

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Columbia Southern University building. It is a large, two-story, light-colored building with a prominent portico supported by four white columns. The words "COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY" are inscribed on the pediment above the columns. The building has large windows and is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, there is a green lawn with some small trees and shrubs.

South Baldwin CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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2023 EDITION ISSUE 5 SEPT/OCT

Featuring

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

THE NEWSLETTER

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New Survey Finds **MORE SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS** **SEE IMPROVING ECONOMY**

uschamber.com | SEP 2023 | by Thaddeus Swanek



SOUTH BALDWIN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Q3 2023 Small Business Index reaches a post-pandemic high score as more small businesses feel confident about the state of the economy and their business health.



The Q3 2023 Index score jumped this quarter thanks to a nine-percentage point increase in the share of small businesses saying that the U.S. economy is in good health (33%). Small businesses also feel better about their own business health and cash flow: Two in three (66%) report that their business is in good health and roughly seven in ten (72%) say they are comfortable with their cash flow.

On both measures, there has been a nearly-10 point increase from last quarter.

The MetLife and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index, has hit its highest score since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 as more small business owners see an improving economy.

Small Business Index Score Q4 2019 - Q3 2023



To explore and browse years of small business data, visit: www.uschamber.com/sbindex

Inflation Remains Top Concern



However, small businesses do have a list of concerns and front and center among them is inflation. In fact, this is the seventh consecutive quarter where inflation tops the list of challenges for small business owners. [...]

Small Businesses Say They Have Advantage as Employee Retention Concerns Creep Up



Amid the ongoing worker shortage, small businesses report a slow uptick in concern for employee retention and being able to afford employee benefits. But in the fight for talent—they also believe they have advantages many big corporations lack. [...]

 **READ THE ARTICLE:** uschamber.com/small-business/new-survey-finds-more-small-business-owners-see-improving-economy

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Based on rate per credit hour among Title IV accepting, fully online 4-year universities. <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/data/> (July 2022)

THE SOUTH BALDWIN CHAMBER'S

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

September

Discover a coastal retreat in Orange Beach at **Fairfield Inn & Suites Orange Beach**. Nestled along Alabama's picturesque Gulf Coast, this hotel exudes a

unique blend of local charm and modern amenities. Just steps away from the beach and the culinary delights of Lower Alabama. Immerse yourself in the ultimate relaxation setting by biking along the scenic bay or strolling through Gulf State Park and Cotton Bayou. The Fairfield Inn & Suites Orange Beach offers an unparalleled location nestled in the heart of Orange Beach. Whether you're here to soak up the sun or explore the vibrant local scene, our hotel serves as your gateway to the best that Orange Beach has to offer. The well-appointed rooms complete with comfortable workspaces, offer a tranquil retreat after a day of exploration or work. Guests can kick start their day with a complimentary hot breakfast before heading out to explore or attend meetings. The on-site fitness center, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, ensures wellness routines are never disrupted. The hotel's lobby and guest rooms echo the serene vibe of its surroundings, creating a relaxing atmosphere. Experience authentic Southern hospitality at Fairfield Inn & Suites Orange Beach. Book your next stay today!



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October

Future Physical Therapy is beginning its fourth year serving the residents of Baldwin County. They are located in north Foley near South Baldwin Hospital to serve the strong medical community here. Pelvic Health (or

Pelvic Floor) Physical Therapy is just like any other Physical Therapy but for some very personal problems that are often not well served in traditional medical offices. Future Physical Therapy is a clinic specializing in only intimate problems like pain with intercourse, pain during pregnancy, incontinence after prostate surgery, bladder pain syndrome, or general persistent pelvic pain. Specializing in only Pelvic Health allows Future Physical Therapy to dive deep into all of the body systems that may be contributing to your concerns and address not just the symptom, but the root cause. They use advanced knowledge of the body and its systems, like the musculoskeletal and the neuromuscular systems, to teach patients about their bodies and empower them to move better for an improved quality of life. You can reach out to them for a free telephone consultation, even if you aren't sure how they may be able to help you improve your overall health and wellness!



