

# ALL IN

2023-2027 CAMPAIGN

THE  
CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE OF WEST ALABAMA



# Chairman's Message



Economic growth in the West Alabama region has been dramatic over the past several decades and has brought unprecedented opportunities.

Recent pandemic impacts are evolving rapidly and our workforce has many more employment options than ever before. If we want to attract needed talent, we must provide the job opportunities and lifestyle options that top talent jobseekers value.

Our Chamber is ready and eager to take the next steps to partner with all stakeholders in our region to boost the career opportunities and quality of life available to make West Alabama a place where people want to live, work and prosper. Chamber leadership's vision is to embark upon the build-out of the **West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center** and to concentrate on four key programming initiatives going forward:

1. **Lead Business-Driven Workforce and Talent Development**
2. **Engage Key Partnerships Focused on Improved Quality of Life In Our Communities**
3. **Improve Economic Vitality in Our Region**
4. **Drive Public Policy and Advocacy for Stronger Business Growth**

The timing couldn't be better! The global pandemic reinforced the importance of working together to handle adversity and make good things happen. In short, we need to be "All In" with our time, our energy, our talents, and our resources to leverage the momentum of the Chamber's past five-year programming and community building accomplishments, achieve even higher beneficial results and outcomes and bring the Chamber's vision to fruition.

I have been personally involved in the planning of this vision and I am **All In** as an "early adopter"—as are many of the members of our Leadership Team whose names you will find displayed throughout this Case Statement. We are confident you will join us and the many other West Alabama business and community leaders who are already on board on this vitally important journey to define our future!

Let's Be ***ALL IN*** Together!



**Michael Goebel**  
President and CEO  
Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc.

# Campaign Leadership

## Chair

**Michael Goebel**  
*Mercedes-Benz U.S.  
International, Inc.*

## Vice Chairs

**Dr. Stuart Bell**  
*The University of Alabama*  
**Dr. Cathy Randall**  
*Community Leader*  
**Dr. Cynthia Warrick**  
*Stillman College*

## Steering Committee

**Inge Beeker**  
*Beeker Properties*  
**Karen Brooks**  
*Phifer Incorporated*  
**Dr. Gary Butler**  
*Camgian*  
**Michele Coley**  
*Allstate Coley Agency*  
**Thomas Dedrick**  
*Raymond James*  
**Claude Edwards**  
*Bryant Bank*  
**Sam Faucett**  
*Community Leader*  
**Carl Jamison**  
*JamisonMoneyFarmer PC*  
**Grant McCabe**  
*WhiteSky Communications*  
**Gary Nichols**  
*McAbee Construction, Inc.*  
**Dr. Pam Parker**  
*Community Leader*  
**David Pass**  
*Sealy Management Co., Inc.*  
**Tripp Powell**  
*Powell Enterprises*  
**Elizabeth Winter**  
*Regions Bank*

## Advisory Committee

**Anwar Aiken**  
*The Grand Event Design &  
Decor*  
**Mary Virginia Best**  
*b.*  
**Mildred Black**  
*People Optimum Consulting,  
LLC*  
**Dan Blakley**  
*The University of Alabama*  
**Bobby Bragg**  
*JamisonMoneyFarmer PC*  
**Karen Burklew**  
*Alabama Power Company*  
**Sydney Burns**  
*Lou & Company*  
**Rick Clementz**  
*Lead Resolution Capital*  
**David Coleman**  
*Hunt Refining Company*  
**Brock Corder**  
*The Builders Group*  
**Dr. Chris Cox**  
*Shelton State Community  
College*  
**Norman Crow**  
*Tuscaloosa County Economic  
Development Authority*  
**Steven Deal**  
*Pritchett-Moore, Inc.*  
**Heather Dill**  
*Embassy Suites Tuscaloosa  
Downtown*  
**David DuBose**  
*Townsquare Media  
Tuscaloosa*  
**Russell Dubose**  
*Phifer Incorporated*  
**Amy Echols**  
*Kentuck Art Center & Festival*

**Matt Fajack**  
*The University of Alabama*  
**Matt Feller**  
*BFGoodrich Tire  
Manufacturing*  
**Carrie Fitts**  
*Carrie Fitts Real Estate*  
**Chip Fuqua**  
*Mercedes-Benz U.S.  
International, Inc.*  
**Lee Garrison**  
*The Frazer Lanier Company*  
**Scott Goldsmith**  
*JamisonMoneyFarmer PC*  
**Jheovanny Gomez**  
*Jalapenos Mexican Grill*  
**Heyward Gould**  
*BankFirst*  
**Chris Gunter**  
*Buffalo Rock*  
**Jennifer Hart**  
*Paragon HM Wealth  
Management Group at  
Morgan Stanley*  
**Cal Holt**  
*Knight Sign Industries, Inc.*  
**Joe Hughes**  
*L&H Contractors, Inc.*  
**Tony Johnson**  
*Pylon Professionals*  
**Danielle Kimbrough**  
*Alabama Power Company*  
**Tim Lewis**  
*TALA Professional Services*  
**Brian Luoma**  
*The Westervelt Company*  
**Mayor Walt Maddox**  
*City of Tuscaloosa*  
**Blake Madison**  
*Rosen Harwood, P.A.*

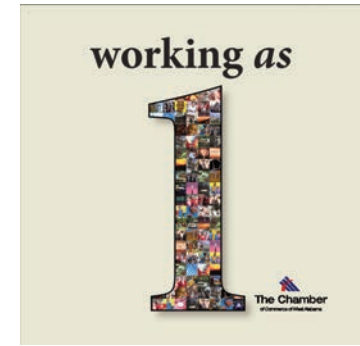
**Scott McClanahan**  
*Paragon HM Wealth  
Management Group at  
Morgan Stanley*  
**Dean McClure**  
*TTL, Inc.*  
**Brent McCorkle**  
*BFGoodrich Tire  
Manufacturing*  
**Gary McGee**  
*Urban Bar & Kitchen*  
**Dr. Joseph Messina**  
*The University of Alabama*  
**Dr. Jacqueline Morgan**  
*The University of Alabama*  
**Jordan Morris**  
*Ward Scott Architecture*  
**Audrey O'Neal**  
*Bryant Bank*  
**Whitney Oswald**  
*Alabama ONE*  
**Tim Parker III**  
*Parker Towing Company, Inc.*  
**Gary Phillips**  
*Premier Service Co., Inc.*  
**Susan Poole**  
*The Westervelt Company*  
**Jasmine Rainey**  
*Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports*  
**David Rains**  
*Randall-Reilly, LLC*  
**Matt Ray**  
*EatMyBeats, Inc.*  
**Nikki Ray**  
*EatMyBeats, Inc.*  
**Luke Remmert**  
*Remmert & Company*  
**Llevelyn Rhone**  
*Hale County Chamber of  
Commerce*  
**Alisa Robertson**  
*The Westervelt Company*

