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December 2018

Directions

A PUBLICATION OF THE DECATUR-MORGAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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This Chamber has a strong and successful history of providing quality workforce development programs. From the Equip program that provides eighth graders with the exposure needed to create in-demand career pathways and develop employability skills to the facilitation of the Workforce Coalition that creates connections between employers and educators and everyone in between, the Chamber is on the forefront of one of the most critical components of a thriving community. They are preparing the next generation workforce, and that is why we belong.

Mary Ila Ward

President

Horizon Point Consulting, Inc.

Business Council of Alabama/Chamber of Commerce

Association of Alabama Small Business of the Year Award - Bronze (1-10 employees)



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George Kitchens
General Manager
Joe Wheeler EMC

W^A Word from your chamber

We can all agree the past 12 months Decatur-Morgan County has seen more energy than in recent years. There are many reasons for this: among them, the soon-to-arrive Mazda-Toyota facility in Limestone County just a few miles from downtown; renewed movement of residential development in our city; a transformative city school system superintendent who is making changes in the district that will impact the next generation of graduates coming from the River City; an arts scene that continues to grow and attract creativity. There is a buzz about Decatur we've not heard in a long time.

What I find in common about all the different reasons for this energy is that it's coming not from people acting alone. Instead, groups – businesses, schools, industries, governments, chambers, non-profits – recognize a greater impact is possible if we work together. That strategy has been part of this chamber's DNA since its founding in the 1930s.

Examples are everywhere. The Alabama Center for the Arts in downtown Decatur is a partnership between Athens State University and Calhoun Community

College. When the Cook Museum of Natural Science launches, it will be a feature in a regional tourism partnership with the U.S. Space and Rocket Center and The Shoals to tell the story of the applied sciences in Huntsville, the natural sciences in Decatur and our cultural and musical history in Muscle Shoals, Florence and Tusculumbia. One of this Chamber's most active outreach activities is Partners in Education, which pairs up local businesses and schools across Morgan County to provide tutoring, mentoring, fundraising and volunteer opportunities to support our young people.

The Community Image, Partnerships and Development Task Team – which I'm honored to lead – is part of the Chamber's five-year strategy "The Partnership." The team will build on these and other examples of collaboration, and expand partnerships throughout the entire region with the goal of developing a common message that will promote our great assets and communicate a positive image.

A great example of this is currently in the works. The City of Decatur, with the guidance of an advisory committee

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Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce

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Endless Opportunities opens eyes to the possibilities



Endless Opps provided students with exposure to a variety of fields available right here in Morgan County. For the third year, United Launch Alliance brought onsite their model rocket launcher to discuss aerospace engineering.

During the two-day period of Oct. 18-19, more than 3,000 eighth graders from across Morgan and Limestone Counties visited Ingalls Harbor Pavilion in Decatur for the Chamber's Endless Opportunities. Presented by **3M Decatur** and in partnership with the Hartselle Area Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Builders & Contractors, the Greater Limestone County Chamber of Commerce, and the North Alabama Workforce Development Alliance, the event is a hands-on expo where students get the chance to take part in career opportunity "worlds" connected to the 16 career clusters identified by the State of Alabama.

Each student's worlds are a result of their interest inventory captured through the Kuder Navigator System - administered as part of the school curricula - and student choice. Career worlds include Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Architecture & Construction; Arts, A/V Technology & Communications; Business Management & Administration; Education & Training; Finance; Government & Public Administration; Health Science; Hospitality & Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security; Manufacturing; Marketing; Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM); and Transportation; Corporate Distribution & Logistics. Professionals from each area engage students in activities that will help explain how careers in each area are developed and how to prepare for each field of study. After attending the expo, students are better equipped to complete their four year plan, now part of each student's high school requirements.

The event was also made possible by Silver Sponsor **White Oak Transportation**; and Corporate Sponsors **Ascend Performance Materials, Calhoun Community College, Nucor Steel Decatur, Redstone Federal Credit Union** and **United Launch Alliance**.

Presenting Sponsor

3M

continued on page 6

Endless Opportunities continued



GE Appliance, a Haier Company discussed manufacturing with the more than 3,000 eighth graders during Endless Opportunities.



Several contractors – including Contractor Service & Fabrication, Inc. – talked with students about careers in construction during Endless Opportunities.



