

South Baldwin

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2024 EDITION

ISSUE 1

JAN/FEB

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THE NEWSLETTER

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On The Cover



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Although we are new to Foley, we are not new
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THE SOUTH BALDWIN CHAMBER 2023 AWARD WINNERS



SOUTH BALDWIN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

January 2024, Foley Civic Center | Presented by McCollough Plastic Surgery Clinic & Skin Center and Total Health Spa

This year, the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce celebrated its **80th Annual Gala** presented by McCollough Plastic Surgery Clinic. The Chamber, a 501(c)(6) business development organization, holds an Annual Meeting each year in the month of January as required by its by-laws, to report to the membership on the Chamber's activities, events, and programs. This meeting is more than just a formal gathering - it's an opportunity to enjoy a memorable and exciting experience. Ample time is allowed for everyone to mingle and get to know each other. During the program, achievements are honored including Business of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Diplomat of the Year, Distinguished Public Service,



and other esteemed awards. SugarLove provided catering for the 2024 event, which featured delicious entrees such as pan-seared swordfish steak with scallop skewers and Mediterranean stuffed pork loin with accompaniments. For dessert, attendees enjoyed red velvet cake and chocolate torte.

We extend our gratitude to our **Diamond Sponsors** for their support and contribution to the success of the event: City of Foley, Riviera Utilities, Columbia Southern University, Collins Aerospace, South Baldwin Regional Medical Center, Island House Hotel, and OWA Parks & Resort. **Congratulations to all of our 2023 Winners!** ■

Christina was born and raised in Elberta, Alabama. She is a fifth-generation farmer from the Woerner Family who has been farming in Baldwin County for over 100 years, a Foley High School graduate, and cum laude business graduate of Auburn University. She is the CEO and founder of AgriTech Corp. and a shareholder in Woerner Family Companies, one of the largest sod producers in the country. Christina started in marketing at Time Warner and worked for Auburn University. In her role at GulfWise Commerce, she completed an international agriculture transaction between the U.S. and Cuba. As the creator of SoilKit, AgriTech's flagship product, She has led product development from its earliest stages. After an initial proof-of-concept year in 2019, She founded AgriTech and ramped up hiring, product development and sales for SoilKit.



Tony was born in Tuscaloosa and moved to Foley in 1987. He worked at Vulcan, Inc. from 1987-1997 and then started as a dispatcher at the Foley Police Department where he spent 4 years in patrol before becoming a juvenile officer where he spent 18 years assigned to major felony cases. The last 3 years of his career he spent in the community services division where he handled all events requiring police assistance for the City of Foley. He is directly responsible for and/or is of great assistance in making the many events throughout the City of Foley very successful. He is the department's Polygraph Examiner and has been very successful in his craft. Among his colleagues, he is considered one of the best Polygraph Examiners in this region. He recently retired from law enforcement after 36 years of service and was awarded the 2023 Officer of the Year.



Vallarta Mexican Restaurant in Foley is family owned and operated by Santiago Barragan, along with his lovely wife Evangelina and family.

Santiago is deeply rooted in the community, always looking for opportunities to lend support to the local schools and help those in need. As a man of faith and deep conviction with a generous heart, he gives weekly and also volunteers his time to St. Margaret of Scotland

Catholic Parish in Foley as well as St. Patrick Catholic Parish, Robertsdale in an effort to spread hope throughout the community. He gives to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as one of his daughters has battled childhood cancer. Santiago and family are dedicated to continuing to provide job opportunities in the City of Foley and South Baldwin to help forward our economic development in the community.



*Vallarta Mexican Restaurant
Small Business of the Year
2023*



*Jack Rich
Diplomat of the Year
2023*

Jack Rich has been a part of the Diplomat Program since mid-2022. Joining the program was one of the first things he did after opening his business. He quickly dove in, attending every event that time allowed for. It was not long before everyone knew who he was. In addition to his passion for providing quality service with his business, Rogue Pest Solutions, he has a passion for youth, the community, and fellow small business owners. The South Baldwin Chamber is lucky to have Jack as a member and diplomat, but several other organizations are blessed by his servant's heart as well. He is an active Lower Alabama Young Professional, participates in regular trash pick-ups with Eco Clean Marine, assisted with volunteer work for the Ruff Wilson Youth Organization and the South Baldwin Literacy Council. He is also a coach for youth baseball and recently started a new networking and referral group for fellow small business owners.

