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August 2019

# Directions

A PUBLICATION OF THE DECATUR-MORGAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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Touring Area Industry and Education Partners

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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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**Amber Fortenberry**  
Director of Talent Development and Recruitment

# W<sup>A</sup> Word from your chamber

Shopping for new school supplies reminds me of my own “back to school” memories. Trapper Keepers, highlighters, pencil sharpener, index cards and the like remind me of the excitement of seeing my friends again and exploring something new.

Now as a parent, for my own children to experience those emotions it requires me to release my twin daughters and college-bound son to people who will spend more time with them than anyone else aside from our family: teachers.

A strong case can be made that teachers are the most important position in a community. They shape and mold any children in their care – no matter their gender, race, language or home life – to be the best they can be. They are teachers not just of their subjects, but teachers of life lessons, imprinting on each one to be bold and imaginative in the world and workforce they will soon join. They are often a primary difference maker in the life of a child.

In our community, we – the Chamber – recognize that and take an active role in equipping and empowering our school systems. Among our many annu-

al events and programs, the last week of July and into August the Chamber celebrated “New Teacher Week,” where we held new teacher breakfast events for Decatur City and Morgan County new teachers and shared with them how the Chamber can support them in their new adventure in our community.

Later that week, the Chamber – in partnership with Morgan County Economic Development Association – held the annual Teachers on Tour event, a day-long program where new teachers from Morgan County, Decatur City and Hartselle City systems toured industry education partners to learn about careers and development opportunities for students, enjoy fellowship and networking, and discover more about their new community.

The Chamber’s goal in having a relationship with our education partners is to support their work preparing the next generation. That starts with our efforts to expand early children education opportunities with pre-K classrooms, advocating for workforce and career technical training, providing audiences for school leaders to discuss the state of our schools with the community,

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## Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce

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## The Chamber Board

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Russ Wilson, Indorama Ventures

## INVESTORS

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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# Chamber celebrates “New Teacher Week”

While parents were finishing up the back-to-school shopping and picking up schedules for their students, the Chamber focused on celebrating new teachers and welcoming them into our community.

July 30-31 marked more than 20 years the Chamber has hosted breakfast events for Morgan County and Decatur City Schools to recognize those men and women who have made the choice to be part of our educational community and serve as leaders in our classrooms. At the July 30 event for Morgan County teachers, Superintendent Bill Hopkins, Jr. encouraged new teachers to keep the fire and energy throughout the year, lean on their teaching peers for ideas and encouragement, and to always look how they can improve from day to day. The breakfast – made possible by gold sponsors **3M of Decatur** and the **Morgan County Commission** – welcomed more than 130 new teachers, principals, administrators and staff from the system, including community and business leaders.

The same annual event for Decatur City Schools, held July 31, wel-

comed more than 150 new teachers, administrators and principals to kick off another school year at the New Teacher Breakfast – presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur** and gold sponsors **3M of Decatur** and **The City of Decatur**. Superintendent Dr. Michael Douglas, starting his third school year with the system, shared with the room how excited he was to watch the system bear the fruit of work done over the past two years with changes around the system. And in the process of discussing changes to the feeder patterns, expanding career tech opportunities and adding Pre-K classroom units, Dr. Douglas reminded those in attendance that each decision schools make need to focus on this key question: “how does this improve instruction for children?” **First Baptist Church of Decatur** served as venue sponsor for both new teacher events.

In its second year, Teachers on Tour in 2019 focused on new Pre-K – 12 teachers, principals and administrators Decatur City, Hartselle City and Morgan County school systems touring industry and education partners across our area. Presented by **Redstone Federal**

**Credit Union**, the all-day event featured area employers showcasing the work they do and what types of opportunities are available for graduates right in their own backyard. Visited industries included Indorama Ventures, Hexcel Corporation, 3M of Decatur, and education partner the Decatur campus of Calhoun Community College. The more than 160 involved enjoyed lunch and time to network with their peers across systems. The goal of the event is to equip teachers with the knowledge and information to help steer their students towards a successful future and develop a strong future workforce. The Chamber and partner Morgan County Economic Development Association are thankful for silver sponsor **Indorama Ventures**, and corporate sponsors **Ascend Performance Materials** and **Hexcel** for helping make the day possible and supporting the shared mission of strengthening our workforce.



Principals at the Chamber's annual New Teacher Breakfast events each do a “roll call” of their new staff members and introduce them to the group.



