

Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce 2014/2015 Annual Report



Ribbon Cutting for Back on the Rack



Annual Arts & Crafts Festival



Infirmary Health

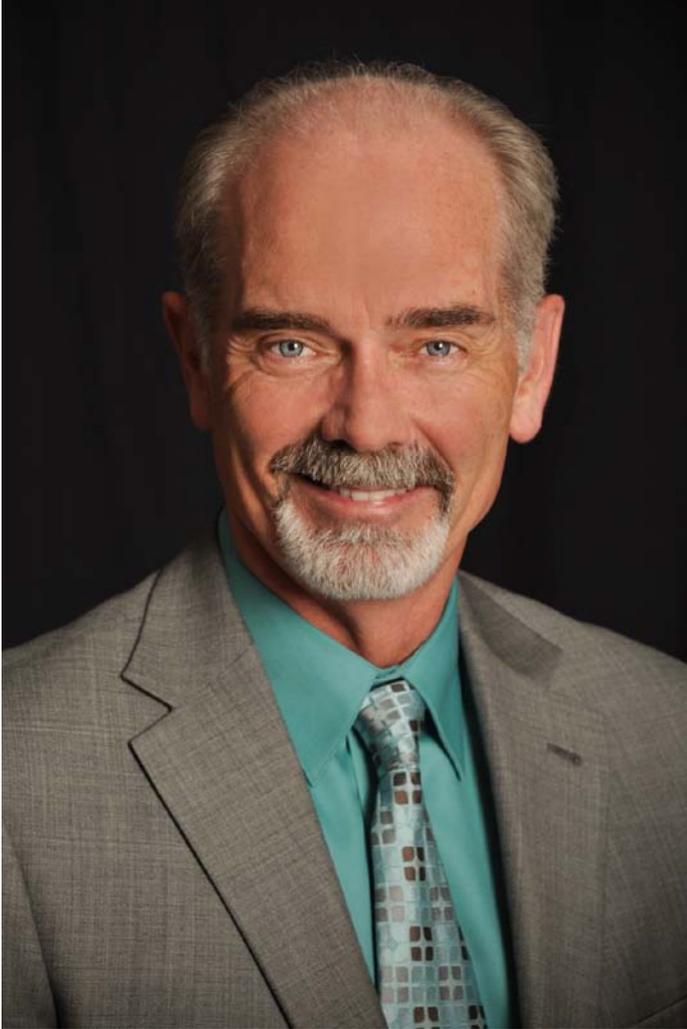


Balloons Are Everywhere

Meet

William McLaughlin

Chairman of the Board



We are indeed fortunate to live on the Eastern shore. Our quality of life is among the best in the Southeast, and we have every reason to believe that our future will be one of growth and prosperity. At the center of that bright future, at the core of that prosperity, is our business community. Business is the engine that powers our towns, supports our schools and churches, and contributes to the overall well-being of our daily lives.

The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce is fully committed to helping our business community fulfill this important role. Not only does the Chamber work to promote our businesses, but we also keep close contact with our elected officials in our three cities and the county to make sure that business has a seat at the table when decisions are made about the future of the Eastern Shore. We are also forming alliances with other chambers, adopting their best practices and making certain that we are working regionally when it comes to economic development.

Our chamber board is composed of dedicated and engaged business women and men who, along with executive director Heiko Einfeld and his staff are “leaning into” the tasks of growing our membership, creating member value, and representing the interests of Eastern Shore business in every available forum. I invite all of you, our valued members, to join us in this journey.

Your input is always welcome and appreciated. Thank you for your support and best wishes for your continued success!

About William McLaughlin

William McLaughlin recently retired after thirty five years of running hospitals and was most recently administrator of Thomas Hospital in Fairhope. William grew up in a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and attended LaSalle College on an Army scholarship. He served six years active duty as an Infantry officer, and had the privilege of commanding a Special Forces “A” Team conducting operations in Central and South America. After the army he attended Yale University where he received a Masters Degree in Public Health. He has worked in hospitals of all sizes in several states and moved to the gulf coast in 1997. He counts among his achievements the construction and opening in 2001 of the new Sacred Heart Hospital near San Destin, Florida. William currently works as a management consultant.

