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June 2019

Directions

A PUBLICATION OF THE DECATUR-MORGAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SWeETy Camp

Preparing the next generation workforce 7

Total
Resource
Campaign

10

Small
Business
Awards

12

YP
Leadership
Luncheon

22

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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



PO Box 2003, Decatur, AL 35602 | 256-353-5312 | www.dcc.org



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Jamie Reeves
Remax Platinum Decatur
Vice Chair of Development

Word from your chamber

Residential development is a hot topic these days. With the economy on the upward swing and job opportunities continuing to evolve, you would think that residential development would be the next obvious area of growth, but is it?

While the real estate market is thriving for sellers, buyers continually find themselves in multiple offer rounds and oftentimes coming up short finding available housing. New home construction within the city limits of Decatur is sparse. Why is that? Why are we still seeing this trend after years of economic growth? At what point do we begin looking within to resolve this issue?

As cities around us double in size, we have to ask hard questions.

As a realtor and one who has worked closely with developers over the years, time is money. Waiting for planning meetings to occur once monthly is not always feasible. It's time we become more efficient in making decisions based solely on each project, rather than referring to antiquated policies because "that's how it's always been done."

We need to be innovators and leaders for development. Enticing developers to build here and giving them full support on projects that will allow Decatur to grow is critical for our city to be known for not only its philanthropy and hospitality, but also its leading-edge approach to residential development.

While policies and procedures are one small factor in our past flaws regarding residential growth, our number one issue is our heart for change. Residents regularly voice their opinions regarding any change that may affect their way of life. Flocking to social media and council meetings to contest any sort of growth has proven unhealthy to the spirit of our great city.

It's time we trust our city leaders and those who are willing to invest in Decatur and allow them to create opportunities that have passed us by in previous years.

Decatur is my home, now and forever.

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

Table of Contents

Member Spotlight.....	6
SWEETy Camp.....	7, 9
Ribbon Cuttings	8
New Members.....	10
Total Resource Campaign	10
Renewing Members.....	11
Small Business Awards	12-14
Breakfast & Biz.....	15
Coffee & Cards	16
Leadership	17-20
Spring Golf Classic.....	21
YP Leadership Luncheon	22

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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 toward improving the quality of life in Decatur-Morgan County for the next generation.

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Member Spotlight

The Port of Huntsville



**HUNTSVILLE
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT**

The Port of Huntsville is the bridge that connects our community to the rest of the world and so in turn it is a highly sought-after location for businesses, industries and travelers alike. Home to the Huntsville International Airport (HSV), Jetplex Industrial Park (JIP) and the International Intermodal Center (IIC), the Port of Huntsville creates efficient and economical solutions for customers and helps stimulate the local economy through a strong transportation infrastructure, global connectivity and innovative improvements. In October 2017, Huntsville International Airport celebrated 50 years of serving this region of Alabama and Tennessee. As a part of the celebration, the airport elevated and created events to give back to customers and the community.

The Port of Huntsville plays a major role in the economic growth and development of the Tennessee Valley region. A large factor helping to stimulate growth is the Jetplex Industrial Park, centrally located in one of the fastest growing high technology communities in the United States. From this strategic southeastern location, the 4,000 acre JIP offers a rare combination of air, rail and truck transportation, as well as a high quality workforce available within a 50-mile / 45-minute commuting radius throughout north Alabama and portions of southern Tennessee. With on-site U.S. Customs and Border Protection and

Foreign-Trade Zone No. 83, the Port of Huntsville's Jetplex Industrial Park offers an inviting and lucrative solution to customers looking to relocate or expand operations.

The International Intermodal Center, located in the Port of Huntsville's Global Logistics Park, celebrated 30 years of operation in 2017. It provides a single hub location specializing in receiving, transferring, storing and distributing international and domestic cargo via air, rail and highway. The IIC rail terminal is served by Norfolk Southern, with dedicated stack train service to and from both east coast and west coast ports. U.S. Customs and Border Protection port inspectors, USDA inspectors, freight forwarders and customs brokers are all located on-site. Highly accessible via the interstate highway system, the Port of Huntsville is strategically located to serve the Tennessee Valley region and beyond.

