



www.dcc.org

December 2019

Directions

A PUBLICATION OF THE DECATUR-MORGAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

OPENING
7 2019



Top 5 Stories of 2019

Reflecting on a year of news and events 4

State
of Area
Schools

6

Leadership
moving
forward

13

Endless
Opportunities

18

Got News?

Do you have news to share with fellow Chamber members? Submit your press releases for *Chamber Chat* to Grant at the Chamber office. We'll print them as space permits. All submissions are subject to editing.

When it comes to finding the right top-ranked insurance to fit your needs and budget, Stovall Marks has more options than an ice cream shop.



Stovall Marks Insurance

Sweet

Offering you more flavors of insurance!

Auto-Owners Insurance
Life, Health, Car, Business, Motorcycle, Boat

Call 256-355-7951 today for a free quote.
www.stovallmarks.com

3/20/25

Grow Your Business With a Partner You Trust.

For over 67 years, Redstone has been providing members with the personal banking solutions they need to get ahead. Let our experts match your business with the tools it needs to thrive. Plus, keep your costs down with lower fees and better rates.

Cash Management | Merchant Services | Business Loans & Accounts

Call us to get started or visit redfcu.org/trust

Must be RFCU® member or Membership Partner to open a business checking account, obtain a loan, or use any service. Must be eligible for membership and open a share savings account to become a member. A \$5 minimum balance is required to open share savings account and must be maintained in share account. Minimum deposits, account balances, and transaction fees apply to some business accounts. Fees apply to some Cash Management services.

Loans subject to credit approval. RFCU is an Equal Credit Opportunity Lender.



256-327-1104

This credit union is federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration.

You love this town,
this neighborhood,
this house!
Then you'll love this bank.



When you've fallen in love with the perfect place, come to Progress Bank for your mortgage. We love welcoming people to our communities! You'll find quick-turn mortgages,* in-house decisions and closing, competitive rates, loan options such as FHA, Rural Development, VA, and military discounts.



Kristi Tapscott
Mortgage Loan Officer
NMLS# 525512
ktapscott@myprogressbank.com
256.319.3653 o
256.303.2833 c

*Credit subject to approval.

 **Progress Bank**
myprogressbank.com

320026



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



facebook.com/
decaturmorganchamber



@DMCChamber



instagram.com/
dmchamber



dcc.org/news-events/
blog

Top 5 Stories of 2019

As a community, it is important for us to look back and reflect on a year of news and events that have brought us to where we are today. At times, the news around us is focused on conflict, which drowns out the news we should celebrate. There is much happening in Decatur-Morgan County that shows our high quality of life, and we need to tell that story.

With that thought in mind, the Chamber would like to share the top five stories from 2019 that make us excited for the future of Decatur-Morgan County.

The next generation of the Cook Museum begins

The updated and expanded Cook Museum of Natural Science opened in June, forever changing the landscape of our downtown city center and creating an attraction to our community that will transform our educational and cultural footprint. At more than 62,000 square feet and a \$32 million construction budget, the Museum – the second generation of the original 5,000 square foot version which opened in the early 1970s – is a state-of-the-art facility equipped with exhibit halls, classrooms, learning laboratories, a 15,000 gallon saltwater aquarium, meeting spaces, a retail store and a full-service organic restaurant. This regional destination is estimated to draw approximately 200,000 to our city (not including school groups) from across the U.S. What will unfold in the years to come is the economic impact the museum will have in the form of restaurant visits, hotel room stays, retail shopping, and visits to other area attractions. More importantly, the effect on the imagination and the creativity on generations of visitors will pay dividends in the form of lives changed and an improved quality of life.

Residential development shifting to high gear

The last 12 months have seen a focused effort by a collection of community groups and business leaders to create a development-friendly environment for residential growth. In the second half of the year, two multi-phased residential developments were announced in south-east Decatur that will add to our city's thin housing inventory. The first, located on nearly 20 acres recently annexed on Old River Road, will begin construction in early 2020, and be known as "River Road Manor." This development will add 55 rooftops to our city in a phased plan thanks to the vision of Howard Morris and his family. In the Point Mallard area of Decatur, developer Jeff Parker of Parker Real Estate has begun site preparations for "Black Branch Point," a planned 74-home phased development that features residential riverfront options. Both developments are the first large subdivisions built in our city since the late 1990s and have the potential to jumpstart other developments in our community. As part of the Chamber's five-year strategic plan "The Partnership," residential development and recruitment will continue to be a high priority for our organization as we serve as an advocate for community development in our area.