Robotics already play a major role in manufacturing and industry, and members of the Alabama Technology Network team were onsite to show examples during Endless Opportunities.



Attendees were able to learn about a wide range of career options during Endless Opportunities, including chemical engineering from local industry member Ascend Performance Materials.



Careers in civil engineering and infrastructure will soon be on the rise in Decatur with the influx of jobs and development coming to our area, making the field a high growth area.

Shepard leads manager training at day-long Breakfast & Biz

On Oct. 30, the Chamber welcomed best selling author and nationally recognized speaker Glenn Shepard for this quarter's Breakfast, Lunch & Biz professional development session, presented by **Redstone Federal Credit Union**. Shepard, whose engag-

ing and animated style is respected throughout the Chamber industry, focused during the day-long session on developing managers and empowering them with the tools to help them get more out of their team. Nearly 70 business leaders from

across north Alabama attended the event, which was also made possible by Breakfast Sponsor **Morningside of Decatur**.

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Save the Date!

The Chamber will be closed Dec. 24-25 for the Christmas holiday

The Chamber will be closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day

State of Healthcare Address

Thursday, Jan. 24

7:30 a.m.

The Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront
Presented by Decatur Morgan Hospital

Career & Workforce Expo

Tuesday, Feb. 9

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Kelley Gymnasium at Calhoun Community College Decatur Campus
Presented by Joe Wheeler EMC

A Word from Your Chamber continued

made up of municipal and non-profit representatives, has retained national advertising and branding agency Big Communications of Birmingham to launch a rebranding initiative for Decatur. Their experience with clients like Amazon, Valvoline, Mercedes-Benz, as well as statewide campaigns like Go Build Alabama, "Made in Alabama," and Gulf Coast Seafood, will bring unparalleled creativity and imagination to how we tell our city's wonderful story.

We need to capitalize on the many positive developments happening in our downtown like the Princess Theatre Center for the Performing Arts and the Cook Museum, new restaurants and nightlife attractions, as well as our assets around the county like the Tennessee River and the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge that will soon undergo a \$5 million facilities upgrade. These

and other topics were outputs of the One Decatur comprehensive plan, which this task team will continue to implement with the City of Decatur.

Regionally, the Chamber and the team will continue to stay active in Launch 2035 – a three-county partnership rethinking our region's economy in the areas of entrepreneurship, land use and workforce training. Groups like Launch 2035 and collaboration between chambers of commerce give Decatur-Morgan County a stronger voice when advocating in Montgomery or Washington DC for issues like infrastructure, education, and space and defense industry recruitment. When we work together, we succeed.

There is an African proverb that says "if you want to run fast, run alone; if you want to run far, run together." As a community, we are running far...

and we can run farther. A combination of technology, ease of travel and the changing ways of doing business in the 21st century have made our world smaller.

We need to continue taking advantage of that and seek new ways to forge relationships to improve the quality of life for Decatur-Morgan County and our region. We live in an amazing place. Events for families, recreational opportunities, faith groups involved in community development, a high rate of entrepreneurship and more go towards measuring the health of a community. Our heart-beat is very strong.

All of that that will help us better tell our story, and you can be a part of what's next.

New Members

We thank the following businesses and organizations who made new commitments to our area by their investment in the Chamber. We look forward to serving you!

