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February 2019

Directions

A PUBLICATION OF THE DECATUR-MORGAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



2019 Career & Workforce Expo

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As the community environment has become more challenging over the years, the Chamber's role in community development could not be greater! The Decatur-Morgan County Chamber has a well-established operational team and Board that continues to reinvent its primary purpose of trade in supporting the interest of business. Our community is very fortunate to have such a highly trained and professional Chamber staff ready to assist its members in assuring their success and providing high value service to our area! All those reasons – and so many more – are why we belong.

Nathaniel Richardson

President
Decatur Morgan Hospital



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Donna Puckett
Pugh Wright McAnally

W^A Word from your chamber

It's hard to believe that this is my tenth year to participate in the Chamber's Total Resource Campaign (TRC) for Decatur and Morgan County. When my employer first talked to me about volunteering with TRC, I was skeptical that I had anything to offer. He encouraged me to attend the training session before I made a decision. I was met with some of the friendliest and energetic co-volunteers who were eager to help a beginner learn the process. The staff at the Chamber was also a tremendous support group, reassuring me that I was in the right place!

So, what exactly is this "TRC" you keep hearing about? Well, TRC is a nine-week campaign that happens each year between mid-January and mid-March where the Chamber's TRC volunteers reach out to members to discuss sponsorship opportunities at Chamber events throughout the year. This is the fourteenth year TRC has been implemented at the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber.

Why only during this 9-week window? There are a couple of reasons for this. First, the Chamber's fiscal year starts on April 1. The timing of the

TRC program allows the Chamber to have an idea of sponsorship revenue for the events in their upcoming year's budget. Second, by allowing the TRC volunteers to call on their members during this specific time, it eliminates the need for Chamber staff to be reaching out every month to members to discuss potential sponsorship on that month's events.

What type of sponsorships are offered to the Chamber's members? The options of sponsorships are as diverse as the membership list. There is something for everyone. The Chamber hosts events for business development such as the Women in Business Celebration; public policy programs including the State of the City, County, State and Healthcare along with trips to Montgomery and Washington D.C.; leadership programs like Edge Student Leadership, Excellence in Leadership, and the YP Leadership Luncheons; workforce and education such as SWeETy Camp and Endless Opportunities; networking opportunities like Membership Appreciation, Business After Hours/Coffee and Cards, golf tournaments, the Clay Shoot Classic; and general events and other offerings like

continued on page 7

Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 2003
Decatur, AL 35602-2003

Website: www.dcc.org



Contact Information

Main Line – (256) 353-5312

John Seymour
President & CEO
john@dcc.org

Crystal Brown
Vice President of Development
crystal@dcc.org

Judy Brown
Director of Member & Investor Relations
judy@dcc.org

Denice Carter
Director of Administration & Events
denice@dcc.org

Leissa Chittam
Chief Financial Officer
leissa@dcc.org

Amber Fortenberry
Director of Talent Development & Recruitment
amber@dcc.org

Grant Thompson
Director of Communications
grant@dcc.org

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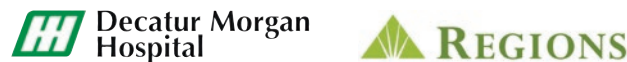
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The Chamber would like to recognize and thank our investors in The Partnership. Their long-term commitment to the Chamber and the business community allows us to work towards improving the quality of life in Decatur-Morgan County for the next generation.

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Career & Workforce Expo highlights career paths, opportunities

On Feb. 5, more than 1,500 area high school students attended the annual Career & Workforce Expo - presented by gold sponsor **Joe Wheeler EMC**, as well as silver sponsors **3M, GE Appliances, a Haier Company, Nucor Steel Decatur, Redstone Federal Credit Union and RUAG Space USA**. Hosted by Calhoun Community College, the event gave students from Morgan, Lawrence and Limestone Counties the chance to visit with more than 30 area business and industry partners to discuss career opportuni-

ties in their fields and what types of education choices they need to make to position themselves for success. This Chamber is committed to preparing the next generation of learners and leaders in our community, equipping them for success in whatever path they choose. The day-long event was a collaboration between the Chamber, the Morgan County Economic Development Association, the Greater Limestone County Chamber of Commerce, and Calhoun's Dual Enrollment and Career Service teams.