William is married to Theresa Brown McLaughlin who is the Chief Operating Officer of Southern Cancer Center based in Daphne. He has two children, a son Wynn, 22, and a daughter Grace who is 20 and is a sophomore in the Honors College at Auburn.

2015 / 2016 Board of Directors



William McLaughlin
Chairman of the Board
Individual Member



Heiko Einfeld
Executive Director

Executive Board:



Richard Johnson
Chairman Elect
Phelps Dunbar



Contina Woods
Past Chairman
Regions Bank



Phil Cusa
Treasurer
AltaPointe Health
Systems, Inc.
dba EastPointe
Hospital



Jennie Campbell
Vice Chairman
Economic Development
Stewart Lodges at
Steelwood



Don Mecke
Vice Chairman
Membership Value
Browning, Mecke and
O'Neal



Steve Carey
Vice Chairman
Foundation
CertaPro Painters



Ed Hammele
Vice Chairman
Governmental Affairs
BBVA Compass Bank



William Stitt
Vice Chairman
Tourism Council
Old 27 Grill

Board of Directors:



Joe Hocklander
Mobile Gas -
A Sempra
Company



Eric Nager
Southern Capital
Services



Bruce Smith
Grand Hotel Marriott
Resort, Golf Club & Spa



Sally Wagner
Hartmann, Blackmon
& Kilgore



Chris Weinberg
Walmart - South
Alabama Dist.



Paige Moore
RE/MAX By The Bay



Chuck Cuff
Homewood Suites



Deanna Auner
Homestead Village
of Fairhope



Kerry O'Connor
BancorpSouth



Ormand Thompson
Infirmary Health



Boyd Little
Oak Hollow Farm



Marcus Neto
Blue Fish Design Studio



Abe Harper
Harper Technologies
LLC



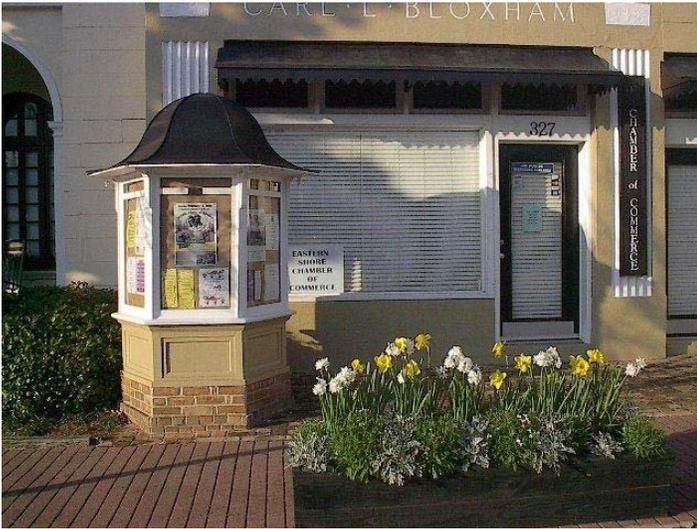
Greg Strachan
Bryant Bank

Eastern Shore Chamber Staff

Kathie Barton, Information Specialist
Cindy Bishop, Accounts Manager
Lori Edson, Tourism Information Specialist
Dawn Everette, Communications Coordinator
Jessica Fleming, Tourist Information Specialist

Diane Harmond, Administrative Assistant
Christina Hellmich, Workforce Development Director
Kay Overstreet, Administrative Assistant
Frank Shepard, Membership Account Executive
Liz Roberts Thomson, Director of Tourism & Special Events

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Fairhope Office
327 Fairhope Avenue
Fairhope, AL 36532
(251) 928-6387



Daphne Office / Welcome Center
29750 Larry Dee Cawyer Drive
Daphne, AL 36526
(251) 621-8222

Fairhope . Daphne . Spanish Fort . Barnwell . Blakeley . Belforest
Malbis . Montrose . Point Clear . Weeks Bay

TOURISM COUNCIL

William Stitt, Vice Chairman

William Stitt, Chairman / Liz Thomson - The Welcome Center welcomed 8,365 visitors last year and the Fairhope greeted 2,072. Six Explore the Shore Tourism e-letters were sent. Six Partnership meetings were held. The Chamber has a Pinterest account and an Instagram Photo Sharing account.