Huntsville International Airport is ranked as the 17th largest airport in the continental U.S. for international air cargo freight. This is due largely to the partnership that has lasted just shy of 30 years between the Port of Huntsville and Panalpina. "Our partnership with Panalpina is a vital component in marketing the city of Huntsville for economic development in the global arena," said Richard Tucker, executive director of the Port of Huntsville. Cargo Carriers located at HSV are Atlas Air, Cargolux Airlines, Federal Express, Panalpina and UPS. This high-tech air cargo market is served by domestic and international all-cargo carriers. Weekly international nonstop is available to Europe, Mexico, Hong Kong and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Huntsville International Airport is the largest commercial airport in north Alabama, serving more than 1.2 million passengers annually. HSV is known throughout its 18-county service region for outstanding customer service, state-of-the-art technology and convenience. Unlike larger metropolitan areas, the airspace at HSV is uncongested and allows for faster landing and take-off times.

The airport handles more than 70 passenger flights daily and has Alabama's only non-stop international air cargo service. There are two parallel runways - 12,600-foot runway (second-longest runway in the Southeast U.S.) and 10,000-foot runway; runways with 5,000 foot separation for simultaneous takeoff/landing. Also, it has an Instrument Landing System (ILS) on all four runway approaches and is Group VI aircraft capable.

HSV has nonstop service to ten destinations, including: Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Orlando and two airports in Washington D.C. – Dulles and National. In 2018, HSV welcomed two new air-carriers, Silver Airways and Frontier Airlines. Silver offers daily direct flights to Orlando. Frontier, an ultra-low-cost carrier, flies direct to Denver and Orlando. The airport is quick and easy to navigate, and very convenient to all the attractions and businesses located in north Alabama. Major capital improvements to the baggage claim area, parking deck, public waiting, security check-in and Four Points by Sheraton Hotel – all help to make the traveler's experience at HSV more enjoyable. Fly Local. Fly Smart. Fly HSV!

SWeETy Camp creates opportunities, big dreams of skilled trades careers

As part of the organization's commitment to preparing the next generation workforce, the Chamber each year presents SWeETy (Summer Welding & Electrical Technology) Camp for 9th–12th grade girls. The first week of June welcomed 15 students from across north Alabama for this free camp, providing hands-on experience in welding and electrical trades, helping develop problem-solving skills and teamwork as they participate in instructor-led projects, field trips, and interact with

women role models in the industry. With a low unemployment rate and a strong jobs forecast for our region over the next 10 years, certified and trained employees are in high demand in the skilled trade fields, and programs like these equip our young people for success in the future.

In the 13 years of SWeETy Camp, more than 360 high school girls have graduated from the program. Session One of SWeETy Camp was presented

by **Contractor Service and Fabrication Inc.** of Decatur, while Session Two was June 10-13, hosted by Calhoun Community College, is presented by **Indorama Ventures** of Decatur.



High school girls from across north Alabama took part in Session One of SWeETy (Summer Welding & Electrical Technology) Camp, hosted by Priceville High School.



Willie LaFavor, president of Contractor Service & Fabrication Inc. and Chairman for the Chamber's Board of Directors, spoke briefly at the opening day of SWeETy Camp.



Students received hands-on training from certified instructors during the four-day SWeETy Camp.



During the week, each student was responsible for completing assigned tasks using the skills they learned during the instruction periods.