3D Fitness
A Plumber, Inc.
A&L Express Sales, LLC
ABSAROKA
ALFA Insurance - Nick Garner
All American Tree Service
Alliance Source Testing, LLC
AllState Insurance Company -
Curtis Wofford
Alteon Health
Anglin, Reichmann, Armstrong, PC
Ashwander Animal Clinic
ASP Construction, Inc.
Automation Personnel Services
Automotive Specialists
B & B Roofing Company
B Cubed dba 307 2nd Ave
Bank Street Grill
Bob's Vending
Bradford Installations, Inc.
Brix & Embers Mobile Wood Fired Pizza
Campus Recognition, Inc.
CB Repair
Choice Rentals, Inc.
Clint Peters
Commercial Flooring
Construction Specialty & Associates
Contractors Choice Roll Off Service, Inc.
Cowley Home Inspections, LLC
Crafts Lawnsapes, LLC
Dale Carter
Decatur Family Eye Care, LLC
Decatur Morgan Auxillary
Decatur Morgan Hospital Gift Shop
Decatur Plumbing Supply
Dry Creek Marine
Duda Energy
Eco Pest
Edward Jones - Cindy Smith
EnerSage, LLC
FACES - Families & Children Experiencing
Separation
Fellowship of Christian Athletes
First Response Ambulance
Free Spirit Visions, LLC
Freedom Services
Fresh Start
Full Blast Pressure Washing, LLC
Fyzical Therapy & Balance Center
Genco, Inc.
GHX
Gold Rush Tax and Accounting
Grateful Recovery
Harold Coomer Evangelistic Association
Helms Air
HiLo Fence, LLC
Home Source Construction
Huntsville Hospital Home Medical
Equipment
Hyundai of Decatur
Inkana Development
Interstate Billing Service
Jackson's Drain Pro, LLC
Jimmy Ray "J.R." Carroll
JJ George
JL Wright Plumbing, LLC
Joe's World Famous Pizza
Jones Fence Enterprises, Inc.
Josie's
Ken Wynn
Latasha Lovelady
Lawn Doctor of Madison-Decatur
Lewis & Son Roofing & Construction, Inc.
LifeSource, Inc.
Line-X Decatur Customs
Marathon Electrical Contractors, Inc.
MB Electric, Inc.
McAlpin Construction, LLC
McDonald Richard Company
Mesco Building Solutions
Milspec Cable, Inc.
Mooney Electric, LLC
Morgan Farmers Cooperative
Morris Plumbing Company
National Bank of Commerce
Nick Hernandez
Nu Image Engraving & Awards
OB-GYN Associates
Ottis & Kate
Pate Enterprises, LLC
Pearce, Bevill, Leesburg, Moore, PC.
Penny L. Taylor, DMD, MS, PC
Petra Solutions, Inc.
Phoenix, LLC
Progress Financial Services
Proncey Robertson
Providence Cabinetry & Design
PZI International Consulting, Inc.
Quail Creek Resort & Golf/Conference/
RV Center
Radiology Group, PA.
Reliable Restoration, LLC
Rental World
Reynolds Funeral Home
River City Real Estate
River City Roofing Solutions
Roberts Plumbing, LLC
Rock n Roll Sushi
Rocket City Waste, Inc.
Rocket RV
Rodan & Fields - Jennifer Henry
Rowe Hauling & Excavating, Inc.
Sensations Massage & Body Clinic
Shane Stevenson DMD, MD, PC
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Sharp Roofing & Construction
Shea Mason
Shelly Waters
Sleep & Pulmonary Care Center
Smith Motors
SouthBridge, LLC
Southern Oak Properties
SP&J General Contractors, Inc.
Sparks Home Inspections, LLC
Sport Clips Haircuts
State Farm Insurance - Chris Humphries
Agency
Superior Carpets & Flooring
T and T Contractors
The Greens Office Park
Trav-Ad Signs
Truckers Warehouse, Inc.
Valley Pulmonary & Critical Care
Vess Brothers Construction &
Remodeling
Vickery Properties
Wells & Tate Electric Company, Inc.
WW X-Ray Company
Yellowhammer Roofing, Inc.
Your Chamber Connection
Your Tech Company, LLC

Renewing Members

The Chamber would like to thank the following members who reinvested in Decatur and Morgan County by renewing their Chamber membership.