Gold Sponsor



The Career & Workforce Expo is a chance for high school students to speak with professionals in areas where students have an interest about careers and opportunities for growth.



More than 30 business and industry partners took part in the Career & Workforce Expo.



Students from Morgan, Limestone and Lawrence Counties took part in the annual Career & Workforce Expo.



Exhibitors in fields like healthcare, utilities, finance, manufacturing, IT and other STEM fields took part in the Career & Workforce Expo.



More than 1,500 students from area high schools attended the Career & Workforce Expo.



The Career & Workforce Expo is one of the largest events in our region for students to learn more about careers and courses of study to plan for their future.

A Word from Your Chamber *continued*

the Annual Meeting, Chamber publications, electronic media and many more. In all, there are more than 1,000 sponsorships available.

Networking opportunities? The price points of sponsorships vary as well, allowing small businesses, individu-

als, and large companies the opportunity to network with other members and create new business contacts.

I'm proud to have the opportunity to discuss the Chamber's events with its members. I know our efforts have a positive impact on our community,

and I'm glad to be a small part of it. I hope you as a member will consider getting involved.

Ribbon Cuttings



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Redstone Federal Credit Union at Calhoun Community College

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Urgent Team
1115 Beltline Road SE, Suite 400, Decatur • (256) 898-3004



Save the Date!

Public Policy trip to Montgomery
Tuesday-Wednesday, March 12-13
Presented by Nucor Steel Decatur

State of the City
Thursday, March 28, 7:30 a.m.
Ingalls Harbor Pavilion
Presented by Huntsville International Airport

The Annual Meeting
Tuesday, April 9, 11:30 a.m.
The Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront
Presented by Indorama Ventures

The Spring Golf Classic
Friday, April 19
Burningtree Country Club

Policy Trip to Washington D.C.
Tuesday, May 5-7

Small Business Awards
Tuesday, May 14, 11:30 a.m.
The Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront

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!

B.B. Perrins Sports Grille
Business to Business Solutions
Decatur Country Club
Holy Moley's Catering
Missing Sock Laundromat
Neighborhood Concepts, Inc.
Scott Stadthagen - AL House of Representatives District 9
Urgent Team



Public policy trips to Montgomery, D.C. help your voice be heard

Collaborating with our legislative delegation is critical in accomplishing the work of the Chamber to improve our business community and quality of life. Much of our community success relies on communication and engagement with our elected leaders, and we are thankful for the positive relationships we have developed over the years.

An important part of that relationship development includes our two public policy trips to Montgomery and Washington, D.C.

The Montgomery trip, set for March 12-13, will include meetings with the Morgan County delegation, legislators, state government officials, as well as observing floor debates. Also, part of the trip are tours highlighting our state history and discussing the development of our state heritage, as well as a tour of the Hyundai engine manufacturing facility. The business of state government has a direct impact on our quality of life, and it is important that government hears from those who it represents. The trip, presented by

Nucor Steel Decatur, is \$195, which includes transportation, tours and all meals except for the night of March 12. The Chamber has established special rate packages with an area hotel, and we recommend booking your travel and housing early. To make your reservations at the Embassy Suites in downtown Montgomery as part of a special block of rooms reserved for the Chamber, please call (334) 269-5055.

Later in the spring – May 5-7 – the Chamber will partner with the Huntsville-Madison County Chamber to travel to Washington D.C. for a three-day visit with federal officials to discuss the state of business and the future of federal collaboration in our region. Meetings and speakers will highlight the defense, technology and transportation sectors important to our region. Past speakers on the trip include the late Sen. John McCain, Sen. Mitch McConnell, Sen. Tom Cotton, Sen. Barbara Mikulski, Sen. Ted Cruz, former House Speaker Rep. Paul Ryan, as well as Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, Sen.