Calhoun ranks #1 in advanced manufacturing

November saw the announcement that Calhoun Community College, the largest two-year college in the State of Alabama located just minutes from downtown Decatur, ranked number one in the U.S. by Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) in awarding degrees in advanced manufacturing – a pool including all community colleges, technical colleges and universities across the country.

continued on page 6

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

Top Five Stories of 2019	4,6
State of Schools	6,7,12
Ribbon Cuttings	8,9
Cash Mob.....	9
New Members.....	10
YP Leadership Luncheon	10
Renewing Members.....	11
Leadership	13-17
Coffee & Cards	17
Endless Opportunities	18-19
Breakfast & Biz.....	20-21
Golf Classic	21-22

On the Cover: Bryan Cook is all smiles as he presents the Cook Museum of Natural Science to the media in June of this year.

The Chamber Board

Executive Committee

Chairman of the Board

Willie LaFavor, Contractor Service & Fabrication, Inc.

Chairman of the Board-Elect

Michelle Howell, 3M

Past Chairman of the Board

Tim Lovelace, Renasant Bank

Vice Chairman, Leadership & Networking

Joseph Hill, Progress Bank

Vice Chairman, Development

Jamie Reeves, Remax Platinum

Vice Chairman, Talent Development & Education

Dr. Tommy Davis, Decatur City Schools

Vice Chairman, Community Building

Lori Hardy Ho-Tung, Renasant Bank

Treasurer

Jeff Brown, Harris, Caddell & Shanks

Board of Directors

Daniel Beggs, The Boeing Co.

Cronan Connell, Valley Rubber

Darius Crayton, Bridge Builders Church International

Lindsey Faulkner, Old River Antiques & Interiors

Leif Founds, Corporate Billing, LLC

Ray Hardin, Decatur Utilities

George Kitchens, Joe Wheeler Electric Membership Corporation

Brendan McCormick, Turner

Carlton McMasters, J & M Signs

Cindy Nafus, United Launch Alliance

Arthur Orr, Alabama State Senate (Chairman of MCEDA)

Dr. Amanda Parker, Animal Tracks Veterinary Hospital

Raul Piers, Synovus Bank

Kyle Pike, Dry Creek Marine (President of Decatur Jaycees)

Dr. Yvette Rice, LLVE, LLC

Lorriane Curtis-Sparkman (President of Decatur Women's Chamber)

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.

STRATEGIC



DIAMOND



PLATINUM



GOLD

Alabama Farmers Cooperative

Bank Independent

C&L Wood Products

Cintas Corp.

Fite Construction Company, Inc.

Hubbard & Drake General-Mechanical Contractors, Inc.

J.M. Smucker Company

Lakeland Industries, Inc.

Magnolia River Services, Inc.

Progress Bank

White Oak Transportation

SILVER

Alabama Credit Union

CB&S Bank

Corporate Billing, LLC

ENERSOLV Corp.

Engie - Alabama Decatur Energy, LLC

Peoples Bank of Alabama

Turner Industries Group, LLC

TVW Electrical Supplies, Inc.

Wear, Howell, Strickland, Quinn & Law, LLC, CPA's

BRONZE

Byrd, Smalley & Adams, PC
Decatur Mall

Edward Jones - Terry White

Harris, Caddell & Shanks, PC

King Insurance Agency
Valley Rubber, LLC

Top Five Stories continued

The recognition is the culmination of a 10-year vision for the college that started with a 2005-2008 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor of \$3.5 million that positioned the school to completely revamp the curriculum and redesign the program to meet the needs of business and industry. With the growing number of high-tech manufacturing careers with companies like Mazda-Toyota, United Launch Alliance, Dynetics and adjacent suppliers, the school is equipping our regional workforce with the skills for graduates to be work-ready once they receive their diploma. Based on projections, the need for this training is expected to grow, and the Chamber looks forward to partnering with Calhoun and others to continue training the next generation workforce.

Career technical education nationally recognized

Just after the start of the new school year in August, the Morgan County Schools Technology Park – located on the campus of Brewer High School – was recognized as

a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School of Excellence. While that designation is a major achievement for the Technology Park team, what makes it even more significant is the fact that it is one of only three career tech schools in the United States to ever be recognized with that distinction. The Technology Park provides a career tech environment where students can get specialized training in fields including Agriscience, Arts and Audio Visual/Multimedia Design, Automotive Technology, Culinary, Drafting/Pre-Engineering, Early Childhood Education, Electronics, Emergency Medical Technician with Calhoun Community College, Health Science, HVAC/R, JROTC, Robotics/Pre-Engineering, Welding and many others fields needed to meet the talent development required to feed our workforce talent pipeline. We congratulate Superintendent Bill W. Hopkins, Jr., Technology Park Supervisor Dr. Jeremy Childers and the entire team for this fantastic recognition.