Ribbon Cuttings



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www.massagebook.com/Decatur-Massage-Sensationsmassageandbodyclinic



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Nature's Table in the Cook Museum of Natural Science
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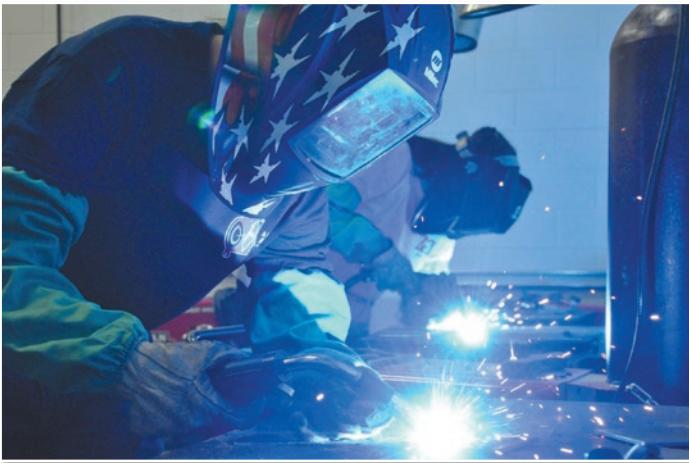
SWeETy Camp continued



Kevin Sanders, Ag instructor at West Morgan High School, served as the primary instructor for the four-day session, focusing on basics in electrical and welding technology.



Since beginning the program 13 years ago, more than 360 students have graduated from SWeETy Camp.



Students complete welding fabrication tasks during the week to complete a project, relying on skills they have learned throughout the week.




On the final day of the session, students traveled to the Decatur location of CSFCO to visit real-world environments where their recently developed skills are used in an industrial setting.

Session One Presenting Sponsor



Session Two Presenting Sponsor





Saint Ann Catholic School

Faith - Academics - Service
Saint Ann Catholic School, founded in 1955, was established to provide a quality Christian education to the residents of Morgan County.

<p>Worried About...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High student-teacher ratio • Lack of discipline • Overcrowded classrooms • Instruction in portable classrooms 	<p>Thought about St. Ann School?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K3 through 8th grade • All faiths welcome
---	--

Decatur, Alabama 35603 (256) 353-6543

Now accepting applications

282006-1

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!

Advance America

Econo Lodge

HealthSource of Decatur, SE

Motel 6

The Albany, LLC



Lawrence to lead Business Marketing Initiative



Kent Lawrence

In preparation of the Chamber's 15th annual Total Resource Campaign, Chamber President and CEO John Seymour has announced that Kent Lawrence, owner of TVW Electrical Supply of Decatur, will chair this year's endeavor.

"It's important to understand the mission of companies and their actions to reach their target markets," said Lawrence. "The Total Resource Campaign is more than providing Chamber members with additional avenues to reach their desired markets. It inspires companies to explore new avenues for connecting with both current and potential clients."

Businesses find increased opportunities to gain exposure among Chamber membership and stakeholders during the TRC. Additionally, Chamber members experience an increased return on investment by securing higher-profile visibility in the community through Chamber programming.

"We hope that members – especially our small business members – will see this campaign as an opportunity to get more involved in the programs they feel most connected with," said

Seymour. "The TRC provides the opportunity for business to align their marketing strategies with Chamber programs."

A change in the annual campaign schedule to September through November is designed to make it easier for members to plan their marketing budget for the coming year. Through the TRC the Chamber continues to expand and enhance member services into identified areas of need.

For more information regarding the TRC, contact Leissa Chittam – the Chamber's CFO and TRC director – at (256) 353-5312 or leissa@dcc.org.