Doug Jones, and Reps. Mo Brooks and Robert Aderholt. Dinners as an entire Morgan County group are set for Sunday and Monday evenings. This year's trip is \$650 before April 2, and \$700 after April 2, which includes bus transportation the entire three days, meals and tours. The guest/spouse rate is \$250. Attendees are responsible for their air travel and hotel accommodations.

To register for both of these trips online, as well as make hotel reservations for Washington using a special online portal featuring a block discount, visit the Chamber's website at <http://tools.dcc.org/events>

**Montgomery Trip
Presenting Sponsor**



Renewing Members

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

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CashMaster	First Bible Church	Morgan County System of Services, Inc.	THE DECATUR DAILY
Central United Methodist Church	G2 of Decatur, LLC	Mullins Building Products	The Freight House Restaurant & Catering
Chicken Salad Chick	Gateway Shopping Center	Neighborhood Christian Center of Alabama	The Light House
Chick-Fil-A	Geo Solutions, LLC	North Alabama Glass Co., Inc.	TOMKAT Properties, LLC
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Cornerstone Engineering Group, PC	Horizon Point Consulting, Inc.	Platinum Mortgage, Inc.	Wear, Howell, Strickland, Quinn, & Law, LLC, CPA's
Courtyard by Marriott	Hubbard & Drake General-Mech. Contractors, Inc.	Plum Tree Shopping Center	Wilson Machine & Welding
Cross-Eyed Owl Brewing Company	Huntsville Hospital Health System	Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 760	Wimberly Plaza
	Hyosung USA, Inc.	Premier System Integrators	Winsett Financial Group
	IMS, Inc.	Racking Horse Breeders Association	Wiregrass Construction Company, Inc.
	Integrated Corporate Solutions		

State of Healthcare Address a showcase for hospital updates

The Chamber's annual State of Healthcare Address on Jan. 24 included a new feature to the program: being onsite at **Decatur Morgan Hospital**, who served as the presenting sponsor for the event. More than 125 business, community and elected leaders from across Morgan County heard from Decatur Morgan Hospital President Nat Richardson about the positive financial status of the hospital, expanded services available to the community and the impact healthcare has on our quality of life. The second half of

the event allowed attendees to take guided, small group tours by hospital leadership to see renovations and updates including the new Emergency Department, new private rooms, the new MRI facility, new public waiting rooms and the renovated mammography center. The strategic plan which outlined these changes was developed by community input and patient surveys with the goal of improving the patient experience. The availability of quality healthcare is a critical component in economic development, residential

recruitment and a high standard of life in a community, and the Chamber is thankful for the leadership of the hospital and the Huntsville Hospital Health System for the long-term investment in Decatur-Morgan County.

Presenting Sponsor



Decatur Morgan Hospital President Nat Richardson spoke briefly during the State of Healthcare Address.



Community and business leaders from across Morgan County attended the State of Healthcare Address.



Attendees were able to tour the newly renovated facilities, including the newly designed Emergency Department.



Tours of the updated hospital facilities were available to attendees, including new private rooms.



More than 125 people attended the State of Healthcare Address, held for the first time at Decatur Morgan Hospital.



Renovations continue onsite at Decatur Morgan Hospital, including new exteriors and new entrances.

Breakfast & Biz helps you break the networking code

Vicki Morris – owner of Face to Face Marketing LLC, program director of Regional Innovators Sustaining the Ecosystem (R.I.S.E.) and creative director for Lana Street Media Co. – shared with the more than 50 in attendance at February’s Breakfast & Biz her strategies on effective networking techniques which can be applied to their own business or career. Throughout her presentation, Morris provided

practical examples of how to seek out networking opportunities, how to turn new connections into future business relationships, and the importance of following up after meeting new people.

