



# ANNUAL REPORT

PO Box 2366 | 601 Avenue A - Opelika AL  
334-745-4861 | [www.opelikachamber.com](http://www.opelikachamber.com)

# ABOUT

The Opelika Chamber of Commerce was organized and incorporated in 1941 by a group of active Opelika professionals. The Opelika Chamber's **VISION** is to be the recognized leader and advocate of the business community, acting as a catalyst for a thriving economic and entrepreneurial environment, collaborative community initiatives, and a better quality of life for its business owners & citizens alike.

The team at the Chamber works every day to fulfill that vision by practicing the following **CORE VALUES**: Practice Positivity, Earnestly Build Bridges, Aspire to Excellence, Seek Continuous

Growth, Earn Trust, and Execute Servant Leadership. The Opelika Chamber celebrated its 80th birthday by joining the top 3% of Chambers of Commerce nationwide, now being honored by the U.S. Chamber as one of only 3 **5 STAR ACCREDITED** chambers in the state of Alabama. With this accolade, the Opelika Chamber has proven its sound operational excellence, as well as its service to area businesses, and the community at large.



2020 - 2024



ALABAMA ACCREDITED  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



# MEET THE TEAM

*Ali Rauch*

President & CEO | [ali@opelikachamber.com](mailto:ali@opelikachamber.com)

*Ashley Colquitt*

Director of Operation & Engagement | [ashley@opelikachamber.com](mailto:ashley@opelikachamber.com)

*Lenzi Womack*

Director of Communications & Media | [lenzi@opelikachamber.com](mailto:lenzi@opelikachamber.com)

*Mackenzie Poole*

Director of Leadership & Events | [mackenzie@opelikachamber.com](mailto:mackenzie@opelikachamber.com)



# BOARD *of Directors*



## Board Chair

### SHERIFF JAY JONES

Sheriff Jones has been a long standing active member of the Opelika Chamber. He joined the Executive Committee 4 years ago & began his leadership progression to Board Chair. His favorite events are Annual meeting and the First Responder's Breakfast, because he is able to see many members, and can thank those who serve.



## Executive Committee

**Linda North**  
Southern Union  
Chair-Elect

**Jason Bryant**  
Auburn University  
Vice-Chair

**Tabatha White**  
Alabama Power  
Secretary

**Robyn Bridges**  
AO Tourism  
Treasurer

**Bill Loosier**  
Edward Jones  
Past-Chair

## Directors

**Barbi Agricola**  
Agricola Law

**Nick Armistead**  
Armistead &  
Associates

**Chuck Beams**  
East Alabama  
Health

**Laurel Buckalew**  
Railroad  
Investment Group

**Laura Cooper**  
Lee County  
Youth Dev. Ctr.

**Raven Harvis**  
H&S Industrial  
Supplies &  
Services

**Chris Hickman**  
Hanwha

**Traye Hulsey**  
J. Smith  
Lanier

**Clay Lane**  
MidSouth Bank

**Mark Neighbors**  
Opelika City  
Schools

**Steve Pelham**  
Auburn  
University

**Billy Plummer**  
S&S Termite & Pest  
Control

**Ginger Stern**  
Individual Member

**Ayanna Thomas**  
Lee Russell Council of  
Governments

## Ex Officio

**Mayor Gary Fuller**  
City of Opelika

**Lori Huguley**  
OIDA

**Evan Crawford**  
Crawford-Willis Group

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# SNAPSHOT

# 792

MEMBERS

# 142

NEW MEMBERS

# 88%

RETENTION

## AWARD WINNING MEMBERS:



Top Left to Right: Small Business of the Year: Angel's Antiques; Distinguished Service: Eddie Smith, Diamond Award: East AL Health, Chairman's Award: Chuck Beams, Legendary Award: Samford & Denson, Visionary Award: Jeremy Gray, Community Partner: Opelika City Schools, Young Professional: Melissa Munford, Large Business of the Year: Baxter, Ambassador: Billy Plummer, Spirit of Opelika: Kate Larkin.

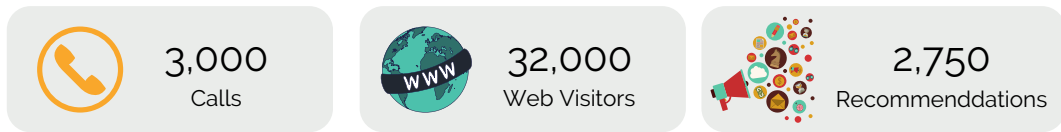


# CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

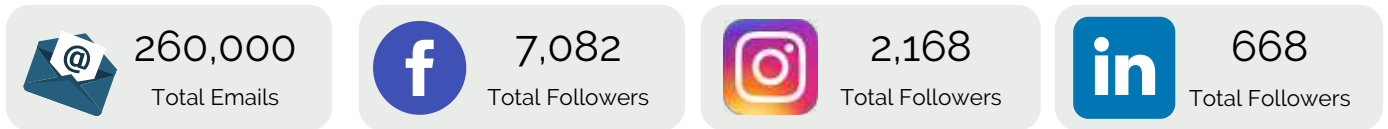
Per our annual contract, The Opelika Chamber works to build economic & member vitality through these four initiatives, which have provided value and services to citizens, business owners, employees & visitors of Opelika.

## Initiative 1: PARTNERSHIPS

- Provide information & visitor services to citizens & visitors alike, acting as an initial and ongoing informational hub for all inquiries.



- Support community relations team across various city departments to raise awareness & reputation of City as a whole. Our reach:



- Act as the small business liaison between citizens & the city to 1) assist entrepreneurs in the new business startup process, and 2) to stay abreast of all business-related issues in our community, and 3) distribute small business grants to businesses licensed to operate within the Opelika city limits, not to exceed \$50,000 annually.



