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Directions

A PUBLICATION OF THE DECATUR-MORGAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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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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Leissa Chittam

Chamber CFO and Total Resource Campaign Coordinator

Word from your chamber

I'm on social media on a not-so-regular basis. My Facebook feed is made up mostly of pictures of my friends' cute dogs, recipes or encouraging notes from friends and families. To be honest, that really all I want to see. But there are these memes and a hashtag I've often see floating around lately: #FOMO.

Yes, I had to look it up too! FOMO is shorthand for "Fear Of Missing Out." It references the idea of people being afraid they're not in the loop on the latest news or social scene, therefore missing out on what people are talking about or how they're spending their time. In this digital age of connectivity, it's hard to imagine we're missing out on anything, but with so much going on, it's impossible to be everywhere!

Many know the Chamber is full steam ahead on our Total Resource Campaign (TRC) – a volunteer-led sponsorship marketing program for our member businesses to help identify target audiences in the Chamber for their brand, help grow their business and align their marketing with likeminded community initiatives. The eight-week campaign provides an avenue for members to – for example – be a presenting sponsor

at a "State of" event, buy a table sponsorship for Women in Business, support our Equip Student Leadership program, or securing a four-man team in the networking-friendly Fall Golf Classic.

TRC is a successful platform for the Chamber, and we are thankful for our members who have participated over the years. However, we struggle with a case of FOMO here at the Chamber – not for ourselves, but on behalf of other people. Specifically, for our Chamber members and other area businesses who are missing out on ideal opportunities to target audiences, grow their business and develop fruitful relationships with key industry leaders. How could your company getting involved in the Chamber's new Workforce of the Future Summit lead to a better trained workforce for you, helping to expanding your production? Could taking a client as your guest to participate in the Clay Shoot Classic team lead to a referral of new customers in a new market? How could your exposure as the Presenting Sponsor of the Chamber's Small Business Awards Celebration better position you to bid on a government subcontract with an area industry partner? What potential business col-

continued on page 10

Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce

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The Chamber Board

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& Fabrication, Inc.

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Russ Wilson, Indorama Ventures

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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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Innovation, servant leadership celebrated at Women in Business luncheon

Two leaders in the business community took the stage at the 11th annual Women in Business Celebration, each recognized as trailblazers and mentors by their peers.

Dr. Eleanor “Jo” Cook, secretary-treasurer emeritus of Cook’s Pest Control, was honored with the ATHENA Leadership Award at the event attended by more than 340 people at Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront. Named for the Greek goddess of wisdom, as well as the champion of justice and law, the ATHENA Leadership Award is presented across the world by chambers of commerce, women’s organizations and universities. It is an international program and is promoted by local organizations.

“As the matriarch of the Cook family, Dr. Cook has both publically and privately lived out the values of the company that bears her name: honesty, courtesy, respect and a solid work ethic. That’s been the case from the day she became a co-owner nearly 70 years ago to today,” said Tami

Reist, president and CEO of Alabama Mountain Lakes and 2018 recipient of the award. “Her generosity with her time in teaching and mentoring generations of men and women continue to have a long-lasting impact beyond north Alabama. She is a treasure and a servant leader we all can learn from each day.”

Dr. Cook and her husband, the late John R. Cook, Sr., became co-owners of the pest control company in 1950 when Dr. Cook’s father-in-law, John L. Cook, passed away. Beginning with only one full-time employee and a handful of accounts, Cook’s Pest Control is now the eighth largest pest management company in the United States, employing more than 1,800 in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida and Mississippi. Throughout the history of the company, it has always stressed integrity, courtesy, taking care of the customer and making sure their company values are expressed in every user transaction. The company’s integrity was recognized by the Better Business Bureau with its 2001

National Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics. That same year, the National Pest Management Association presented John – with Jo by his side – its Pinnacle Award, the association’s highest honor. In 2008, Dr. Cook oversaw the writing of *Employee Number 2: The Story of John Cook and Cook’s Pest Control*.

In 1980, Dr. Cook and her late husband opened Cook’s Natural Science Museum, a 5,000 square-foot facility, as a place to display John’s insect and wildlife collection. Nearly 40 years later in 2019, the Cook Museum of Natural Science re-opened its doors as a 62,000 square foot regional attraction – more than 12 times the size of the original venture featuring a café, retail store, event center and educational epicenter for natural science. Dr. Cook serves on the board of directors. She and her late husband also were involved in the founding of First Bible Church of Decatur in 1965. The church is opening its second campus in nearby Madison, Ala., this fall. Mrs. Cook has spent much of her adult life teach-



More than 340 people attended the Chamber’s 11th annual Women in Business Celebration, presented by Nucor Steel Decatur.