63rd Annual Arts & Crafts Festival

Jaca McLaren and Laura English. Co-Chairmen / Liz Thomson - The Arts & Crafts Festival was voted one of the top attractions by the Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel and was ranked in the top 20 events by Southeast Tourism Society. Approximately 300,000 people were welcomed at the three-day festival. This year the festival artwork was created by Jean McKee Williams. We experienced a greater overall profitability with the festival. There was increased revenue across the board with the sponsorships and food court seeing the greatest increase. A new Kids Area was added. A separate website for the Arts and Crafts Festival was developed and linked to the Chamber's website.

24th Annual Jubilee Festival

Tabitha Raus, Chairman / Liz Thomson - The 2014 Jubilee Festival is a wonderful regional festival held in Daphne. The chamber received media exposure on two television stations, four radio stations and in the local newspapers prior to the event. As in previous years, the Kids' Art in the Park section was very popular. The event usually draws about 25,000 visitors. The official artwork was created by Stephanie Spradling.

EASTERN SHORE CHAMBER FOUNDATION

Steve Carey, Vice Chairman

Workforce Development

Steve Carey, Chairman / Christina Hellmich - Student Training & Exploration Program (STEP). The four year program achieved a milestone this year by hosting its first graduation. Since STEP's inception, the program has reached approximately 180 students with a ZERO drop out rate.

Diane Anderson, Chairman / Christina Hellmich - Youth Leadership - Forty students graduated from the Youth Leadership Program in March 2015. The program to date has reached over 500 Eastern Shore students. This was the 14th graduating class.

Environmental

Joe McEnerney, Chairman / Christina Hellmich - The winner of the Environmental Award for 2015 was Faulkner Farm Compost.

MEMBER VALUE

Don Mecke, Vice Chairman

14th Annual Eastern Shore Chamber Golf Tournament

Grey Englebert, Chairman / Liz Thomson and Christina Hellmich - The 14th Annual Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament. Held at Lakewood Golf Club in May, the event is a great way for businesses to network. It is also a great venue to promote businesses to other key players in the community. The Chamber signed up 17 teams to play in the tournament. All of the funds raised went toward the Youth Leadership Program.

31st Annual Mayors' Prayer Breakfast

Connie Whitaker, Chairman / Liz Thomson - The Mayors' Prayer Breakfast was held on May 7, 2015, the National Day of Prayer. The event united the Eastern Shore community for an inspirational and uplifting breakfast while recognizing our three mayors. This year's keynote speaker was Dr. Richard H. Schmidt. The breakfast was held at Daphne Civic Center. Approximately 450 community and business leaders attended the event. This year we increased sponsorships participating and had a very strong showing from all three cities.

91st Annual Meeting

Nancy Grace, Chairman / Dawn Everett - The event took place at Oak Hollow Farm in June 2015, with 250 members attending. The theme this past year was Italian with Italian cuisine served. Awards were presented to members in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the Chamber and to the community.

Ambassador Program

Cindy Zebryk, Chairman / Frank Shepard & Kathie Barton - New initiatives have been adopted for the upcoming year which will focus on retention of members and sponsorships. Many incentives are being offered to encourage their participation. We are currently developing a marketing campaign to recruit new Ambassadors. Many hours were spent volunteering time to attend ribbon cuttings, delivering plaques to new members, attending Chamber monthly meetings and assisting with projects. Diane Lynn Siefert was honored as Ambassador of the Year.

Young Professionals

Frank Shepard and Kathie Barton - A concerted effort has been made to integrate young professionals within the Chamber into various programs and events. These young professionals are contacted electronically to ensure their awareness of activities. The Young Professionals Group enjoyed monthly networking opportunities throughout the fiscal year. They also helped the "Toys for Tots Campaign" by donating more than 100 toys for the US Marines.