- Maintain an active role in all workforce development activities, including serving on the Region 5 Workforce Council, Vets Choose Opelika, Career Discovery Program, and working with Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC) and Opelika City Schools (OCS) on new initiatives to aid in the process.
- In conjunction with Auburn Opelika Tourism, serve as the official hosts for visiting groups by coordinating tours, maintaining the welcome center, & more, as needed.



# CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

## Initiative 2: **PROGRAMMING**

- Offer informational programs throughout the city that provide an avenue for citizens & local leaders to interact, connect & take action on topics of interest to constituents. This past year, we executed 70 events, including:

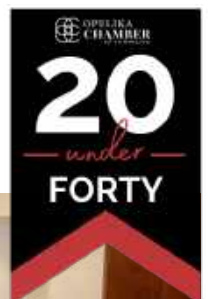


## Mayoral Address

March 26, 2021

We are proud to host the Mayor annually to share a "State of the City" update from the prior year. 200+ in attendance.

- Execute leadership development programs for people of all ages across Lee County, including Lee County Young Leaders for high school students, Leadership Lee County for seasoned professionals, and 20 under 40, for emerging leaders who are under the age of 40 and residents of Opelika.



2021-2022 LCYL Class



2021-2022 20 under 40 Class

# CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

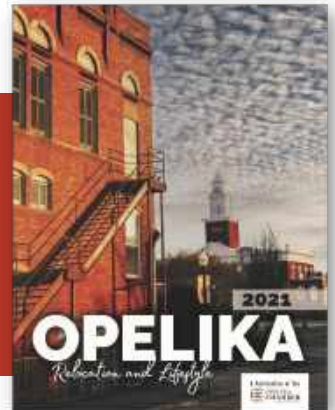
## Initiative 3: **EDUCATION**

- Cultivate relationships with all Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC) and Opelika City School (OCS) officials & teachers and serve as a resource to fulfill their community needs as it relates to education.
- Support and assist with annual events, luncheons, tours & training seminars to support OCS on behalf of the local business community.



**Opelika City Schools Teacher Orientation**

- Produce the annual "Opelika Lifestyle Magazine" to promote and encourage **relocation to Opelika**, which is distributed across hotels, businesses, and is included in all relocation packets distributed by Opelika Utilities.



- Develop and distribute Relocation packets/services.
- Determine needs of local constituents and build and offer educational programs to enhance their business & economic success and improve overall livelihood.
- Complete the annual Cost of Living Survey (quarterly).

Cost of Living	Auburn	Opelika	Smiths Station	Phenix City	Lee County	Russell County	Alabama	United States
Overall	102	88.7	90	76.7	93.1	77.4	82.3	100
Grocery	101.2	97.2	97.3	94.4	97.9	93.7	94.4	100
Health	104	104	104	105.6	104	105.6	102.2	100
Housing	112.5	72.8	69.6	35.3	85.9	38.4	55.9	100
Median Home Cost	\$260,200	\$168,400	\$161,000	\$81,500	\$198,700	\$88,700	\$129,300	\$231,200
Utilities	101.1	99.4	101.6	100.7	101.1	100.8	101.2	100
Transportation	79.7	77.5	88.5	84.7	83.8	8.3	85.9	100
Miscellaneous	107.2	106.9	106.2	97.7	101.5	97.1	94.5	100



# CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

## Initiative 4: **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- Plan & execute the annual community Christmas activities, which may include Christmas Parade, Sno\*pelika, Tree Lighting Ceremony & more, which will be open to the public. Thousands attended in 2020.



- Support community organizations and non-profits, when able, to improve the overall livelihood of those within the City. Below are examples of service projects with Storybook Farms & The Curtis House.



- Promote & execute Ribbon Cuttings & Ground-Breaking ceremonies for member businesses, city organizations & new industry coming to City.



# GETTING INVOLVED

The Opelika community can make an impact through the following avenues:

## 20 UNDER 40 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This is made up of graduates of the 20 under 40 program and help shape the future classes of 20 under 40, and in turn, cultivate emerging leaders talents for the betterment of our community.

## AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors act as the official welcoming committee of the Opelika Chamber, visiting new and existing businesses and attending all ribbon cutting & special events.



## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This committee's goal is to aid in the growth of our members and community at large by defining & deciding on educational programs of interest as a part of our annual event calendar.

## GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Our purpose is to function as a sounding board for any issues that may impact the business and/or industry in our community, and to actively advocate for our community and its business members to our elected officials.

## LEE COUNTY YOUNG LEADERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This made up of educators and other invested parties who are committed to growth and development of young leaders, and aim to offer leadership training and scholarships to high school leaders.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Our purpose is to ensure the member benefits and services that we offer at the Opelika Chamber of Commerce match the needs of our business community, and to support in the recruitment & retention of our member business.

## MINORITY BUSINESS COUNCIL

Our purpose is to foster growth and networking for minority businesses and to be a resource to minority business owners in our community, and to recruit minority owned businesses to ensure our membership reflects our community.

## SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Our purpose is to foster growth and networking for small businesses through targeted programs, such as mentorships, mastermind groups and small business grants, and to be a resource to entrepreneurs to aid in their challenges and struggles associated with small business growth.

## RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

Our purpose is to find ways to celebrate our members for their achievements and accomplishments, and also to support the nomination & selection of award recipients for the Small Business of the Quarter, Minority Business of the Quarter, and all annual awards.

## WOMEN'S BUSINESS COUNCIL

Plan and promote programming efforts targeted at women in business and their unique needs to be successful. Additionally, the women's business council will work to engage with women in our community to get actively engaged in our organization for networking and growth opportunities.