Dr. Eleanor “Jo” Cook, secretary-treasurer emeritus of Cook’s Pest Control, was honored with the ATHENA Leadership Award at the Chamber’s 11th annual Women in Business Celebration, a luncheon attended by more than 340 people at Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront. This award was presented by Tami Reist, president and CEO of Alabama Mountain Lakes and the 2018 award recipient.



This was the 11th year for the Women in Business Celebration, this year held at the Doubletree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront.



During her acceptance speech, Dr. Cook reflected on the role her faith and values played in shaping the values of the company she and her husband, the late John R Cook, Sr., led together for nearly 60 years.

ing Bible classes, children's Sunday School lessons, and leading overseas mission trips. She also has served on the Civitan Auxiliary, the Decatur General Auxiliary (now Decatur Morgan Hospital), The Junior League of Morgan County, Business and Professional Women's Club, area representative for Christian Women's Club, lay staff for Campus Crusade, a member of the Auxiliary Board of Directors for Titus International, and other faith-based organizations.

Together, Dr. Cook and her late husband had a son, John, Jr., who is married to his wife, Lyn. Jo Cook has one grandson, Brian, who is president and CEO of the company and president of the museum board of directors. Brian and his wife, Leslie, have three children – great grandchildren to Dr. Cook.

Later in the event, the Chamber welcomed keynote speaker Kim Caudle Lewis to the stage for a "fireside chat" like conversation with Chamber Vice Chair of Development Jamie Reeves. Lewis is founder and CEO of the Huntsville-based company PROJECTXYZ, which provides customer support in engineering, logistics, information technology, and alternative energy, and has grown to include

employees spanning multiple U.S. locations and become a forerunner in the industry. During her time at the event, Lewis shared several stories that highlighted her motivation and what drives her each day: creating opportunities to give back to the community and others. As the youngest of 10 children, she discussed times in her life when she was always surrounded by family and emphasized the value of having a strong support network around you. To display those values, Lewis and her companies 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. In 2017, PROJECTXYZ was named the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Women-Owned Business of the Year, and 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 successes and civic involvement. Her business and community contribu-

tions 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 Women in Business Celebration is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**. The event is also made possible by ATHENA Leadership Award Sponsor **Redstone Federal Credit Union**, Gold Sponsors **GE Appliances**, a **Haier Company**, and **Huntsville International Airport**.

Presenting Sponsor
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Ribbon Cuttings



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www.GreenLifeChiropractic.com



Residence Inn by Marriott Decatur

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Boys & Girls Clubs of North Alabama – Oak Park Club

1218 16th Avenue SE, Decatur • (256) 552-3033
www.bgnal.com

Women in Business continued



Business and community leaders from across north Alabama – more than 340 in total – attended the 11th annual Women in Business Celebration.



The Chamber welcomed keynote speaker Kim Caudle Lewis to the stage for a “fireside chat” conversation with Chamber Vice Chair of Development Jamie Reeves.



During the keynote conversation, Kim Caudle Lewis and Chamber Vice Chair of Development Jamie Reeves discussed creating opportunities to give back to the community and helping to build new leaders for the next generation.



Dr. Cook (gray jacket, center), secretary-treasurer emeritus of Cook's Pest Control, was honored with the ATHENA Leadership Award at the Chamber's 11th annual Women in Business Celebration. Here, she is pictured with other past Athena honorees in attendance.



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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!

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Boyet Construction	Pro Fitness & Tanning
Carriage House	The Cole Law Firm, LLC
Central Park Baptist Church	Wheeler Basin Natural Gas
Hairston Law, PC	Yellowhammer Logistics Services
Home Town Lenders	
Meagan Yarbrough, LLC Attorney at Law	

Save the Date!

Endless Opportunities

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

YP Leadership Luncheon

Tuesday, Oct. 22, 12 p.m.
CSFCO Board Room at the Chamber
Presented by
Ascend Performance Materials

Coffee & Cards Networking Event

Wednesday, Oct. 23, 7:30 – 9 a.m.
Presented and hosted by
SilMan Construction

State of Morgan County Schools

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

State of Decatur City Schools

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

Coffee & Cards Networking Event

Thursday, Nov. 21, 7:30 – 9 a.m.
Presented and host by
Edward Jones – Rita Seaton

Thanksgiving Holiday

Chamber Office closed Nov. 28-29

A Word from Your Chamber continued

laborator could you meet during the Breakfast & Biz event where you sponsored the breakfast?