Highway 20 overpass project key to safety, growth opportunities

In the spring and summer of 2019, plans advanced for an overpass on Highway 20 in the Decatur-annexed portion of Limestone County that would create safe access for development on both north and south sides of the highway near Bibb-Garrett Road. The total project of approximately \$18 million is anchored by a \$14.2 million BUILD grant awarded to the City of Decatur in January from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The project, located on the easternmost boundary of our city, will provide safe and controlled access to several hundred acres for a wide range of development opportunities, including residential, retail, commercial, industrial and recreational. That long-range vision for growth in the area brings with it the potential of jobs and a chance to shape a “blank canvas” in our city across the Tennessee River in a way that best serves the needs of our community.

State of Morgan County, Decatur Schools strong

As part of our mission in the community and our five-year strategic plan “The Partnership,” the Chamber holds with the highest regard the relationships we have with our local school systems and superintendents. Because of the impact schools have on the business community and quality of life, the Chamber is honored to provide an audience for community and business leaders to come together and hear from our education leaders about our most precious resource: our children’s futures.

On Tuesday, Nov. 5, the Chamber hosted its annual State of Morgan County Schools address, featuring Superintendent Bill Hopkins, Jr., and presented by the **Morgan County Commission**. During the hour-long breakfast event, Mr. Hopkins and several system students shared with more than 200 in attendance at First Baptist Church in Decatur several reports on specific areas of the system, including early childhood, agriscience technology, vocational and trade skills education, AP opportuni-

ties, recent growth at West Morgan Elementary and much more. We are thankful for the collaborative relationship with Morgan County Schools and look forward to more work ahead preparing the next generation of leaders.

Later in November, Superintendent Dr. Michael Douglas of Decatur City Schools shared with more than 140 business and community leaders at the State of Decatur City Schools his take on the condition of the system and his vision on where he plans to



More than 200 community and business leaders from across north Alabama attended the Chamber's annual State of Morgan County Schools Address, presented by the Morgan County Commission.



Members of Bill W. Hopkins, Jr.'s family introduced him to the more than 200 in attendance at the Chamber's annual State of Morgan County Schools - presented by the Morgan County Commission.



Bill W. Hopkins, Jr., superintendent of Morgan County Schools, spoke briefly to more than 200 in attendance at the Chamber's annual State of Morgan County Schools - presented by the Morgan County Commission.



As is tradition for the Chamber's annual State of Morgan County Schools Address, students from across the district share their thoughts and experiences in their school communities with community and business leaders. The event is presented by the Morgan County Commission.



More than 200 community and business leaders from across north Alabama attended the Chamber's annual State of Morgan County Schools Address, presented by the Morgan County Commission.



Members of the Decatur High School Chorus sang the National Anthem during the Chamber's annual State of Decatur City Schools Address.

continued on page 12

Ribbon Cuttings



Eye Care Associates

2349 Danville Road SW, Suite 410, Decatur • (256) 353-2392
www.eyecareassociates.com



Dynetics Aerospace Structures Complex

60 Booster Boulevard, Decatur
www.dynetics.com



State Farm – Patrick Johnson

1721 Somerville Road SE, Decatur • (256) 353-0000
www.agent52.com



4th Avenue Storage

1116 4th Avenue SE, Decatur • (256) 472-1117
www.4avenuestorage.com



Brookdale Cedar Springs Retirement Community

2505 Spring Avenue SW, Decatur • (256) 552-3800
www.brookdaleliving.com



SIP Cigars & Lounge, LLC

110 2nd Avenue NE, Decatur • (256) 686-0186
www.sipdecatur.com



Inform. Inspire. Interact.