**Kelsey Rush**  
*Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports*  
**Emmie Sanders**  
*Young Tuscaloosa*  
**Mark Shearer**  
*Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa, Inc.*  
**Sontonia Stephens**  
*Community Service Programs  
of West Alabama*  
**Mark Sullivan**  
*Bryant Bank*  
**Hugh Thomas**  
*ONIN Staffing*  
**Mark Tobin**  
*The Westervelt Company*  
**Matt Tompkins**  
*Rosen Harwood, P.A.*  
**Ken Todd**  
*McAbee Construction, Inc.*  
**Matt Turner**  
*Alabama ONE*  
**Gene Upton**  
*SMP Automotive Systems  
Alabama, Inc.*  
**Jason Walker**  
*TTL, Inc.*  
**Cade Warner**  
*The Westervelt Company*  
**Glenda Webb**  
*City of Northport*  
**Bill Wells**  
*Alabama ONE*  
**Sandra Wolfe**  
*The Arts and Humanities  
Council of Tuscaloosa County,  
Inc.*  
**Jackie Wuska**  
*The United Way of West  
Alabama*  
**Rolf Wrona**  
*Mercedes-Benz U.S.  
International, Inc.*



# Track Record of Success

In 2012, the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama facilitated a comprehensive strategic planning process that involved dozens of business leaders and community stakeholders. The resulting plan, *Working As 1*, articulated an ambitious five-year vision for the community, economic, and workforce efforts of the Chamber. Subsequently, the Chamber led a highly successful capital campaign that generated more than \$2.5 million in investment from the area business community to support the numerous initiatives of the *Working As 1* plan.



**\$9 MILLION**  
GRANT FUNDING

**75+**  
ENTREPRENEURS  
HOUSED

**300+**  
MENTORSHIPS

**80+**  
NEW-TO-  
MARKET  
RETAILERS

**MILLIONS**  
IN SALES TAX

**WEST ALABAMA WORKS**  
**WOW**  
WORLDS OF WORK

**4500+**  
STUDENTS

**125**  
COMPANIES

**900+**  
VOLUNTEERS

**\$225 MILLION**  
LOCAL  
ROAD  
PROJECTS







Building upon the success and momentum of the *Working As 1* strategic plan and capital campaign, the Chamber recognized the need and opportunity to take its ambitious efforts to the “next level.” Thus, in 2017, *The Next Level Initiative* was launched. This new five-year strategic planning process resulted in even greater involvement from business and community leaders and led to more than \$3.5 million of local investment for the Chamber’s updated strategic initiatives. Like the *Working As 1* plan, the accomplishments of *The Next Level Initiative* will have a lasting impact in our region.



## LEAD WORKFORCE READINESS AND QUALITY EDUCATION



- Continue leadership and management of all Region 3 Workforce Development Council / *West AlabamaWorks!* initiatives
- Convene workforce partners on industry-driven talent development
- Enhance business community engagement in pre-K-12 education curriculum

## DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH



- Leverage *The Edge* to foster entrepreneurship, innovation, high-tech commercialization initiatives, and small business development
- Partner with The University of Alabama and area leaders to recruit knowledge-based economic development and create “technology villages” in rural areas
- Promote “smart growth” principles in collaboration with local government officials
- Continue efforts to expand new retail offerings

## ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY TO CREATE TRUE QUALITY OF PLACE



- Expand the reach and impact of minority business development and diversity efforts
- Continue efforts to strengthen capacity and service delivery of the non-profit community
- Convene key organizational partners to address community quality of life issues
- Advocate for expanded cultural, arts, entertainment, and recreational opportunities

## DRIVE PUBLIC POLICY AND BUSINESS ADVOCACY



- Remain the “voice of business” in the community through aggressive public policy advocacy at all levels of government
- Develop strategies to proactively solve issues that impede economic development
- Maintain focus on responsible public investment in transportation infrastructure



# The NEXT LEVEL Initiative



Through *The Next Level Initiative*, the Chamber made significant strides in all core membership engagement areas. Legacy programs, such as Adopt-A-School and Leadership Tuscaloosa, continue to remain popular, highly sought after means of corporate engagement and professional development. Newer programs, such as the Diverse Business Council, Non-Profit Council, Women's Leadership Alliance, and Young Tuscaloosa, have expanded the reach and impact of the Chamber with key stakeholder groups throughout the community. In addition, the Chamber's annual community benchmarking trips have had an immediate and profound impact. These thoroughly planned visits to other thriving southeastern cities have not only been fully embraced by dozens of top public, private, and nonprofit sector leaders, but have also provided the inspiration for numerous community initiatives such as the expansion of public art, the creation of the West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center, and the ambitious *Elevate Tuscaloosa* plan.

The Chamber also made significant progress in areas such as economic development, continuing to work closely with partner entities in the recruitment of new commercial enterprises and fostering further growth in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. A prime example is the Chamber's pivotal role in the recruitment of Camgian to open a Center for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Tuscaloosa, which has already led to the retention of top graduates from The University of Alabama and the recruitment of highly educated talent to the community.

The Chamber has also been heavily engaged in important public policy initiatives at all levels of government. A notable example is the leading role the Chamber played in the development and strong bipartisan passage of the *Rebuild Alabama Act of 2019*, unprecedented state legislation that is resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment in Alabama's transportation infrastructure.