Business Academy

Kay Overstreet - Eggs N' Issues - The Chamber held three Eggs N' Issues last fiscal year. A digital element was added to the program. There was more emphasis on new member and business introductions and highlights. Greater sponsorships were created. Elite guest speakers were invited to increase participation.

Home Based Business Expo

No Chairman / Kay Overstreet and Lori Edson - The Eastern Shore Chamber held a home Based Business Expo at Gulf Coast Event in October 2014. The event was held during the October Business After Hours and was well attended.

Morning Marketing Meeting

Grey Englebert, Chairman - The Morning Marketing has become so popular by our Members that we had to change the venue to Dicky's Barbarque. We also added sponsorships to provide food for the event.

Business After Hours

Kay Overstreet - The Chamber's Business After Hours was held 11 months in FY 2014/2015. We implemented many incentives including cash and prize giveaways and provided speaking opportunities for the hosts of the events. The events have been extremely well attended.

Best Hamburger on the Eastern Shore

Frank Shepard - The event was implemented this past fiscal year not only to taste some of the best burgers served up by our Chamber member restaurants, but to also sit down one-on-one with members to discuss their issues and how the Chamber can best support our businesses.

Movie Night in Fairhope

All Staff - The Chamber held a "Dinner & Movie" night in Fairhope to feature Coffee Shop, which was filmed in Fairhope. The event was so popular, we held two showings.

Governmental Affairs

Richard Johnson, Chairman / Christina Hellmich - The committee produced the 11th Eastern Shore Legislative Agenda covering local, state, and federal issues, and distributed it to elected officials and Chamber members. An Elected Officials Reception took place at Rock Creek Golf Club in November of 2014.

Administration

- **Website** Since launching the new website during the latter part of FY 06/07 many enhancements and changes have been made. We have since added two additional websites. There were 114,120 sessions last fiscal year and 337,289 page views. The Chamber has plans in the works for making other changes to the website to improve the ability to search for information and promote our members.
- **The Chamber's APP is now linked to 10,764 followers. There were a total of 94,740 interactions and 8,876 unique sessions. We have 6,230 Facebook likes and 2,200 Twitter followers.**
- **The Chamber's Electronic newsletter has become the primary method we utilize in which to communicate with our members. This past year we added a new feature of highlighting local businesses and enlisted the talents of freelance writer D. Fran Morley, who also writes articles for the Chamber's magazine.**
- **The Chamber produced 29 publications and brochures** that highlight the advantages of living, investing in, as well as visiting the Eastern Shore. These publications are sent out to prospective new industries, businesses, and individuals looking to relocate to the area, as well as to potential tourists. Most of the Chamber's printed materials are also available on the website.
- **The Chamber worked closely with SCORE** throughout the year, and scheduled **239 counseling sessions** for those seeking to start their own business or seeking advice on an existing business.
- **The Chamber** received an average of **100,000 calls** last year.
- **The Chamber** provided pieces of information to 2,948 inquiries about visiting our area for various conventions and group tours.
- **For the 2014/2015 fiscal year** the chamber sent out **5,948 brochures** for people relocating to our area, people inquiring about retirement opportunities, people interested in visiting our area and people visiting the area for vacations, conferences, family reunions or weddings. The Chamber also assembled packets for schools and miscellaneous projects. **Most people visit the Chamber's website to obtain information.**
- **The Chamber** distributed over **10,000 copies** of the Eastern Shore Magazine/Chamber Directory during FY 2014/2015. The magazine is also available online. The Chamber produces a monthly e-newsletter, e-event reminder, and monthly Chamber Happenings e-blast spotlights on local businesses. In addition the Chamber promotes community events in the kiosks at both offices.
- **The Chamber participated in Christmas parades in Daphne, Fairhope and Spanish Fort.**
- **The Chamber provides relocation and retirement information through www.alabamaadvantage.org.**