State Farm – Cassidy Chandler
2218 6th Avenue SE, Decatur • (256) 686-1111
www.insuremorgancounty.com

Cash mob crashes the holiday shopping season



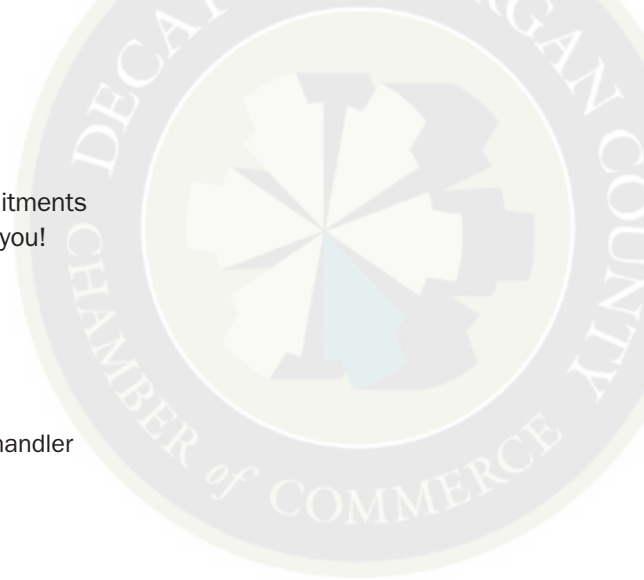
The November Cash Mob helped knock out some of our holiday shopping!

The second Chamber Cash Mob crashed our friends at Old River Interiors and The Paper Chase, knocking out some of our holiday shopping at one of our fantastic local merchants. Cash mobs are like flash mobs, but instead of singing and dancing, we 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. We're thankful for the hospitality of Lindsey Faulkner, Ashley Ashwander and their team during this busy shopping season!

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!

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Alabama Education Association | Shield and Stone |
| Beyond Purses & More Boutique | SIP Cigars & Lounge, LLC |
| DMS, LLC | Sparks Energy, Inc. |
| Five Star Food Service, Inc. | State Farm Insurance - Cassidy Chandler |
| Marathon of Decatur | Stitchez |
| Miss Muldrew's | Team Freeze |
| Nature's Table at Cook Museum | The Reeves Law Firm |
| Providian Real Estate Management | The Witt House |
| Rocket City Trash Pandas | Traditions Fence, LLC |
| Sasser Law Firm, LLC | |



Sen. Orr discusses future of state with young professionals

On Oct. 22, State Sen. Arthur Orr of Decatur served as the speaker for the Chamber's bi-monthly YP Leadership Luncheon, presented by **Ascend Performance Materials** and lunch sponsor **Alabama Farm Credit**. Approximately 40 young professionals from across north Alabama took part in a "YP Town Hall" style gathering where Sen. Orr discussed with attendees issues like residential growth, education, tourism, poverty, transportation and how we can work together to improve our quality of life. We are thankful for Sen. Orr's service to our area representing us in Montgomery and his role in improving the Decatur-Morgan County community.



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.

Worried About...

- High student-teacher ratio
- Lack of discipline
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Instruction in portable classrooms

Thought about St. Ann School?

- K3 through 8th grade
- All faiths welcome

Decatur, Alabama 35603 (256) 353-6543

Now accepting applications

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	Edward Jones - Mitchell Owens	Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa	The Paper Chase
A Plumber, Inc.	Edward Jones - Tore Haavik	Marx Optical	The Tennessee Valley Press, Inc.
ABSAROKA	Electronic Express	McAbee Medical, Inc.	Toray Fluorofibers (America), Inc.
Air Hydro Power, Inc.	ENERSOLV CORPORATION	Meagan Yarbrough, LLC Attorney at Law	Trav-Ad Signs
Alliance Source Testing, LLC	Enterprise Rent-A-Car	Mooney Electric, LLC	Trinity Discount Drugs
Amanda G. Scott - Revenue Commissioner	EvaBank	Morgan Price Candy Co., LLC	TVW Electrical Supplies, Inc.
American National Insurance Webb Awtrey Agency	F1 Solutions, Inc.	Morgan Stanley	Valley Pulmonary & Critical Care
Ascend Performance Materials	Fellowship of Christian Athletes	National Packaging Co., Inc.	Volunteer Center of Morgan County, Inc.
Bendall's Pharmacy, Inc.	First Choice Printing, Inc	Nexstar Broadcasting dba WZDX Fox 54	Wells & Tate Electric Company, Inc.
BMSI	First South Farm Credit	North Alabama Glass Co., Inc.	Westmeade Baptist Church
Boyett Construction	Francesco's Italian Restaurant	OB-GYN Associates	WS Electrical & Air Conditioning, Inc.
Brix & Embers Mobile Wood Fired Pizza	Fyzical Therapy & Balance Center	Office Interiors by OSCO, LLC	Yellowhammer Roofing, Inc.
Carriage House	GSE, Inc.	Old River Antiques & Interiors	
CB&S Bank	Hampton Inn	Ottis & Kate	
Centers for the Developmentally Disabled North Central Alabama (CDD)	Hardy Chiropractic	Penny L. Taylor, DMD, MS, PC	
ChelDen's Gift Emporium	Harold Coomer Evangelistic Association	Pill Box Pharmacy	
City Cafe	Harris, Caddell & Shanks, PC	PNC Bank	
Clinic for Women, PA	Hexcel Corporation	Price-Denton Endodontics, LLC	
Commercial Flooring	Home Pest Control	Pro Fitness & Tanning	
Construction Specialty & Associates	Hood Contracting, Inc.	Pro Rain Irrigation Services, Inc.	
Contractors Choice Roll Off Service, Inc.	HTI General Contractors	Pugh Wright McAnally, Inc.	
Cook's Pest Control - Sales & Technical	Hyundai of Decatur	PZI International Consulting, Inc.	
Cornerstone Baptist Church / Cornerstone Christian School	INEOS Styrolution America, LLC	Radiology Group, PA.	
Corporate Warehouse Services, Inc.	Interstate Billing Service	Reed Contracting Services, Inc. / Ready Mix Concrete	
Courtyard by Marriott	Jackson's Drain Pro, LLC	River City Roofing Solutions	
Decatur Family Eye Care, LLC	Johnston RV Center	Roberts Plumbing, LLC	
Decatur Mall	Julia's Pools	Sensations Massage & Body Clinic	
Decatur Optical Dispensary	Junior League of Morgan County, Inc.	SP&J General Contractors, Inc.	
Delano Park Conservancy	Labor Finders	Stifel	
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Decatur Riverfront	Lifepoint Church	Synovus Bank	
Dry Creek Marine	Line-X Decatur Customs	Synovus Mortgage	
Edward Jones	Longhorn Steakhouse	T and T Contractors	
	M & D Mechanical Contractors	T.P.I.S. Industrial Services, LLC	
	Marathon Electrical Contractors, Inc.	The Cole Law Firm, LLC	
	Marketing Works	The Lioce Group	