Arguably the most pressing economic challenge in recent years has been developing and sustaining a qualified workforce. Under the strategic direction of *The Next Level Initiative* and through the numerous organizational partners of West AlabamaWorks!, the Chamber continued to implement innovative programs to aid both employers and job seekers and, in doing so, further elevated its national reputation as a workforce development system model.

Since its inception in 2014, **West AlabamaWorks!** has developed and curated programs, most of which have received statewide and global recognition to support the mission. Our programs such as Worlds of Work (WOW), Educator Workforce Academy (EWA), Modern Manufacturing Program (MMP), WOW 2.0, Regional Signing Day, Career Connect, Job Connect, and I.G.N.I.T.E. Student Jobs Portal have enhanced our ability to help tens of thousands of individuals find their passion and career pathway. The following data points illustrate the broad scope of work in this critically important area and underscore the quantifiable impact of the efforts.





The mission of **West AlabamaWorks!** is to recruit, train, and empower a highly-skilled workforce driven by business and industry needs in West Alabama. Our outreach events have been one of the main factors connecting employers to job seekers and providing them with the opportunities to gain high wage jobs in West Alabama. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, WAW continued to have outreach events in support of area business and industry by transitioning to virtual hiring events.

## Career Connect by the Numbers



**12,931**

Number of applications submitted by job seekers in Job Connect



**22,526**

Number of individuals in Career Connect



**309,819**

Number of text messages sent and received by workforce navigators to job seekers

## Partnerships with Business & Industry



**82**

Number of virtual and in person outreach events



**101**

Number of partners with Adopt-A-School



**256**

Number of companies helped by West AlabamaWorks!

## Worlds of Work by the Numbers



**850**  
per year

Number of volunteers serving 12,000 hours per year



**18,181**

Number of students who attended in person WOW & Virtual WOW



**114**

Number of companies involved in WOW

## Partnerships with Education



**2,730**

Number of students who experienced TransfrVR Career Exploration



**206**

Number of top leaders in education who graduated from Educator Workforce Academy

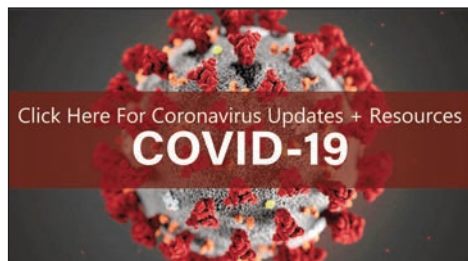


# 2021 Chamber of the Year Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives

The unprecedented success of *The Next Level Initiative* not only positioned the Chamber to address business and community needs like never before, but also to become a national benchmark for our organization’s local response to the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and our ongoing innovation in workforce development. As a result, the Chamber was named the **2021 Chamber of the Year** by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE).



Based in Alexandria, Virginia, ACCE has more than 1,600 chambers of commerce and related business and economic development organizations as members, representing more than 9,000 industry professionals across North America. The Chamber of the Year Award is the most prestigious recognition in the chamber of commerce industry and receiving the highly-coveted honor is a significant testament to both the collective impact and national reputation of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama.



**TUESDAY, APRIL 28 | 9:30 am**  
**Financial Tools to Survive and Thrive Amid COVID-19**

The financial tools and disciplines savvy business owners use to thrive in good times are the same ones they use to pivot and survive during a crisis. Corporate leadership coach and former CFO, Ken DeWitt, will share how you can use his recession planning checklist, 13-week cash flow forecasting model, and net worth resources tool, as well as advice on how to spend stimulus money wisely. Jacque Johnson, Financial Wellness Manager at Alabama ONE, will share good news on how to recover from this pandemic through practical habits such as creating a family budget and businesses incorporating the barter system to gain access to needed supplies. Johnson brings a financial message of hope to those seeking to do better and be better on the other side of this crisis. No matter how the pandemic has affected your business and/or family finances, you can use the information shared in this Zoom webinar to make your situation better and emerge from it in a strong position.

**Presenters:**  
Ken DeWitt – Principal, DeWitt, LLC  
Jacque Johnson – Financial Wellness Manager, Alabama ONE

This will be a Zoom webinar. Upon registration, you will receive an email with login and dial-in information.

**CLEANING + DISINFECTING AFTER OPENING**

**CLEAN** Clean surfaces using soap and water. Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. High touch surfaces include: Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

**DISINFECT** We recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectant. Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend:  
• Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label)  
• Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use

**Water-diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface.**  
• Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection, and ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening may not be suitable for disinfection.  
• Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.  
• Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 16 | 9:30 am**  
**Hiring Amid A Crisis**

There are obviously a significant number of people in our community who are out of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are also a number of essential businesses that are actually seeking additional employees to hire right now. This conference call will give clear direction to job seekers on how to access available jobs, as well as advise employers on how to immediately connect to qualified candidates. Many businesses are also concerned about retaining employees who may be temporarily displaced. This session will address the steps employers need to take to reach full employment when we emerge from this crisis.

**Presenters:**  
Donny Jones – Chief Operating Officer, Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama; Executive Director, West Alabama Works  
Larry Jowers – Director, Tuscaloosa Area Career Center

**WORK HARD.  
WORK SMART.  
WORK SAFE.**

PLAYBOOK FOR REOPENING  
YOUR BUSINESS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19



# Stakeholder Input

While our region has experienced unprecedented growth and economic success in recent years, there remains no shortage of challenges. In answer to this situation, the Chamber continues to perform its most important role in the community – that of convener.

In April 2022, the Chamber convened more than 110 top community leaders from the public, private, nonprofit, and education sectors at the Renaissance Ross Bridge Resort for *The Next Level Summit*. This intensive three-day event allowed for candid, in-depth discussions on a variety of pressing community issues. Multiple breakout sessions were held and the discussions were moderated by the same local leaders who led panel discussions during *The Next Level Series*, several issue-focused educational forums that preceded the Summit.

In addition, participants received high-level briefings from some of the most prominent leaders in our region and state. These presentations and breakout discussions resulted in the creation of proactive action items to address many of the challenges and opportunities identified through both the Series and Summit. Various community stakeholder groups will take on the responsibility of these action items, including the Chamber through this new, five-year *ALL IN* strategic plan.