Renewing Members

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

1st Impression Cleaning Services	Dunagan Yates & Alison	Progress Bank
3-GIS	Dynetics	Pugh Wright McAnally, Inc.
AFS Foundation & Waterproofing Specialists	Early Services, Inc.	Randall L. Sandlin, DMD
Alabama Center for the Arts	Edward Jones - Mitchell Owens	Red Sage Communications, Inc.
Alabama Decatur Energy, LLC	Edward Jones - Rita Seaton	Remax Platinum
Alfonso's Pizza	EFF, LLC	River City Pharmacy
Alliance HR	Environmental Comfort Systems, Inc.	Ruag Space USA
AlphaPet, Inc.	Family Security Credit Union	Scott Anderson
American National Insurance Webb Awtrey Agency	First Heritage Credit	Serra Toyota of Decatur
Anderson Office Interiors, LLC	First United Methodist Church	SGS Petroleum Service Corporation
Animal Tracks Veterinary Hospital	Five Guys Burgers & Fries	Sonny Craig
Annunciation of the Lord Catholic Church	Flemons Properties	Southland International Trucks, Inc.
Automatic SMP	Guice Pharmacy	SPC Restoration, Inc.
Bender's Plaza	H.C.S. Engineering Co., Inc.	Supreme Beverage Company, Inc.
Bramlett Automotive Buick, GMC, Kia	Hampton Inn	T.P.I.S. Industrial Services, LLC
Bridge Builders Church International	Hardy Chiropractic	Texas Roadhouse
Bunge Corporation	Home Pest Control	The Terrace at Priceville
Calhoun Community College	Honda of Decatur	Traditions Bank
Cathcart Service, Inc.	Hospice of the Valley, Inc.	Tru-Line Manufacturing, Inc.
Chick-Fil-A	J. T. Ray Company	Volunteer Center of Morgan County, Inc.
City Cafe	Knots & Pains, LLC	WAFF-TV Decatur Bureau
Corum's Building & Farm Center	Lakeland Industries, Inc.	Watermark Property Group, LLC
Courtyard by Marriott	Lentz Thompson Retirement Advisors	Wayne Farms Decatur Further Processing W
Decatur Career Center	Marx Optical	Window World
Decatur ENT Associates, PC/ Light Facial Plastic Surgery	Matthews Industries, Inc.	Your Transmission Man, Inc.
Decatur Heritage Christian Academy	Morningside of Decatur	
Decatur Optical Dispensary	NEO Industries, Inc. (Alabama)	
Decatur Orthopaedic Clinic	North Alabama Glass Co., Inc.	
Decatur Public Library	Occupational Health Group	
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Decatur Riverfront	Parker Towing Co., Inc.	
Downtown Dawgs	Pill Box Pharmacy	
	Plastic Recyclers Southeast, Inc.	
	Price-Denton Endodontics, LLC	
	Priceville Foodland, LLC	

Chamber recognizes Lubisco, Dilbeck, Grumbir for excellence in business

On May 14, three area professionals were honored by the Chamber at the annual Small Business Awards Celebration for their innovation, creativity and commitment to our business community.

Joe Lubisco, Jr., founder and president of Entrusted Tees in Decatur, was named the Raymon Baker - John Cook - Ralph Jones Small Business Person of the Year; Autumn Dilbeck, retail regional operations coordinator for Renasant Bank in Decatur, was named the Arthur Orr Young Professional of the Year; and Sue Grumbir, founder and executive director of Hands Across Decatur, was named the Lynn C. Fowler Non-Profit Professional of the Year. The luncheon was held at the Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront.

Lubisco opened Entrusted Tees as a side business in 2011 while working for a medical consulting company, later turning it into a full-time venture and growing it into the largest corporate promotions company in north Alabama. An active member in several community service initiatives, he is currently serving in his first term as the Place 1 representative on the Priceville Town Council, where he is the chair of the town's economic development efforts. Among his other areas of giving back to the community, Lubisco helped establish the Boys & Girls Club in Priceville, serves as a board member for the single mother's ministry Refuge of Grace, is

an advisory board member of Decatur Morgan Hospital, and directs traffic at Priceville Elementary School each morning. A native of Pennsylvania, Lubisco and his wife and two sons live in Priceville.

With more than 14 years of experience with banking in Decatur, Dilbeck is responsible for auditing, operations and compliance for the 20 Renasant Bank branches in Alabama. The Illinois native and Hartselle resident is active in community efforts that promote child welfare in Morgan County. She is a board member of CASA of North Alabama, an organization that provides advocates for children in the court system in Morgan, Limestone and Lawrence Counties. Dilbeck is also a longtime tutor and mentor at Eastwood Elementary and Leon Sheffield Magnet Elementary in Decatur City Schools.