State of Schools continued

take the growing system. Presented by **Indorama Ventures** and held at venue sponsor **Decatur Baptist Church**, the address gave Dr. Douglas the chance to share successes of the system, including tremendous growth in state test scores and data, the increased availability of AP classes, student safety, teacher professional development, the value of diversity in the sys-

tem, access to technology, and gains in closing the achievement gap. He also discussed his plans to continue increases in reading proficiency and college and career readiness. Morgan County Schools, Decatur City Schools and their leadership teams are preparing the next generation of leaders for a global economy, and the Chamber is thankful for the opportu-

nity to partner with each of them on workforce, education and talent development initiatives to benefit our community.



Attendees at the Chamber's annual State of Decatur City Schools Address heard Superintendent Dr. Michael Douglas share his vision for the future of the system.



Superintendent Dr. Michael Douglas gave his take on the condition of the system at the Chamber's annual State of Decatur City Schools, presented by Indorama Ventures.



More than 140 business and community leaders heard Superintendent Dr. Michael Douglas give his take on the condition of the system at the Chamber's annual State of Decatur City Schools, presented by Indorama Ventures.

**State of Morgan County
Schools Presenting Sponsor**



**State of Decatur City
Schools Presenting Sponsor**



Leadership programming moving forward into 2020

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

Excellence in Leadership program – the Chamber's flagship leader development program for professionals – gathering for October was based around the idea of team building. Held Oct. 23, the 33 class members navigated the Decatur Morgan Hospital West Campus ropes course, requiring them to work together as a team to develop strategies to accomplish their established goals. The exercises also explored the process of creating a culture of trust, a safe environment, communication channels and how to rely on other team members in challenging situations.

The November Excellence in Leadership class focused on education in our community. After starting the day at the State of Morgan County Schools Address and breakfast, the group traveled to the campus of Brewer High School for a tour of the Morgan County Schools Technology Park, where students can get specialized training in fields

including Agri-science, Arts and Audio Visual/Multimedia Design, Automotive Technology, Culinary, Drafting/Pre-Engineering, Early Childhood Education, Electronics, Emergency Medical Technician with Calhoun Community College, Health Science, HVAC/R, JROTC, Robotics/Pre-Engineering, Welding and many others. The group later traveled to Decatur Heritage Christian Academy where Headmaster Scott Mayo welcomed the group to lunch and shared with them the vision of the school and the role of private school options in a community. After lunch, the class traveled to the Decatur Campus of Calhoun to tour the Health Sciences school and discuss with Dr. Lynn Hogan – chair of the Nursing Department – how Calhoun has become one of the most competitive nursing programs in the South and how their relationships with local healthcare providers have contributed to a more healthy area workforce. To round out the day, the class traveled to the Alabama Center for the Arts in downtown Decatur and received a tour from Director Jennifer Bunnell – an Excellence alumnus. To end the day, participants and the superintendents from our three school systems – Dr. Dee Dee Jones of Hartselle City Schools, Dr. Michael Douglas of Decatur City