Great organizational strides have been made in recent years to place the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama in the top echelon of chambers in the nation. As the Chamber looks to the next five years, it is perfectly positioned to continue making this community an ideal place to do business and call home. The Chamber is *ALL IN*.

## THE NEXT LEVEL SUMMIT





# Lead Business-Driven Workforce and Talent Development

"The partnership Shelton State Community College has with the Chamber is second to none in providing sustainable growth for the regional workforce. Whether it be new training opportunities or enhancing current talent initiatives, we will continue to work closely together to address the ever-evolving workforce needs of our community."

*Chris Cox*

— Dr. Chris Cox, President,  
Shelton State Community College



## Vision

Continue to lead the nationally-recognized, regional workforce system to meet business and industry needs by increasing the labor force participation rate; connecting students to Career Technical Education options, apprenticeships, and jobs; and opening doors of opportunity to individuals normally left behind.



"The partnership the Tuscaloosa City Schools has with the Chamber and West AlabamaWorks! is truly invaluable. From their Adopt-A-School program, to the Educator Workforce Academy, to Worlds of Work and Worlds of Work 2.0, and more, our students and educators benefit every single day through an active relationship with the business community."

*Mike Daria*

— Dr. Mike Daria, Superintendent  
Tuscaloosa City Schools

"The Hale County School System is exceptionally grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Chamber's education and workforce development initiatives. Because of this partnership, our schools are able to participate in the Adopt-A-School program, which has created a great relationship between community businesses and our schools."

*Michael C. Ryans*

— Michael Ryans, Superintendent  
Hale County School System





# Deliverables

- Continue to expand the Chamber's regional coordination role and collaboration through continued employer engagement, career pathway alignment, and sector partnerships through West AlabamaWorks!—*underway and ongoing*
- Expand career technical education offerings such as Modern Manufacturing, construction trades, and health sciences in every school system in West Alabama—*underway with target completion date of 2024*
- Increase focus on STEM curriculum to improve math and science skills for students as well as enhancing targeted essential employability skills training in all Pre-K-12 public and private schools—*underway and ongoing*
- Create a public education dashboard to measure outcomes and improvements in student educational attainment, reduction in dropout rates, career technical enrollment, credentials obtained, dual enrollment, advanced placement courses, and apprenticeships—*in place by 2024*
- Expand and enhance the Chamber's Adopt-A-School program in all 12 school systems in our region while continuing to encourage focus on the "Four Pillars of Education" adopted in 2021 by public, private, and nonprofit partners across West Alabama—*underway with target completion date of 2025*
- Work with the public and private education partners to develop and implement a summer and after school learning program to eliminate summer learning loss, and to help improve school performance—*underway*
- Continue to develop a youth jobs program to build a strong workforce pipeline to put students in front of opportunities at every stage of development whether that's a part-time job, summer job, co-op, apprenticeship, or an internship—*ongoing*
- Lead the community in developing comprehensive strategies to address pressing workforce barriers of quality childcare, affordable workforce housing, and public transportation—*underway and ongoing*
- Increase the number of community outreach and hiring fair events across the region to increase the labor force participation rate—*expand to 20 annual events beginning 2023*
- Craft and implement strategies to attract, recruit, and retain young professionals in the workforce—*identify, recruit, and convene appropriate team members (including West Alabama young professionals) to define effective strategies with program roll-out in 2023*

"Developing and sustaining a highly qualified workforce is a constant challenge for all employers. The leading role the Chamber plays, through West AlabamaWorks!, is critical to our community's workforce development strategies and overall economic well-being. MBUSI is proud to work with the Chamber on this important topic."

*Rolf Wrona*

— Rolf Wrona  
Vice President, Human Resources  
Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc.



"The Chamber has been an excellent partner in helping businesses like ARD Logistics, LLC succeed in our quest to recruit, educate, assist, and retain our team members. The Chamber provides a business-friendly and supportive environment and advocates for area businesses that create jobs and ultimately support families, while growing and developing our community."

*Bregitte Braddock*

— Bregitte Braddock, General Manager,  
ARD Logistics, LLC

"The Chamber's workforce development team has been instrumental in helping our small business employ skilled workers for our music event staff. After many failed attempts trying to hire workers on our own, we reached out to the Chamber for help. Thanks to their large database of workers in West Alabama, our small business has the same opportunities in reaching potential employees as larger companies."

*Matt and Nikki Ray*  
— Matt and Nikki Ray  
Owners, EatMyBeats, Inc.





# Engage Partnerships Focused On Improved Quality of Life In Our Communities

"The cultural arts are critical to a community's economic development efforts and overall quality of life for its residents. The Chamber has embraced this, becoming a trusted partner and vocal champion for initiatives of The Arts Council and our partner arts organizations."

*Sandra Wolfe*

—Sandra Wolfe, Executive Director,  
The Arts and Humanities Council of  
Tuscaloosa County, Inc.



## Vision

Convene and host a broad coalition of public, private, and nonprofit sector partners to promote community development initiatives, programming, and outreach to make our area more attractive to young professionals, potential and current employees, visitors, and residents.

## Deliverables

- Consistently convene community forums to gain broad input on pressing challenges—*conduct two (2) forums per year beginning in 2023 to gain understanding to shape future programming outreach*

"The Chamber's leadership and proactive efforts continuously help position our community to be competitive and has greatly enhanced our quality of life. They consistently bring innovative ideas and strategies to the table that quickly turn into action."

*Kelsey C. Rush*

—Kelsey Rush, President and CEO,  
Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports





- Convene area employers to engage with DCH Health System and other healthcare providers to improve health outcomes and public perception of the quality of care—*in place and ongoing*
- Provide proactive, innovative, and community-led initiatives to address public safety issues and support law enforcement—*target a camera provision program to assist law enforcement in 2023 and identify at least one (1) “solution bringer” each year going forward*
- Act as on-going convener for nonprofit sector entities to assist them in building organizational capacity and addressing community needs—*expand current engagements providing space, programmatic support, and other ongoing resources beginning in 2023*
- Advocate for cultural arts initiatives as well as additional entertainment venues, expanded recreational opportunities, and signature community events that provide unique experiences for both residents and visitors—*organize and convene key players to identify and help bring to fruition one new venue, initiative, and/or event beginning in 2023 and ongoing*
- Continue to coordinate and lead annual community visits to benchmark ourselves with other successful regions—*in place and ongoing*

“The Chamber serves as the primary convener of public, private, and nonprofit sector leadership in addressing our community’s most important quality of life issues. I applaud their efforts to constantly benchmark against other successful communities and for being a leading voice in pushing our community to remain a great place to live and work.”