Alabama Credit Union	Hampton Inn	Clinic
Amanda G. Scott - Revenue Commissioner	Hardy Chiropractic	Sigh Photo Booth
American National Insurance Webb Awtrey Agency	Harris, Caddell, & Shanks, PC	Simpson's Florist
Armor's Contracting, Inc.	Hexcel Corporation	Spur, Inc.
Bendall's Pharmacy, Inc.	Home Pest Control	Synovus Bank
BMSI	Hood Contracting, Inc.	T.R.I.S. Industrial Services, LLC
CB&S Bank	HTI General Contractors	The Boeing Company
Cell Pak, Inc.	INEOS Styrolution America, LLC	The Core Construction Group, LLC
Centers for the Developmentally Disabled North Central Alabama (CDD)	J. Felton Davenport, DMD	The EE Group, Inc.
Choice Properties	JMS Russel Metals	The Lioce Group
City Cafe	Julia's Pools	The Pilot Club of Decatur
Clinic for Women, PA	Junior League of Morgan County, Inc.	The Tennessee Valley Press, Inc.
Cornerstone Baptist Church / Cornerstone Christian School	Lifepoint Church	Toray Carbon Fibers America, Inc.
Corporate Warehouse Services, Inc.	Magnolia Investments - d/b/a Jack Daniel Cooperage	Toray Fluorofibers (America), Inc.
Courtyard by Marriott	Marketing Works	Truckers Warehouse, Inc.
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Decatur Optical Dispensary	Milo's Hamburgers	TVW Electrical Supplies, Inc.
Decatur Rotary Club	Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial	UniFirst Corporation
Defense Pest Solutions	Morgan Price Candy Co., LLC	Volunteer Center of Morgan County, Inc.
Diamond Pro Corporation	Morgan Stanley	Westmeade Baptist Church
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F1 Solutions, Inc.	Pugh Wright McAnally, Inc.	
First South Farm Credit	Randall L. Sandlin, DMD	
Francesco's Italian Restaurant	Realty Group of Alabama	
Goodwyn, Mills, & Cawood, Inc.	Reed Contracting Services, Inc. / Asphalt Manufacturing & Paving	
GSE, Inc.	Reed Contracting Services, Inc. / Ready Mix Concrete	
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	Sensations Massage & Body	

Membership event adds more than 130 new members

Our Chamber membership event, where a team of more than 100 volunteers over a three-day period became advocates for the Chamber, helped add more than 130 members to the organization. Jimmy Cusano and the entire Your Chamber Connection spent a week in Decatur holding education seminars with our volunteer teams and equipping them with information to help them best recruit members and tell the Chamber's story. This is the third time the Chamber has worked

with YCC on member events, where more than 600 members have been added to our organization in the last nine years.





Networking events key to member connectivity

Opportunities to connect in the community continue to give our members the chance to meet others across Morgan County to help their business, build relationships and learn more about our area. In mid-October, **The Terrace at Priceville** hosted Coffee & Cards and welcomed more than 40 attendees at the event. Along with

meeting new connections, guests learned more about The Terrace and took tours to become aware of the services available to the families to care for aging family members. The week after Thanksgiving, **Alabama Credit Union** of Decatur also hosted the morning networking event, providing a high traffic, high visibility venue for the

business community to gather. Guests enjoyed refreshments and the chance to learn more about the personal and business products available from Alabama Credit Union. The Chamber is thankful for both The Terrace and Alabama Credit Union for their generosity and hospitality.



Perfect conditions for the Fall Golf Classic

On Oct. 12, the Chamber held our annual Fall Golf Classic, presented by **Valley Budweiser**, along with Gold Sponsors **Window World of Huntsville** and **Burningtree Country Club**. More than 135 golfers took part in the day-long event, and we are thankful for everyone who joined us for this great networking event.

Morning A Flight

(1st) 56 – 3M
(2nd) 56 – Pepsi of Decatur

Morning B Flight

(1st) 66 – Wiregrass Construction
(2nd) 68 – Burningtree Country Club

Closest to the pin #3 – Kelsey Brewer
Closest to the pin #12 – Marc Wallace

Afternoon A Flight

(1st) 52 – Fite Building Company
(2nd) 53 – Team Lynn Fowler

Afternoon B Flight

(1st) 66 – Decatur Morgan Hospital
(2nd) 66 – Valley Budweiser

Closest to the pin #3 – Steven Smith
Closest to the pin #12 – Nick Sparks

Presenting Sponsor



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Report cards are in: our schools are strong

Our community is fortunate to have strong school systems for our young people to grow and develop into leaders for the next generation. November gave the business community a chance to hear from both superintendents during the Chamber's annual State of Schools events.

On Nov. 1, the Chamber hosted its annual State of Morgan County Schools address, featuring Superintendent Bill Hopkins, Jr., and presented by the **Morgan County Commission**. During the hour-long breakfast event, Mr. Hopkins and several system students shared with the more than 180 in attendance at First Baptist Church in Decatur several reports on specific areas of the system, including early childhood, special needs, agri-science technology, vocational and trade skills education, AP and dual-enrollment opportunities, and much more. The event was also

made possible by Venue Sponsor **First Baptist Church of Decatur**.