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South Baldwin Regional Workforce Authority

Campus Update



The South Baldwin Regional Workforce Authority (SBRWA) has received what will be included in the pre-development project scope to begin in late October of this year.

The Community Development Group (CDG) will be engaged to oversee the timely and cost-effective implementation of the master-planning and subsequent development of an approximately 150 acre site adjacent to Highway 98 and the Foley Beach Express. CDG will report to the SBRWDA and/or a Steering Committee for the project as determined by the Authority.

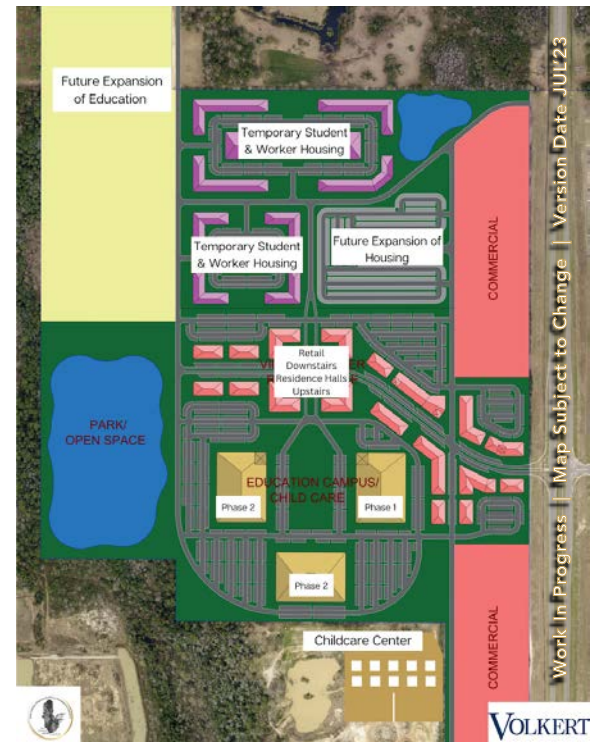
CDG will utilize its own team members to be augmented by third-part architects, engineers, and other key vendors and coordinate their activities to develop a Master Plan with an associated Infrastructure plan to be approved by the Authority.

The scope of the pre-development stage will be . . .

- Review existing conditions and receive input and direction from SBRWDA with goals to include:
 - ▶ Planning for potential facilities for University of South Alabama, Auburn University, and Coastal Alabama Community College.
 - ▶ Providing housing for area seasonal workers
 - ▶ Creating student housing for the campus
 - ▶ Building a workforce training center of excellence that will incubate other entrepreneurial ideas
 - ▶ Alleviating the current regional childcare shortage
 - ▶ Combine these uses to create a gathering place and amenity for the broader community.
- Meet with officials from the colleges to understand their needs, goals, budget, and timeframes.
- Engage consultants as appropriate for design work and pricing
- Identify and qualify risks and financial feasibility of the project and each component.
- Solicit additional community and third-party input and feedback
- Develop target list of users and uses for the project
- Formulate financing plan for the construction of the phased infrastructure
- Develop multiple draft master plans for review and approval of the Authority
- Create preliminary budget and schedule to phase infrastructure development
- Modify and refine design of the Authority-selected draft Master Plan
- Identify and screen potential developers for components of the Master Plan
- Present Master Plan and Infrastructure Plan to Authority and modify to come up with an approved Master Plan.



COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
GROUP



"On behalf of the CDG team, we are very grateful and incredibly excited to have been selected as the Master Developer and Planner for The Gateway campus project. We have had a great experience this past year working with the Authority and its outstanding members to help define the best path forward for this landmark project."