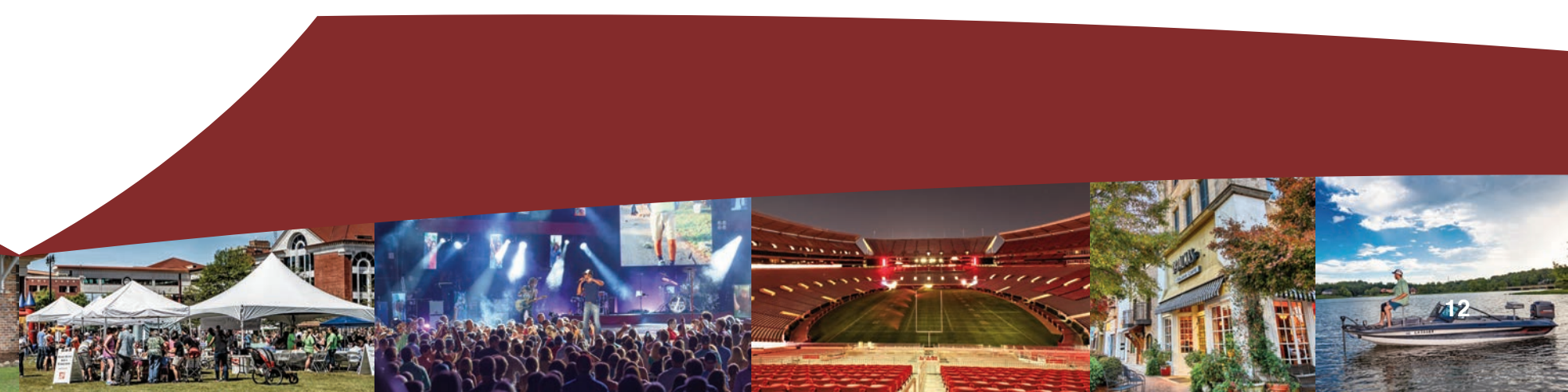
*Elizabeth Winter*

— Elizabeth Winter,  
Market Executive, Regions Bank



“The Chamber’s benchmarking trips to other thriving cities have given community leaders fresh perspective on innovative ways to improve our quality of life and have inspired us all to think bigger. That’s great for business.”

*Justin Holt*  
— Justin Holt, Owner,  
Southern Ale House





# Drive Public Policy and Advocacy for Stronger Business Climate

"The Chamber is a vital resource for our community when it comes to public policy advocacy. From education, to transportation, to workforce housing, and everything in between, the City's partnership with the Chamber continues to be a critical piece in making Tuscaloosa a great place to live, work, and play."

*Walt Maddox*  
— Mayor Walt Maddox,  
City of Tuscaloosa

"Our Chamber continues to be instrumental in identifying community challenges, advocating for solutions, and educating stakeholders in a way that helps craft better public policy and planning for our future."

*Rob Robertson*  
— Judge Rob Robertson,  
Probate Judge and County  
Commission Chairman,  
Tuscaloosa County

"I value my longstanding relationship with the Chamber. From working together to improve roads to developing a qualified workforce, I'm proud of the City of Northport's partnership with the Chamber in making our community a great place to call home."

*Bobby Herndon*  
— Mayor Bobby Herndon,  
City of Northport



"Having a close working relationship with the Chamber has been incredibly important to me throughout my tenure as a member of the Alabama Legislature. The organization is a trusted source of information and serves as an invaluable sounding board when dealing with legislation of significant interest to the business community."

*Kyle South*  
— Representative Kyle South  
(R – Fayette), Alabama House of  
Representatives

"The Chamber's Public Affairs Council meetings and advocacy visits to Montgomery during legislative sessions provide ideal forums for the local legislative delegation to actively engage on public policy issues with business and community leaders."

*Chris England*  
— Representative Chris England  
(D – Tuscaloosa), Alabama House of  
Representatives





# Vision

Lead the region in proactive, strategic efforts to draw attention to and influence policy decisions supporting community, economic, and workforce development.

# Deliverables

- Convene and partner with organizations of like-mind on key policy issues for increased ability to influence legislation—*identify, recruit, and convene partners by year-end 2023*
- Conduct forums that allow area business leaders to engage with policy makers and proactively advocate for issues—*conduct at least two (2) forums each year beginning in 2023*
- Aggressively support pro-business legislation and fight against legislation that would have a chilling effect on business at all levels of government—*in place and ongoing*
- Develop an annual public policy agenda for issues at the local, state, and federal levels—*in place and ongoing*
- Coordinate annual in-person delegation visits to advocate for public policy priorities with elected and appointed officials in Montgomery and, as needed, Washington D.C.—*in place and ongoing*

“Being actively engaged in the Chamber’s public policy activities gives me and my company a seat at the table with elected officials and decision makers. That strength in numbers allows us to impact issues that are important to us. The Chamber really is the voice of business.”

*Heather Dill*

— Heather Dill  
Regional Director of Sales and Marketing,  
Valor Hospitality Partners,  
Embassy Suites Tuscaloosa Downtown



“Developing the Tuscaloosa National Airport to its full potential is a marathon, not a sprint, but I can say without a doubt that we would not be where we are today – a newly replaced runway, a SCASDP grant to help recruit air service, and a master plan with record community input – without the support and convening power of the Chamber.”

*David Pass*

— David Pass, Chairman,  
Tuscaloosa National Airport Advisory Committee





# Improve the Economic Vitality of Our Region

"As a community and region with a comprehensive research university of national significance, we have a special opportunity to collaboratively pursue economic development and diversification that best align with the research strengths of The University of Alabama and the continuous pipeline of talent it produces. Our close partnership with the Chamber is vital to our success."