The event – presented by **Redstone Federal Credit Union** along with Venue Sponsor **The Magnolia Room** – is one of the Chamber’s many professional development training opportunities

that provide ongoing support for our local business partners. Stay tuned for our next Breakfast & Biz event, which will be later in the spring.

Presenting Sponsor



We are thankful for the hospitality of The Magnolia Room for serving as the venue sponsor for Breakfast & Biz.



More than 50 people attended the Chamber’s Breakfast & Biz event focusing on networking.



Community and business leaders from across our region attended the Chamber’s Breakfast & Biz event focusing on networking.



Vicki Morris, owner of Face to Face Marketing LLC, served as the keynote speaker for the Chamber’s Breakfast & Biz event discussing successful ways to network.



Attendees representing non-profits, professional services, real estate, media groups, financial services, healthcare and more took part in the Chamber’s Breakfast & Biz event focusing on networking.

Leadership programs hit mid-year mark



The Excellence in Leadership class participated in a poverty simulation as part of their January session.



As part of the poverty simulation, Excellence class members were given scenarios involving decision-making on topics like healthcare, education, housing, and the corrections system.

The Chamber's three leadership programs – Excellence, Edge and Equip – each continued their focus on personal and professional development as the calendar flipped over to a new year.

The Chamber's Excellence in Leadership program in January added a new feature to the curriculum: a poverty simulation exercise. Each class member 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. Each participant had to interact with 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. Participants 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 partnering on the poverty simulation event, and First Baptist Church in Decatur for serving as the host venue. After lunch at the church and time to work on their class service

project for Boys & Girls Club, the group visited the Alabama Center for the Arts in downtown Decatur for a tour from facilities manager Jennifer Bunnell – an Excellence graduate herself – after having to reschedule from the education-themed day in November. The group toured the student gallery, the Phase One visual arts building and the Phase Two performing arts facility before ending the day back at First Baptist. Excellence in Leadership is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**.

On Jan. 10, the Chamber's Equip Student Leadership class spent the day discussing fabrication and manufacturing. The group visited Hubbard and Drake fabrication shop in Decatur and were able to see up close the process of welding, pipefitting and how each piece of equipment worked. Students were able to see how hand railings for a staircase were made and what the finished product looked like before installation. H&D team members Ivan Armor, training director and project manager, and Doug Drake, field superintendent, served as speakers and tour guides for the visit. The trip allowed students to see

all that goes on in a fabrication shop while exposing our future workforce to different careers. The day ended with lunch at the Chamber and a round-table discussion on their day.

Jan. 31 marked the final gathering of session one of the Chamber's Equip Student Leadership, a program for eighth grade students from across Morgan County exposing them to post-high school college and career opportunities in the skilled trades as well as degree programs requiring less than a four-year degree. The day started at the Chamber, but quickly transitioned to the Decatur Utilities Central Office for a briefing of careers in utilities and infrastructure. Joe Holmes, DU's communications and public relations coordinator, welcomed the group and discussed with them the long list of opportunities within the utilities industry. Opportunities include financial management, information technology, communications, customer service, geographic information systems (GIS), engineering, administrative support, as well as field crews and technicians. Later in the morning, the group returned to the Chamber to work on

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Leadership continued



Excellence class members toured the Alabama Center for the Arts in downtown after having to reschedule from a previous class.



Facilities Manager Jennifer Bunnell (purple sweater) of the Alabama Center for the Arts gave students a tour of each phase of the campus. Bunnell is an alumni of the Excellence program.

soft skill and interview training by playing “Right Way, Wrong Way,” an interactive game involving students acting out the right and wrong ways to engage co-workers in the workplace. After lunch, courtesy of Whitts Barbeque, the group was dismissed – but not before receiving their graduation certificates for completing the program. The Equip program is made possible by presenting sponsor **Nucor Steel Decatur**. Session two kicks off in February with a new group of students and runs until the end of the school year.

