



EYES OF PROGRESS

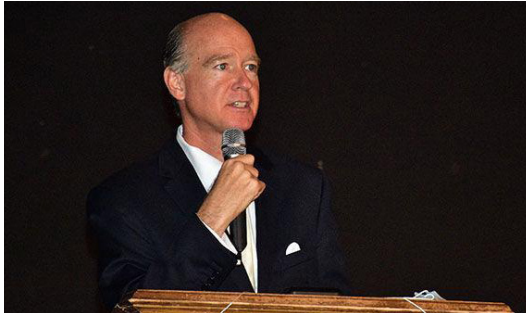
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The 2019/20 Youth Leadership Program Holds Their (Masked) Graduation

The Chamber's Youth Leadership program has been one of the best opportunities for high schoolers to gain a wide array of skills in professional development and discover the impact that healthy volunteerism can have on local communities. The kids in this year's program days throughout the semester with packed schedules that allowed them a well-rounded view into local business and commerce, as well as the tourism industry. They got a peek into Cullman's cultural heritage and its continued impact, and even a time to observe local government officials and what they do on a day-to-day basis. Along with gaining all of this insight and how it effects citizens in the community, they also learned about many career paths and options in higher education, as well as skills in professional etiquette and interview situations. Though activities mid-way through the spring semester were not able to be conducted, that didn't stop the Chamber from holding an ending graduation of sorts! The Youth Leadership graduation is always the event to cap off a wonderful year of learning and professional development and, though it wasn't the usual big celebration with family, the students were still able to visit the Chamber and receive their official certificate of completion, as well as having a photo made with their program leaders. Another noticeable difference was that masks were of course required, but that certainly makes for some memorable photos!





Community Luncheon features Robert Aderholt

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce members got an inside look at the upcoming general election and the happenings in Washington from Rep. Robert Aderholt on Friday, October 16th..Aderholt spoke during the chamber's monthly Community Luncheon which returned after several months off due to COVID-19.



Holiday Display Contest 2020 WINNER ASHLEY MERCANTILE

Congratulations to Ashley Mercantile for winning the Storefront Display Contest! They received the \$500 cash prize for having the most likes with over 500 likes. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make Cullman beautiful this Christmas season!



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Who Will Be Named America's Next Top Young Entrepreneur?

National College Scholarship Start-Up Pitch Competition Livestreamed Worldwide

On Saturday, October 17th, teens from around the country competed to see who would be named America's Next Top Young Entrepreneur at the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) 12th Annual Saunders Scholars National Competition. The Shark Tank style pitch competition awarded over \$80,000 in cash prizes and college scholarships to the Saunders College of Business at Rochester Institute of Technology to the students with the best businesses in the U.S. Local viewers were able to cast their vote for the People's Choice Award.

The local semi-finalist, college freshman Emily Butler of Northwest-Shoals Community College was selected by local judges to advance to the National Competition for her start-up business More than the Reel.

Butler participated in the Young Entrepreneurs Academy nine-month youth entrepreneurship program presented by and in partnership with the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce. With the help of local entrepreneurs and business leaders, the student designed, pitched, and launched More than the Reel, an online clothing and accessory line that aims to help teens live beyond their images on social media. More than the Reel donates 10% of every purchase to the Jed Foundation, a nonprofit that provides tools to help protect the emotional well being of teens and young adults.

"Through YEA! I learned that business doesn't have to fit into a specific mold as I had assumed before. YEA! taught me what true entrepreneurship is!" shared Butler.

Emily recently graduated with honors

from Trinitas Classical Academy. She maintained a 4.0 GPA while volunteering for local charities and working two jobs. Emily was named "Distinguished Young Woman" of Lauderdale County and selected for Youth Leadership Shoals. She was also selected for Girls State and won the position of Commissioner of Agriculture & Industries at Alabama Girls State. Emily was 1 of 10 students invited to participate in the Cullman, AL Chapter of Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!). As currently the only YEA! program in the state of Alabama, the Cullman chapter became regional for the 2019-2020 year by accepting students from all over North Alabama. Out of these 10 students, Emily was selected by a Shark Tank style panel to advance to the national competition.