Mid-November gave Dr. Michael Douglas of Decatur City Schools an audience to celebrate the work of the system. Presented by **BBVA Compass**, the event provided Douglas an opportunity to make clear the question he asks with each decision the system makes: does this benefit and improve student instruction? Douglas shared updates on new campuses, changes in the feeder patterns, the 1-for-1 technology program, testing and instruction, career tech curriculum, student safety, gains in reading and math proficiency, teacher recruitment and professional development. The event was also made possible by Gold Sponsor **Indorama Ventures** and Venue Sponsor **Decatur Baptist Church**.

The Chamber is thankful for the relationship we have with our schools, which are the heartbeat of our communities. We look forward to growing the work we do together to improve the quality of life for children across Morgan County.

State of Morgan County Schools Presenting Sponsor



State of Decatur City Schools Presenting Sponsor



The Decatur High School Choral sang the National Anthem during the 2018 State of Decatur City Schools address.



Community and elected leaders from across Morgan County attended the 2018 State of Decatur City Schools address.



Superintendent Bill Hopkins Jr. spoke briefly during the 2018 State of Morgan County Schools address.



More than 180 members of the community attended the 2018 State of Morgan County Schools address.



Wheeler Moore, a pre-k student at Danville-Neel Elementary School, spoke briefly during the 2018 State of Morgan County Schools address.



Former area superintendents Dr. Ed Nichols (L) and Dr. Vic Wilson introduced Superintendent Bill Hopkins, Jr. with a personalized version of The Beverly Hillbillies theme song during the 2018 State of Morgan County Schools address.



More than 180 community leaders attended the 2018 State of Decatur City Schools address.



Superintendent Dr. Michael Douglas shared with more than 180 community leaders in attendance his thoughts on the strengths of our school system during the 2018 State of Decatur City Schools address.

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We appreciate you, our members!

As a membership organization of more than 950, we can't do the job of making Decatur-Morgan County a healthy business environment without those who are part of our organization. On Nov. 30, the Chamber welcomed more than 120 people for our annual Membership Appreciation Luncheon, presented by **King Insurance, Inc.** of

Decatur. The open house event was an opportunity for business and community leaders to come together, enjoy fellowship and kick off the holiday season. The event was also made possible by Silver Sponsors **Country Cottage, Pepsi Cola Decatur, Pro Rain Irrigation Services, Renasant Bank and The Terrace at Priceville.**

Presenting Sponsor



Leadership programming reaches mid-year point

The Chamber's three leadership development programs – Excellence, Edge and Equip – continued to meet throughout the fall and into the winter, reaching halfway points in each while continuing to develop the next generation of leaders in Decatur-Morgan County.

Excellence in Leadership, the Chamber's curriculum for career professionals, met again in October, November and December to continue connecting different community topics and how they impact our quality of life. In October, the focus was on law & order in Morgan County. Starting the day, the group met with several members of the county court system to discuss their roles in the criminal justice system and their "origin story" of becoming a leader in the field. Meetings included conversations with District Attorney Scott Anderson, District Judge Shelly Waters, District

Judge Charles Langham, Circuit Judge Jennifer Howell, Circuit Judge Steve Haddock, Circuit Court Clerk Chris Priest, and Drug Court Coordinator Tammy Jolley. Later in the day, the group of 35 participated in a mock trial exercise where class members played roles including judges, witnesses, attorneys and jury members under the direction of Anderson and attorney Tina Ogle. Following lunch, which featured a briefing from attorney Doug Bacchus on the role of CASA of North Alabama in our court system, the group traveled to the City of Decatur Fire Training Center in Flint to meet with public safety officials about their work and training to serve the community. Fire Chief Tony Grande shared with the group the work of his team, the various responsibilities of the department, how they train and the future of fire protection. Police Chief Nate Allen also discussed with the group his work and

that of the more than 110 employees in his department on community relations, school protection, training and self-care, and how he is recruiting the next generation of officers. The time with Chief Allen also included a Taser target demonstration and how the non-lethal technology is used.

November's Excellence gathering highlighted the impact of education in our community. The group started the day at First Baptist Church as part of the

continued on page 20



Fire Chief Tony Grande – and Excellence graduate – hosted members of the Excellence in Leadership class at the Flint fire training center as part of the law and public safety session.



Members of the Excellence in Leadership program took part in a mock trial exercise as part of October's session focusing on law and public safety.



Members of the 3M fire team were training at the Flint fire safety training center during the Excellence in Leadership session on law and public safety.