There are examples after examples where engagement in the Chamber's programs through TRC have developed relationships and grown business. And we would love to connect you with members to share those testimonials. Yet, just a little more than 20 percent

of Chamber members take advantage of those marketing opportunities. That leaves around 700 members – and countless area businesses not affiliated with the Chamber – who have the chance to connect with programs that support their company goals while investing in our business community. Are you one of them? If you are, do you know what you're missing out on with the Chamber? What could being

involved in TRC do to your bottom line? Where can the Chamber serve you and your vision for business?

Our well-versed volunteers are standing by to keep you from missing out.

Renewing Members

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

Acme Brick & Tile	Decatur Truck & Trailer Sales	Jackson Plumbing Heating & Cooling	Rotary Club of Decatur Daybreak
ADS Security	Decatur Women's Chamber of Commerce	Jamie Hood Jewelers, Inc.	Second Read Books
Alabama Farm Credit	Dental Associates of North AL	Kids to Love Foundation	Security Finance
American Cancer Society	Domino's Pizza	Launch Program C/O Wellstone Behavioral Health	ServisFirst Bank
Ameri-Tek	DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Decatur Riverfront	LPL Financial Services - Dewayne Eddy	Servpro of Decatur
Anthony Dental Services	Down the Line, Inc.	Lynn Layton Cadillac-Nissan, Inc.	SmartFox Solutions
Baggette Construction, Inc.	Elamar Skin Science	Lynn Layton Chevrolet, Inc.	Southern Printing Co., Inc.
Barge Design Solutions, Inc.	Elite Equipment Rental, Inc.	Magnolia River Services, Inc.	Southern Staffing
BBVA	Epic Church	Mayer Electric	SouthernLINC Wireless
Belt & Bruner, PC.	Essix Resources, Inc.	Mellow Mushroom	St. Peter Baptist Church
Beltline Church of Christ	Express Oil Change - 6th Ave	Mid-South Sales, Inc.	State Products Mart Authority (SPMA)
BlueCross & BlueShield of Alabama	Family Security Credit Union Priceville Branch	Milo's Hamburgers	Stephen Ward & Associates
Brannon Benefits Consulting featuring Aflac	First Presbyterian Church	Moe's Original BBQ	StoneRiver, Inc.
Brooks Lock & Key, Inc.	First Priority of Greater Decatur	Morgan County 911	Strayer University
Cagle Mini-Storage, LLC	Fish Window Cleaning	Mosaic Mentoring of North Alabama	Surgery Center of Decatur
CashMaster	Fountain, Parker, Harbarger & Associates	Nola + VanPeursem Architects, PC	T.P.I.S. Industrial Services, LLC
Cerro Wire, LLC	Fulin's Asian Cuisine	North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments	The Brick Deli
Choice Properties	General Repair Service, Inc.	OCI Alabama LLC	The Core Construction Group, LLC
Clearview Cancer Institute	Glee Interiors	OMI, Inc.	The Light House
Collins Management, Inc.	Granada Apartments	Peck - Glasgow Agency, Inc.	Thermal Insulation, Inc.
Computer Support Systems, Inc.	Greater Morgan County Builders Association	Peoples Bank of Alabama - Lee St	Tractor & Equipment Co., Inc.
Construction Services, Inc.	Hampton Inn	Pepsi Cola Decatur, LLC	Trading Post Western & Outdoor
Container Recycling, Inc.	Hardwick Law Firm, LLC	Pest Management, Inc.	TriGreen Equipment, LLC
Cook Museum of Natural Science	Hardy Chiropractic	Petroleum Sales, Inc.	Trudy Grisham
Corporate Billing, LLC	HDT Global	Pill Box Pharmacy	United Way of Morgan County
Country Paradise	Herston Painting, Inc.	Price-Denton Endodontics, LLC	UPS
Courtyard by Marriott	Hill Development Co., LLC	Pro Air Services, Inc.	US Space and Rocket Center
Cricket By The Creek	Holston Gases	ProFab Machine of Hartselle, Inc.	Valley Heating & Cooling
Decatur Animal Care	Home Instead Senior Care	Raymond James Financial Services Stonebridge Wealth Management	Valley Overhead Door
Decatur Comprehensive Dentistry	Home Pest Control	River City Electric	Whitt's Barbecue
Decatur Energy Center	Home2 Suites by Hilton	Robin Rents Equipment	Your Transmission Man, Inc.
Decatur Jaycees	Hometown Market		
Decatur Lions Club	Hubbard & Drake General-Mech. Contractors, Inc.		
Decatur Morgan County Tourism	Inline Lighting & Electrical		
Decatur Printing Solutions, LLC	iWebVisit.com		
Decatur Rotary Club	J.K. Richard & Company, LLC		