While Emily did not make it to the final round, we are so proud of the way she represented the Cullman area.

Thank you to our YEA! Sponsors: Walmart – Presenting Sponsor; 412 Public House, Drinkard Development, LLC – Corporate Sponsors; Lazarus, LLC – Investment Presentation Sponsor; A-1 Marketing, LLC, Cullman Daily News, In-N-Out Self Storage, Milo's Hamburgers, River Valley Ingredients – Investor Panel Sponsors.



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COC Morning Blend ends hiatus

After taking a break for several months, we were thrilled to resume our monthly Morning Blend meetings this quarter! On September 23rd, we held the first Morning Blend since February where we were able to meet back together once again at Rumor's Deli. For the welcome back meeting, the main topic of discussion was Oktoberfest 2020. Zach Wood, executive director of Cullman Parks and Recreation, joined us to discuss the new schedule for the festival. While the decision was made to go ahead with hosting the event this year, in light of

the ongoing pandemic, there were of course some modifications that were to be made, mainly in the shorter duration length of just two days rather than a full week. However, despite the altered schedule put in place in order to implement proper social distancing, it turned out that that many of the Oktoberfest events that Cullmanites know and love were still planned for event weekend! The cornhole tournament, pumpkin patch, and farmer's market are just a few examples of returning events. One of the biggest topics to cover was the logistical changes that would have

to occur to create a safe environment for attendees. Zach Wood explained that some events, such as kids crafts and the car show, would be moved to the parking area behind the Cullman Museum. Due to ongoing construction in the Warehouse District area, other events that are normally held at the Festhalle were moved to Depot Park. We'd like to thank Karma's Coffee House for once again sponsoring this month's Morning Blend and providing some amazing coffee! We look forward to seeing everyone for the next meeting in November!



Chamber's October Morning Blend featured The Link

Melissa Betts, Director of Community Development from The Link was the speaker. She shared many ways in which the community can give to The Link to support our "neighbors."



Sponsored by: **Dr. R. Kline Adams**





Iron ReHealth program now available for Chamber members

This quarter, we were excited to roll out a brand new service to Chamber members. We have recently entered a contract with Viva Health in order to join the Alabama Chambers Benefit Program, which exists to provide affordable health care packages that are designed specifically with small and mid-size businesses in mind. The program, administered locally by Iron ReHealth, will offer many benefits such as lower health costs, easy access to excellent customer service, access to the prescription-saving IronRx program and 24/7 access to Teladoc with a \$0 copay. This program is

available to any businesses who are Chamber members with at least two employees, and who work full-time (30+ hours). We successfully held a virtual webinar with Iron ReHealth's local representative Marty Vice on October 1st, who was able to share more information with members about the accumulative benefits of this health program. This webinar can be conveniently found on the Chamber's Facebook page. Improve your workplace and add to your employees' career benefits by taking advantage of this amazing program today!

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Leadership Cullman County Graduation

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's 2019/2020 participants in Leadership Cullman County concluded its program in September with a reception and recognition program.

Program Co-chairs Dr. TJ Franey of Cullman County Schools and Brian Lacy of Cullman County Cooperative, both graduates of the Leadership Cullman County program, presented the 19 participants with their graduation awards.

Leadership Cullman County is designed to identify, prepare and build upon leadership resources within Cullman County. Leadership Cullman County has produced several programs including Youth Leadership and Keeping It Real.

With this group the program now boasts more than 350 graduates since its inception in 1998.