More than 130 attended the Chamber's annual Morgan County Schools New Teacher Breakfast.





Principals at the Chamber's annual New Teacher Breakfast events each do a "roll call" of their new staff members and introduce them to the group.



More than 130 attended the Chamber's annual Morgan County Schools New Teacher Breakfast.



More than 130 attended the Chamber's annual Morgan County Schools New Teacher Breakfast.



Each new teacher at both events received a box of school supplies for their classrooms, courtesy of gold sponsor 3M of Decatur.



Austin High School cheerleaders helped introduce new staff members at the Decatur City New Teacher Breakfast.



Principals at the Chamber's annual New Teacher Breakfast events each do a "roll call" of their new staff members and introduce them to the group.

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# Ribbon Cuttings



**The Breast Health Center  
at Decatur Morgan Hospital**  
1201 7th Street SE, Decatur • (256) 973-2000  
[www.decaturmorganhospital.net](http://www.decaturmorganhospital.net)



**The Albany**  
400 Grant Street, Unit 1-A, Decatur • (256) 654-0811  
[www.the-albany.com](http://www.the-albany.com)



**Healthsource of Decatur**  
2934 Point Mallard Parkway SE, #B2, Decatur • (256) 584-9554  
[www.healthsourcechiro.com/decatur-se/](http://www.healthsourcechiro.com/decatur-se/)



**The United Way of Morgan County**  
115 1st Avenue NE, Decatur • (256) 353-6643  
[www.uwmc.org](http://www.uwmc.org)



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# New Teachers continued



Principals at the Chamber's annual New Teacher Breakfast events each do a "roll call" of their new staff members and introduce them to the group.



Austin High School cheerleaders helped introduce new staff members at the Decatur City New Teacher Breakfast.



New teachers at Austinville Elementary School received "team jerseys" from Principal Tony Willis at the Decatur City New Teacher Breakfast.



Aly Hall, account coordinator for Nucor Steel Decatur, spoke briefly during the Decatur City New Teacher Breakfast and shared a story about how her mother – an early childhood teacher – served as a mentor for new teachers in her home system.

**Teachers on Tour  
Presenting Sponsor**



**Decatur City Schools  
New Teacher Breakfast  
Presenting Sponsor**

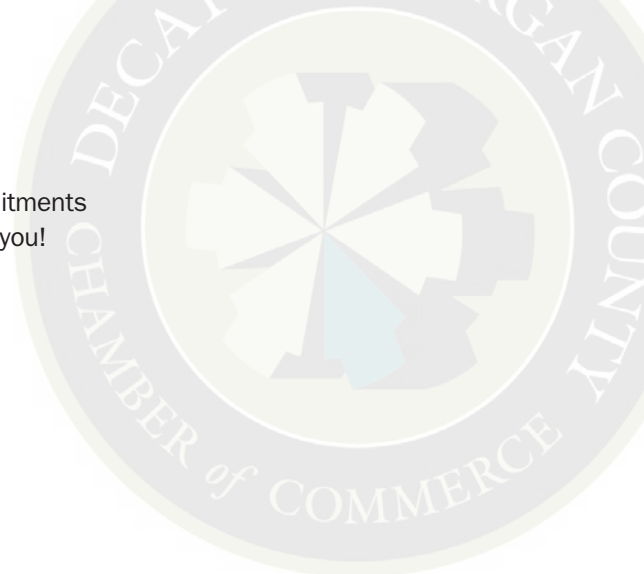


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# New Members

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!

Green Life Chiropractic  
Humana MarketPOINT  
Osborne Animal Clinic  
Pinnacle Title Services, LLC  
Riley Security  
Stillwater Washing Company



## Save the Date!

### Partners in Education Working Breakfast

Tuesday, Aug. 20, 7:30 a.m.  
Austin High School  
Presented by Redstone Federal  
Credit Union

### YP Leadership Luncheon

Tuesday, Aug. 20, 12 p.m.  
The Loft at First Baptist Church, Decatur  
Presented by Ascend  
Performance Materials

### Breakfast & Biz: Grow with Google

Tuesday, Aug. 27, 7:30 a.m.  
The Magnolia Room, Decatur  
Presented by Redstone Federal  
Credit Union

### Business After Hours

Tuesday, Aug. 27, 4:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
Presented and hosted by Sensations  
Massage & Body Clinic, Decatur

### Women in Business Celebration

Tuesday, Oct. 1, 11:30 a.m.  
The Doubletree by Hilton  
Decatur Riverfront  
Presented by Nucor Steel Decatur

### Member Appreciation Celebration

Friday, Oct. 4, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
The Chamber Office  
Presented by Truckers Warehouse, Inc.