The Chamber’s Edge Student Leadership program kicked off 2019 with a day session focusing on the role of economic development in our community. In the morning, Jeremy Nails - president and CEO of the Morgan County Economic Development Association - discussed the role of the organization and principles used to recruit industry to our area. Also, Nails and the group played an economic development board game, where students were given a simulated society to select certain qualities they wanted in their community, then competed against one another to recruit businesses to their

area. Later in the morning, the group toured the United Launch Alliance Assembly Facility where students were briefed on the company’s role in the future of space transportation and the work they do in Morgan County. The group had lunch at Joe Wheeler EMC, where they discussed the role of utility providers in economic development, careers in utilities and played a version of the game show Jeopardy! focusing on leadership development. The day wrapped up with Lorrie Howard of Horizon Point Consulting discussing with the class responsible social media usage, and continued their work on the value of soft skills by holding mock interviews with students.

In February, the Edge class spent their day focusing on “now and then” in our community. Morgan County Commission Chairman Ray Long and Mayor Tab Bowling started the day at the Chamber speaking with the group about each of their roles in local government, what each is responsible for, how they collaborate on economic and community development projects, and their own personal leadership styles. Students went on to tour the Old State Bank and the restored his-

toric train depot under the guidance of David Breland, historic preservation commission program coordinator for the City of Decatur. From there, students traveled to the Cook Museum of Natural Science in downtown Decatur, where they received a briefing on the museum, explored the 60,000 square foot facility and got a behind-the-scenes tour of several of the exhibits prior to the June opening. Following the museum, the class learned about the historic Princess Theatre Center for the Performing Arts from Interim Operations Director Mary McDonald as they toured the more than 130 year old building. Following lunch at the theater, the group returned to the Chamber for a session with Laura Ritch, who worked with the group to discuss dinner and business etiquette, appropriate attire in casual and professional environments, and other soft skill training. The group ended the day working on their community project and prepared for the class trip to Montgomery set for March. Edge is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**.



Joe Holmes, public relations coordinator for Decatur Utilities, spoke to the Equip class in January about careers in the utility industry.



Equip students collaborated on several projects during the January class session, including an interview role-playing game called "Right Way, Wrong Way."



Session One of Equip ended the last day of January. A second session is set to kick off in February.



Equip students visited Hubbard & Drake Contractors to discuss careers in manufacturing and fabrication.



Edge students in January took part in a day focusing on economic development. Jeremy Nails, president of Morgan County Economic Development Association, discussed the role industry plays in our community.

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Leadership continued



During the briefing with Nails, students played an economic development board game where their communities competed in the recruitment of industries and retail.



Edge students visited with Strategic Partner Joe Wheeler EMC as part of the day focusing on economic development. (Picture courtesy of Joe Wheeler.)



Morgan County Commission Chairman Ray Long discussed his role in county government during the Edge class in February highlighting Decatur "now and then."



City of Decatur Mayor Tab Bowling discussed with Edge students his leadership style and how it developed over time.



Edge students toured part of the soon-to-open Cook Museum of Natural Science as part of their day highlighting the city "now and then."



Members of the Edge class were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the Cook Museum as part of their day discussing the history and heritage of Morgan County.



Interim Operations Manager Mary McDonald (far right) as part of their tour gave Edge students a behind-the-scenes look at backstage and stage areas of the Princess Theatre.

**Presenting Sponsor for
Excellence, Equip and Edge**



Students toured and had lunch at the Princess Theatre as part of the Edge session on our area's legacy.

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Grant Thompson
Editorial Coordinator/Writer

Stephen V. Johnson
Graphic Design

Jeronimo Nisa Luna
Dan Busey
Grant Thompson
Photographers



(256) 353-5312
Fax: (256) 353-2384
<http://www.dcc.org>

PO Box 2003
Decatur, Alabama
35602-2003

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