




# Opelika

L I F E S T Y L E

A Publication of the  **OPELIKA**  
**CHAMBER**  
*of commerce*





# Why do we know East Alabama so well?

It's because we've  
grown up together.

## TOOMERS CORNER AND THE BANK OF AUBURN

This famous intersection, now known as Toomers Corner was named for businessman and State Senator Sheldon Toomer who founded the Bank of Auburn here in 1907. He served 45 years as bank President and 25 years on the Auburn City Council.

Since 1907, AuburnBank has been a part of East Alabama. Our area is recognized for its quality of life. We are proud to be a part of it. As the area's only locally chartered bank, we are uniquely equipped to understand our community and the specific financial needs of our neighbors, who are also our customers. Our services include mortgage loans, personal loans, commercial loans, free personal internet banking, checking and savings accounts, as well as convenient branch locations, ATMs, and drive-thru services.

We hope you enjoy the East Alabama area as much as we do. And remember, a good way to get to know this area is to get to know us. Drop in for a visit anytime.



## AUBURNBANK

SINCE 1907  
YOUR PARTNER, YOUR NEIGHBOR,  
YOUR FRIEND

[www.auburnbank.com](http://www.auburnbank.com)

MEMBER FDIC





# Welcome to Opelika!



I am honored and humbled to serve as Chairman of the Opelika Chamber of Commerce board of directors this year. I follow a strong legacy of leaders who have worked together with the board, staff, city, businesses and its members to make Opelika the best place to live, work, play and worship. I am excited about the future of Opelika and its chamber.

Lets face it...Opelika is no longer a little secret. Years ago, when I traveled and was asked where I was from I always replied "Auburn" because people knew it but not Opelika but now that has changed. I recently had the opportunity and pleasure to have an apartment in Seville Spain for a month and travel throughout southern Spain and Portugal. The countries are gorgeous, the people are friendly and the food is wonderful but quite honestly I really missed Opelika after a week. Opelika has many great attributes and perhaps the best kept secret are our schools. As the father of two children I can personally attest that our schools readied my kids for college and successful careers and on any given day or weekend there are opportunities to see a number of high ranking sporting events or performing arts at them. Practically every program received top awards this past year!

Manufacturing companies have also found Opelika due to its great economic climate and location and are constantly expanding. Opelika has also become a shopping destination and our historic downtown is booming and attracting out of town visitors and garnishing national attention with our distillery and brewery. In addition, we have world class golf venues that feature professional tournaments such as LPGA and the upcoming Barbasol tournament. Our city also boasts very nice recreation facilities and parks, concerts in the streets, the nearly famous and recently restored Rocky Brook Rocket train and top notch performing art performances. We can also brag about dining with a few items making the "top 100 things to eat in Alabama" list.

We are also blessed to have many passionate citizens who have poured their heart and soul into our community and call this city home. These people inspire me...they start cool events such as touch a truck, Burger Wars, Christmas in a Railroad town, On the tracks, and they do more humble things like Storybook farms, Big House, Carver-Jeter project, etc...too many to list here.

As you can see, we are truly blessed to live in Opelika. Now, as we look ahead, I encourage us all to build upon the successes that have been achieved and to continue to move our city forward. To start, I encourage everyone to reflect upon yourselves personally and professionally and evaluate where you are, where you're headed and the direction you want to go. We are all in this together and together we can continue to make Opelika the best place to live, work, play and worship in the future, too. I look forward to working alongside each of you. Lastly, I invite you to discover your city and chamber this year and to get involved. Throughout it all, the Chamber has been an encouragement and resource to lead the way for the future. Please let me know if we can help you. I can be reached at [shey@betterfasterrepairs.com](mailto:shey@betterfasterrepairs.com)

Best Regards,

Shey Knight  
Chairman





# Opelika

LIFESTYLE

## Publisher



## President

Pam Powers-Smith – psmith@opelikachamber.com

## Membership Director

Jill Robinson – jrobinson@opelikachamber.com

## Business Marketing Director

Dinah Motley – dmotley@opelikachamber.com

## Administrative Assistant

Vivian Anthony – vanthony@opelikachamber.com

## Contributing Writers

John Atkinson, Rachael Barnes, Laura Leigh Chesser,  
Emily Goodman, Aly Hatter, Kate Larkin,  
Dinah Motley, Carla Nelson, Donna Williamson

## Photography

Opelika City Schools, Keep Opelika Beautiful, Jody Fuller,  
Opelika Chamber, City of Opelika, Golden State Foods,  
East Alabama Medical Center, Exodus Ranch, Flip Flop Foto,  
Springs of Mill Lakes, The Village at Hamilton Lakes

## Graphic Design

McNutt & Company, LLC  
ads@leadershipbycreativity.com

## Advertising

Dinah Motley – dmotley@opelikachamber.com

## Printing

McQuick Printing Company, Montgomery, AL

## Opelika Chamber of Commerce

601 Avenue A

Opelika, Alabama 36801

Phone: (334) 745-4861 • Fax (334) 749-4740

[www.opelikachamber.com](http://www.opelikachamber.com)

*Opelika Lifestyle is a publication of the Opelika Chamber of Commerce. In order to advertise in this publication you must be a member. To become a member of the Opelika Chamber of Commerce and have your business listed in the Membership Directory, among other benefits, please contact (334) 745-4861.*



Cover features a few highlights of Opelika.  
Article is found on page 8.

## Advertisers Index

Advantage Chiropractic Clinic.....	15
Alsobrook & Agricola.....	43
Auburn-Opelika Tourism.....	26-27
Auburn Bank .....	Front Inside Cover
Auburn Cardiovascular, PC.....	17
Auburn Dental Spa.....	35
Auburn Pediatric Dentistry .....	21
AU Regional Airport .....	15
BancorpSouth .....	17
Bubba's Medicine Shop .....	43
Burger Fi .....	19
Century 21 Koullas Realty .....	15
Country and Commercial Properties.....	43
Cruise Planners .....	45
Dick's Sporting Goods.....	31
EAMC - Rehab Works.....	37
East Alabama Pediatric Dentistry.....	15
Focus Pay .....	25
Hilyer & Associates.....	41
J. Smith Lanier & Company.....	21
Jackson Thornton .....	19
Lee Russell Council of Governments.....	39
Machen, McChesney, LLP.....	25
MAX Credit Union.....	37
McNutt & Company, LLC.....	46
National Village .....	47
City of Opelika .....	Back Inside Cover
Opelika City Schools.....	29
Opelika Power Services.....	33
Opelika Utilities .....	Back Cover
Prestige Properties .....	43
Realty South .....	31
Saugahatchee Country Club .....	35
Scott Bridge Company .....	50
Smith-Kastner Wealth Management .....	41
Southern Union State Community College .....	31
Tatum & Cox .....	45
TownPlace Suites .....	13
Trustmark.....	43
Weichert Realtors - Porter Properties .....	37



# Mayor's Welcome



Welcome to Opelika! Thank you for choosing to make our community your home. We are a hidden little jewel here in Alabama. We offer a rich history, yet time and time again, we are named one of the fastest growing cities. Our revitalized downtown offers one-of-a kind shops and if you're a foodie, you'll love all of our amazing restaurants. Tiger Town, located on the I-85 corridor, brings you a wealth of retail, food and entertainment options.

We have a lot to be proud of in Opelika. As you get settled, I ask that you check out OPSOne. As Alabama's first Gig City, Opelika has a state-of-the-art Fiber Optic Network covering the entire city making us one of the most technologically advanced cities in the world! With our fiber network, OPSOne offers you a complete package of technology in addition to electrical services. There is almost no limit to what we can do. Power, Video, Voice, and Data services – working together with the convenience of ONE provider who the community knows and trusts. And because OPS is a part of the City of Opelika Municipal Government, it is owned by our citizens. Therefore we offer you attractive rates for electricity and very competitive prices for Cable TV, telephone, and ultra-high-speed internet services. Any and all profits earned are used to enhance our financial support of Opelika City Schools and other important city services such as parks and recreation, library, public safety and street resurfacing.

If there is ever anything we, your city government, can do to help make your transition into Opelika a smoother, more enjoyable experience, please do not hesitate to call us here at City Hall, or visit the City's website at [www.opelika-al.gov](http://www.opelika-al.gov). If you can't find what you're looking for, please don't hesitate to call my office at (334) 705-5150.

I invite you to "like" the City of Opelika's Facebook and Twitter pages. Stay in touch with us so we can keep you up-to-date on all that's happening in our beautiful city! No question there is always something going on!

And, if you are on social media, you may have noticed that people are using #myOpelika and #beOpelika in conversation. Several city entities are working together to promote our city by asking citizens to take pictures and comment on what Opelika means to them. When asked, it only took me a moment to conjure up a few words that describe our amazing community – heritage, future focused, faith, caring and generous. I ask you to hop on our Facebook page, snap a picture and tell us what Opelika means to you. Don't forget the hashtag!

Again, on behalf of the City of Opelika, welcome to our community! We're glad you chose us and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Fuller'.

Gary Fuller  
Mayor of Opelika





# History

## ***Opelika – Rich in Heritage with a Vision for the Future*** ***Alabama's First Gig City***

*By: Dinah Motley*



**O**pelika first appears on maps as far back as 1733. The earliest people in Opelika were the Creeks or Muskogee Indians. Early traders called them "Creeks" because of their habit of living along rivers and streams.

The first white settlers in the area now known as Opelika arrived in the late 1830s and established a community called Lebanon. After the removal of the native peoples by force in 1836-37, the area became known as "Opelika", taken from a word in the Muskogee language meaning "large swamp". Settlement was sporadic until the late 1840s, when Opelika quickly became a commercial center with the coming of the railroad.

