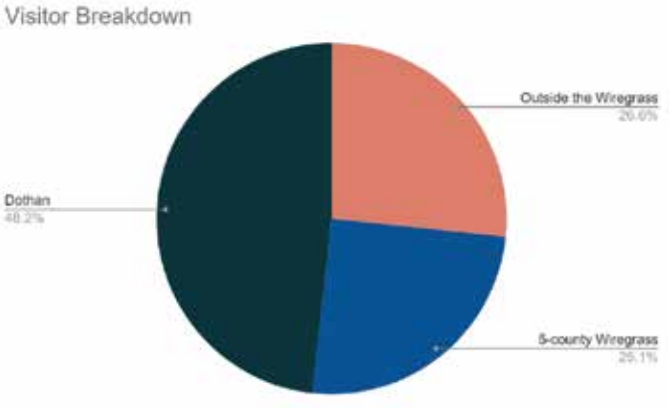
The foundation wishes to give a BIG thank you to all who helped make it a success. For more information, contact Baity at (334) 547.8467, **lisab@alkidney.org** or visit **www.alkidney.org**.

WMA'S Economic Impact Report

In May 2023, the Wiregrass Museum of Art reached 2,189 people, with an approximate economic impact of $66,275.26 from visitor spending. Total economic impact since October is $1,100,960.44. Visitors came from Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas and Mexico.

WMA tracks visitor zip codes and number of overnight stays. Spending shown is calculated using average spending for overnight and daytrip visitors, by party, as defined by Visit Dothan's Visitor Profile Research. This economic impact is only an estimation of monthly visitor spending, not a comprehensive look at WMA's complete economic impact, which would include total expenditures, full-time jobs, household income, and local and state government revenue.

For more information, contact Dana-Marie Lemmer, executive director and curator, at (334) 794-3871, ext. 260, **dlemmer@wiregrassmuseum.org** or visit **wiregrassmuseum.org**.



	May 2023	Since Oct. 2022
Daytrip Visitor Spending (304 travel parties)	$50,141.76	$993,928.44
Overnight Visitor Spending (41 overnight stays by party)	$16,133.50	$107,032.50
Total Impact of Cultural Tourism	$66,275.26	$1,100,960.44

JACKSON THORNTON
Certified Public Accountants & Consultants

JACKSON THORNTON
ASSET MANAGEMENT

Jackson Thornton, JTAM Named To *Accounting Today, Forbes* Lists

Jackson Thornton, a certified public accounting and consulting firm headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama, and Jackson Thornton Asset Management, a wealth management firm with offices in Montgomery, Dothan and Opelika, Alabama, have been named to multiple lists by *Accounting Today* and *Forbes*.

Jackson Thornton ranked 35th on Accounting Today's "Beyond the Top 100 – Firms to Watch," a listing of top CPA firms across the U.S. In addition, the firm was one of only eight Alabama firms and the only Montgomery-based firm to make the Regional Leaders Gulf Coast list (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi). Jackson Thornton was also recognized in Forbes' listing of "America's Best Tax & Accounting Firms 2023" and was named in both the tax and accounting categories.

Accounting Today's rankings were determined by a survey of almost 300 tax and accounting firms across the U.S. and were based on 2022 revenue and other information. To create the list of "America's Best Tax and Accounting Firms 2023," *Forbes* surveyed approximately 30,000 CPAs, enrolled agents, tax attorneys, accountants and CFOs. Each was asked to name firms in tax and accounting that they would recommend based on their professional experience during the last three years.

JTAM was named a "2023 Wealth Magnet" in *Accounting Today's* recent listing of the top 150 CPA financial planners. With more than $1.5 billion assets under management, JTAM is ranked 36th and is one of only 49 firms in the $1 Billion-Plus Club. *Accounting Today's* listing is based on assets under management.

"We're honored to be recognized by both of these well-respected publications," said John Fendley, Jackson Thornton president and CEO. "Our primary goal is to serve our clients well by doing good work for them as well as throughout the communities we serve. It's gratifying for our team to be identified as leaders in tax, accounting and wealth management and we're certainly proud of the way they continue to respond to our clients' expanding and evolving needs."

For more information, contact Cindy Scott, chief marketing officer, at (334) 240-3641, **cindy.scott@jacksonthornton.com** or visit **www.jacksonthornton.com**.

Carr Joins HudsonAlpha Team

Ann Marie Carr, Economic Development Associate

HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology named Ann Marie Carr as its new economic development associate for HudsonAlpha Wiregrass. Carr is responsible for coordinating the Economic Development Mission's work for HudsonAlpha Wiregrass, which includes entrepreneur and recruitment-based economic development efforts to benefit the Wiregrass region, with the focus involving the agriculture and agtech sectors.