### The Fall Golf Classic

Friday, Oct. 11  
Burningtree Country Club  
Presented by Valley Budweiser

### Endless Opportunities

Thursday – Friday, Oct. 17-18  
Celebration Arena, Priceville  
Presented by 3M

### State of Morgan County Schools Address

Thursday, Nov. 5, 7:30 a.m.  
First Baptist Church, Decatur  
Presented by Morgan County  
Commission

### State of Decatur City Schools Address

Tuesday, Nov. 19, 7:30 a.m.  
Decatur Baptist Church  
Presented by Indorama Ventures

## A Word from Your Chamber continued

create hands-on environments where students can imagine their lives in a career or classroom after high school, and leadership development programs for middle and high school students to sharpen their skills and connect with their peers across systems. It is our honor to provide these and other chances for young people to grow.

But where it starts is with teachers. Schools are the identity of a community, and teachers have made the choice to be servant leaders on the front lines with our young people. Every success story starts with a teacher. We all have – myself included – that ONE who believed in us and inspired us to be a better version of

ourselves. And while we celebrate them with breakfast events and community information, the Chamber's support for their work is both year-round and hands on. And it's one of the most important things as a community we can do.



# Session two of SWeETy Camp graduates 20 high school girls

As part of our commitment to preparing the next generation workforce, the Chamber each year presents SWeETy (Summer Welding & Electrical Technology) Camp for 9th–12th grade girls. This free camp provides hands-on experience in welding and electrical trades, helping students develop problem-solving skills and teamwork as they participate in instructor-led projects, field trips, and interact with women role models during lunch programs. Certified and trained employ-

ees 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 Two - presented by **Indorama Ventures** of Decatur – took place June 10-13 on the Decatur campus of Calhoun Community College and graduated 20 high schools at the end of the four-day session. Along with

learning the basics in electrical and welding technologies, students were exposed to advanced manufacturing skills, including drafting and 3D printing. The Chamber is thankful for the partnership with Calhoun and our work focusing on our shared mission of equipping our future workforce.

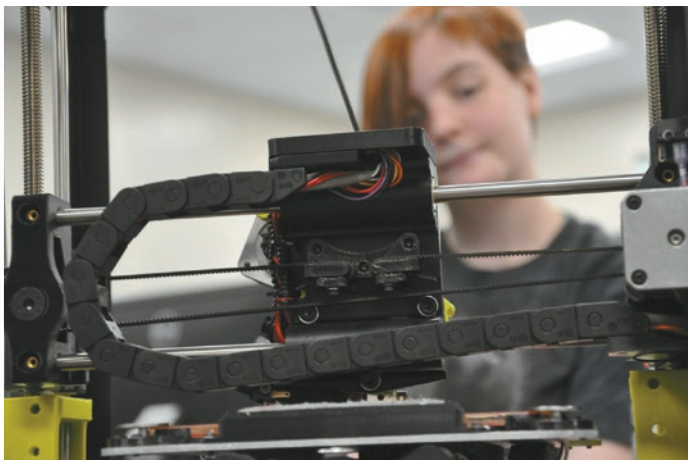
The week was also made possible by lunch sponsors **J.M. Smucker Company**, **Java Jaay Café** and **Kinder MorganBulk Terminals**.



*During the week, students were taught by certified welding instructors and learned the required skills to work in the industry.*



*In the electrical classroom, students received hands-on training in wiring, circuitry and current flow, and learned how to safely hone their skills.*



*Students were exposed during the four-day week to 3D printing and drafting as part of the STEM-based curriculum.*



*Class members learned first-hand the skills and knowledge required to work in the welding field.*





In the 13 years of SWEeTy Camp, the program has graduated more than 360 students.



High school girls from across north Alabama took part in the annual SWEeTy Camp.



Exposure to non-traditional fields for women to students provides them the opportunity to explore previously undiscovered interests that can provide a rewarding career.