In November, members of the Excellence class took part in several events and exercises focusing on the role of education in our area and the business community.

Leadership continued

audience for the Chamber's State of Morgan County Schools address with Superintendent Bill J. Hopkins, Jr. Following the breakfast, the group traveled to Hartselle to receive a tour of Hartselle High School – one of the newer schools in Morgan County – while later getting a briefing on Decatur City School's Career Tech Program strategy. After lunch at Decatur Heritage Christian Academy and a presentation by Dr. Yvette Rice about dream realization, the group took a guided tour of the Decatur Campus of Calhoun Community College to learn about the long list of programs available at the two-year school. The group heard from faculty

in many areas of study, including health sciences and advanced manufacturing. The day ended at the Alabama Center for the Arts where the class took part in a panel discussion with our three area superintendents: Hopkins, Dr. Dee Dee Jones of Hartselle City Schools and Dr. Michael Douglass of Decatur City Schools. Each discussed issues within their systems, including their strategies on workforce development, how testing data impacts schools and students, early childhood education and school safety.

Excellence in December concentrated on how we care for our community, which included healthcare, social services, non-profits assistance and public health. The morning included a status update on our hospital system and a construction tour of Decatur Morgan Hospital. The group then transitioned to social services with a tour and briefing of the work done by the Department of Human Resources, which protects children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect or exploitation. Later in the morning, the group toured the Neighborhood Christian



Superintendents from our three area school systems – (L-R) Dr. Michael Douglas of Decatur City Schools, Bill J. Hopkins Jr. of Morgan County Schools, and Dr. Dee Dee Jones of Hartselle City Schools – participated in a panel discussion with members of the Excellence class during the November session.



December gave the Excellence class the opportunity to tour the construction areas of Decatur Morgan Hospital as part of the day's focus on healthcare.



Judy Smith, area administrator for the Department of Public Health, discussed with the Excellence class in December the impact of public health on our area's quality of life.



Members of the Edge Student Leadership program received a tour and briefing from Dean Bret McGill during the class' tour of Calhoun Community College's health sciences department during their December session focusing on health and education in our community.



As part of their day focusing on health and education, Edge students spent time at Woodmeade Elementary School in Decatur visiting with students and reading to them as part of their classroom activities for the day.



Equip Leadership students in November learned about automotive technology up close during a demonstration of the Calhoun ethanol-fueled Ford Cobra entirely fabricated by students.



Jennifer Bunnell, facilities director for the Alabama Center for the Arts, gave Edge students a tour of the downtown campus during their day focusing on health and education.



Edge Student Leadership in October participated in the ropes course session as a way to develop communication and problem solving skills.

Center, which provides emergency support to Morgan County residents in need. Lunch at Riverside Senior Living featured a panel discussion about elder care and end-of-life planning with Bridget Montgomery of Hospice of the Valley, Doug Bachuss of Nowlin, Bachuss & Gray, and Michelle Riley of Riverside Senior Living. The group spent the afternoon at Community Action Partnership of North Alabama, where Mari Juarez – a member of the Excellence class and a Community Action Partnership employee – discussed with the group the work of the Partnership and how their programs help break the cycle of poverty in north Alabama. The day ended with Judy Smith, area administrator for the Department of Public Health, providing a demonstration of how public health

issues like restaurant inspections, vaccinations, community wellness, nutrition and sickness can effect the region and the business community.

Because of rescheduling the ropes course from September due to inclement weather, Edge Student Leadership - the Chamber's leadership program for 10th and 11th graders – met twice in October. Early in the month, the group navigated the ropes course on the campus of Decatur Morgan West to learn about the value of team building and communication in leadership environments. Working with the ropes course staff, students broke up into groups to conquer smaller challenges requiring strategy, recognizing obstacles and working together. Later in October, the group – like their

Excellence counterparts - also took a day to focus on the justice system in Morgan County, including a mock trial exercise similar to the adult class. The class also toured the Morgan County Jail, sat in the gallery of a courtroom and observed a jury selection, and met with Decatur City Police Chief Nat Allen to discuss the role Decatur City Police plays in community development and keeping our city safe.