Grumbir founded Hands Across Decatur in 2012 with the mission to connect with the homeless and in-crisis community of Decatur by providing self-sufficiency skills training including computer literacy, reading and writing advancement, job placement services, as well as emergency food supplies and life necessities in a ministry environment. With a volunteer team of more than 100, she coordinates the pick-up and drop-off of supplies across Decatur at churches, community events, and designated locations where the homeless community can receive help. Grumbir is also the vice

president of the Newcomers Club of Decatur, where she has also served three terms as the lead community outreach chairperson. She is a past board member of the Committee on Church Cooperation, as well as a regular speaker across the city advocating for care of the homeless. Originating from upstate New York, Grumbir also founded in 2014 Suspended Coffee Decatur, a "pay it forward" program with service businesses for anyone in need.

Winners of each award are selected from nominations submitted by the Chamber membership and evaluated by committees of past honorees. The event was made possible by gold sponsors **Building Construction Associates** and **Redstone Federal Credit Union**.

The Small Business Awards Celebration also served as "graduation" for the Chamber's Excellence in Leadership. The 35 members of the class spent the past 10 months as part of a leadership development program intended to connect business, non-profit and education professionals with community issues like health-care, education, public safety, state and local government, tourism and sociology. The program, presented by Nucor Steel Decatur, has graduated more than 1,150 participants since starting more than 30 years ago.

Gold Sponsor



Gold Sponsor



Also during the event, the Chamber recognized members who within the last year reached a milestone year of service of 50 years or more in the Morgan County business community.

50 YEARS: B & B Roofing Company, Morgan County Economic Development Association, Steam-Way Carpet Cleaners, and Wahl Supply

55 YEARS: Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association

60 YEARS: Greater Morgan County Builders Association, and Home Pest Control

70 YEARS: Matthews Industries, Inc., and North Alabama Industrial Development Association

80 YEARS: Decatur Utilities, Decatur Women's Chamber of Commerce, and Talley, Mauldin, & Peete, PC

85 YEARS: Gobble-Fite Lumber Co., Inc.

90 YEARS: Reynolds Funeral Home

110 YEARS: Decatur Coca-Cola Bottling Co.

130 YEARS: St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church

135 YEARS: Eyster, Key, Tubb, Roth, Middleton & Adams, LLP

140 YEARS: Halsey Foodservice

185 YEARS: First United Methodist Church, Decatur



Jamie Reeves, the Chamber's vice chairman of development and a realtor with Remax Platinum, welcomed the room of more than 200 at the Chamber's annual Small Business Awards Celebration.



Autumn Dilbeck, retail regional operations coordinator for Renasant Bank in Decatur, was named the Arthur Orr Young Professional of the Year.



The Small Business Awards Celebration serves as "graduation" for the Chamber's 10-month Excellence in Leadership program.



More than 200 people attended the Chamber's annual Small Business Awards Celebration.

continued on page 14

Small Business Awards *continued*



More than 200 people attended the Chamber's annual Small Business Awards Celebration.



Dilbeck is an active volunteer in the community, including working in schools as a tutor and mentor.



Sue Grumbir, founder and executive director of Hands Across Decatur, was named the Lynn C. Fowler Non-Profit Professional of the Year.



Grumbir opened her non-profit in 2012 with the goal of serving the homeless community in Decatur-Morgan County.



Joe Lubisco, Jr., founder and president of Entrusted Tees in Decatur, was named the Raymon Baker - John Cook - Ralph Jones Small Business Person of the Year.



Lubisco started Entrusted Tees as a side business in 2011, and has since grown it to be one of the largest promotional item companies in the southeast.