Schools, and Bill J. Hopkins, Jr., of Morgan County Schools – took part in a question and answer session focusing on goals for each system, the role of workforce development in curriculums, the impact of poverty and social media on students, test scores and school data analysis. We are thankful for each participant's passion for education and developing young people, and we look forward to more partnerships together in the future. Excellence in Leadership is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**, along with Lunch Sponsor **Decatur Heritage Christian Academy**.

In October, the Edge class – comprised of more than 30 10th and 11th graders from across Morgan County – focused on the role our judicial and criminal justice systems play in our community. Starting the day at the Morgan County Courthouse, the class heard brief presentations from our area judges and justice officials, where they shared the type of work they do and the cases they cover. Morgan County Circuit Judges Stephen Brown, Charles Elliott, Jennifer Howell; Morgan County District Judges Brent Craig, Charles Langham, Shelly Waters; Probate Judge Greg Cain; Morgan County District Attorney Scott Anderson; and Morgan County Circuit



A student was able to capture his own image while suspended during the October ropes course class.



The Excellence class had to conquer challenges and establish a communication strategy during the October ropes course class.

continued on page 14

Leadership continued



During the day focused on education, Excellence students visited the pre-school training facility during their tour of Brewer High School.



The Excellence class toured the Alabama Center for the Arts as part of their day focused on education.



(From L-R) Morgan County Schools Superintendent Bill W. Hopkins, Jr., Decatur City Superintendent Dr. Michael Douglas and Hartselle City Superintendent Dr. Dee Dee Jones each shared their extensive knowledge of education policy and challenges in schools during the Superintendent Panel.



Morgan County Circuit Court Judge Charles Elliott spoke briefly to kick off the Edge Student Leadership day focused on the justice system.

Court Clerk Chris Priest each were generous with their time and answered a long list of questions from students. Following a tour of the Morgan County Jail, the group discussed with Decatur City Police Chief Nate Allen the role community policing and school safety play in our daily lives. After lunch, the group participated in a mock trial exercise – an annual highlight for the class. Students played the roles of judges,

jury, prosecution and defense teams, witnesses and the accused under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Garrick Vickery. The Chamber is thankful to the entire Courthouse staff, especially Judge Shelly Waters and Tina Gibson, for coordinating the day for students. The day sponsor for Law & Order Day was **Nowlin, Bachuss & Gray Law Firm** of Decatur.

November's Edge meeting is a relatively new addition to the program's curriculum: a poverty simulation exercise. Each student was given a scenario of being in a certain family economic situation ranging from a single parent with three children, a disabled veteran, a fully employed single person, an elderly widow and more. Each participant had to interact with leadership volunteers who also had scenarios like someone



Morgan County District Judge Charles Langham helped prep students prior to the mock trial during Law & Order Day.



During the mock trial, students played each of the courtroom characters during Law & Order Day.



Edge students cross-examined their peers during the mock trial session.



In November, Edge students participated as "family units" during the Poverty Simulation exercise.



Edge students were required to move around the room and make family-dependent decisions based on a bare-bones budget.



Community volunteers took part in the Edge Poverty Simulation, helping to guide the students into making smart decisions while being accountable for how you spend your money.

continued on page 16

Leadership continued



Equip students in October focused on skilled trades and toured the Decatur headquarters of Contractor Service and Fabrication Inc.



Students in the Equip program took part in a financial literacy workshop with area company Redstone Federal Credit Union.



In November, the Equip class visited Valley Rubber of Falkville to discuss synthetic rubber production and the value of investing in your staff.



The goal of the Equip program is to serve young people and help them make wise decisions early to shape their futures.

who owned a check cashing business, a healthcare provider, a parole officer, a childcare center director and so on. Students had to learn about prioritizing topics like healthcare, childcare, education, rent and other real-world issues for working families. The Chamber is thankful for Leadership Huntsville for partnering on the poverty simulation event. The presenting sponsor for Edge is **Nucor Steel Decatur**.