**Presenting Sponsor**





# U.S. Chamber award-winning entrepreneur Kim Caudle Lewis to be keynote speaker for Women in Business Celebration



Finding the perfect work-life balance is an ongoing struggle for men and women in the workforce who have families and lives outside their professions. Wherever that balance is, you will likely find Kim Caudle Lewis somewhere nearby.

Lewis, founder and CEO of the Huntsville-based company PROJECTXYZ, will discuss that and the path she took to find herself where she is today at the Chamber's annual Women in Business Celebration Tuesday, Oct. 1, 11:30 a.m. at the Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront. The luncheon, presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**, promises to be an inspirational conversation about facing challenges while staying focused on moving forward.

Since its inception of PROJECTXYZ, the company has grown to include

employees spanning multiple U.S. locations. The company, which provides customer support in engineering, logistics, information technology, and alternative energy, has become a forerunner in the industry. Having been recognized among the Inc. 5000 in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017; the recipient of the U.S. Chamber Blue Ribbon award in 2016; and recipient of the Huntsville Madison County Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year award in 2015, PROJECTXYZ has steadily garnered the attention of notable sources. In 2017, PROJECTXYZ was named the US Chamber of Commerce Women-Owned Business of the Year. In July 2019, the U.S. Army Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal awarded PROJECTXYZ Inc. a Foreign Military Sales contract valued at more than \$17.2 million.

PROJECTXYZ's success is further complimented by Lewis' personal achievements and civic involvement. Her business and community contributions have earned her board member positions for Calhoun Community College Foundation, Cummings Research Park, the Huntsville Hospital Foundation, Health Establishments at Local Schools, the Huntsville Botanical Garden, the National Children's Advocacy Center, and currently the 2019 Board Chair of the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce. With each accomplishment, professionally and personally,

Lewis continues to solidify her standing as a preeminent leader in business and the community.

The lunch will also feature the presentation of the 2019 Athena International Leadership Award, an honor presented across the world by Chambers of Commerce, women's organizations and universities. The award – this year sponsored by **Redstone Federal Credit Union** – honors those who have achieved the highest level of professional excellence, contribute time and energy to improve the quality of life for others in the community, and actively assist others – particularly women – in realizing their full leadership potential. For more information about the award, contact Crystal Brown, the Chamber's vice president of development, at (256) 353-5312. To submit a nomination online, visit the Chamber's website at <http://www.dcc.org/what-we-do/program-of-work/business-development>.

Tickets to the event are \$35 for members and \$55 for non-members. The event is also made possible by Gold Sponsors **GE Appliances, a Haier company** and **Huntsville International Airport**. Please watch for the RSVP information announcement in late August. We hope you will join the Chamber for one of the most impactful events of our program year.

Presenting Sponsor



Athena Award Presenting Sponsor



# State of the State Forum addresses successes, challenges of legislative session

On June 25, the Chamber welcomed more than 120 attendees and several media outlets to the annual State of the State Forum, which provided an opportunity for Chamber members and the business community to hear about the most recently completed legislative session, plans for the future of state government, and answers to previously submitted questions from the membership. The forum, presented by **Alabama Technology Network** and gold sponsor **The Boeing Company**, included topics

such as infrastructure, education, the prison system, workforce and talent development, the protection of life, transportation and incentives. The Chamber is thankful for the relationship we have with the Morgan County Delegation and the work they do on our behalf in Montgomery. A special thanks go to Rep. Terri Collins, Rep. Parker Moore, Sen. Arthur Orr, Rep. Proncey Robertson, and Rep. Scott Stadthagen. Rep. Randall Shedd was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.

Presenting Sponsor



**Alabama  
Technology  
Network**



*Business and community leaders from across Morgan County attended the Chamber's annual State of the State Forum.*



*The Chamber's annual State of the State Forum is an opportunity for the Morgan County Delegation and the business community to connect and discuss policies impacting our area's quality of life.*



*Rep. Parker Moore of Decatur spoke briefly during the Chamber's State of the State Forum.*



*Sen. Arthur Orr of Decatur spoke briefly during the Chamber's State of the State Forum.*

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Rep. Proncey Robertson of Mt. Hope spoke briefly during the Chamber's State of the State Forum.



Rep. Terri Collins (left) and Rep. Scott Stadthagen each served as speakers at the Chamber's annual State of the State Forum.

## Excellence in Leadership begins new program year in late August

Excellence in Leadership, the Chamber's flagship leader development program, will kick off Aug. 28, starting the 10-month class with a group of 35 adult participants coming from Morgan County businesses, industries, small businesses, health-care providers, municipalities, school systems and non-profits.