Breakfast & Biz discusses importance of cyber security

On Thursday, April 18, more than 40 business and community leaders from across north Alabama gathered at The Magnolia Room in downtown Decatur to hear Daniel Starr - founder and managing partner of IT provider Lightwire Solutions – address the finer points of network and data security during the Chamber’s quarterly Breakfast & Biz business development session, presented by **Redstone Federal Credit Union**. Starr, who has more than 20 years of individual IT experience,

discussed hot topics in the network security field, including phishing and spear-phishing techniques, firewalls and network integration, anti-virus/anti-malware protections, and how ransomware attacks can impact your information. The session was followed by an in-depth Q&A where attendees were able to dig deeper into how they can protect their business and their employees. Along with Redstone, the morning was made possible by breakfast sponsor **J.T. Ray Company** and

venue sponsor **The Magnolia Room**. Look for our next Breakfast & Biz session later this summer.

Presenting Sponsor



April Breakfast Sponsor



More than 40 business and community leaders attended the Chamber’s Breakfast & Biz event, featuring Daniel Starr of Lightwire Solutions focusing on cyber security and protection.



Daniel Starr, founder and managing partner of Lightwire Solutions, discussed with more than 40 business leaders about the critical need for network security during his keynote address at the April Breakfast & Biz business development event.



Business and community leaders from across north Alabama gathered at The Magnolia Room in Decatur to discuss the value of digital security for your personal and customer information at the April edition of Breakfast & Biz.



During the April edition of the Chamber’s Breakfast & Biz series, Daniel Starr of Lightwire Solutions shared his more than 20 years of experience in data and personal information security.

Coffee & Cards visited Redstone Federal in Decatur

On May 21, more than 40 members and community leaders visited the Sixth Ave. branch of **Redstone Federal Credit Union** in Decatur during the Chamber's monthly Coffee & Cards networking event. We are thankful for the hospitality of the entire Redstone team for the early morning event and their work with area families and businesses providing financial services. Great morning for our Chamber!



Redstone Federal, a Strategic Partner of the Chamber, each year hosts a Chamber networking event to give members an opportunity to learn about services available to them in a casual, come-and-go environment.

Networking events like Coffee & Cards and the evening edition, Business After Hours, give members the chance to connect across industry lines and understand how they can better serve the community.



More than 40 members attended the Coffee & Cards networking event, hosted by Redstone Federal Credit Union on Sixth Ave. in Decatur.

Presenting Sponsor



Leadership programming wraps up year with graduations, plans for the future

Excellence in Leadership, Edge Student Leadership and Equip Student Leadership each completed their program years with graduations, recognitions and an understanding that they have an opportunity to become more engaged in their community.

The Chamber's Excellence in Leadership class – comprised of 35 business, industry, non-profit, education and municipal professionals from across Morgan County – spent their April gathering examining Decatur "now and then," taking a look at our past and present, while looking ahead to our future. The morning started with breakfast featuring Chairman Ray Long of the Morgan County Commission and Decatur City Council President Paige Bibbee each discussing their roles in leadership, their personal leadership "origin story," along with their thoughts on the state of the county and city. Later, the class received a briefing on the Chamber's "Partnership," our five-year strategic plan to address residential development, talent devel-

opment and recruitment, education, and regionalism and community branding. Jack Fite, president of Fite Building Company and the residential development task team leader; Michelle Howell, plant manager of 3M Decatur and the talent development and recruitment task team leader; and Ed Nichols, community outreach consultant for Decatur Morgan Hospital and a member of the education task team, each shared their vision for the next five years and how each of their areas impact our business community and quality of life. Following a bus tour of historic downtown Decatur featuring David Breland, program coordinator of the City of Decatur's Historic Preservation Commission, the group met with John Allison, director of the Morgan County Archives, to learn about the historical significance of our area and the role it has played in our state's heritage. After lunch at the Chamber, the group received a behind-the-scenes tour of the Cook Museum of Natural Science – a 67,000 square foot science museum which opened June 7 in

our downtown city center. While the group was not able to navigate the exhibits area at the time due to the final construction projects nearing completion, the class was able to tour the collections area, classrooms, retail store, restaurant and event area of the museum. The \$32 million investment in our downtown expects to welcome more than 200,000 visitors annually (not including school groups) and will serve as a regional attraction for generations to come. The day ended with a return to the Chamber. We are thankful to **Whitt's BBQ** of Decatur for serving as the day's lunch sponsor.