November's Edge meeting was a new addition to the program's curriculum: a poverty simulation exercise. Each student was given a scenario of being in a certain economic situation ranging from a single parent with three children, a disabled veteran, a fully employed single person, an elderly widow and more. The participants had to interact with

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Leadership continued

leadership volunteers who also had scenarios like someone who owned a check cashing business, a healthcare provider, a parole officer, a childcare center director and so on. Students had to learn about prioritizing topics like healthcare, childcare, education, rent and other real-world issues for working families. The Chamber is thankful for Leadership Huntsville for facilitating the poverty simulation event.

The early December Edge class concentrated on health and education in the community. After starting the morning at the Chamber, the group toured the health science center at the Decatur campus of Calhoun Community College. Health Sciences Dean Bret McGill discussed with the class all the different options available to study at Calhoun, including their highly competitive nursing, physical therapy and EMT programs. Following the Calhoun tour, students received a briefing from Alabama Center for the Arts Facility Director Jennifer Bunnell about the downtown campus, the pro-

grams of study at the school and the role it plays in the cultural identity of our community. Later in the morning, the group toured Woodmeade Elementary School in Decatur, met with teachers and had the chance to read to students from pre-kindergarten up to fifth grade. The class enjoyed lunch sponsored by Decatur Morgan Hospital, and afterwards toured the lab and imaging departments. During their visit to imaging, Dr. Vernon Hurst spoke to the group about his journey to becoming a radiologist.

The Chamber's Equip Leadership program – designed for 8th grade students from Morgan County to expose them to post-high school college and career opportunities in the skilled trades that require less than a four-year degree – met Nov. 30 at the Chamber to discuss career opportunities in automotive technologies and innovation. Lewis Nall, an automotive instructor in the Automotive Technologies Department at Calhoun Community College in Decatur,

shared with students his education path to becoming an instructor at Calhoun, including his work in private industry. Nall shared stories about teachers who had helped motivate and encourage him while showing him the value of hard work. Students also got to see up close Nall's class project car, an ethanol-fueled Ford Cobra entirely fabricated by students in his program. Students also continued working on "soft skills" training and study habits.

All three of the Chamber's leadership programs are presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**.

**Excellence, Edge, & Equip
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Looking for a few good volunteers

The work of the Chamber is only possible because of incredible volunteers who serve our business community with their time and talents. Their dedication contributes to our ability to provide leadership development programs, advocate for pro-business policies, recruit jobs and strive for a high quality of life in Decatur-Morgan County.

We need you to add your name to that list of servant leaders. The Chamber's annual Total Resource Campaign (TRC) is an organized nine-week campaign run by members volunteer who help sell sponsorship opportunities and recruit new member businesses. The annual campaign is the only time the Chamber offers sponsorship opportunities to

members, allowing businesses to plan their marketing budget and making them aware of Chamber programs.

The Chamber is looking for volunteers to be part of TRC. Why serve as a TRC volunteer? Not only do you raise funds to help us build our business community, but there are several incentives that may pique your interest. Benefits include weekly cash bonuses; free weekly reward luncheons; recognition at luncheons, in Directions Magazine and on the Chamber's social media platforms; door prizes; enhance relationships with community leaders; networking with other Chamber members; and a chance to earn a celebration trip for you and a guest. Past trips have includ-

ed Atlantis Bahamas, San Francisco, Jackson Hole, Seattle and Las Vegas).

The sponsorship renewal period for TRC is during the month of January, while the main part of the campaign kicks off Monday, Jan. 28 and runs until Thursday, March 14. This highly successful initiative is kicking off its 14th year of being part of the Chamber's annual programing.

Now is an exciting time to be part of the Chamber's work, and we want you or someone on your team to be a part of what we do. For more information or to volunteer, please contact TRC Staff Coordinator Leissa Chittam at (256) 353-5312 or leissa@dcc.org.

YP Leadership Luncheon welcomes Paige Bibbee

On Oct. 31, Paige Bibbee - who is serving in her first term as District 3 representative and president of the City Council - spoke to the Chamber's YP Leadership Luncheon series about her long history of volunteer service in our community and her deep-rooted

passion for The River City. Bibbee also gave the group an update on city government, her own leadership development story, took questions from attendees and talked about how young professionals can get involved in making Decatur a stronger com-

munity. The series is presented by **Ascend Performance Materials of Decatur**, with the October lunch sponsored by **Indorama Ventures**.

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October Lunch Sponsor



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