In 1848, the Montgomery & West Point Railroad Company extended a rail line from Montgomery, Alabama to Opelika, and in 1851 completed a connection to West Point, Georgia, thus connecting Opelika with Atlanta, Georgia. This line was the only direct rail route between New Orleans and the Eastern Seaboard, and rapidly became one of the primary trade lines for shipments of raw cotton from Southern plantations to the North. The Montgomery & West Point lines were soon joined by a rail connection to Columbus, Georgia in 1855, and a connection to Birmingham, Alabama in 1869. Almost overnight, Opelika became a regional hub for commerce.

To manage this rapid growth, Opelika was incorporated as a town on February 9, 1854. As a result of Opelika's transportation infrastructure, many warehouses for storing cotton and other goods were built. With the onset of the Civil War these warehouses were converted to Confederate supply depots. In 1864 and 1865, Union raids commanded by Lovell Rousseau and James H. Wilson attacked Opelika, tearing up the railroads and destroying all government property, including Opelika's warehouses.

Soon after the end of the war, the Alabama state legislature created a new county out of parts of Macon, Russell, Chambers, and Tallapoosa counties to be named after Confederate general Robert E. Lee. In 1866, citizens of the new "Lee County" voted Opelika as the county seat, despite the fact that Opelika was technically unincorporated after having its charter revoked for abetting the rebellion against the United States.

After Opelika received a new charter in 1870, rapid growth resumed. The town nearly doubled in size between 1870 and 1900. During this time, Opelika began to gain a reputation as a wild, lawless town. Soon after receiving the new charter, city officials attempted to scam outside investors by issuing fake railroad bonds. For this, the town's charter was revoked again in 1872, and the town was administered as a police district by the state legislature for the following year. Opelika's downtown was packed with saloons, and frequent gunfire in the streets led to railroads ordering passengers passing through Opelika to duck beneath the windows to avoid being shot.

In 1882, voters dismissed the incumbent city government. Unwilling to give up power, the city council nullified the election until the courts ruled against them. When the state yet again revoked Opelika's charter, the city leaders took up arms against those that opposed them, and the governor was forced to send in the militia to restore order. Opelika remained under unelected military rule for sixteen years until 1899, when Opelika's charter was again restored.

In 1900, local investors founded the Opelika Cotton Mill as the first textile plant in the city, employing 125. In 1925 Pepperell Manufacturing Co. constructed a large mill just outside of the Opelika city limits. The period between 1930 and 1970 would turn out to be Opelika's heyday, as industrial growth turned Opelika into a regional economic powerhouse.



Opelika continued to add factories and other industry throughout the middle years of the twentieth century. In the 1950s, Opelika attracted the nation's first and largest magnetic tape manufacturing plant. In 1963, tire manufacturer Uniroyal constructed a massive plant in Opelika, and around the same time Diversified Products revolutionized the physical fitness equipment industry with products produced in their Opelika plant. By the early 1970s, Opelika's industries employed nearly 10,000.

Between the late 1970s and 2005, non-agricultural employment in the Auburn-Opelika area grew at a slow but steady pace. By the late 1990s, Opelika sought to increase its industrial employment base by purchasing and developing a 2,200 acre park site, Northeast Opelika Industrial Park. Since 1999, two major distribution centers, four tier 1 automotive suppliers and one manufacturer of dietary supplements have located within the park. In 2003, the park was recognized as one of the "South's Best Automotive Assembly Plant Sites" by Southern Business & Development, an industry trade publication.

Opelika has also experienced a boom in retail development. Conveniently located at the intersection of Interstate 85 and Highway 280, Tiger Town, a 130- acre mixed use development, has nearly one million square feet of retail space as well as freestanding restaurants, banks, offices, and hotel sites. It is east Alabama's largest retail center and is home to more than 85 businesses.

Across the interstate from TigerTown, sits the AMC Tiger 13 Cinema which boasts of having the largest screen in the nation. Joining the Cinema is the recently opened Freddy's Frozen Custards and Steakburgers and the Home2Suites, as well as the Holiday Inn Express and the Hampton Inn & Suites.

Following major renovations, Historic Downtown Opelika is enjoying a return to the center of life in Opelika. The shopping and restaurant district has been improved with a turn of the 20th century flair. Opelika is filled with a variety of specialty shops, galleries, antique stores and restaurants. The John Emerald Distilling Company and the Red Clay Brewery have won numerous awards in their fields.

Wanting to keep up with future technology for businesses and homes, Opelika invested in the fiber optic system and became Alabama's first "Gig City" which means she has one of the most advanced, high-tech 100% fiber optic systems in the world! With the new fiber optic network, Opelika can now offer a complete package of home technology. There is almost no limit to what can be done with fiber technology. Power, Video, Voice, and Data services – working together with the convenience of one provider.

Opelika might have started out a little rocky with people ducking as they rode through, but today you won't want to miss all that's going on in this charming, progressive and lively city! 🇺🇸

# Table of Contents

## About

Quick Facts ..... 10  
Calendar of Annual Events ..... 12

## Arts & Entertainment

OHS Theatre: Children of Eden ..... 14  
East Alabama Arts ..... 16  
Jody Fuller, The Stuttering Comic ..... 18

## Business & Industry

Downtown Continues to Thrive..... 20  
Small Businesses of the Year/Quarter ..... 22-23  
Golden State Foods Helping Opelika Grow..... 24

## Education

Google Expeditions, Tech in Education ..... 28  
Career Discovery Expo ..... 30  
20 under 40 ..... 32

## Health & Safety

New Cancer Center Opening in 2019 ..... 34  
Citizen's Academy ..... 36

## Lifestyle

Rocky Brook Rocket ..... 38  
The New 55+ Communities..... 40  
KOB: Love Where You Live..... 42

## Worship

Exodus Ranch ..... 44

# About the Cover

## East Alabama Arts Performances

For over 30 years, the Arts Association of East Alabama Performance Series brings the best in music, theatre and dance to the community. Six to eight major shows featuring national and international touring productions, which are generally only available in larger metropolitan areas, are presented each year at the Opelika Center for the Performing Arts. See a listing of the 2017-2018 series on page 14.

## Golfing in Opelika

If you are into golf, then the Opelika area has you covered with over 7 stellar golf courses including one of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail courses at Grand National which is the host for the Barbasol PGA Championship.

## New Business Development

Over 92 ribbon cuttings for businesses in 2016-2017! Opelika has a plethora of businesses in retail, manufacturing, office and services. Some of our larger companies include Baxter International, Pharmavite and Mando. Read an article on a new business, Golden State Foods, to open this fall on page 22.

## A Victorian Christmas in Opelika

Since 1993, over 60 homes in the Historic District have been transformed into a Victorian Christmas annually. Homes are decorated with life size Santas, angels, toys, carousel horses and Christmas-themed figures. The Victorian Front Porch Christmas Tour has been voted one of the Southeast's top rated tourism events and has been featured in Better Homes & Gardens and Southern Living.

## Homes Your Way

With historic houses, spacious downtown lofts and new homes suited for active lifestyles, Opelika offers a variety of residences for newcomers. Recently, we have had two 55+ communities to be developed, as well as National Village at Grand National. Read about the two newest 55+ communities in this issue on page 38.

## TigerTown

Tiger Town, located at Exit 58 off Interstate 85, offers 92 shops, restaurants, and businesses. There are plenty of hotels in this area to accommodate travelers just passing through or wanting to visit for a while.

## East Alabama Medical Center

East Alabama Medical Center, a 340-bed regional referral hospital serving a six-county area, is Lee County's second largest employer with 3,300 employees. Among the services that EAMC provides are open-heart surgery and cancer treatment, both of which are highly acclaimed specialties at the hospital. EAMC also operates non-mainstream services, including RehabWorks, HealthPlus Fitness Center, the Diabetes & Nutrition Center, the Wound Treatment Center and the Auburn University Medical Clinic. For more information, please visit [www.eamc.org](http://www.eamc.org).

## Rocky Brook Rocket

The Rocky Brook Rocket has proudly strutted down the track in Municipal Park since it first debuted on July 1, 1955. A unique feature to Opelika, this miniature train brings a lot of joy to children and adults alike. At Christmas time, the Rocket is converted to the Reindeer Express and Municipal Park into a Winter Wonderland. See more information about this little train on page 36.

## Historic Downtown Opelika

Downtown Opelika is home to charming restaurants, shops, a brewery, a distillery and many other businesses, as well as to numerous events that bring in hundreds to the downtown area. On the Tracks, Touch-A-Truck, Burger Wars, and Christmas in a Railroad Town are a just a few of the annual events. Read more about Downtown Opelika on page 18.

## Opelika Loves Families

Opelika has an abundance of family activities and events plus an award-winning school system. Opelika Parks and Recreation offers a wide variety of activities from soccer to ceramics for every season and age. The Opelika Sportsplex and Aquatics Center provides a great opportunity for a healthier lifestyle, as well as a splash park for the little ones. Family events include: Noon Tunes, Summer Swing, Touch-A-Truck, Garden in the Park, Christmas in a Railroad Town just to name a few.