*Russell J. Mumper*

— Dr. Russell J. Mumper,  
Vice President for Research and Economic  
Development, The University of Alabama



## Vision

Partner in all efforts to support existing businesses and industries; strategically recruit and grow a diverse mix of business enterprises that add new jobs to the market; and research and communicate matters of economic importance to the community.

## Deliverables

- Partner with all appropriate public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to formulate a comprehensive community economic development strategy—*develop and execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with all economic development entities in 2023. Operational by mid-year 2023*

"Our state has an opportunity to become a national model in terms of strategically building an innovation economy and is presently dedicating time, energy, and resources to accomplish this objective. It is critical that the Tuscaloosa and West Alabama region engage and align in those efforts, and the Chamber is uniquely positioned as a primary convener to bring the business community to the table."

*Bill Poole*

— Bill Poole, Director of Finance  
and Senior Advisor to the Governor,  
Office of Governor Kay Ivey





- Assist with existing business and industry growth through targeted outreach, strategic programming, networking opportunities, and special events—*in place and ongoing*

- Work alongside partner entities in the strategic recruitment and development of knowledge-based and technology sector businesses—*collaborate with partners to identify, target, and recruit new companies and assist existing companies to grow/scale each year 2022-2026*

- Actively support the recruitment of targeted, new-to-market retail and commercial businesses—*engage in a data-driven approach to identify and recruit businesses that minimize the leakage of community sales tax revenue*

- Support all marketing, promotion, and programmatic efforts of The EDGE – Incubator and Accelerator and assist with the recruitment and nurturing of facility tenants—*in place and ongoing*

- Lead the development and coordination of a local investor network to support start-up and emerging businesses—*identify, recruit, and convene a nucleus of investors by year-end 2024*

- Identify and prioritize infrastructure improvement projects that will help foster commercial and residential development opportunities—*form partnerships in 2022 with all sectors to target top needs. Beginning in 2023, focus on bringing resolution*

*recommendations to the table for at least one (1) key issue each year going forward*

- Continue to educate the community of the economic impact and promote the importance of supporting local businesses—*Strategic “Buy Local” marketing efforts in place and ongoing*

- Produce an annual Prosperity Index to measure the community's economic health across a variety of statistical categories—*in place and ongoing*

“Camgian is proud to be a strategic partner with the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama and The University of Alabama. Through these strong partnerships, we have been able to not only open a new office in Tuscaloosa and bring highly technical, high-paying jobs to the area, but also attract and retain the educated talent we need to make a difference for our industrial and manufacturing partners in West Alabama, as well as our nation's warfighters on the battlefield.”

  
— Dr. Gary Butler  
Founder and CEO, Camgian



“The Chamber has taken a leading role in recruiting, training, and assisting job seekers throughout West Alabama. Those efforts, coupled with helping new and existing business of all sizes navigate challenges and pursue growth opportunities, has greatly contributed to economic vitality of our entire area.”

  
— Michele Coley  
Owner/Exclusive Agent,  
Allstate Coley Insurance



# The Investment: Our Goal

Annual Budget: \$800,000  
Five-Year Budget: \$4,000,000

- Lead Business-Driven Workforce and Talent Development
- Engage Partnerships Focused on Improved Quality of Life in Our Communities
- Drive Public Policy and Advocacy for Stronger Business Climate
- Improve the Economic Vitality of Our Region

## Annual Investment Levels

Visionary	\$50,000 +
Game Changer	\$25,000 +
Chairman's Circle	\$15,000 +
CEO Council	\$10,000 +
Investor Leader	\$5,000 +
Growth Partner	\$2,500 +
Community Supporter	\$1,000 +
Media Partner	in-kind

# Investor Benefits

## Visionary

\$50,000 +

- Membership on the Chairman's Council
- Exclusive invitation to all Chairman's Council events
- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Annual on-site investor executive briefing/input session with senior Chamber leadership regarding key Chamber initiatives and pressing community issues
- Reserved table in prominent location and special recognition at the Annual Meeting & Awards Celebration, Education Summit, Talent Conference, and all Chamber in Session events: State of the Community, State of the Economy, and State of the State
- Two registrations for the annual Montgomery Drive-In
- Logo on home page and prominent recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Prominent recognition in all print and digital membership publications, including an annual feature in the Membership Directory and Rising Tide business journal
- Strategic promotion and recognition through all Chamber social media channels
- Prominent digital profile or advertisement in the lobby at the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center
- Customized investor logo to use for investor's print and digital marketing assets
- Complimentary use of the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center for any meeting and/or special event, upon availability
- Highest priority and 30% discount on all event and program sponsorships offered through the annual 4th Quarter Drive, excluding Presenting sponsorships, advertisements, and table sponsorships
- Other tailored benefits of specific interest to you can be developed as part of regular meetings with Chamber leadership

## Game Changer

\$25,000 +

- Membership on the Chairman's Council
- Exclusive invitation to all Chairman's Council events
- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Reserved table in prominent location and special recognition at the Annual Meeting & Awards Celebration, Talent Conference, and the Chamber in Session event: State of the Community
- One registration for the annual Montgomery Drive-In
- Logo on home page and prominent recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Prominent recognition in all print and digital membership publications, including the annual Membership Directory and Rising Tide business journal
- Strategic promotion and recognition through all Chamber social media channels
- Prominent logo recognition on display at the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center
- Customized investor logo to use for investor's print and digital marketing assets
- Complimentary use of the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center for four meetings and/or special events annually, upon availability
- Priority and 25% discount on all event and program sponsorships offered through the annual 4th Quarter Drive, excluding Presenting sponsorships, advertisements, and table sponsorships
- Other tailored benefits of specific interest to you can be developed as part of regular meetings with Chamber leadership