The October gathering of Equip Student Leadership – a career development program for 8th grade students from

across Morgan County – focused on fabrication and financial literacy. After starting the day at the Chamber, the group of more than 20 students traveled to the south Decatur location of Contractor Service & Fabrication, Inc. to learn about fabrication, manufacturing and careers in skilled trades. Jack Austill, project coordinator for CS-FCO, also shared with students other careers in the field, including project management, drafting, sales, business development and human resources. Students toured the fabrication facility on site, met several team members

and discussed roles and responsibilities. After returning to the Chamber for lunch sponsored by Dominos, the group learned the importance of financial literacy, how to make a budget and why making smart money decisions is so important. Kaeshier Fernandez, financial education coordinator for Redstone Federal Credit Union, taught students – using real-life situations like whether to rent or buy, how to buy a car, how to pay bills, why a budget is important and how to avoid debt – the role financial success plays in a stable future.

In November, Equip students took the short drive to Falkville and met with the production team of Valley Rubber, a manufacturer of custom rubber solutions for international mining and industrial applications. During the visit, the Valley Rubber staff shared with the group the types of positions they have on their team, the types of training and education involved in the work, and how professional development and investment in their workforce keeps their crew competitive in the global market.

We are thankful for their hospitality and sharing with students skills that will prepare them for future success. Equip Student Leadership is presented by **Nucor Steel Decatur**.

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



Connecting with business and community leaders is critical for any company

Connecting with business and community leaders is critical for any company, which is why the Chamber is thankful for members willing to open their doors and welcome others into their space. In October and November, Chamber members had the opportunity to visit two established area businesses to learn more about their mission in a casual setting. In October, **SilMan Industries** hosted Coffee & Cards at their Central Parkway location, while the **Edward Jones team of Tore Haavik** welcomed the Chamber to his Bank Street location in downtown Decatur. We are thankful for the hospitality of both members and their support of connecting community members for future success.



October Presenting Sponsor



November Presenting Sponsor



Endless Opportunities workforce event helps students discover career paths, plans

At the Chamber’s annual Endless Opportunities hands-on career and education event, students got the chance to take part in four career opportunity “worlds” connected to the 14 career clusters identified by the State of Alabama. Each student’s worlds are a result of their interest inventory captured through the Kuder Navigator System – administered as part of the school curricula – and student choice. Career worlds include Agriculture Food and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication; Hospitality and Tourism; Marketing, Sales and

Service; Business Management and Administration; Finance; Education and Training; Government and Public Administration; Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; Health Science; Human Services; Information Technology; Manufacturing; Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

Professionals from each area engaged students in activities that will help explain how careers in each area are developed and how to prepare for each field of study. More than 1,500 eighth-graders from across the three

Morgan County Schools systems, as well as private school programs, visited Celebration Arena during the day-long event on Thursday, while more than 1,000 students from Limestone County were onsite Friday. The event is made possible by Presenting Sponsor **3M Decatur**, along with Silver Sponsors **Ascend Performance Materials, Calhoun Community College, Nucor Steel Decatur, Redstone Federal Credit Union** and **United Launch Alliance**.

Presenting Sponsor



Silver Sponsor



Learning about electricity and circuitry is critical in facing the shortage of skilled electricians in our area, an issue highlighted during the annual Endless Opportunities hands-on career and education event, presented by 3M of Decatur.



More than 2,500 eighth graders from Morgan and Limestone schools took part in the annual Endless Opportunities hands-on career and education event, presented by 3M of Decatur.



More than 2,500 eighth graders from Morgan and Limestone schools took part in the annual Endless Opportunities hands-on career and education event, presented by 3M of Decatur.



Students from Morgan and Limestone schools are able to have a “red carpet experience” during the annual Endless Opportunities hands-on career and education event, presented by 3M of Decatur.



Strategic Partner United Launch Alliance let students wear their virtual reality (VR) launch simulator during the annual Endless Opportunities hands-on career and education event, presented by 3M of Decatur.



Young people interested in construction and trade careers are in high demand, which is an annual focus of the Chamber's workforce and talent development efforts. We are thankful for partners like 3M of Decatur for supporting events like Endless Opportunities.

Chamber development session advises businesses on social media trends

Businesses – small businesses, especially – are always looking for ways to be smarter and more efficient in how they market their story. In the interest of serving our business partners and providing development opportunities, the Chamber was excited to welcome Wednesday, Nov. 20, Sarah Macaluso, marketing specialist for Red Sage Communications, Inc. in Decatur, as

our subject matter expert for our fall Breakfast & Biz development session. Presented by **Redstone Federal Credit Union**, the event focused on smart social media strategies on the horizon for 2020 about how companies should plan to integrate platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram into their planning. Macaluso also discussed content engagement, social

media budgeting, promoting content and how to develop a social media plan. Along with Redstone, the morning was made possible by breakfast sponsor **United Way of Morgan County** and venue sponsor **The Magnolia Room**.