601 AVENUE A + OPELIKA, AL 36803  
334.745.486 | [WWW.OPELIKACHAMBER.COM](http://WWW.OPELIKACHAMBER.COM)



### Opelika Chamber of Commerce Staff

*(Left to Right)*

Vivian Anthony, Administrative Assistant

Jill Robinson, Membership Director

Dinah Motley, Business Marketing Director

Pam Powers-Smith, President



# Quick Facts & Contacts

## Relocation

### Cable Service:

Spectrum Business – (678) 226-3661  
Opelika Power Services – (334) 705-5570

### Motor Vehicle:

Driver's License – (334) 742-9986  
New Resident Vehicle Registration – (334) 737-3655

### Local Phone Service:

AT&T – 1-888-757-6500 (residential), 1-866-620-6000 (business)  
Spectrum Business – (678) 226-3661  
Opelika Power Services – (334) 705-5570

### Social Security Administration:

(334) 745-7052, 1800 Corporate Dr, Opelika, AL 36801

### Utilities:

#### Electric

Opelika Power Services – (334) 705-5570  
Alabama Power – 1-800-245-2244 (residential),  
1-800-430-5787 (business)  
Tallapoosa River Electric Cooperative (TREC) – (334) 864-9331

#### Gas

Alagasco – (334) 887-4800

#### Water and Sewer

Opelika Utilities – (334) 705-5500

### Recycling:

Keep Opelika Beautiful – (334) 749-4970  
Opelika Environmental Services – (334) 705-5480

### US Postal Service:

Opelika Branch – (334) 745-3561

### Voter Registration:

Board of Registrars – (334) 737-3635

### Property Taxes:

Lee County Revenue Commissioner's Office – (334) 737-3655

### Sales Tax Rate:

Opelika Sales and Use Tax – 9.0%

### Cost of Living

ACCRA Cost of Living Index\* – 94.5  
\*Third Quarter 2016 for Auburn-Opelika MSA

### Climate (Fahrenheit and Inches)

	Avg. High	Avg. Low	Avg. Rainfall
Winter	54.7	33.6	14.94
Spring	73.9	49.8	16.00
Summer	89.1	68.2	12.57
Fall	74.5	51.6	11.07

### Time Zone

Opelika is located in the Central Time Zone.

## Business & Information

### Business Climate

A small town community with large town amenities, Opelika has the infrastructure and leadership in place to welcome and work with new or expanding businesses. With five exits off Interstate 85, and an hour and fifteen minute drive from Atlanta, Opelika's location provides quick access to markets and people across the Southeast.

### Location

Major Cities	Distance in Miles
Columbus, GA	40
Montgomery, AL	65
Atlanta, GA	100
Birmingham, AL	110
Mobile, AL	240
Savannah, GA	272

### Population

Auburn-Opelika MSA	2010 Census	2016 Estimate*
Population		
City of Auburn	53,380	62,059
City of Opelika	26,477	29,527
Auburn-Opelika MSA Total:	140,247	158,884
2016 Est. Median Age*		32
2016 Est. Median Household Income*		\$48,927
2015 Est. Per Capita Personal Income**		\$23,447

\*Source: 2016 Estimates: Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

\*\*Source: 2015 Estimates: Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

### Transportation

#### Highways

Interstate Highway	85
U.S. Highways	29, 280 and 431
Alabama State Highway	51

#### Motor Freight Carriers/Overnight Carriers

There are more than 30 licensed carriers in the area.

#### Railroad Service

CSX, Norfolk Southern

#### Air Service

AU Regional Airport – serves corporate aircraft with 5,265' main runway  
Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport – in Atlanta, approximately  
1 hour and fifteen minutes from Opelika  
Columbus Metropolitan Airport – in Columbus, GA approximately  
30 minutes from Opelika  
Montgomery Regional Airport – in Montgomery, AL approximately  
1 hour from Opelika

### Labor

Auburn-Opelika MSA*	
Total Civilian Labor Force:	74,778
Total Employment:	71,061
Unemployed:	3,717
Percent Unemployed:	5.0 %

\*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## Education

### Education Institutions in Opelika

#### Private Schools

- Trinity Christian School, K-12  
(334) 745-2464; [www.tcsopelika.org](http://www.tcsopelika.org)
- Lee-Scott Academy, K-12  
(334) 821-2430; [www.lee-scott.org](http://www.lee-scott.org)

#### Public School System

- Opelika City Schools, K-12  
(334) 745-9700; [www.opelikaschools.org](http://www.opelikaschools.org)
- Lee County Schools, K-12  
(334) 705-6000; [www.lee.k12.al.us](http://www.lee.k12.al.us)

To schedule a tour of Opelika City schools, please contact:

**Becky Brown, Public Relations Coordinator**

**(334) 745-9700**

**[www.opelikaschools.org](http://www.opelikaschools.org)**

### Higher Education

Auburn University  
(334) 844-4000; [www.auburn.edu](http://www.auburn.edu)

Faulkner University  
(334) 386-7143; [www.faulkner.edu](http://www.faulkner.edu)

Huntingdon College  
(334) 745-2940; [www.huntingdon.edu](http://www.huntingdon.edu)

Point University  
(706) 385-1000; [www.point.edu](http://www.point.edu)

Southern Union State Community College  
(334) 745-6437; [www.suscc.edu](http://www.suscc.edu)

### Statistics

2016-2017	Number Enrolled
Auburn University	28,290
Faulkner University	3,262 (3 campuses)
Point University	1,582 (6 campuses)
Southern Union State	5,000 total (3 campuses)
Community College	3,878 at Opelika Campus

## Employment

Employment— Auburn-Opelika MSA*	
Non-agricultural	64,400
Manufacturing	7,100
Mining, Logging & Construction	1,800
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	11,700
Information	500
Financial Activity	2,000
Professional and Business Services	7,700
Education and Health Services	3,700
Leisure and Hospitality	7,900
Other Services	1,800
Government	19,800
NET CHANGE FROM December 2016	2,200

\*Alabama Department of Labor (DOL):

Alabama Labor Market Newsletter January 2017 (Dec '16 Data)

## Arts & Entertainment

### Entertainment

- Auburn University Theater & Singers
- Opelika High School Theater
- Opelika High School Ovations / Impressions / Imaginations
- Rocky Brook Rocket Reindeer Express
- Noon Tunes
- Eggstravaganza (Easter Events)
- Wood Duck Preserve
- Summer Swing in the Park
- Garden in the Park
- On the Tracks Food and Wine Event
- Touch a Truck
- Victorian Front Porch Tour
- Christmas in a Railroad Town
- Freedom Celebration
- Tiger 13 Alternative Programming
- On the Town
- Opelika Theatre Company
- Cruise – In at the Tracks
- Cottonseed Studios
- The Bottling Plant Event Center

### Area Museums

- The Museum of East Alabama
- Jule Collins Smith Museum of Art
- AU Jonathan B. Lovelace Athletic Museum and Hall of Honor
- Lee County Historical Museum

### East Alabama Arts Association Performance Series

- Sept. 19, 2017 Ballet Hispanico
- Oct. 26, 2017 Vienna Boys Choir
- Nov. 13, 2017 Dirty Dancing The Musical
- Jan. 25, 2018 Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
- Jan. 29, 2018 Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella
- Feb. 12, 2018 The Hot Sardines
- March 7, 2018 The National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba
- April 26, 2018 A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder

## Health & Safety

### Emergency : 911

#### Opelika Police Department

(334) 705-5200

#### Opelika Fire Department

(334) 705-5300

#### Lee County Sheriff's Office

(334) 749-5651

#### East Alabama Medical Center

(334) 749-3411

#### Lee County Health Department

(334) 745-5765

#### Department of Human Resources

(334) 737-1100

#### Better Business Bureau

(800) 768-4222

## Membership

### Referrals & Information Center

The Opelika Chamber is a business based organization that receives thousands of requests for information and referrals. The Chamber only refers its members to residents, newcomers, and business clients. Members are notified of the referrals they receive. In addition, the Opelika Chamber serves as a clearinghouse for information regarding Opelika and its surrounding area.

### Business Services

- Membership Mailing Labels
- Membership Guides Available
- One listing in the Membership Directory, published annually.
- East Alabama Industrial Guide
- Notary Service
- For a nominal fee, your business may be listed under two categories in the Membership Directory and on the website.
- Listing in the on-line Membership Directory with a link to your business website.
- Membership decal indicating to your customers that you support the business community.

### Promotional Opportunities

Work with the Chamber to help get your business the attention it deserves:

- Participate in giveaways for special events and meetings.
- Display your company's promotional brochures in the Chamber information center.
- Have the Chamber schedule and promote a groundbreaking, ribbon cutting or grand opening ceremony.

### Advertising Opportunities

The Opelika Chamber has over 250 sponsorships available at a variety of price ranges.

### Networking Opportunities

Business After Hours  
Business Over Breakfast  
Annual Meeting  
Connections  
Business Development Seminars

### Business & Education

Leadership Lee County  
Lee County Young Leaders  
Career Technical Fair  
Health Science Fair  
Quarterly Seminars  
Plant Manager's Round Table  
20 Under 40  
Opelika Business Clean Water Partnership

### Committees

Ambassador Committee  
Education Committee  
Governmental Affairs  
Nominating Committee  
Parade Committee  
Public Relations Committee  
Recognition Committee  
Small Business Committee

If you are interested in joining an Opelika Chamber of Commerce committee, please call the chamber at (334) 745-4861 or email us: coc@opelikachamber.com.