## Chairman's Circle

**\$15,000 +**

- Membership on the Chairman's Council
- Exclusive invitation to all Chairman's Council events
- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Reserved table in prominent location and special recognition at the Annual Meeting & Award Celebration and Talent Conference
- Logo on home page and recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Recognition in all print and digital membership publications, including the annual Membership Directory and Rising Tide business journal
- Recognition through all Chamber social media channels
- Prominent logo recognition on display at the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center
- Investor logo to use for investor's print and digital marketing assets
- Complimentary use of the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center for two meetings and/or special events annually, upon availability
- 15% discount on all event and program sponsorships offered through the annual 4th Quarter Drive, excluding Presenting sponsorships, advertisements, and table sponsorships

## CEO Council

**\$10,000 +**

- Membership on the Chairman's Council
- Exclusive invitation to all Chairman's Council events
- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Reserved table and special recognition at the Annual Meeting & Awards Celebration
- Logo on home page and recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Recognition in all print and digital membership publications, including the annual Membership Directory and Rising Tide business journal
- Recognition through all Chamber social media channels
- Prominent logo recognition on display at the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center
- Investor logo to use for investor's print and digital marketing assets
- 10% discount on all event and program sponsorships offered through the annual 4th Quarter Drive, excluding Presenting sponsorships, advertisements, and table sponsorships

## Investor Leader

**\$5,000 +**

- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Four seats at the Annual Meeting & Awards Celebration
- Recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Recognition in all print and digital membership publications, including the annual Membership Directory and Rising Tide business journal
- Prominent logo recognition on display at the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center
- Investor logo to use for investor's print and digital marketing assets

## Growth Partner

**\$2,500 +**

- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Recognition in all print and digital membership publications, including the annual Membership Directory and Rising Tide business journal
- Prominent logo recognition on display at the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center
- Investor logo to use for investor's print and digital marketing assets

## Community Supporter

**\$1,000 +**

- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Investor logo to use for investor's print and digital marketing assets

## Media Partner

**in-kind**

- Membership on the Chairman's Council
- Exclusive invitation to all Chairman's Council events
- Invitation to all investor-only receptions and events
- Two seats at the Annual Meeting & Awards Celebration, Talent Conference, and the Chamber in Session: State of the Community
- One registration for the annual Montgomery Drive-In
- Listed as media sponsor for any event promoted through partner's own media channels
- Logo on home page and prominent recognition on the investor page of the Chamber's website
- Prominent recognition in all print and digital membership publications, including the annual Membership Directory and Rising Tide business journal
- Prominent logo recognition on display at the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center
- Complimentary use of the Chamber/West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center for four meetings and/or special events annually, upon availability
- Other tailored benefits of specific interest to you can be developed as part of regular meetings with Chamber leadership

# West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center

## Vision: The “Why”

In 2018, 91 local leaders visited Lexington, Kentucky as part of the Chamber’s annual community benchmarking trip. There, leaders saw multiple partner agencies housed together within the Commerce Lexington, Inc. facility to advance their highly collaborative and nationally recognized economic development efforts. That experience sparked a vision to create a similar concept in the Tuscaloosa area focused on workforce and community development. The primary and most obvious hurdle, however, was lack of a facility with the physical capacity to accommodate such an undertaking. Thanks to the forward-thinking leadership of the Chamber’s then-Treasurer, Elizabeth Winter of Regions Bank, the idea of the Chamber’s Foundation acquiring the Regions Bank facility, in the heart of downtown Tuscaloosa, was born. Two years of significant and thoughtful due diligence later, the Chamber Foundation purchased the facility through an extremely generous financial transaction by Regions Bank and the **West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center** officially came to fruition.

This unique center not only provides additional physical capacity for the Chamber and West AlabamaWorks!, but now houses numerous community organizations that each have a strategic workforce and/or community development partnership with the Chamber and West AlabamaWorks! This co-housing under one roof has dramatically enhanced the day-to-day collaboration among these partner entities; created new synergies among many of their collective missions; and greatly improved accessibility for stakeholders and external groups that engage with facility tenants. Additionally, the Center has quickly become an extremely popular meeting location for a wide variety of corporate, philanthropic, educational, and government entities. Existing meeting rooms and collaboration spaces are consistently in high demand and in perfect alignment with the original vision for the facility, making the West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center a “central gathering place” for those advancing the well-being of the community.





# Community Impact

The partner tenant organizations of the West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center have all stated that significant synergistic opportunities have evolved with other partner tenants, the Chamber, and other community organizations and leaders who visit the facility. The community impact of the partner tenants' programming and outreach positively affects thousands of lives in significant ways throughout Tuscaloosa and West Alabama. Prime examples include:

- **West AlabamaWorks!** currently serves hundreds of West Alabama businesses through five primary industry clusters and dozens of individualized workforce development strategies, engages with thousands of students from nine counties through annual career exploration initiatives, has assisted more than 21,000 area job seekers through the Career Connect system and numerous hiring events, and manages the Modern Manufacturing program for all five major automobile manufacturers through the Alabama Department of Commerce – all out of the West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center.
- The **Tuscaloosa Education Foundation** now serves 4,500-plus employees from the Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County school systems and has expanded new programming to aid both new and veteran classroom teachers.
- The **Kristen Amerson Youth Foundation** serves more than 1,000 students each year to promote healthy lifestyles and educate about youth suicide prevention.

The completion of the remodeling of the West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center will not only add to one of Tuscaloosa and West Alabama's crown jewels but will create opportunities for these and other significant community organizations to be able to continue to provide critical community betterment for all the citizens of West Alabama. Join us with your investment in the West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center to ensure that our community will continue to meet the workforce and community needs of West Alabama citizens.

## What Our Partner Tenants Say

The mission of the **Tuscaloosa Education Foundation** is to provide support and financial resources to enhance public education through partnership with local school systems.

*"If you want to grow partnerships, this is the place to do it."*

**Camgian** was founded in 2006 by CEO Dr. Gary Butler with the vision of delivering a new generation of intelligent machines fueled by big data that drive operational speed, scope, and scale.

*"Moving into the building put us in the mainstream with the civic community and has given us the ability to bring high-wage engineering jobs to the area."*

**The Dannon Project's** mission is to ensure maximum utilization of private charitable resources and government funding to support the development of healthy communities and lifestyles to decrease elevated-risk behaviors and economic inclusion caused by generational cycles of poverty.