Jared Herrell arrived in Baldwin County in 2020. Since settling here, he has joined several organizations and jumped right in to giving back to the community. Jared is part of the Diplomat Program for both the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce as well as the Coastal Alabama Business Chamber. He plays an integral volunteer role in the Lower Alabama Young Professionals program, Coastal Alabama Leadership League, and Kiwanis Club of Foley. He also spends his time volunteering for the South Baldwin Literacy Council, Eco Clean Marine, Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival, Foley BBQ & Blues Cook Off, the Annual National Shrimp Festival, and several other community events. When he's not busy volunteering his time, he can be found tinkering with motorcycles, playing video games, and spending time with his family.



*Jared Herrell
Volunteer of the Year
2023*

Baldwin Connect College + Career Expo

Begin Planning For Your Future!

3rd Annual Baldwin Connect College and Career Expo

WHO:

11th and 12th
Grade Students

WHEN:

March 20, 2024

WHERE:

Baldwin County Coliseum

PRE-REGISTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN
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Sign up TODAY
with your
Career Coaches!

Whether your plans lead you to
college or directly into a career,
THIS IS FOR YOU!

Meet over 50 business and industry
professionals from a vast array of
careers and companies who are
ready to hire. Whether you are
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internship, apprenticeship or ready
for a career come learn about high
demand, high wage opportunities in
Southwest Alabama.

PROSPECT EMPLOYERS WILL HAVE
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JOB OPENINGS, SALARIES,
BENEFITS, AND CAREER PATHWAYS
INCLUDING: EDUCATION,
CERTIFICATES AND SKILLS NEEDED
TO BE EMPLOYED WITH THEIR
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All this so that you can make an
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"Connecting Today's Business with Tomorrow's Workforce"
In partnership with Baldwin County Career Tech and The Baldwin County Chambers of Commerce

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- Corporate Events
- Company Parties
- Family/Class Reunions
- Skeet Shooting
- Pheasant Shoots
- Lodge/Bunkrooms

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Your SOURCE for AREA UPDATES,
WEATHER REPORTS and EVENTS CALENDAR

THE SOUTH BALDWIN CHAMBER'S BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

January

Foley's **Planet Fitness** is a gym that is a non-intimidating, welcoming environment fostering a sense of community among all members and encourages them to work toward their health and fitness goals, no matter how big or how small. The club is bright and spacious offering a large selection of high-quality, brand-name cardio, circuit, and weight-training equipment for all fitness levels, including first-time and casual gym users. The staff prides itself on maintaining a clean and welcoming workout environment where everyone feels accepted and respected, and our certified trainers are ready to help. **Planet Fitness** offers low startup fees, no-commitment options as well as the PF Black Card® where you can get ALL. THE. PERKS. in the Judgement Free Zone®. Whether you're a first-time gym user or a fitness veteran, you'll always have a home at **Foley's Planet Fitness**. Open 24 hours, 7 days a week - you belong!



 planetfitness.com/gyms/foley-al | ☎ (251) 943-9370

February

Island Air Conditioning & Heating has been providing the best indoor comfort solutions to homeowners and businesses in South Baldwin County for over twenty years. Rob and Ginny Barnas, Mickey Cornell, and their team have worked tirelessly to ensure that their customers receive top-quality service. As a local family-owned business, they are invested in the community and often volunteer at local events. Their specialty includes high-efficiency and environmentally-friendly home comfort systems, as well as state-of-the-art indoor air quality solutions. They also offer a 3-year labor warranty on all new residential American Standard system installations. Check out the online store for your air filter needs at CallIslandAir.com and remember, **Island Air** will deliver to your home!