## Calendar of Annual Events

### Opelika Chamber of Commerce Calendar

Annual Meeting.....June  
Ambassador's Meeting ..... Every 3rd Tuesday  
Board of Directors Monthly Meetings ..... Every 3rd Wednesday  
Business After Hours.....Quarterly  
Business Over Breakfast .....Quarterly  
Christmas Parade.....December 2  
Christmas Reception.....December  
Connections.....Every 2nd Wednesday  
Plant Manager's Round Table.....Quarterly  
First Responders Appreciation Breakfast .....September 29  
Golf Tournament .....May 1  
Health Science Tour .....April  
Leadership Lee County.....August - May  
Lee County Young Leaders Program.....August - May  
Legislative Reception .....August  
New Members Breakfast.....Quarterly  
Past Chairman's Luncheon .....February  
Quarterly Seminar / Workshops .....Quarterly  
Small Business Week .....May  
20 Under 40 Sessions.....Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday August - May

### City Of Opelika / Opelika Main Street Calendar

Downtown Farmers Market ..... Every Tuesday, June - August  
Holiday Open House .....November  
Easter on the Square .....March 31  
Fall Festival .....October  
Freedom Celebration .....July 3  
Noon Tunes (Courthouse Square)..... Every Wednesday, May • 12 pm  
On the Tracks, A Food & Wine Event.....October / April  
Opelika Board of Zoning & Adjustments.....2nd Tuesday  
Opelika City Council Meeting.....1st & 3rd Tuesday  
Opelika City School Board of Education Meetings.....4th Tuesday  
Opelika Planning Commission Meeting.....4th Tuesday  
Summer Swing (Municipal Park) ..... Every Tuesday, May - August • 7pm  
Think Pink Breast Cancer Walk .....September  
Touch-A-Truck.....June

### Christmas Calendar

Camelot Christmas Cards .....December  
Christmas Parade.....December 2  
Christmas in a Railroad Town.....December 8  
Collinwood Luminaries.....December  
Rocky Brook Rocket Reindeer Express .....December  
Victorian Front Porch Tour .....December

### Keep Opelika Beautiful Calendar

Arbor Day .....February  
Azalea Trail .....April  
Garden in the Park .....May  
City-Wide Clean Up .....March  
Community Garden.....Spring  
Electronic Recycling / Document Shredding .....Fall and Spring





# Relocating?

On the move? Let TownePlace Suites® treat you to the comforts and amenities of home as you get to know the area.

With our spacious suites, full kitchens and flexible spaces, you can settle right into work, rest or play. And our service team is in the know, so they'll gladly share all the best-kept local secrets. Kinda nice to have a friend in your new neighborhood, isn't it?

**TOWNEPLACE  
SUITES®**  
MARRIOTT

**FROM \$89/NIGHT**

CALL 1.800.MARRIOTT OR  
VISIT [MARRIOTT.COM/CSGAU](http://MARRIOTT.COM/CSGAU)

**TownePlace Suites®**  
**Auburn**  
1117 S College Street  
Auburn, AL 36832  
334.466.8390

*Rates are per room, per night. Limited availability. Not applicable to groups of 10 or more rooms and cannot be combined with any other offer or prior purchase.*

# Arts & Entertainment

## Opelika High School Theatre Society Earns Top Honors

By: Donna Williamson



For the past three years, the Opelika High School Theatre Society has been recognized as one of the top theatre programs in the state.

In December the group competed against 17 other schools at the Walter Trumbauer Secondary Theatre Festival where they received “Best in Show” and the honor of representing the state of Alabama at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in Lexington, Kentucky. In Lexington the group received awards for best makeup design and Peyton Brown and Wesley Herring were each named festival all stars.

Under the direction of Revel Gholston, the students performed Act II from the musical “Children of Eden” in the local, state and national competitions. According to Gholston, the musical is a rather “Broadway” look at the Genesis chapters of the Bible. Act I addresses the story of Adam and Eve and Cain and Able. Act II is the story of Noah and his family.

“We could have cut down either Act I or Act II,” Gholston said. “I really didn’t have a plan, but when I heard the music of Act II, I was hooked and couldn’t wait to get the show up and running.”

When choosing the right production for competition, Gholston explained that it has to be something that not only fits the group dynamic but that can also be cut down into a forty-five minute time frame.

“Sometimes I am able to have a few things in my back pocket,” said Gholston. “Oddly enough for this show I did not. I really didn’t know much about ‘Children of Eden’ other than a few

of the songs and its general premise. I am proud to say I almost picked it blindly this time.”

Gholston can’t really “pin down” what makes this group of students so special. “I underestimated them, that’s for sure,” said Gholston. “I thought this year would be a rebuilding year. They absolutely smashed that thought and have done some very magical things. They seem to love each other and love the piece. I think that was key. They felt the message and knew that the world needed to hear it. Or at least to anyone who was willing to listen, they were ready to preach forgiveness, acceptance, non-violence, and most importantly unity.”

The trip to national competition was costly and Gholston is proud of the support his students received outside of fundraising.

“Opelika is so proud of anything that carries its name,” said Gholston. “As soon as the word hit the pavement that we had an invitation to SETC, the outpouring of support and love began. I’m very proud that the people wanted to see these kids succeed as much as we did.”

### 2017-2018 Series

**Peter Pan – October 2017**

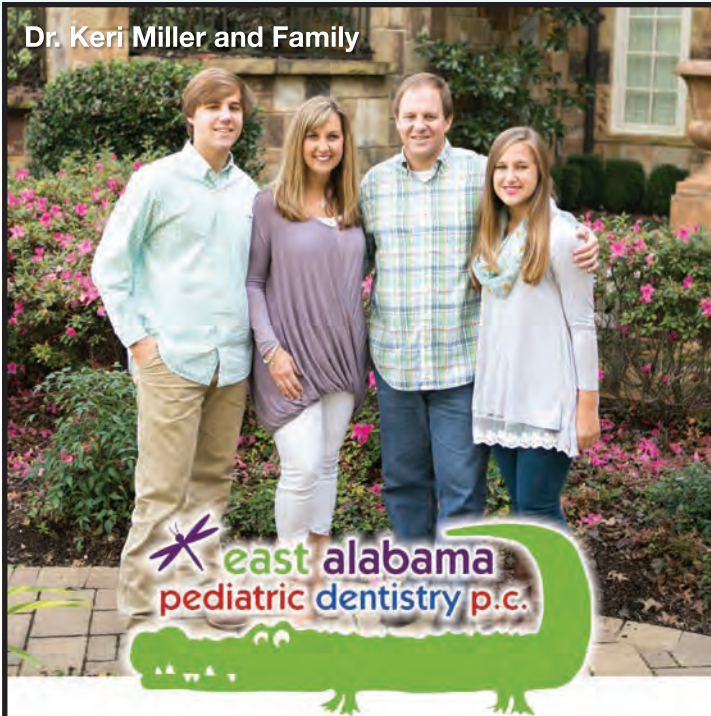
**The Civil War – 2017**

(This will be the competition production.)

**Almost Maine – 2018**



Dr. Keri Miller and Family



**east alabama**  
**pediatric dentistry p.c.**

**Dentistry for Children and Adolescents**

**Keri L. Miller, DMD**

(334) 321-0780

742 North Dean Road • Auburn, AL 36830

**[www.gatorgrins.com](http://www.gatorgrins.com)**

**Century 21**  
**KOULLAS REALTY**

**Selling in Auburn, Opelika, and  
Lake Martin Areas**

**Commercial and Residential**

**334.887.2000**



2016 Century 21 Real Estate LLC. Century 21 is a registered trademark owned by Century 21 Real Estate LLC. Equal Housing Opportunity. Each office is independently owned and operated.



Tom Vrbka, DC, CCSP® Brad Adams, DC, D.A.C.O.  
*Palmer College Graduates*



**Amazing Results,  
Everyday!**

**(334) 821-2552**

**2408 E. University Dr., Suite 101 • Auburn, AL 36830**

**COMPLETE CHIROPRACTIC CARE FOR FAMILIES**

**Multiple Adjustment Techniques**

**Disc Decompression**

**Laser Therapy**

**Physical Therapy**

**Pregnancy Pain Relief**

**Certified Whiplash Specialist**

**Certified Sports Chiropractor**

**Computerized X-ray**

*Please see our website for details*



*We respect your time – short wait times.*

**[www.AdvantageChiropracticClinic.com](http://www.AdvantageChiropracticClinic.com)**



Auburn University Regional Airport serves Auburn, Opelika, and Lee County with recreational and corporate travel as well as providing flight education and aircraft maintenance. Conveniently located adjacent I-85 in east central Alabama, the new 26,000-square-foot terminal building is now open and part of an economic-growth partnership to recruit knowledge-based companies to the area which will further diversify and boost the local economy.



**AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
REGIONAL AIRPORT**

2150 Mike Hubbard Blvd., Auburn, AL 36830

334.844.4597 • Fax: 334.844.4272 • [info@auairport.com](mailto:info@auairport.com) • [auairport.com](http://auairport.com)

# Arts & Entertainment

## *East Alabama Arts Performance Series 2017-2018*

Sept. 19, 2017 - Ballet Hispanico

Oct. 26, 2017 - Vienna Boys Choir

Nov. 13, 2017 - Dirty Dancing The Musical

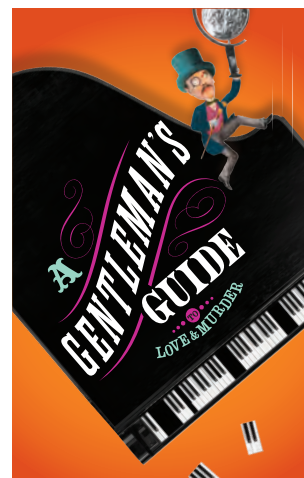
Jan. 25, 2018 - Orpheus Chamber Orchestra

Jan. 29, 2018 - Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella

Feb. 12, 2018 - The Hot Sardines

March 7, 2018 - The National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba

April 26, 2018 - A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder





# Strength. Stability. Confidence.

Since our founding more than 135 years ago, BancorpSouth has continuously served our customers and communities throughout changing times and the economy's ups and downs. We are committed to serving the credit needs of the communities in which we do business. Our job is to take a proactive, rather than passive, approach to meet community and individual needs.

*Visit Us Today.  
Let's Start a Relationship Together.*

**Opelika** | 414 S 7th Street | (334) 749-2041



© 2016 BancorpSouth. All rights reserved.