Lorri McNutt, branch manager for presenting sponsor Redstone Federal Credit Union, spoke briefly during the fall Breakfast & Biz development session focusing on smart social media strategy.



More than 60 business and community leaders attended the fall Breakfast & Biz development session discussing social media trends for 2020.



During Breakfast & Biz development sessions, attendees have the opportunity to introduce themselves to the room and provide their “elevator pitch” about their business.



Sarah Macaluso, marketing specialist for Red Sage Communications, Inc. in Decatur, served as our subject matter expert for our fall Breakfast & Biz development session focusing on smart social media strategy for 2020.



Breakfast & Biz is a networking opportunity for business and community leaders to connect and discover shared interests and goals for their businesses.



Business leaders from across north Alabama are regular attendees of the Chamber's quarterly Breakfast & Biz development sessions.

Presenting Sponsor



Breakfast Sponsor



Venue Sponsor



Fall Golf Classic wraps annual Chamber sporting events

The Chamber's annual Fall Golf Classic, presented on Oct. 11 by **Valley Budweiser** and gold sponsor host **Burningtree Country Club**, gathering 100 golfers for the day-long event under perfect skies on the more than 7,000-yard course. The four-man scramble format welcomed the 25 teams to a morning or afternoon starting time to cap off the Chamber's

sporting events for 2019. The social and networking event is one of many opportunities the Chamber hosts each year for community and business leaders to connect in a relaxed environment. Events like the Fall Golf Classic happen because of the generosity of sponsors, and we are thankful for everyone's support.

Presenting Sponsor



Gold Sponsor



Morning Group

1st Flight

- 1 - McAbee Medical (57)
- 2 - American Midstream (60)

2nd Flight

- 1 - Huntsville International Airport (66)
- 2 - ServisFirst Bank (67)

Afternoon Group

1st Flight

- 1 - Burningtree Country Club (53)
- 2 - Pepsi of Decatur (55)

2nd Flight

- 1 - TTL, Inc. (61)
- 2 - I.C.E. (62)

continued on page 22

Golf continued



The Chamber welcomed 25 teams for the day-long Fall Golf Classic, presented by Valley Budweiser.



Gold Sponsor Burningtree Country Club played host to the Fall Golf Classic.



At more than 7,000 yards, Burningtree Country Club always presents quite a challenge for the Chamber's annual Fall Golf Classic.



Networking events like the annual Fall Golf Classic provide members the opportunity to connect with other business and community leaders from the Decatur-Morgan County area.



The Chamber is thankful for the hospitality of Gold Sponsor Burningtree Country Club for hosting the annual Fall Golf Classic.



Events like the Fall Golf Classic are made possible by the generosity of sponsors like Express Employment Professionals and Turner, who served as our Beverage Cart Sponsors.

Happy Holidays

from all of us
to you



www.daikin-america.com



2699 Sandlin Rd SW • 256-351-9180
2600 Pt Mallard Pkwy • 256-351-4163

Mary Ann Scott, Broker CRS
256-227-2456



1009 Line Street NE, Decatur
adjacent to Rhodes Ferry Park
www.riversideal.com



302 Wilson St. NW, Decatur, AL
256-353-5713
www.gobble-fite.com

**Talley, Mauldin
& Peete, P. C.**

.....
ACCOUNTING
AND
BUSINESS
CONSULTING



Joe Wheeler EMC
A Southern Energy Corporation

Trinity • Moulton • Hartselle
(256) 552-2300



**Mayer
Electric**

Published for the Decatur-Morgan County
Chamber of Commerce by
Tennessee Valley Printing Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 2213 • Decatur, Alabama 35609-2213

Grant Thompson
Editorial Coordinator/Writer

Stephen V. Johnson
Graphic Design

Jeronimo Nisa Luna
Dan Busey
Grant Thompson
Photographers



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

PO Box 2003
Decatur, Alabama
35602-2003

The information in this newsletter is gathered in such a way to ensure maximum accuracy. Tennessee Valley Printing Company and the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce cannot and do not guarantee the accuracy of all information furnished to it, nor the complete absence of errors and omissions; hence no responsibility for the same can be, nor is, assumed.

Merry Christmas AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



We strive to provide you with excellent customer service and budget minded design. Visit our showroom for beautiful options.

Elite FlooringAmerica.

where friends send friends



1326 4th Ave SE Decatur, AL 35601

Ph: (256) 353-0300 • Fax: (256) 353-5222

www.eliteflooringamerica.com