In May, the class spent their final class discussing "what's next" for them in their journey of developing as the next generation of leaders. Scott Mayo, headmaster of Decatur Heritage Christian Academy, spoke to the group about the value of regionalism – communities working together across municipal boundaries – and how that has led to successes in the area. Mayo, a former Chamber

continued on page 18



John Allison, director of the Morgan County Archives, shared with the Excellence group about the historical significance of our area and the role it has played in our state's heritage.



Excellence class members in April received a behind-the-scenes look at the Cook Museum of Natural Science collections area prior to their June opening.

Leadership continued



Kelly Thomas, sales director for Courtyard by Marriott and a board member of the Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority, met with the group to discuss the five-year strategic plan for downtown and the projects the authority plans to address.



The May class ended the day at the 3rd Street Boys & Girls Club – their community service project recipient – with a tour and a presentation to the club of more than \$11,000 raised during the 10-month class for after school programs, tutoring and technology.

Board of Directors chairman, is an active member of Launch 2035 - a regional partnership that will rethink and imagine our area's economy for the next two decades on the issues of entrepreneurship, land use and workforce development. These three issues share several characteristics and present opportunities for regional action where working together benefits the entire region. Kelly Thomas, sales director for Courtyard by Marriott and a board member of the Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority, met with the group to discuss the five-year strategic plan for downtown and the projects the authority plans to address, including entryways, public art and riverfront access. Later in the morning, attorney and former Chamber Board Chairman Doug Bachuss of Nowlin, Bachuss & Gray shared with the group his approach to servant leadership and how it has shaped the work he has done in the community with relation to – among other things – education, child welfare and youth sports. The group enjoyed lunch at the Decatur Morgan County Entrepreneurial Center, cour-

tesy of Brix & Embers food truck, and conducted a class evaluation of the past 10 months, discussing programs they enjoyed and how others could be tweaked for the next year. The class ended the day at the 3rd Street Boys & Girls Club – their community service project recipient – with a tour and a presentation to the club of more than \$11,000 raised during the 10-month class for after school programs, tutoring and technology. The presenting sponsor of Excellence is **Nucor Steel Decatur**.

The Chamber's Equip Student Leadership program - geared towards eighth grade students who are interested in career paths in the skilled trades or careers requiring a two-year degree – on April 18 toured Chamber member Valley Rubber's manufacturing and distribution facility in Falkville. The group of more than 20 students learned about careers in advanced manufacturing, chemicals, and the types of classes they need to take to pursue those types of career following their high school graduation. The semester-long program ended April 30 with an extensive tour of

the United Launch Alliance assembly facility program in Decatur and discussion with their team about careers in aeronautics, engineering and what role the Decatur team is playing in returning humans to space. ULA, a strategic partner of the Chamber, and Valley Rubber are both long-time advocates of the Chamber's workforce and talent development programming, and we are thankful for their continued support of our initiatives. Equip is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**.

On April 15, the Chamber's Edge Student Leadership – the eight-month leadership program for 10th and 11th graders from across Morgan County – celebrated their graduation with a dinner and ceremony hosted by Burningtree Country Club of Decatur. Following team presentations of their program-long service projects for area non-profits, Jerry Baker – vice president of sales for Cook's Pest Control – shared a message with the more than 100 students and parents about recognizing priorities, caring for those in your community, and making wise choices as young people. Later, Mary



The Chamber's Equip Student Leadership program is geared towards eighth grade students who are interested in career paths in the skilled trades or careers requiring a two-year degree.



Equip ended April 30 with an extensive tour of the United Launch Alliance assembly facility program in Decatur and discussion with their team about careers in aeronautics and engineering.