Partners In Education connects businesses, schools in service of students

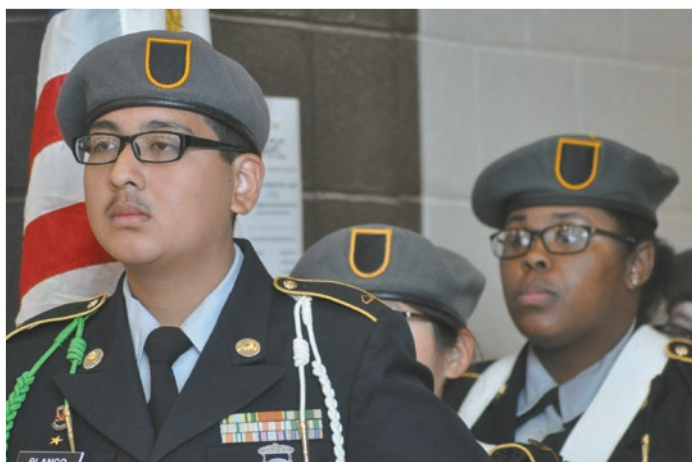
On Aug. 20, the Chamber hosted more than 150 educators and business leaders at Decatur City School's Austin High School to discuss opportunities to collaborate between school systems, specific schools and the highly trained workforce of Morgan County. Past partnerships include tutoring, mentoring, serving as classroom aides, helping host school events and fundraising.

We are thankful for presenting sponsor **Redstone Federal Credit Union** for helping make this important event happen. Our entire community – individuals, businesses, industries, and more – has a vested interest in the success of our young people and school systems, and the Chamber is thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Presenting Sponsor



Willie LaFavor, president of Contractor Service & Fabrication Inc. and chairman of the Chamber's board of directors, spoke briefly during the Chamber's annual Partners in Education Kickoff Breakfast, this year presented by Redstone Federal Credit Union and held at Austin High School.



Members of the Austin High School JROTC presented the colors during the Chamber's annual Partners in Education Kickoff Breakfast.



More than 150 education and business leaders from across Morgan County attended the Chamber's annual Partners in Education Kickoff Breakfast, this year presented by Redstone Federal Credit Union and held at Austin High School.



Anita Clark, principal of Austin Middle School, spoke during the Chamber's annual Partners in Education Kickoff Breakfast about her experience working with local industry partner Indorama Ventures about their recycling program and how it helped make students aware of their impact on the environment.



Austin High School Principal Melissa Scott (left) spoke with representative of 3M Decatur – the Austin Partners in Education company – during the kickoff breakfast.



West Decatur Elementary School Principal Jennifer Edwards and representatives from Ascend Performance Materials discussed during the annual Partners in Education breakfast ways they could collaborate to improve the lives of young people in our community.

Inaugural Cash Mob

Sept. 25 marked the launch of a new Chamber program: the Cash Mob! Cash mobs are like flash mobs, but instead of singing and dancing, attendees spend money as a group! We target Chamber businesses who have invested in our local economy while we promote the value of networking, the advantages of shopping locally and keeping our revenue in Decatur-Morgan

County. Each mob meets at a designated location, then makes a brief walk to the business as a group. Each “mobster” is encouraged to spend \$10-15 at the member business. The goal of the event is to create an exciting new networking event while promoting our local businesses. Sam’s Sports Grill on Beltline Road in Decatur was our first targeted business during the lunch

hour, and more than 25 business and community members joined the festivities. The Chamber will continue to host Cash Mobs around Decatur-Morgan County, so please stay tuned to the Chamber’s social media and email platforms for our next announcement!



More than 25 business and community members joined the festivities for the Chamber’s inaugural Cash Mob.

Are you growing with Google?

On Aug. 27, Grow with Google Speaker and Trainer Demming Bass asked more than 50 attendees of the August Breakfast & Biz a simple question: is your organization's online muscle as strong as it could be? For more than an hour, Bass shared with the room of business leaders strategies using Google's search engine optimization tools, the latest best practices in search engine marketing, content marketing and social media efficiencies to reach more customers and

spread their brand. He also discussed the value of creating and verifying a free Google My Business listing, which is the first thing that populates search results. Breakfast & Biz is

presented by **Redstone Federal Credit Union**, along with Venue Sponsor **The Magnolia Room**.