This year's graduates include: Zach Lee, Lowes; Benjamin Joslin, Moss Funeral Home; Jess Moore, Chamber of Commerce; Joshua Swindall, Cullman Christian School; Pastor Joe McNulty, Nazarene Church; Sara Maney, Red Cross; Sherry Pentecost, UPS Store; Charlie Gibbs, Yeltek; Rob Dean, Eva Bank; Aleah Deboer, Parks and Rec; Luke Satterfield, CEDA; Craig Montgomery, Cullman Police Department; Larry Drake, Cullman Electric Co-op; Steve Patrick, Daystar; Joy Boggs, First Bank; Ethan Ponder, Willow Bend Mortgage; Lisa Courtney, Cullman Regional; Dylan Earnest, Chick fil A; and Rick Black, Rehaus.





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July Small Business of the Month:
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August Small Business of the Month:
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RIBBON CUTTINGS & GROUNDBREAKINGS



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Though these unprecedented times have caused a feeling of general uncertainty, it hasn't stopped these new businesses from opening up their doors!



SUNFLOUR BAKERY & EATERY held their grand re-opening July 13th and experienced an incredible display of support from the community. Though they had to close for a little over a year, we feel quite fortunate that they are able to open their doors once again! Remember to stop by for one of their delicious chicken salad sandwiches or place an order for some of their amazing baked goods. Their new location is 326 County Road 222, Cullman, AL 35055.



The ribbon-cutting for CHRIS THOMPSON INSURANCE AGENCY's new location was held on August 3rd. Chris and his awesome team celebrated with refreshments and drawings for some cool prizes for their customers, including brand new AirPods! Their beautiful new office is located at 1850 Cherokee Ave SW, Cullman AL, 35055.



DUCHESS BAKERY celebrated their grand re-opening on August the 7th, under new management. Duchess has a history with this city that is more than 80 years strong. Ever since they first opened in 1939, they have been Cullman's go-to in all things "donut". Swing by and grab an order of classic glazed for your office or next family gathering. They are still located at 222 1st Ave SE in downtown Cullman.



On September 5th, Smith Lake RV & Resort celebrated their Phase 3 Expansion grand opening. We anticipate this new expansion to have a positive impact on both the recreational and economic aspects of the community and county. The ribbon cutting festivities included a performance by Tristan McIntosh of American Idol fame, a shrimp boil provided by Arrowhead Restaurant and popsicles from Frios.



The ribbon-cutting for the new TACO BELL location in South Cullman was held on September 22nd. This new location will provide much easier logistical access for customers, accompanied by beautiful new dining room and outdoor seating areas. You can find them at their new address of 1746 2nd Ave. SW in Cullman. A huge thank you to Eva Bank for sponsoring all of our ribbon-cuttings for the year!

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HISTORIC BAKERY: Ribbon Cutting December 11th. Cullman proudly welcomes The Historic Bakery! They will feature fresh bread, donuts, cakes, pastries and much more. One of the owners, Brittany Miller, has a culinary education and an extensive background that adds to their already talented team. Dennis Marty and Auriel Ramirez work alongside Brittany in the bakery to create these delicious goodies! We are sure everyone is as excited as we are about this great addition to our city! Congratulations to the owners: Stephen Gannon, Ricardo Nishimura, Trey Jordan, and Brittany Miller.



LEDGER'S: Ribbon Cutting November 13th. Cullman proudly welcomes Ledger's. Located at Stone Bridge Farms, they will feature private dining areas available for reservations, as well as first class menu items. We congratulate owner Ron Foust and the entire Ledger's team on their opening! They are located at 281 County Road 717, Cullman AL, 35055. Go check them out!



SEASONED CATERING: The ribbon was officially cut October 15 at Seasoned Catering Co., a new catering service from the owners of the popular 412 Public House. Located in what was Top of the Town on the top floor of the Cullman Savings Bank building downtown, City leaders and representatives of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce joined to congratulate 412 Public House co-owners Trey Jordan, Stephen Gannon and Rico Nishimura on the restaurant's growth.