Island Air's team considers the Baldwin County area one of the most beautiful places on Earth, and they are proud to call it home. They are thrilled to be in their new office building located on James Road in Foley. They are grateful for the people of South Baldwin County who have supported them over the years and allowed them to service their homes and businesses.



 callislandair.com | ☎ (251) 943-4709

THE GATEWAY INITIATIVE

Workforce Development & Recruitment +
Pro-Business Advocacy & Legislative Action +
Entrepreneurship & Existing Business Assistance +

G A T E W A Y I N I T I A T I V E . C O M



Gateway to Great Careers Bulldozes onto 4th Tour | [Gateway to Great Careers](#)

hosted the fourth of eight industry tours with Gulf Shores High School. Each month for the 2023-2024 school year, a maximum of 30 students and teachers hop on a bus and tour a specific industry. The students who signed up and were selected for this tour were mostly juniors and seniors within the school's engineering and construction classes. We are grateful for our partnership with the teachers and CTE director at GSHS. Thank you so much to the business owners who worked with us and are so passionate about the future of their industry with our next generation!!

EMAIL Tyler@GatewayInitiative.com to learn more.



Baldwin County Chamber Coalition 2024 Legislative Agenda | As the voice of

our business community, we rely on your valuable feedback to identify the most pressing policy issues affecting your business. We are grateful to those businesses who participated in our brief survey, which has enabled us to develop a county-wide **Legislative Agenda for 2024**. The survey's TOP RESULTS:

- Economic Growth & Infrastructure
- Employee Recruitment & Retention
- (Tied) State Budgets & Taxes / Legal Climate & Business Regulations



Mental Health First Aid: Training for the Workplace | What you need to know:

- One full day of ON-SITE TRAINING
- Can be paid for by the AWSP GRANT
- TEACHES about recovery, resiliency and how to spot depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis, and substance use
- LEARN interventions and how to apply the Mental Health First Aid 5 step action plan in a variety of situations

Contact the Gateway Initiative team to apply: Tyler@GatewayInitiative.com

Thank you to our **INVESTORS** for your partnership, leadership, active participation and support in the Gateway Initiative.



CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE





DISCOVER AND EXPLORE COSTA DEL SOL
with the SOUTH BALDWIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Optional Tours: Mijas, Rock of Gibraltar, Seville

October 18 - 26, 2024 | Visit <https://bit.ly/costadelsol24>



Extra NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM THE WEB

Becoming a More Compassionate Leader | JAN '24

By the dedicated team of editors and writers at Newsletter Station

In the realm of leadership, the shift from traditional authoritarian models to more compassionate and empathetic approaches has gained significant traction. A compassionate leader inspires productivity and growth and fosters an environment where individuals thrive personally and professionally.

This blog explores the journey towards becoming a more compassionate leader and the profound impact it can have on both the leader and their team:

- ♦ Benefits of Compassionate Leadership
 - ♦ Enhanced Employee Well-being
 - ♦ Improved Productivity
 - ♦ Higher Retention Rates
 - ♦ Strengthened Team Dynamics
 - ♦ Innovation and Creativity
- ♦ Steps to Becoming a More Compassionate Leader can be found here ♥

Read article online: <https://www.newsletterstation.com/blogs/120717.php> ■

Bye, Bye, Bad Client! When It's Time To Cut Ties And Move On | JAN '24

Melissa Houston, Contributor

As a freelancer or a small business owner, clients are key to your success. You want to serve them to the best of your ability, provide quality services, and get paid accordingly. However, not all clients are created equal. Some are great and easy to work with, while others can be difficult, draining, and even toxic.

When you find yourself dealing with bad clients, it can be tempting to tolerate their behavior and keep working with them, fearing that you might lose their business. But at what cost?

Time is money, and nothing is more precious than the hours you spend working to make a living. When you have a client who is taking up too much of your time without providing compensation, it may be time to re-evaluate your business relationship.

It can be difficult to let a client go, especially when you've put so much effort into building a relationship, but it's important to recognize when it's no longer beneficial for both parties.

What is the cost of bad clients and when do you cut ties and move on? Find out more ...

Read article online: www.forbes.com/sites/melissahouston/2024/01/20/bye-bye-bad-client-when-its-time-to-cut-ties-and-move-on ■

BBB Scam Alert: Top Valentine's Day scams |

FEB '23 Better Business Bureau

Valentine's Day is ripe for scams -- whether you're buying a gift for your sweetheart or avoiding catfishing schemes while looking for someone new.