Venue Sponsor

Presenting Sponsor



Lorri McNutt, branch manager of the Sixth Ave. location of **Redstone Federal Credit Union**, spoke briefly during the August gathering of Breakfast & Biz. RFCU serves as the presenting sponsor of the series.



More than 50 business leaders from across north Alabama attended the Chamber's Breakfast & Biz event, featuring Grow with Google Speaker and Trainer Demming Bass.



Grow with Google Speaker and Trainer Demming Bass spoke to more than 50 area business leaders during the August Breakfast & Biz event about simple ways businesses can improve their visibility online with potential customers.



Presented quarterly by Redstone Federal Credit Union, Breakfast & Biz is a regular gathering of business professionals seeking out opportunities for professional and personal development while connecting with other members of our region's business community.

Chamber's networking opportunities connect the community

The chance to connect with other business and community leaders can be “make or break” for any company, which is why the Chamber continues to create an environment for members to get facetime with their peers. In August and September, Chamber members had the opportunity to visit two established area

business to learn more about their work in a casual setting. In August, our monthly event visited **Sensations Massage and Body Clinic** in Decatur for Business After Hours and learned about the medical value of massage therapy and benefits of salt therapy for people suffering with allergies. In September, members visited

The Decatur Daily for Coffee & Cards and had the chance to learn about their marketing services – reach256 and Tennessee Valley Outdoors – and how they could possibly benefit their business. We are thankful for the hospitality of both members and their support of connecting community members for future success.

August Presenting Sponsor

Sensations Massage and Body Clinic



Sensations Massage and Body Clinic, who hosted the Chamber's networking event Business After Hours at their location in southwest Decatur, features a salt therapy room where customers with allergies can receive benefits of the treatment.

September Presenting Sponsor

The Decatur Daily



More than 40 members took part in the Coffee & Cards networking event hosted by The Decatur Daily in September.



The goal of Chamber networking events is to provide opportunity and an environment for members to connect and grow their business.

Three leadership classes in full swing



Excellence in Leadership class members took part in kickoff activities, including explanations of their Emergenetics profiles.



Dr. Ed Nichols (right) worked with the Excellence class to help them better understand their Emergenetics profile and how to communicate their results to their peers and team members.

With the start of the new school year, participants in the Chamber's three leadership development programs – Excellence, Edge and Equip – are fully involved connecting with the community and learning more about Decatur-Morgan County.

The Excellence in Leadership program is the flagship program of the Chamber's Leadership series. The program was designed to identify, orient, develop and network existing and emerging leaders with the goal of enhancing positive growth in the area business community. The 2019-2020 class features 34 professionals from across Morgan County and meets monthly to focus on topic-specific content. Class kicked off Aug. 28 with a half-day session focusing on "get to know you" exercises, as well as an unpacking session of each class member's Emergenetics profile. Administered by Dr. Ed Nichols, Emergenetics is a personality and characteristics profile developed to distinctively measure how people think and behave. Using psychometric data provided by each participant through an online survey, Emergenetics accurately measures three behavioral

attributes and four thinking attributes to help the user understand how they best communicate, engage with others, analyze information and react to changing conditions.

The September gathering focused on caring for our community. The day started at the Chamber with three health and human service professionals discussing their organization and the work they do. Sue Terrell from Hands Across Decatur, Amy Rakestraw from the Decatur Morgan Senior Center, and Lainie Alexander from the Department of Human Resources each shared with the group how their areas of focus (the homeless, seniors, and at-risk children) impact the broader community. Following their presentations, the group toured Decatur Morgan Hospital to learn about the work of the healthcare provider, the more than \$60 million in updates over the past two years, and the high quality healthcare available in our own backyard. Lunch at Riverside Senior Living welcomed Debbie Heard, CEO of Hospice of the Valley, Doug Bachuss of Nowlin, Bachuss & Gray, and Lisa Burns of Riverside talking about end of life care and the estate and legal

planning you can take care of to make sure your wishes are honored by your family. Bachuss also discussed CASA of North Alabama, an organization serving as an advocate for children in the court system. The group then traveled to Community Action Partnership of North Alabama and were briefed by Resource Specialist Mari Juarez on the work they do in their 18-county region in the areas of affordable housing, early childhood education, financial literacy and poverty eradication. Leigh Littrell of Refuge of Grace also shared her organization's mission as a women's jail ministry in Morgan County. The day ended with Judy Smith, Area Administrator of the Public Health Department, exploring the wide scope of public health issues in our county, the value of preventative healthcare, and the impact of health epidemics on the business community. Excellence in Leadership is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**, along with Day Sponsor **Decatur Morgan Hospital**.