**BancorpSouth.com**



**Auburn Cardiovascular**

## **Auburn Cardiovascular PC**

Michael B. Williams, M.D., FACC, FSCAI  
Donald W. Rhodes Jr., M.D., FSCAI  
Patricia Wade, M.D.  
Chantelle Watson, CRNP

**334-821-1219**

Specializing in the diagnosis and management of Cardiovascular Disease

# Arts & Entertainment

## ***The Stuttering Comic***

***Turning a disability into an ability – and making a career of it***

*By: Kate Asbury Larkin*

**J**ody Fuller has always stuttered. As a child, he suffered from ridicule and was the butt of jokes, but instead of letting the bullying break him down, he found a way to turn the situation into a positive.


“About middle school, I made up my mind that the teasing wasn’t going to define me, but the stuttering probably would, so I decided not to let it bother me anymore,” Fuller said. “I began to dish out the jokes faster – and better – than the perpetrators. It worked and I realized humor was a good way to fight back. I knew every stuttering joke there was, so if somebody spouted one off at me, I had a comeback that was funnier than what they said.”

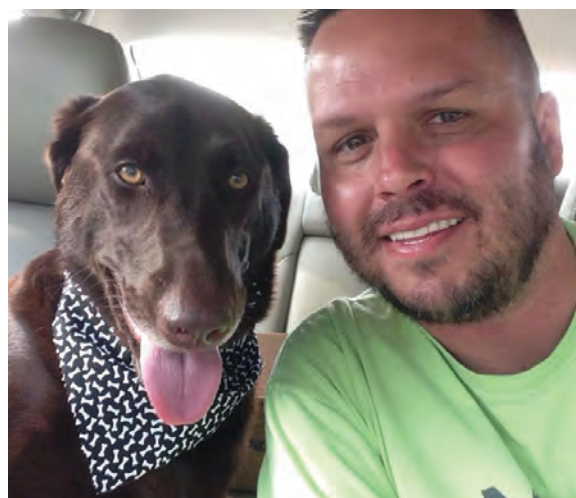
Fuller graduated from Opelika High School in 1990 and joined the United States Army where he served four years as an army medic at home and abroad.

Shortly after earning a degree from Auburn University Montgomery in 2001, the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred and Fuller reenlisted in the Army. After graduating from Office Candidate School, he headed to Iraq in what would be the first of three tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was during the first tour (2003-2004, Samarra, Iraq) that his unit encouraged him to enter an informal New Year’s Eve talent show and his stuttering comic routine was a huge hit. Such a hit, in fact, that one of the men in attendance entered the video in the Wendy’s (Restaurant) Funniest Online Comic competition and Fuller’s performance won a show in Las Vegas. From that point, it was game on.

Now, more than 10 years later, Fuller has made a living both as a comedian and speaker. He has two DVDs and has stories published in seven editions of Chicken Soup for the Soul. Fuller is a sought after inspirational speaker, presenting at conferences and events around the country, inspiring others who suffer from stuttering and other physical and mental disabilities. He has also performed for deployed troops in 14 countries...and counting.

“I’ve traveled all over the United States speaking to groups, combining humor and the ability to laugh at yourself in my presentations about living with and overcoming disabilities,” Fuller said.

Fuller is also active in the Opelika community, volunteering his time at many local events and even occasionally performing in town. Search for opportunities to meet and get to know this Opelika jewel. For more information, visit [www.jodyfuller.com](http://www.jodyfuller.com) or his Facebook page, Jody Fuller. Comic. Speaker. Soldier. 





# FROM THE FARM. NOT THE LAB.



OUR NATURAL ANGUS BEEF IS NEVER FROZEN.  
FREE OF HORMONES, STEROIDS, AND  
ANTIBIOTICS. YOU KNOW, THE JUNK THAT  
SHOULDN'T BE THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.



**AUBURN**  
339 S COLLEGE ST  
AUBURN, AL 36830  
334.52.5030  
SUN-THU 11AM-10PM  
FRI-SAT 11AM-11PM

**OPELIKA/TIGER TOWN**  
2175 INTERSTATE DRIVE, SUITE  
D-3 OPELIKA, AL 36801  
334.759.7040  
SUN-THU 11AM-10PM  
FRI-SAT 11AM-11PM

**TUSCALOO SA LEGACY PARK**  
1320 MCFARLAN D BLVD. EAST  
BUILDING 500, SUITE 510  
TUSCALOOSA, AL 35404  
205.759.2510  
SUN-THU 10:30AM-10PM  
FRI-SAT 10:30AM-11PM

©2016 BURGERFI International, LLC. BURGERFI® and the BURGERFI® logo are registered trademarks of Restaurant Development Group, LLC. BURGERFI system consists of restaurants owned by BURGERFI International, LLC. affiliates, and BURGERFI franchisees.

## It's not our job to help solve financial problems. It's our calling.

*That's just the way we do business.*



**JACKSON THORNTON**

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS | CONSULTANTS

jacksonthornton.com 334.749.8191

# Business & Industry

## Historic Downtown Opelika Continues to Thrive

By: Carla Nelson



Each year, historic Downtown Opelika continues to outgrow the community's expectations. From a wide variety of restaurants and storefronts, locals and visitors are discovering everything that downtown Opelika has to offer.

Opelika Main Street, a non-profit organization, is dedicated to the promotion and revitalization of the downtown area. Through year-round events and promotion, Opelika Main Street is helping raise awareness in the local community and attract visitors to the area.

The downtown area has witnessed the openings of several new businesses this past year. La Cantina, a Mexican restaurant, opened earlier this year. Since the restaurant opened, it has been praised for its quality food, atmosphere and exceptional customer service. La Cantina is located at 870 North Railroad Avenue. Their hours are 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. on Wednesday through Saturday and 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Collaboration Station, a co-working space for professionals, also recently opened this year. The business is located at 216 South Eighth St. and offers professionals a space to grow their own individual businesses. Collaboration Station has multiple packages that new businesses and entrepreneurs can choose from.

The Wilton Drink + Eat, a neighborhood bar and restaurant, is expected to open in the near future. This restaurant will be located adjacent to the Red Clay Brewery on North Railroad

Avenue and will feature high quality, made-from-scratch comfort food and will focus on seasonal local ingredients.

Opelika Main Street has been crucial in the revitalization of downtown Opelika. The non-profit organizes annual and semiannual events to help bring more locals and visitors to the downtown area. "Touch-A-Truck" is one of several annual events that Opelika Main Street organizes. The event is in collaboration with Keep Opelika Beautiful and the City of Opelika and is a free event. Children are allowed to explore trucks and vehicles of all shapes and sizes. Opelika Rotary Club holds "Burger Wars" that same day. This event allows businesses and individuals to compete to create the best burger.

Other annual events include "Christmas in a Railroad Town" and "On the Tracks."

"Christmas in a Railroad Town" is scheduled for December 8, 2017. This event features pony rides, caroling, entertainment and more.

"On the Tracks" is a semiannual event that is held in the Spring and Fall. The next "On the Tracks" is scheduled for Oct. 20, 2017. This event features a wine trail in which downtown businesses offer a taste of various wines and a bite of food. Live music is also provided during the event.

For more information on Opelika Main Street and Historic Downtown Opelika, please visit [www.opelikamainstreet.org](http://www.opelikamainstreet.org).



# Auburn Pediatric Dentistry



841 N. Dean Road \* Auburn, AL 36830

**334-826-6651**

Charles R. Greenleaf, DMD



[www.auburnpediatricdentistry.com](http://www.auburnpediatricdentistry.com)

We are preferred providers for Blue Cross & Blue Shield, Southland, MetLife, and Delta Dental

## LOOKING AT THE ROAD AHEAD

As part of Marsh & McLennan Agency, the largest insurance brokerage firm in the world, we deliver innovative solutions and opportunities for our clients.

Call on us to consolidate all your insurance needs:

- Property & Casualty ◀
- Employee Benefits ◀
- Risk Management ◀
- Personal Insurance ◀
- Executive Risk ◀
- And more! ◀



*J. Smith Lanier & Co.*  
a Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC company

2821 Corporate Park Drive • Opelika, AL 36801  
334-749-3401 • 800-226-4521 • [jsmithlanier.com](http://jsmithlanier.com)

# Business & Industry

## Wright's Market – Small Business of the Year

By: Aly Hatter

Every quarter, The Opelika Chamber of Commerce recognizes a local business as the “Small Business of the Quarter”. This prestigious award is given to a business that goes well above the norm to help their customers and the City of Opelika as well as treat their employees like family. A “Small Business of the Year” is chosen from the quarterly winner.

### Wright's Market

Wright's Market is a family-owned and operated grocery store that serves the Auburn-Opelika area and many surrounding areas. The store and its employees offer locals a clean place to shop for groceries and help support the local community and economy. Wright's Market strives to provide good service and a helping hand to the local community and surrounding areas.

Jimmy Wright, an Opelika resident and local hero, is not only contributing a quality market to Opelika, but is also providing a sense of community. Wright began working at the local market at an early age. Once he was able to purchase the market, he used it as an opportunity to give back to his Opelika family, along with several other communities.

Wright has always strived to give back to the community. After forming a relationship with Focused Community Strategies, he discovered a need for a local grocery store in South Atlanta. With an eager heart and a helping hand, he began sending trucks to Atlanta in 2012, offering affordable produce to the local citizens.

Within the last year, Wright's market launched “Wright 2 U,” an online shopping and delivery service. Wright 2 U serves the local Opelika and Auburn community, as well as surrounding rural areas. Every item in the store is available online and customers can choose curbside pickup or home delivery. Other services provided by Wright's Market include a free 15-passenger shuttle service for all customers that call ahead of time.