*"It would have taken us years to develop the partnerships we have built here. It's like a one-stop shop."*

**Junior Achievement's** mission is to inspire and prepare young people to succeed.

*"We work closely together with the Chamber, so it made sense for us to move in together."*

**UCP of West Alabama** envisions a community in which all people are empowered to advance their independence, productivity, and inclusion in the community.

*"Since we are all about getting jobs for people with disabilities, it just made sense to move in with the Chamber. There is a lot going on in the building; we can tell people about us, learn of jobs becoming available, or even get a donation."*

The mission of the **Kristen Amerson Youth Foundation** is to promote healthier lives for youth by providing age-appropriate resources for suicide prevention and position educational experiences.

*"Our move to the Chamber was a godsend."*

**Habitat for Humanity Tuscaloosa** brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

*"The Chamber has made us think more openly and broadly, and the building creates an environment where many partners can thrive together."*

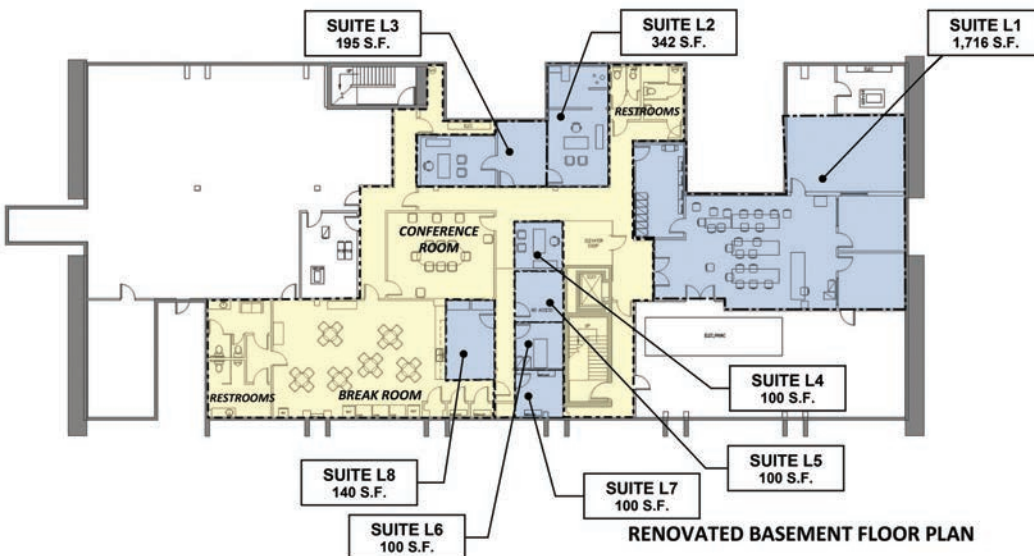
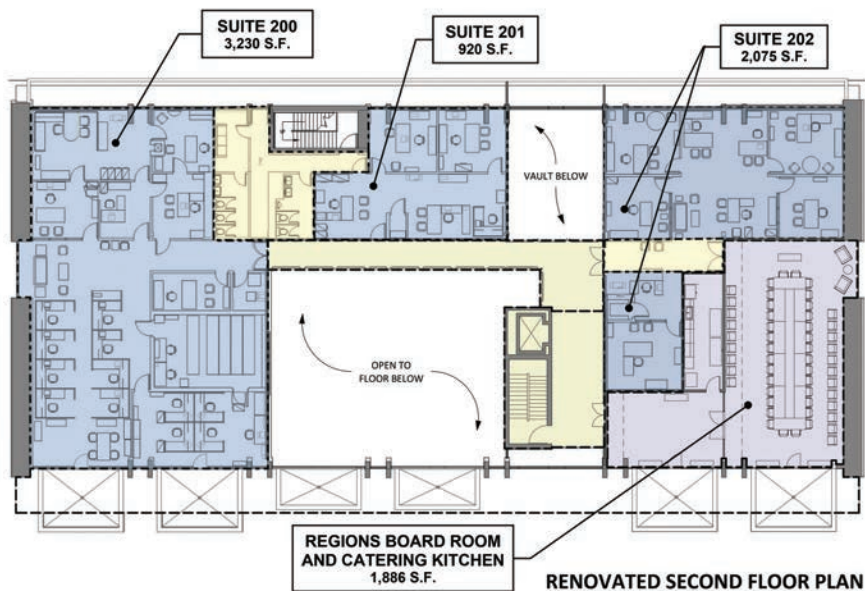




# Building Campaign Goal and Naming Opportunities

Modest and largely cosmetic improvements have been made to the 50-plus year-old facility through equity from the sale of the previous Chamber-owned property. However, additional structural and cosmetic enhancements will be needed in future renovations in order to fully leverage the opportunities the facility affords its community partner tenants and the Chamber in meeting the needs of its members and community stakeholders. By offering naming rights and deploying an aggressive grant writing effort, **the Chamber Foundation seeks to raise a minimum of \$1.5 million over the next five years to fund the additional renovations that are needed.**

The completion of the **West Alabama Workforce and Community Development Center** will create several significant and highly-visible naming opportunities for companies, individuals, and families.



## Naming Opportunities

### Main Floor

- Main Lobby
- Atrium/Conference Hall
- Catering Kitchen
- Community Conference/Multimedia Room
- Chamber Office Suite
- Chamber Conference Room 1
- Chamber Conference Room 2
- West Alabama Works Office Suite

### Second Floor

- Lobby
- Catering Kitchen
- Suite 200 – Camgian
- Suite 201 – Habitat for Humanity Tuscaloosa
- Suite 202 – UCP of West Alabama

### Lower Level

- Conference Room
- Breakroom
- Suite L1 – The Dannon Project
- Suite L2/3 – Tuscaloosa Education Foundation
- Suite L4 – Junior League of Tuscaloosa
- Suite L5 – Kristen Amerson Youth Foundation
- Suite L6
- Suite L7 – Perfect Shine
- Suite L8 – Junior Achievement of Tuscaloosa





**THE**  
**CHAMBER**  
OF COMMERCE OF WEST ALABAMA

2222 9th Street  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401  
(205) 758-7588  
[westalabamachamber.com](http://westalabamachamber.com)