Aimed at 10th and 11th grade students from across Morgan County, Edge Student Leadership was created to expose the 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 took to the ropes course in mid-September at Decatur Morgan Hospital's West Campus. The day gave students the opportunity to learn about the value of team building in leadership environments. Working with the ropes course staff of Decatur Morgan Hospital, the 33 students

were broken up into groups to conquer smaller challenges that required clear communication, strategy, recognizing obstacles and working together to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Throughout the day, the group also explored the process of creating a culture of trust, a safe environment, communication channels and how to rely on one another in challenging times. During lunch, which was sponsored by **Milo's Hamburgers**, Taylor Simmons of Horizon Point Consulting discussed with the group the results of

their Strong Interest Inventory profile, an assessment of their interests that provides guidance on career options. Edge is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**, along with breakfast sponsor **Cook's Pest Control**.

Equip is a leadership program for 8th grade students from across Morgan County exposing them to post-high school college and career opportunities in the skilled trades as well as programs that require less than a four-year degree. Equip is broken up



Excellence, made up of 34 area business professionals, is presented by Nucor Steel Decatur.



As part of the gathering focused on caring for the community, the Excellence group received a tour of Decatur Morgan Hospital and spoke with staff members about the role the hospital plays in the community.



Hilary Blakely (second from the left) gave class members a behind-the-scenes tour of the newly renovated Emergency Department.



As part of their ropes course challenges, Edge Leadership members were required to develop strategies as a group that would help them achieve performance goals.

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Leadership continued

in two sessions (fall and spring) and features approximately 25 students in each session. The gathering on Sept. 19 focused on opportunities available at both Calhoun Community College and the Alabama Robotics Technology Park – both just a short drive from downtown Decatur. After starting the day in the Contractor Service & Fabrication Inc. Board Room at the Chamber, the group made the short drive across the bridge to the Decatur Campus of Calhoun to explore the options available at the state's largest community college. Students toured the Health Sciences Building and discussed with staff opportunities in nurs-

ing, emergency/first responder fields and the health technology industry. Students also visited the welding lab, the advance manufacturing and 3D printing and design department, and the Aerospace Technology Center. The group discussed with professors what certain areas of study are involved and the types of jobs it would prepare them for after completing their studies. The class traveled across the street to the Alabama Robotics Technology Park for lunch – presented by **Whitt's BBQ** – and a briefing about the Park and the type of training they do in the fields of robotics, maintenance and automation. Students received a tour

of the training rooms, as well as the high-bay floor where robotics students practice their coding and programming projects on robots similar to what they would find in automotive manufacturing environments. Equip is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**, along with Day Sponsor **Magnolia River**.



A successful ropes course experience required communication, teamwork and strategy – all themes of the Edge Student Leadership program.

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Members of Equip toured classrooms and labs at the Robotics Training Center as part of their most recent gathering.



The Equip students were able to discuss with instructors the types of classes they would need to take in high school to continue work in robotics and automation.

Young Professionals discuss the arts, economic impact in Decatur-Morgan County

On Tuesday, August 20, Philip Mann, executive director of external affairs for the Alabama Center for the Arts, discussed with nearly 30 young professionals the role of the arts and culture in economic development in our area, as well as his vision for the ACA and the role he believes it can play in our area. The YP Leadership Luncheon series – presented by **Ascend Performance Materials** of Decatur, along with August lunch sponsor **First Baptist Church** – is a bi-monthly leadership lunch-and-learn event at locations across Decatur-

Morgan County. The gathering, open to members and non-members alike of the under-40 crowd, features a catered lunch and a presentation from a member of the business or leadership community.

The event provides an opportunity for both social and personal development to the future leaders of our community.

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Philip Mann, executive director of external affairs for the Alabama Center for the Arts, served as the keynote speaker for the August gathering of the YP Leadership Luncheon.



More than 30 young professionals from businesses and industry across Morgan County attended the August gathering of the YP Leadership Luncheon series.



Presented by Ascend Performance Materials, the YP Leadership Luncheon is an opportunity for the under-40 crowd to connect and develop as professionals in their own back yard.



Prior to coming to Decatur in 2018, Mann was director of live performance and music industry development for Louisiana Entertainment in Baton Rouge.

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