Recently, Wright's Market was chosen by the United States Department of Agriculture to test accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through their online shopping service. Wright's Market was one of 10 businesses, including Amazon and Walmart, chosen to participate in this program. The United States Department of Agriculture hopes to expand this program to include all SNAP users.





## Small Businesses of the Quarter



### Warehouse Bistro

Located in Opelika's oldest industrial park, The Warehouse Bistro provides a cozy atmosphere, with a casual, but fine dining experience. The menu showcases an American and Continental cuisine, along with nightly chef specials, a full service bar, and an award winning wine list that features over 300 selections. The wine list has won the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence from 2005-2016. Referred to by many, as "Opelika's best kept secret," the restaurant has been rated five stars by The North American Restaurant Association and Trip Advisor. With a focus on food presentation and providing excellent service, The Warehouse Bistro is the go-to place for an unforgettable meal.



### The Bottling Plant Event Center

Nestled in the heart of historic downtown Opelika, the 33,000-square-foot Bottling Plant Event Center has branded themselves as a venue capable of handling any type of event.

This historical treasure originally opened in 1938 as a Coca-Cola Bottling Warehouse. The warehouse was a dream come true for owner, Lisa Ditchkoff, who had dreamed of owning a unique event venue. Ditchkoff renovated the space with state-of-the-art additions, yet kept much of the original charm and elegance.

The first floor is made up of a 7,712-square-foot ballroom that can be divided in two separate ballrooms, a bar area, a meeting room and a 9,289-square-foot courtyard. The second floor space includes a rooftop terrace, lounge, an adjoining private room and bridal quarters. The latest addition is an 8,000-square-foot covered pavilion. This will allow the event center to organize outdoor events throughout the year. The Bottling Plant Event Center organizes a variety of events: weddings, conferences, trade shows, parties, reunions, and so much more.



### Red Clay Brewing Company

Known for their deep southern roots and locally brewed beer, Red Clay Brewing Company strives to provide quality beer while also representing its southern roots. Located in the center of downtown Opelika, the 3,000 square foot building is a perfect location for small and large events.

The 3 founders, Kerry McGinnis, Stephen Harle and John Corbin, are known for their deep southern roots and love of red clay. This love led to the name "Red Clay Brewing Company." Each founder brings their own unique set of skills to the business which has helped make it so successful.

Today, Red Clay has eight different homemade brews ranging from stouts to IPAs to cider. The Muskogee word, Opelika, meaning Big Swamp, became the brewery's inspiration for one of its first beers: Big Swamp Stout. The brewery is located on North Railroad Avenue in Downtown Opelika. [📍](#)

# Business & Industry

## Golden State Foods: Helping Opelika Grow

By: Rachael Barnes



After announcing its plant opening in Opelika, Alabama, two and a half years ago, Golden State Foods (GSF) is set to open its doors in August 2017. This new plant is projected to bring up to 200 jobs to the area and will help continue economic growth in Opelika.

“We are excited to be new members in this community and look forward to growing our business here,” said Dr. Wayne Morgan, corporate vice president and president, protein products group.


GSF’s new location in Opelika will be a 165,000 square-foot protein facility for the business. The company hopes that this plant will help meet their growing processing needs, as well as better serve their customers. GSF also hopes to continue to fulfill its vision to “make the best products and provide the best service” through the services done at its new Opelika plant.

GSF was founded in 1947 by Bill Moore. The business started as a small meat company, originally Golden State Meat Company, who provided products to businesses in the Los Angeles area. In the 1950s, GSF partnered with McDonalds Corp. and began its rise to fame. After 70 years in business, the company is one of the largest diversified suppliers to several industries, including the Quick Service Restaurant industry.

The Opelika location will be one of 50 multinational locations on five continents. A few of the company’s core businesses include: processing and distribution of liquid products, meat products, produce and dairy. GSF’s 7,000 worldwide associates help provide a variety of services for the entire supply chain spectrum.

The following core values, “Treat others like you want to be treated; Make the best product; Give the customer a fair deal; and Maintain the highest standards,” are not just the company’s mission, but the company’s way of doing business and creating change in the world. These will be at the center of operations at the new Opelika plant.

“We manage by our Creed and Values to help guide our decisions,” said Morgan. “All of the city leaders have been very helpful and we look forward to a continued strong relationship in the future.”

The plant is set to open within the next few months. Citizens can view open positions on GSF’s website, [www.goldenstatefoods.com](http://www.goldenstatefoods.com), under the careers tab. 





Our professionals have been *Returning Value* to our clients and community for over 60 years.

## How can we *Return Value* to you?

Our professionals have the experience and skill to handle the most complex business issues and strive to *Return Value* in everything we do.

Accounting & Outsourcing  
Audit & Assurance

Business Advisory  
Business Valuation

Estate & Trust Tax  
Family Office & Elder Care

Individual & Business Tax  
Industry Specialization

International Tax  
Wealth Management

Auburn | Opelika (334) 887-7022 | [www.machenmcchesney.com](http://www.machenmcchesney.com)



## Focus on what you do best— **GROWING YOUR BUSINESS.**

**Let us HANDLE THE REST.**

FocusPay Solutions brings focus to your business through cost-effective payroll, benefits and HR support:

- Automated Payroll Processing
- Employee Benefit Administration
- Retirement Plan Options
- HR Management Services

*FocusPay Solutions –  
Bringing Focus  
to Your Business*

### CONTACT US FOR A FREE QUOTE.

[www.focuspaysolutions.com](http://www.focuspaysolutions.com) • (334) 321-4226 • [info@focuspaysolutions.com](mailto:info@focuspaysolutions.com)

1820 East University Drive, Auburn, AL 36830





# TO DO:

## ☐ SAMPLE LOCALLY CRAFTED SPIRITS

*John Emerald Distilling Company, North Railroad Avenue, Opelika*  
Craft distillery featuring American Single Malt, Rum and Gin. Come visit our tasting room to sample our spirits and enjoy one of our fantastic Alabama craft cocktails.



## ☐ AUSOME AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

*Kreher Preserve & Nature Center, North College Street, Auburn*  
Program occurs periodically throughout the fall. Check the calendar for a full description of the many children's & adult's programs held year round at the KPNC!



## ☐ SCALE THE GREAT WALL OF CHEWACLA

*Chewacla State Park, South College Street, Auburn*  
Over 25 miles of Alabama's newest mountain biking trails wrap themselves around the last foothill of the Appalachian mountains. Enjoy trails, obstacles, and technical features for skills of every level.



## ☐ THROW A SCOOPY SHOT

*Opelika Sportsplex & Aquatic Center, Andrews Road, Opelika*  
The sportsplex is a "life enhancement center" featuring a disc golf course, swimming pool & splash park, full individual and group fitness facilities, and a soccer complex. Visit them online for a full calendar of classes, activities, and special events.



## ☐ SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE

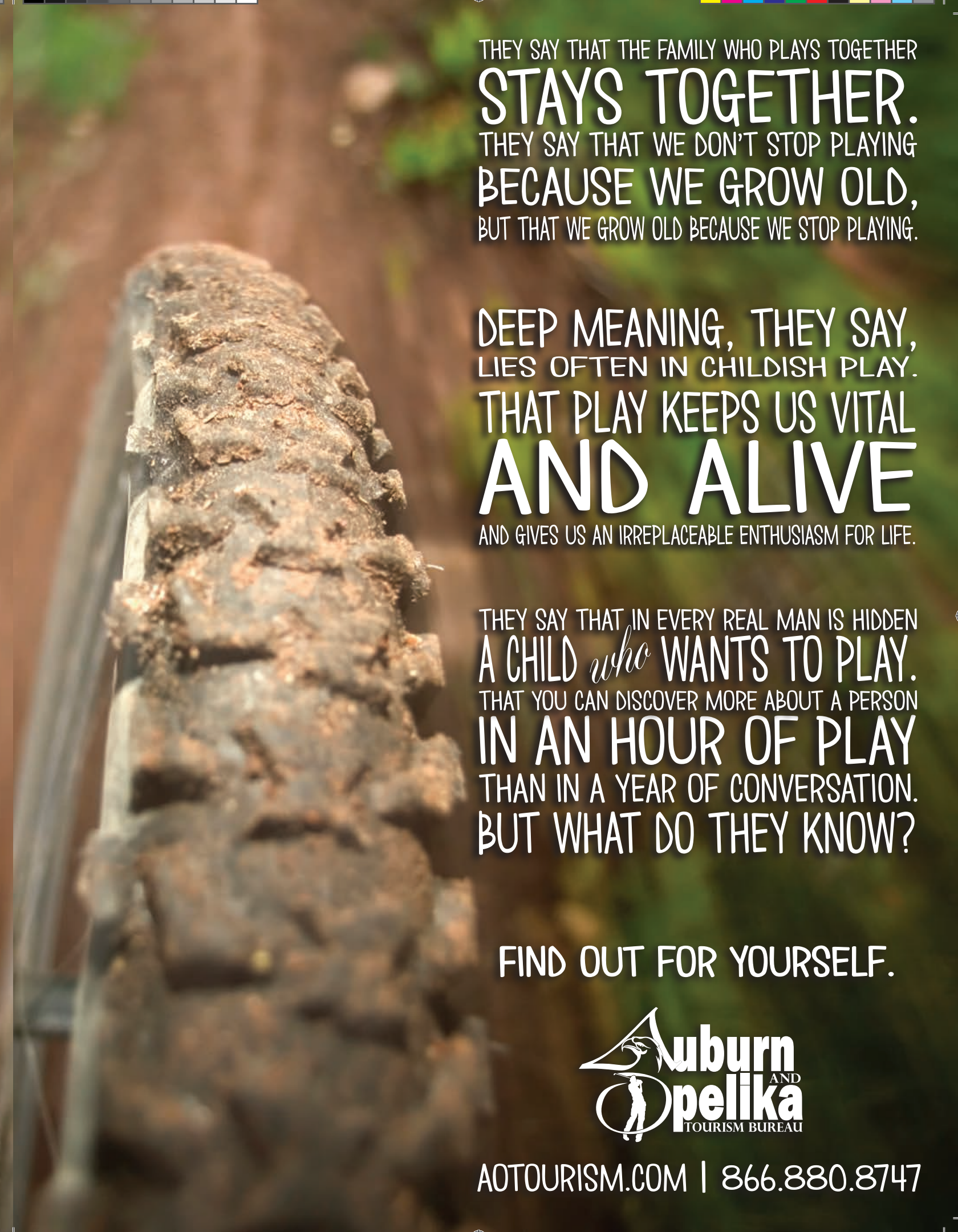
*Summer Farmers' Markets, Downtown Opelika & Agricultural Heritage Park, Auburn*  
From locally grown fruits and vegetables to honey, florals, and cheeses, the months of May to September are a bonanza of opportunity to live well while supporting our local growers. Our sister cities feature outdoor markets each week during the summer. You'll find them at the courthouse square every Tuesday in Opelika and at Auburn University's Agricultural Heritage Park every Thursday.