The program – previously known as Leadership Morgan County – is designed to identify, orient, develop and network existing and emerging leaders with the goal of enhancing positive growth in the area business community. The class meets once a month, with each day-long session focusing on single topics including healthcare, economic development, education, tourism, city and county government, law enforcement, and social services. The class also includes a service project, where members of the class select an area non-profit to support through fundraising and community service. The program will wrap up with a graduation event at the Chamber's annual Small Business Awards Celebration in May 2020.

Chamber members nominate individuals from their workforce, and participants are selected by members of the Chamber Leadership Committee. The presenting sponsor of Excellence is Nucor Steel Decatur.

The 2019-2020 class members and their employers:

John Andrzejewski, City of Decatur; Annah Ayers, Morgan County Commission; Paige Bibbee, City of Decatur; Catherine Bolding, Boys & Girls Clubs of North Alabama; Juan Boulton, Toray Composite Materials America; Ryan Cate Gibson, Holistic Performance Group; Marty Chambers, Morgan County Schools; Lori Eastman, 3M; Heather Hampton, GE Appliances, a Haier Company; Nick Hubler, Decatur Morgan Hospital; Mike Johnson, Morgan County Schools; Andrain Jones, Strayer University; Jacob Ladner, Interstate Billing Service; Ashley Lorange, Renasant Bank; Alex Lowry, Progress Bank; Kyle Mangum, Bank Independent; Ashley McCulloch, Morgan County School; Mark McCurry, Parker Real Estate LLC; Joe McKaig, Decatur Baptist Church; Jared Miner,

Morgan County Schools; Megan Pitts, United Launch Alliance; Jerred Pope, United Launch Alliance; Chad Pope, 3M; Stewart Schuerr, JT Ray Company; Jared Sharpton, United Launch Alliance; Nathan Springer, City of Decatur; Michelle Stinnett, Next Move Real Estate; Nikki Tallent, Habitat for Humanity of Morgan County; Alyson Terry, Home2 Suites By Hilton; Lisa Terry, Decatur Utilities; Tim Thrasher, Community Action Partnership of North Alabama; Wesley Torain, Calhoun Community College; Nora Vanderploeg, 3M; Richard Watts, The Salvation Army; Amber Weldon, Double Duty Commercial Cleaning.

Presenting Sponsor

**NUCOR**<sup>®</sup>  
**DECATUR**

# Tennessee Valley Training Center hosts “safe” networking event

On June 20, more than 40 members and community leaders visited Tennessee Valley Training Center in Decatur throughout the morning during the Chamber’s monthly Coffee & Cards networking event. We are thankful for the hospitality of the entire TVTC team for the early morning event and their work with area businesses and industries for safety and workplace training.



Presenting Sponsor





# Clay Shoot Classic welcomes members to the great outdoors

The Chamber's annual Clay Shoot Classic, held at Limestone Hunting Preserve in Ardmore, Ala., was an opportunity for more than 65 members to enjoy "Chamber of Commerce weather" in the great outdoors. The day-long event included a morning and afternoon flight, a great opportunity for fellowship during lunch and the chance for teams to compete for prizes. For the morning flight, the team from Progress Bank finished first with a score of 318, while the team from Gateway Commercial Brokerage finished a close second at 315. In the afternoon, Guice Pharmacy had a commanding win with a 312 over second-place Alabama Farmers Co-Op's score of 273. We are thankful for all our members who came out for another wonderful event, and we look forward to seeing you next summer!



Shooters from across north Alabama turned out for the Chamber's annual Clay Shoot Classic at Limestone Hunting Preserve.

We are thankful for all our members who turned out for the Chamber's annual Clay Shoot Classic.



As one shooter shared, "this is Chamber of Commerce weather, but just with shotguns and not golf clubs!"

Shooters from across north Alabama turned out for the Chamber's annual Clay Shoot Classic at Limestone Hunting Preserve.





The day was broken up by lunch between the morning and afternoon flights.



Shooters from across north Alabama turned out for the Chamber's annual Clay Shoot Classic at Limestone Hunting Preserve.



Events like the Chamber's annual Clay Shoot Classic are opportunities for members to network with clients and customers outside of your traditional networking environments.



More than 65 shooters enjoyed an afternoon away from the office during the Chamber's annual Clay Shoot Classic.