– Harlen Foster, a partner with Community Development Group

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

SEP/OCT 2023 | The Gateway Team



President of the University of South Alabama Jo Bonner addressed Gateway Investors at an exclusive meeting prior to the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce Leadership luncheon in August. President Bonner followed Harlen Foster with Community Development Group who's firm will be handling the pre-development services for The Gateway workforce development project. Bonner spoke of his commitment to explore higher educational program offering in Baldwin County and spoke of his excitement for the development of the workforce campus and the potential for the University at the site. ■



A main focus within Gateway's Workforce Development pillar is connecting high school students with a variety of career pathing opportunities within our investor community and beyond. This past May, Jessica Sampley, Director of Career Tech and Academics for Gulf Shores City Schools, reached out to the Gateway Initiative team to help her plan and coordinate industry tours for interested high school students for the 2023-2024 school year. Last Thursday, we kicked off the first industry tour in Healthcare. Two classes at the high school got first pick on participating in the full-day tour, which was Foundations of Health Sciences and Sports Medicine.

The day started at the University of South Alabama's College of Nursing and their state-of-the-art Simulation Lab. The students were able to experience hands-on learning on simulator patients and loved the experience. They also received a private bus tour of the entire campus.

Next on the tour, we came back to our very own South Baldwin Regional Medical Center, who graciously provided the students lunch and spoke about the many career opportunities at the hospital. Coastal Alabama Community College's programs in Nursing and Allied Health were also in attendance during the lunch to speak about the many opportunities at the college. Two directors at the hospital then broke the students into two groups and we toured several areas of the hospital.

There are 7 more industry tours scheduled for the remainder of the school year. (See schedule). If you are interested in participating and putting your business in front of these students, please contact Tyler Morgan at tyler@gatewayinitiative.com. Gateway is already in conversation with Orange Beach High School and Foley High School to implement this program in their schools for the 2024-2025 school year. ■

GULF SHORES GATEWAY TO CAREER TOURS	
SEPTEMBER 9	HEALTHCARE
OCTOBER 11	AVIATION
NOVEMBER 8	HOSPITALITY & TOURISM
DECEMBER 7	CONSTRUCTION
JANUARY 18	MARINE
FEBRUARY 7	MANUFACTURING
MARCH 7	AGRICULTURE/LANDSCAPING
APRIL 10	SUSTAINABILITY

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

Q3 NEWSLETTER



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ALABAMAWORKS! ANNOUNCE 2023 ANNUAL INNOVATOR AWARD WINNERS

See article:
alreporter.com

Congratulations to Coastal Alabama Community College Nursing Apprenticeship Program winning the 2023 Innovator Award for Region 7

The Innovator Awards were created to highlight people and programs across the state that take an innovative approach to solve workforce challenges and help advance Governor Ivey's Success Plus attainment goal of adding 500,000 highly skilled workers by 2025.



"We are thankful for the efforts and initiatives put in place by these individuals, organizations and companies that are leading the way in workforce development across Alabama and want to recognize them for their contributions," – Ed Castille, Executive Director of AIDT and Deputy Secretary of Commerce



BALDWIN COUNTY EDA WINS 3 AWARDS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

See BCEDA article:
baldwineda.com

The **International Economic Development Council (IEDC)** has named the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance (BCEDA) an [Excellence in Economic Development Award](#) recipient among three categories in the 200,000-500,000 population size range. BCEDA received an IEDC Excellence Award for Best Special Event, Best Use of Federal Economic Development Resources, and EDO of the Year.

In addition to these awards, BCEDA has received **3 other awards this year**. The Business Concept designated Baldwin County an Excellence Award for Local Aerospace Industry Development Services. Area Development awarded Alabama a Silver Shovel for setting a state record of \$10.1 billion in new capital investment, of which Baldwin County garnered \$2.5 billion. Area Development also awarded Novelis a Manufacturing Project of the Year for their investment in Baldwin County and for creating over 1,000 jobs. This represents one of the largest economic development projects in the State of Alabama's history.