If you are looking for a gift or looking for a date, let BBB help you do it safely and outsmart scammers.

- ♦ **Impostor websites:** Consumers should always be alert for impostor websites, from fake jewelry sellers to online dating sites. Scammers can easily lift official photos, sale promotions, and logos directly from the website of a popular jewelry brand. With professional graphics and unbeatable prices, scammers build an attractive website that looks eerily similar to the real thing.
- ♦ **Romance scams:** Romance scammers often target vulnerable people who have experienced a recent breakup or other hardship.
- ♦ **Fake Florist scam:** Ordering flowers for Valentine's Day? Don't procrastinate or you may end up falling for a scam. BBB has received many reports of shoppers who thought they were ordering flowers from an online florist... but either got nothing at all, or a disappointing arrangement. **Don't let phony florists ruin Valentine's Day.**
- ♦ See the list of "red flags" and find out what to do if you encounter a scam . . .

Read article online: www.bbb.org/all/valentine-s-day ■



BBQ & BLUES COOKOFF *Foley, AL*

PRESENTED BY: **River View Turf**

MARCH 8

LOCAL LIVE MUSIC
FOOD TRUCK & BAR
* NO BBQ SAMPLES
* NO KIDS ACTIVITIES

MARCH 9

COOK OFF
VENDORS! BBQ SAMPLES!
LIVE MUSIC & KIDS ZONE!



Local NEWS TO SHARE

ABOUT PEOPLE & PLACES
YOU KNOW



ARTWORK DESIGN WINNER Kris Navas-Fuentes of FHS

Congratulations!

See News Release:
southbaldwinchamber.com/news

Foley High School student Kris Navas-Fuentes is the official 2024 Foley BBQ & Blues Cook Off t-shirt design winner. Her design will be featured on the shirts sold at the festival in March.

Each year student from the schools served by the [South Baldwin Chamber Foundation](#) are encouraged to create a design for the event's official t-shirt. The top twenty-five artwork submissions will be framed and on display at cook-off event.

The Foley BBQ & Blues Cook Off is hosted by the South Baldwin Chamber Foundation, an organization that is passionate about enhancing the lives of students in our community, and for nearly 20 years, it has focused on developing leadership, enriching education, and bettering students' lives within our community. All proceeds from the festival benefit the Foundation.



THE CHAMBER CELEBRATING 80 YEARS of Service to the Community

See the Find It Local guide:
bit.ly/FILG2024

On July 24, 1944, a group of local citizens met at the offices of Riviera Utilities for what would be the beginning of a now 80 year endeavor. An endeavor that has helped to shape and support the business community throughout South Baldwin County.

The purpose of the meeting, as described in the minutes, was: To discuss the civic needs of Foley and its trade area and to start a program to further the physical and ecumenical development of this territory. It was here that eleven local businessmen formed the committee to organize "a permanent Chamber of Commerce for the Foley area."

Read this article in the newly published Find It Local Guide [available online](#) and hardcopy. Stop by the Chamber's office at 200 N Alston Street to get yours today!



WEEKS BAY STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR Receives National Honor

See News Release:
outdooralabama.com

Eric Brunden, Stewardship Coordinator at the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) in Baldwin County, Alabama, was presented with the NERR System and NERR Association Award for Outstanding Contribution at the annual meeting of the national reserve system in New Jersey in November 2023.

Weeks Bay NERR was established in 1986 and is managed by the State Lands Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) NERR System.

"It is an honor to be recognized for my work at Weeks Bay," Brunden said. "It is especially meaningful to me that this recognition comes from my peers."



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Invited

TO JOIN

the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

WHY

Join?

MEMBERSHIP
BUSINESS
DIRECTORY



NETWORKING
OPPORTUNITIES



EDUCATION
AND COMMUNITY
BETTERMENT



CHAMBER
EVENTS AND
PROGRAMS



GAIN A
VOICE IN
GOVERNMENT



BUSINESS
CREDIBILITY
AND VISIBILITY

scan me



"It's not just about joining the South Baldwin Chamber, but getting involved that has made a tremendous impact on the profitability of my business."

- Sted McCollough, McCollough Architecture



SOUTH BALDWIN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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