"HudsonAlpha is fortunate to have Ann Marie come on board. She has a strong track record of collaboration and bringing people together to improve the workforce in Southeast Alabama," said carter Wells, vice president of economic development. "With her extensive network within the economic development community, she will add value to HudsonAlpha Wiregrass from day one."

As part of the collaboration between HudsonAlpha and the city of Dothan, HudsonAlpha Wiregrass is building and strengthening an innovation economy throughout the region.

"Ann's experience, knowledge and contacts will be a huge asset to the HudsonAlpha Wiregrass team, and we are thrilled to welcome her to the HudsonAlpha family," said Dean Mitchell, HudsonAlpha Wiregrass director. "Her 'can do' attitude and knowledge of our area will be instrumental in helping build an economy based in science, research and innovation. The opportunities to make a significant economic impact in the Wiregrass area are endless, and we look forward to working with Ann to make a difference."

Carr worked as the Executive Director for Southeast AlabamaWorks, Inc. for the last two years, where she worked with key workforce, economic and elected officials to meet workforce and economic needs for the 10-county region. Carr previously worked for Wallace Community College and the Alabama Department of Labor Career Center Systems.

Alabama Legislature Provides Funding For Wiregrass Innovation Center

The city of Dothan was recently informed that the Alabama Legislature will provide funding for Dothan's new Wiregrass Innovation Center, which is a collaboration between the city, HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology and the Wiregrass Foundation. The state of Alabama is providing $20 million in project funding, while the Wiregrass Foundation is providing $10 million.

The Wiregrass Innovation Center will serve several major functions including:

- Being a home for hands-on training, practical learning and engagement in the world of science, genomics, research, entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Creating an ecosystem for entrepreneurs and innovators where they can start their businesses, launch their products into commercial markets and provide job opportunities along with career options for local citizens; and
- Providing a space for the HudsonAlpha Wiregrass partnership to conduct activity around its three specific area goals including – research, education and economic development.

According to Mayor Mark Saliba, "This is an incredible opportunity for Dothan, Alabama and the Wiregrass at large. New enterprises, products, businesses, partnerships, innovations and growth are right here at our doorstep. We have said, in relation to Dothan's City Center project, that we have the right people, Dothan is the right place, and this is the right time to propel our community into the future. I, along with the City Commissioners, are committed to working with local, regional and statewide leaders to expand this area's potential to provide high-skilled, high wage jobs, right here in the Wiregrass. This will benefit not only Dothan and the Wiregrass area, but the state of Alabama as well. I want to thank Gov. Kay Ivey and State Finance Director Bill Poole for seeing our vision and helping us to make it a reality. I would also like to thank our local legislative delegation including Senators Donnie Chesteen and Billy Beasley, and State Reps Paul Lee, Steve Clouse, Jeff Sorrells and Rick Rehm. I want to offer them our sincere gratitude for their hard work on this very important project."

Dr. Neil Lamb, HudsonAlpha Institute of Biotechnology president, stated, "The city of Dothan's work to build a Wiregrass Innovation Center is about growing the economy of the Wiregrass, adding the field of genomics to the agricultural heritage of the community, and providing educational opportunities for students and adults that connect to tomorrow's careers. We are thrilled to be a part of this center and look forward to partnerships and collaborations to enhance economic growth."

Troy Fountain, Wiregrass Foundation president, added, "The Wiregrass Foundation is honored to come alongside the state of Alabama and the city of Dothan to help build an innovation center in downtown Dothan that will serve our region well into the future. In addition, the opportunity to energize our local community, along with the city's partnership with HudsonAlpha Wiregrass, is a generational chance to improve the health, education and quality of life for citizens living right here in the Wiregrass."

For more information, contact Vincent Vincent, community relations officer, at (334) 615-3117 or **vvincent@dothan.org**.