## ☐ KNOW YOUR AROMA FROM YOUR BOUQUET

*On the Tracks Food & Wine Festival, Downtown Opelika*  
Occurring twice each year in the spring and fall, *On the Tracks* is a celebration of food, wine, and life. Under the stars and along the charming streets of downtown Opelika where Railroad Avenue cuts through the heart of the historic district, you'll stroll the streets enjoying live music and discovering and sampling over 20 selections of diverse, seasonally relevant wines. Even if your "nose" knows no more than when you started, it's sure to be a delightful evening.

This information proudly provided by the Auburn-Opelika Tourism Bureau. Visit [AOTourism.com](http://AOTourism.com) for details on all of these activities and more, or get the free app for your Apple or Google device at *Visit Auburn Opelika*.





THEY SAY THAT THE FAMILY WHO PLAYS TOGETHER  
**STAYS TOGETHER.**  
THEY SAY THAT WE DON'T STOP PLAYING  
**BECAUSE WE GROW OLD,**  
BUT THAT WE GROW OLD BECAUSE WE STOP PLAYING.

DEEP MEANING, THEY SAY,  
LIES OFTEN IN CHILDISH PLAY.  
THAT PLAY KEEPS US VITAL  
**AND ALIVE**  
AND GIVES US AN IRREPLACEABLE ENTHUSIASM FOR LIFE.

THEY SAY THAT IN EVERY REAL MAN IS HIDDEN  
A CHILD *who* WANTS TO PLAY.  
THAT YOU CAN DISCOVER MORE ABOUT A PERSON  
**IN AN HOUR OF PLAY**  
THAN IN A YEAR OF CONVERSATION.  
BUT WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF.

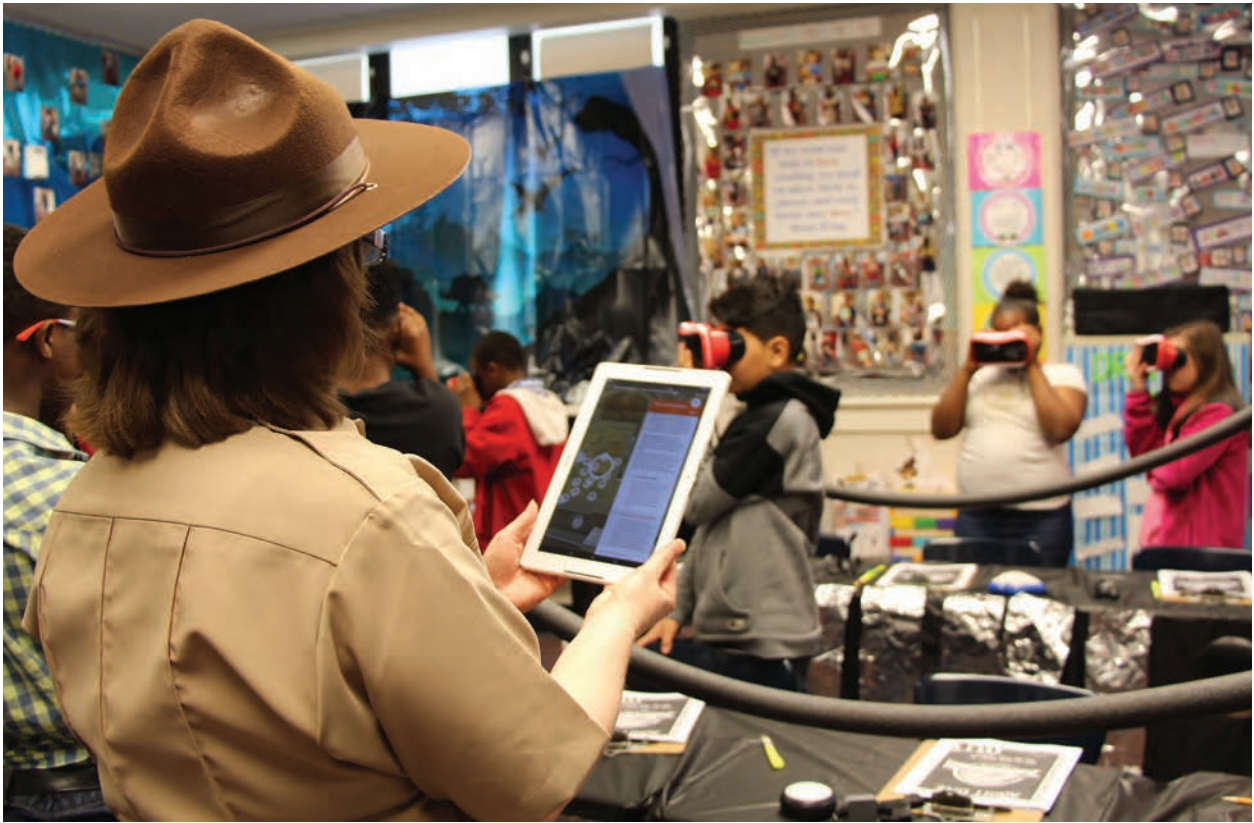


AOTOURISM.COM | 866.880.8747



## Virtual Reality: The New and Improved Class Field Trip

By: Emily Goodman




Imagine traveling to the International Space Station or visiting the coral reefs in the middle of a class lecture. Now, Opelika students are able to do just that from the safety of their own classroom.

This new form of learning comes from Google Expedition's new virtual reality kits. These kits provide students with a plastic headpiece and phone that give the illusion of being submerged in the virtual world. These kits are different from watching a movie or documentary because they fully immerse the viewer through full sensory experiences. The 360-degree experiences allow students to feel as though they are actually in another location.

This new technology is streamed directly from the teacher's hands using the Expedition application. This app allows the teacher to regulate each student's experience. Each Google Expedition location comes with a script and questions that help guide the teacher and students which enables them to better understand what they are experiencing. With over 500 experiences available to teachers, students are able to experience many different locations.

Stacy Royster, the district technology coordinator for Opelika City Schools, understands that students absorb information best when they have first hand experience on the subject matter. "By bringing the Google Expeditions into the classroom, we can take students on journeys that allow them to get those life experiences they may otherwise never have a chance of obtaining," said Royster. "An oceanography lesson is much easier to understand if you have visited the beach. So for all of our students that have not been able to go to the beach, we can take them there through the expeditions. It is a true game changer for our teachers."

After experiencing this technology firsthand, the school board purchased 30 kits for \$10,000. For now, they are distributing one kit in every school for a month and a half. This allows the board to evaluate the effectiveness of these new resources and determine whether there is a need to purchase more. The hope is that these kits will provide students with a better understanding of subject matter and increase their willingness to learn. 



# WE'RE TALKING TECHNOLOGY!

*Intermediate students participating in Project Lead The Way.*



## Certified Tech Savvy

When students graduate from Opelika City Schools they have been immersed in hands-on technology and problem solving from Kindergarten through 12th grade. In primary school, students will not have only built robots, but also programmed those robots to complete a desired task. As they move to middle school, students will complete projects with Computer Aided Drafting programs and 3-D printers. They will also discuss and experiment with alternative energy sources such as hydrogen cells, batteries, and solar power. Upon arrival at Opelika High School, students will have the opportunity to put their skills to the test and design an electric car to race. Or, they can learn more about computer programming and hardware while gaining industry recognized certifications in Fiber Optic Cabling, Autodesk, Microsoft, and many more. With these certifications and an Opelika City Schools diploma, students will be well equipped with the skills to enter college or the workforce.

*In Opelika City Schools, we're talking technology.*



*OHS students design and print objects on the 3D printer.*



**Opelika**  
CITY SCHOOLS

300 Simmons Street • Opelika, AL 36801

p: (334) 745-9700 • f: (334) 745-9706

[www.opelikaschools.org](http://www.opelikaschools.org)

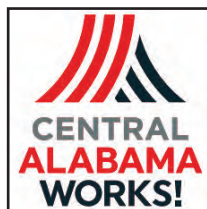




# Education

## Career Discovery: Preparing students for the future

By: Rachael Barnes



Many students begin dreaming about their future career when they are in middle school and junior high but many do not have the opportunity to experience the different industries they may end up in. Career Discovery is seeking to change that and has been doing so since their first Career Discovery Career Expo in 2015.