The team from Progress Bank won the morning flight for a score of 318.



The team from Gateway Commercial Brokerage placed second in the morning flight with a score of 315.

continued on page 20



# Clay Shoot continued



In the afternoon flight, Guice Pharmacy won the grouping with a score of 312.



Coming in second in the afternoon flight was the team from Alabama Farmers Co-Op with a score of 273.

## Edge Student Leadership launches new program year

The Chamber's long-time student leadership program Edge is prepared to welcome 34 high school students from across Morgan County as the school year begins.

Edge Student Leadership is open to all 10th and 11th-grade students in Morgan County. The program was created to expose students to leadership opportunities in a creative and challenging manner, providing the students with the tools necessary to develop individual leadership skills. The program also encourages students to be a positive influence in their schools and to serve in the community. The class meets for a full day once a month, with each day focusing on specific topics. Themes for each day include teambuilding, healthcare, public safety, education, economic development, community non-profits, area history, county and city government, and a day trip to Montgomery to focus on state government.

This year, more than 115 area students applied for the program, which is made possible by presenting sponsor **Nucor Steel Decatur**. Participants are blind judged by a panel based on a points system. Applications are available in April from school principals and counselors.

This year's class includes Reese Banks, Priceville High School; William Barnett, Jr., Decatur Heritage Christian Academy; Hensley Beatty, Hartselle High School; Brantley Blaxton, Hartselle High School; Ward Bouchillon, Decatur High School; Morgan Brannon, Decatur High School; Natalie Brown, Decatur High School; Lauren Burnett, Decatur High School; Skye Fleming, Austin High School; Calee Fowler, Hartselle High School; Srishti Garg, Austin High School; Amelia Hicks, Decatur High School; Natalie Hurst, Decatur High School; Emma Jankowski, West Morgan High School; Raegan Jenkins, Cornerstone Christian School; Josh

Kelley, A.P. Brewer High School; Jeb Lowman, Austin High School; Emily Grace Lyons, Decatur High School; Lydia Matthews, Decatur High School; Fay Moore, Austin High School; Addie Lu Nails, Decatur High School; Mary Claire Pace, Hartselle High School; John Wesley Peters, Decatur High School; Mary-Peyton Propst, Decatur Heritage Christian Academy; Colby Reeves, Austin High School; Caleb Simmons, Hartselle High School; Walker Smith, West Morgan High School; Anna Claire Stacy, Decatur High School; Nia Stevenson, Decatur High School; Eli Terry, Hartselle High School; Wyatt Tomlin, Falkville High School; Cassie Truitt, Decatur High School; Emily Ann Vought, Decatur High School; Sam Waters, Decatur Heritage Christian Academy.

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# New Teachers continued



*New teachers from across Morgan County loaded up on buses to take part in the Chamber's annual Teachers on Tour event.*



*Hexcel served as an industry host during the Chamber's annual Teachers on Tour event.*



*New teachers from across Morgan County toured the advanced manufacturing and innovation lab at Calhoun Community College as part of the Chamber's annual Teachers on Tour event.*



# YP Leadership Luncheon discusses tourism, attractions

“What’s there to do in Decatur-Morgan County?” That’s the question Danielle Gibson - president and CEO of Decatur-Morgan County Tourism - addressed at the Chamber’s YP Leadership Luncheon Tuesday, July 9 held at the Chamber’s CSFCO Board Room.

With the expansion of tourism, attractions, local festivals, annual traditions and downtown redevelopment, the options seem endless, which was the message delivered by Gibson to a room of nearly 40 young professionals. Not only is tourism bringing

visitors to our area, but it is a huge economic driver, providing jobs and tax revenue in our own back yard. The YP Leadership Luncheon series is presented by **Ascend Performance Materials**, along with July lunch sponsor **Fite Building Company**.



More than 40 young professionals took part in the Chamber’s July gathering of the YP Leadership Luncheon series.

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Young professionals from across north Alabama attended the Chamber’s July YP Leadership Luncheon.



Young professionals from across north Alabama attended the Chamber’s July YP Leadership Luncheon.



Danielle Gibson, president and CEO of Decatur Morgan County Tourism was the keynote speaker for the Chamber’s YP Leadership Luncheon.



J. Robert Fite of Fite Building Company spoke briefly before the Chamber’s YP Leadership Luncheon. Fite Building Company served as the lunch sponsor for the event.



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