ABERCROMBIE CFO & CHASTANG CNO FEATURED IN BECKER'S TOP HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SYSTEM

See SBRMC posts:
facebook.com

Julie Abercrombie, South Baldwin Regional Medical Center's Chief Financial Officer, was recently featured as one of [Becker's top 182 women hospital and health system CFOs to know](#). Julie has been part of the SBRMC family since 2012 making her start as director of the finance department. She has played an integral role in the hospital's expansion and modernization project currently underway in Foley. [\[Read More on Facebook\]](#)

Karen Chastang, South Baldwin Regional Medical Center's Chief Nursing Officer, was recently featured as one of [Becker's top 153 hospital and health system CNOs to know](#). Karen has been part of the SBRMC family since 2007, making her start as director of the orthopaedic department. [\[Read more on Facebook\]](#)

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Extra NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM THE WEB

The Path to Lifelong Happiness (and Success) Comes Down to 4 Easy Choices | SEP '23 *Marcel Schwantes | Inc.*

Achieving happiness isn't about chasing rainbows or waiting for the perfect moment. It's a

journey, not a destination. As someone who coaches leaders, I often remind them to acknowledge that happiness is not a constant but a series of moments.

Whether you're in a leadership role or an individual contributor, encourage yourself and those you lead or work with to find joy in small victories, such as completing a challenging task or praising a colleague for exceptional work. Celebrating success on a regular basis and fostering a culture of gratitude can have a significant positive impact on your general well-being.

More important, achieving happiness requires us to take inventory of who we are, where we're headed, and how we are experiencing the journey along the way.

Here are four tips to help you navigate your path to happiness and success:

- ✦ Embrace your uniqueness
- ✦ Learn from your mistakes
- ✦ Take responsibility for your life
- ✦ Avoid complacency

Read article online: <https://www.inc.com/marcel-schwantes/the-path-to-lifelong-happiness-and-success-comes-down-to-4-easy-choices.html> ■

Five Benefits of Joining Your Local Chamber of Commerce | OCT '22 *Kaytlyn Smith | CO*

Learn how your local chamber can create business contacts, increase credibility, expand your network, provide resources, and support professional development.

A chamber of commerce is an integrated business network that works toward the common interests of small businesses in local areas across the United States. Your local chamber of commerce can offer visibility, credibility, support, and more for your new or growing business.

Joining a chamber of commerce can be the best thing you do for your business. Here are a few reasons why:

- ✦ Helps you make business contacts
- ✦ Increases credibility
- ✦ Expands your network
- ✦ Provides key business resources
- ✦ Supports your professional development

Read article online: uschamber.com/co/run/finance/benefits-of-joining-local-chamber-of-commerce ■

BBB TIP: How Scammers Use Social Media Platforms |

SEP '23 *Better Business Bureau*

The introduction of social media has transformed how millions of people communicate with friends, family, strangers, and businesses. Unfortunately, it has also provided an outlet for fraud, scams, and unethical business practices to reach a broad audience. Whether through social media marketplaces, sponsored advertisements, business or friend impersonation, or many other tactics, social media provides a direct-to-consumer contact method that scammers can use to carry out various schemes. The best defense against falling victim to fraud and scams originating from social media interactions is to understand how bad actors use the most popular platforms.

- ✦ LinkedIn – typically leverages professional messaging, employment opportunities, influencer marketing, and impersonations
- ✦ Facebook (Meta) – fraudulent purchases using Facebook Marketplace or buy/sell groups; be mindful of the information they provide while answering popular social media quizzes
- ✦ Instagram – fraudulent or impersonated fitness/health influencers, romance scams
- ✦ TikTok – fraudulent purchases, enticing young adults, marketplace is unsecured; investments
- ✦ X (Twitter) – surveys are parts of a sophisticated phishing scam; scammers follow conversations

How to **avoid scams on social Media** . . .

Read article online: bbb.org/article/news-releases/29154-bbb-tip-how-scammers-use-social-media-platforms ■



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