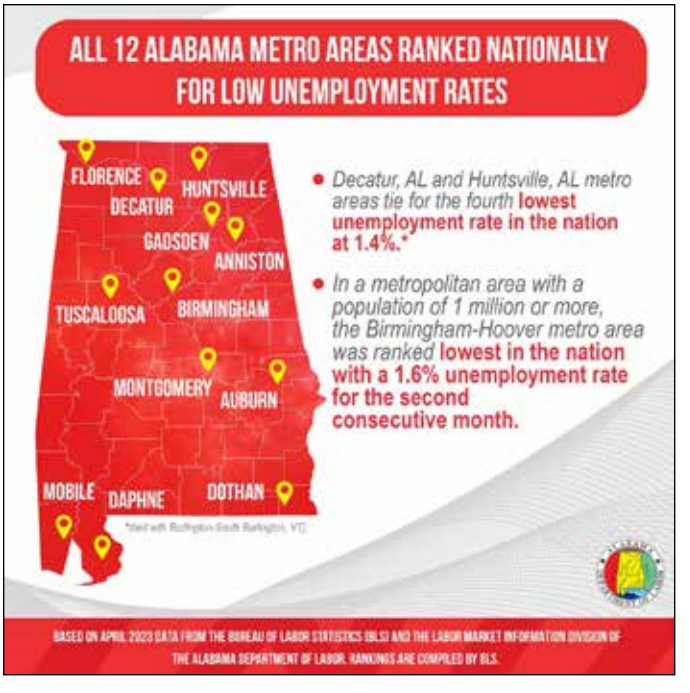
The state of will be providing $20 million in project funding, along with $10 million from the Wiregrass Foundation, for Dothan's new Wiregrass Innovation Center. Pictured (l-r) are Rep. Steve Clouse (93rd District), Rep. Rick Rehm (85th District), Rep. Paul Lee (86th District), Dothan Commissioner David Crutchfield (District 6), Mayor Mark Saliba, Dothan Commissioner John Ferguson (District 4), Sen. Donnie Chesteen (29th District), Sen. Billy Beasley (28th District) and Rep. Jeff Sorrells (87th District).

Dothan City Schools Finishes Strong In Science Fair Competitions

After impressive gains in last year's science fair, students across Dothan City Schools stepped up their game even more this year. Participation in grades 4-12 nearly tripled to over 660 students compared to last year. Approximately 120 students competed at the ACOM District Fair in January and from there nearly 60 students advanced to the regional competition in late February in Montgomery at Auburn University. Student winners from Highlands Elementary, Carver Math, Science and Technology, Selma Street Elementary and Dothan Preparatory Academy advanced to the state competition in April at Auburn University in Auburn.

"It's always a great day when we can celebrate the success of our students, and to have this kind of participation is outstanding!" says District Instructional Specialist, Dr. Mark Dunaway. "This is the success you expect when you empower students to challenge their thinking and experience that [productive struggle]. It gives them an extra skill set that prepares them for other things in school and beyond." To celebrate their achievement this year, the district presented all 668 student participants from 4-12 schools with a medal to honor their academic success. "This was important," said Dunaway. "Our students have worked hard and continue to shine. We want them to feel special." In addition, Science Leads from each school were presented with a plaque acknowledging their leadership and support. A special thank you goes out to all teachers, parents and administrators for supporting this endeavor. Additionally, the district would like to thank student mentors and Dr. Audrey Vasauskas and her team from the Alabama College of Osteopathic College (ACOM), who have partnered with Dothan City Schools since 2015. "ACOM has been instrumental in providing a number of resources and encouraging our students to think like scientists. We are grateful for the longevity of their support," said Dunaway. Looking ahead to the new school year, science leads will meet with students and teachers in late August to gauge interest. From there, students will begin researching and planning their experiments until late November. Local school fairs and judging will be held in December 2023 followed by the ACOM District Fair in January 2024. All students are encouraged to participate.

For more information, contact Megan Dorsey, public relations officer, at (334) 793-1397, ext. 236203, **medorsey@dothan.k12.al.us** or visit **www.dothan.k12.al.us**.



YOUR**CHAMBER**

Attention Members!

If you know of a business interested in benefiting from joining the Chamber, please contact Kendretta Thornton, membership coordinator, at (334) 792-5138 or **kthornton@dothan.com**.

TROY UNIVERSITY

DOTHAN ALABAMA

DOTHAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ATTENTION CHAMBER MEMBERS

Are You Taking Advantage Of This Great Educational Partnership?

Attention Chamber members … are you taking advantage of the great educational partnership that's offered to you and your employees through Troy University and the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce?

As an active member, this Corporate Partnership will provide you and your full-time employees a 10 percent tuition scholarship, the application fee is waived along with a free unofficial transcript evaluation.

Troy University and the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce leadership are excited to be able to provide this opportunity. A primary goal of the program is to help develop the workforce needed to sustain growth and create new business opportunities across the region.

To learn more about this partnership and how your business or organization can take advantage of the educational opportunities currently being offered, call (334) 268-9203 or visit **www.troy.edu/dothancc**.

Apply online today or visit **www.troy.edu/partnerships**.

Back-To-School Sales Tax Holiday

July 21-23

Alabama's 18th annual sales tax holiday for school-related items will be observed from 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 21, 2023, until midnight, Sunday, July 23, 2023.