Jerry Baker – vice president of sales for Cook's Pest Control – shared a message with the more than 100 students and parents at the Edge graduation about recognizing priorities and caring for those in your community.



Colin Nelson, a sophomore at Decatur High School, was presented with the Mary Shaw Ozier award at the Edge graduation ceremony.

Ila Ward of Horizon Point Consulting presented two students – Colin Nelson, a sophomore at Decatur High School; and Walt Shelton, a junior at Hartselle High School – with the Mary Shaw Ozier Award. Voted on by the class participants, the award is in memory of a student leadership graduate who passed away soon after finishing the program. Ozier underwent cancer treatment during her school year, yet never missed a session of the 1999-2000 program. She finished the program in May and

died the following September. Each year since her passing, participants have recognized one of their own in Mary Shaw's honor. Ward was a member of the 1999-2000 class and was a friend of Ozier. This is the first time in the history of the award there was a tie in the voting and presented to two students. Edge Student Leadership is made possible by presenting sponsor **Nucor Steel Decatur**, as well as award sponsor **Horizon Point Consulting**.

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



continued on page 20

Leadership continued



Walt Shelton, a junior at Hartselle High School, was also presented with the Mary Shaw Ozier Award.



Edge Student Leadership is an annual eight-month program featuring high schools students from across Morgan County.

Better late than never for the Spring Golf Classic

On April 26, the Chamber's Spring Golf Classic teed off a week late due to inclement weather, but found itself under beautiful skies once the event got underway. Hosted by gold sponsor **Burningtree Country Club**, nearly 100 golfers from across north Alabama took part in the annual four-man scramble. The Chamber would also like to thank beverage cart sponsor **Valley Budweiser**, hole-in-one sponsor **Lynn Layton Chevrolet** and the business community for making it a great day!

A Flight

1st place

Team Fite Building Company – 52

2nd place

Team Bryan Fowler – 53

Closest to the Pin

Dewayne Eckl - #12

B Flight

1st place

Team Nucor Steel Decatur – 65

2nd place

Team Shapiro Metals – 65

Longest Drive, Sponsored by **Thryv**

Mac Murphy - #18

Gold Sponsor



Spring Golf Classic continued



Young professionals discuss critical need for residential development

Residential recruitment is a critical issue in Decatur-Morgan County, especially in the effort to attract young professionals and families to our community. On April 30, more than 40 YPs gathered at the Boys & Girls Club of North Alabama to discuss that topic and the status of development in our area during the April edition of the YP Leadership Luncheon, presented by **Ascend Performance Materials** and lunch sponsor **Kiwanis Club of Decatur**.

The three-member panel of Victoria McKenzie, Stratton Orr and Miracle Osborne – each members of the Chamber’s Residential Development Task Team – shared with the group the goals of the task team, achievements the group has already accomplished and what is on the horizon. More importantly, the room of YPs shared with the task team members what they were looking for in housing options: upscale “Class A” apartment options and starter

homes in developed neighborhoods. Thousands of jobs are coming to our region in the next several years, and our area needs to be prepared to receive them and have them plant roots and become part of our community. We are thankful for the engagement of the young professionals in our community and their enthusiasm for the development of a long-range strategy for homebuilding in Decatur-Morgan County.



More than 40 young professionals gathered in April to discuss the need for residential development as part of the Chamber’s YP Leadership Luncheon.



Attendees shared with the three-person panel what they were looking for in housing, specifically upscale multifamily developments and starter homes.

Presenting Sponsor



April Lunch Sponsor



Young professionals play a critical role in the residential development conversation as key stakeholders, being the next generation of leaders in Decatur-Morgan County and positioning themselves to benefit from the forecasted job growth in north Alabama.



Miracle Osborne (center), a member of the Chamber’s Residential Development Task Team, spoke as part of the three-person panel on the work of the team and what is on the horizon for development in our area.



Young professionals from diverse businesses and industries shared their thoughts on the economics of residential development in our area and the challenges we are working to overcome to reach success.



The power to connect.



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