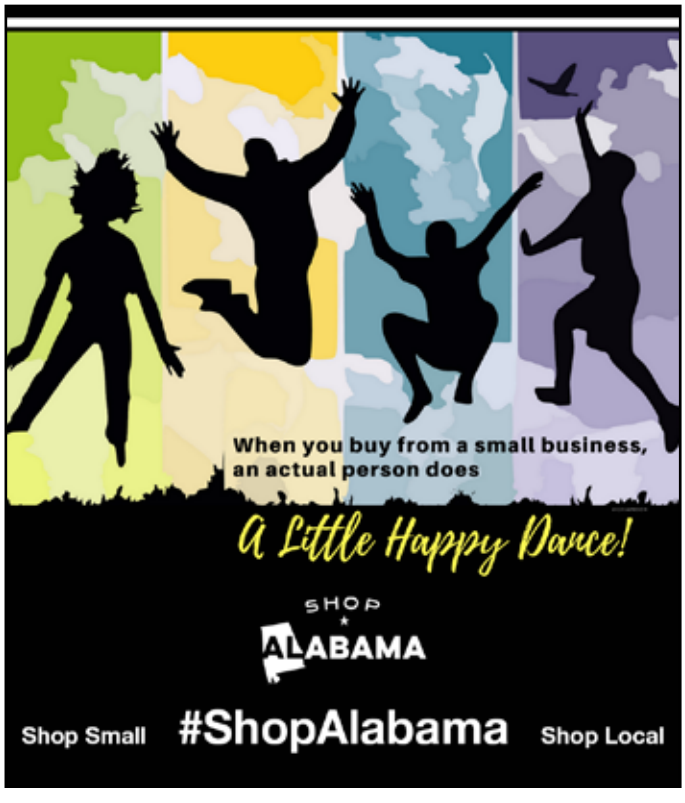
For three days only, pay no sales tax on:

- Clothing and footwear ($100 or less per item)
- Certain school supply items ($50 or less per item)
- Computers or computer equipment ($750 or less)
- Any book valued at $30 or less

Each year, the Alabama Retail Association compiles a toolkit for retailers with all the information needed to prepare for and promote the sales tax holiday in their store. To download the Alabama Sales Tax Holiday Retailer's Toolkit, visit the below website.

Retailers are required to participate and may not charge state sales tax on items that are legally tax-exempt during the Sales Tax Holiday. Depending on a city's or county's participation, local sales tax may apply.

For more information and to download the Alabama Sales Tax Holiday Retailer's Toolkit, visit www.alabamaretail.org/resources/salestaxholidays



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CHAMBER DISCOVERIES

DOTHAN ALABAMA
DOTHAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

AMBASSADOR / DIPLOMAT COMMITTEE APPLICATION

2022-2023

Are you good at promoting your belief in the Chamber?

Do you enjoy people and networking?

Is your business interested in connecting with the community?

Then you may have what it takes to be a Chamber Ambassador or Diplomat.

The Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassador and Diplomat Committees are gearing up for its 2023-2024 fiscal year and are looking for a few good volunteers who enjoy teamwork and meeting people. The program year runs October-September and the committees meet the first Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Chamber office.

Serving as an Ambassador or Diplomat allows you to become more involved in your business community. This results in increased networking opportunities, enhanced visibility of your business and numerous opportunities to market and promote your products and services.

If you are interested in serving as an Ambassador or Diplomat for the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, please complete and return the below application, or click the QR code to complete online. The commitment is for one year.

The Chamber has 50 Ambassador positions available for the 2023-2024 year and **will accept applications until NOON Thursday, Aug. 10, 2023, or until all positions are filled.**

Returning Ambassadors/Diplomats must also re-apply for the 2023-2024 year. (To be a Diplomat you must have been an Ambassador for three consecutive years.)

For more information, contact Kendretta Thornton, at (334) 792-5138 or **kthornton@dothan.com**.

Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Title or Position: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Tell us more about yourself! _____

_____

_____

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Connections

A Publication of the
Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce
July 2023
Vol. 50, No. 10 (USPS 700-660)
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ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL

DOTHAN ALABAMA
DOTHAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

		2022	2023
↑	Labor Force For The Dothan MSA:	65,782 64,459 (Employed)	66,678 65,483 (Employed)
↓	Unemployment For The Dothan MSA:	2.0%	1.8%
↓	Residential Building Permits For The City Of Dothan:	48 Issued ($13.73 Million)	28 Issued ($10.07 Million)
↓	Home Sales in Dothan:	171 Sold	135 Sold
↓	Enplanements For Dothan Regional Airport:	3,562	2,860
↑	Houston County & Dothan Sales And Use Tax Collections ($):	$2,056,777 (County) $7,622,645 (City)	$2,230,369 (County) $8,132,823 (City)

Editor's Note: Sources for this information vary; call the Chamber for details. Data as of 6/9/23. Visit www.dothan.com for the most current information.

Chamber Connections is published monthly (USPS 700-660) for the members of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, 102 Jamestown Blvd., Dothan, AL 36301. Subscription rate is $24 annually. Postmaster: Send address changes to Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 638, Dothan, AL 36302. Periodicals postage is paid at Dothan, AL and additional mailing office.

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