“Career Discovery is a fun, educational, hands-on experience for eighth grade students in Region 5,” said Janet Ormond, chair of the Career Discovery Career Expo committee. “The purpose is to help students make wise decisions about their future and to help them understand the value of education in preparing for careers that will lead to economic prosperity.”

Since 2015, the state restructured the regions and increased the number of participating counties from five to 13. Through hard work, the Career Discovery committee has increased the number of participating businesses as well.

“The number of clusters, which represent the leading industry sectors in the Region, has been the same since 2015,” said Ormond. “Since the expansion of the region, more industries are choosing to participate so that students from their counties will see careers available close to home.”

The Career Discovery Career Expo committee is made up of committed individuals who strive to educate students about the many different career paths available to them. The committee is broken up into Cluster Chairs, Subcommittee Chairs, Career Tech Directors and Career Coaches. The committee’s work is never done; they begin planning for the next year soon after the previous career expo is completed.

“Each position works to secure participation from industry in their cluster, from the community on their subcommittee, or schools to participate from their school systems,” said Ormond.

Cluster chairs contact Alabama industries and help secure businesses for the career expo. There are 11 clusters that are showcased at the career expo: agriculture; architecture and construction; communication and information technology; education and training; hospitality, tourism and recreation; manufacturing; automotive manufacturing; healthcare; public service; transportation, distribution and logistics; and energy and utilities.

The career expo has grown immensely since its start in 2015. This year the committee expects to have at least 5,000 students, teachers and volunteers from all 13 counties. The committee has also added a College and Career Night for high school juniors and seniors.

“The College and Career Night will be held on the first day of the event from 3 to 7 p.m.,” said Ormond. “This is an opportunity for high school juniors and seniors and their parents to visit with College Recruiters from throughout the state as well as visit all the interactive events of the Career Expo.”

The Career Discovery committee hopes to provide this valuable experience to every eighth grade student within the 13 counties of Region 5. Interested businesses and local community members can visit Career Discovery’s website, [www.career-discovery.org](http://www.career-discovery.org), to learn more about the event and how they can help.

“This event has been highly successful in the first two years,” said Ormond. “This year we anticipate an even greater number of students whose futures will be impacted by the experiences they have at the Career Discovery Career Expo. This is an opportunity for anyone who is concerned about the future of Alabama’s workforce to get involved in enriching the lives of young people who are entering the years of school where it is important for them to make wise decisions about careers and education.”







**SOUTHERN UNION**  
STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Through its three distinct academic divisions, Southern Union State Community College offers an educational emphasis on academic programs for transfer and technical and health sciences programs for specialized training. Keep Going toward your dreams at Southern Union!

**suscc.edu**

No matter your career or personal goals, Southern Union can help set you on the path to success.



**RealtySouth**<sup>TM</sup>  
A Berkshire Hathaway Affiliate

A market leader for homes listed and sold in Auburn and Opelika, Alabama for over three decades.

*"Caring people, exceptional service"*



(334) 826-0111 • [www.realtysouthauburn.com](http://www.realtysouthauburn.com)  
1725 East University Drive • Auburn, AL 36830

EVERY SEASON STARTS AT



**STORE MANAGER: STEVE DARCEY**

**PHONE: 334-749-8123**

**TIGER TOWN LOCATION**  
**2718 ENTERPRISE DR. • OPELIKA, AL 36801**

**[WWW.DICKSSPORTINGGOODS.COM](http://WWW.DICKSSPORTINGGOODS.COM)**



# Education

## The “20 Under 40” Program

The “20 Under 40” program, under the direction of the Opelika Chamber of Commerce, is a class comprised of 20 outstanding people under the age of 40 who live in Opelika, love Opelika and have a vested interest in shaping the direction of this city’s future. The class members are encouraged to think outside the box and are challenged to think of ways to make their city better and improve the quality of life. Below, a few members of the 2016-2017 class share their experiences of the program.



**Melissa Todd**

Being a part of the 2016-2017 Class of 20 Under 40 has been absolutely amazing. Having the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people has been great. Everyone I’ve met all have one thing in common; they all love the great City of Opelika and are sincerely concerned about its growth. I was able to peek

inside so many different avenues relating to the city; such as Opelika Power Services & Utilities, City Council, fire & police department operations, city school systems, and so much more. It’s exciting to see all of the plans that are underway to further expand the growth of Opelika. The one thing I really enjoyed was being introduced to the different community service outlets. Everyone has their own projects that are near and dear to their heart but being able to hear from different organizations on what they do for the community and how you could help is uplifting (organizations such as The Curtis House, Way 2 Serve Ministries, and United Way). It gives a new perspective on the fact there is still so much to do in our community and everyone could play a part in giving back. I salute Mayor Fuller and the Opelika Chamber of Commerce on creating such an eye opening program designed to inspire young leaders to do even more to help our city, create lifelong friendships, and networking that could be used within your professional career. It was truly a blessing to be a part of this great program.

By: Melissa Todd, Jonathan Savage and Carter DeShazo



**Jonathan Savage**


Whether you have lived here your whole life or are new to town, it doesn’t take long to realize that Opelika is a special place. I moved to Opelika in 2009 and naturally came to call this place home. What being a part of the 20 Under 40 program has shown me is that our city is full of people

that genuinely care about our community. Old or young, kids or no kids, single or married, this town has someone like you. The program was a great way to connect with the city on a more personal level and learn all of the parts and pieces that make it work. I highly recommend you apply if you are looking for a way to connect and see all that our town has to offer, from its heritage to its future!



**Carter DeShazo**

I thoroughly enjoyed getting to be a part of the 2016-2017 class of Opelika’s 20 Under 40 program. It was eye opening to see so many things firsthand that as a citizen could be easily taken for granted. Opelika is fortunate to have a strong infrastructure in its utilities, government,

first responders, and school system. In addition their solid foundation, Opelika is blessed with many other entities that make it flourish. From the non-profit organizations seeking to improve the lives of all citizens through various avenues, to the businesses who have invested in the area, some making life-saving equipment for people nationwide, Opelika is able to flourish. The people of Opelika are at the heart of what makes it such a great city. The people who have chosen to lead this community in whatever capacity they can truly make Opelika what I consider the gem of East Alabama. This program does a great job at showcasing the many aspects that make Opelika a great city and engaging its future leaders. 



# MORE POWER TO YOU

in one powerful tech package!



## TV • Phone • Internet • Power

Get the fastest, most reliable Video, Voice, and Data services in all of Alabama with our newest, most powerful package yet: The ONE.

**GOODBYE FRUSTRATION.** No more waiting to see who gets to use the computer, the tablet or the TV. With OPS, your entire family can watch TV Everywhere, stream Netflix and still have the speed you need for online gaming and social media.

Opelika Power Services. One powerful entertainment package delivered straight to you. Makes frustration a thing of the past. Call OPS today at 334-705-5170.



600 Fox Run Parkway Opelika, Alabama 36801 - 334.705.5170 - [opelikapower.com](http://opelikapower.com)



# Health & Safety

## New Cancer Center Expected in 2019

By: John Atkinson



In 1992, the population for Lee County was 91,572—that was 30,000 more people than in 1970. Fast forward to 2017 and we’re pushing 160,000 people—and consistently listed among the top three fastest growing counties in Alabama.

At East Alabama Medical Center, 1992 brought the opening of a Cancer Center. The hospital had dabbled in oncology services prior to then, but this building brought about a full commitment to the treatment of cancer here in east Alabama. Residents would no longer need to be inconvenienced with out of town travel while also enduring a battle with cancer.

It has been 25-plus years since then and the Cancer Center has outgrown its current space at EAMC. Thankfully, EAMC received approval from the Alabama State Health Planning and Development Agency in March 2017 to build a new cancer center for the residents of east central Alabama.

John Cabelka, M.D., radiation oncologist at EAMC uses a baseball analogy to describe the situation. “We got a great team—a major league team. However, we are playing in a minor league facility right now due to a lack of space.” Dr. Cabelka says that the equipment being used to treat patients

is more than adequate, but “the nice amenities that go along with patient comfort is what we are really looking forward to adding” in the new facility.

The new Cancer Center, which will be a state-of-the-art stand-alone facility, is expected to be located in the vicinity of The Pediatric Clinic off of Dunlop Drive (which is just north of EAMC). Early estimates have the new Cancer Center costing in the neighborhood of \$40 million.

To help meet that cost, EAMC’s Foundation will conduct a capital campaign in an effort to meet a collective goal of \$5 million in donations and pledges from the hospital’s employees and physicians, as well as the community.

Looking back at 1992, the community provided extensive support by collectively pledging \$1.5 million to a capital campaign in which the construction and equipment costs totaled \$3 million. That investment has served residents of Lee and surrounding counties for more than 25 years now. It’s a small price to pay to help our family, friends and neighbors should they need cancer care. 



Most Prestigious Golf Course in the Area • Voted Best Golf Course by Opelika-Auburn News Readers Choice



**18-Hole Golf Course**  
**Driving Range & Practice Greens**  
**Swimming Pool**  
**Tennis Courts**  
**Formal & Casual Dining**  
**Fitness Center**  
**Ballroom**  
**Private Rooms overlooking the  
Golf Course and the Pool**  
**Clubhouse**  
**Social Events**  
**Individual and Corporate  
Memberships**

**Contact Mary Isbell, Membership Marketing Director**

**(334) 749-3441 or [Mary@SaugahatcheeCountryClub.com](mailto:Mary@SaugahatcheeCountryClub.com)**



**Brad Litkenhous, D.M.D.**  
Cosmetic Dentistry, BOTOX/Juvederm



**Myles Wiggins, D.M.D.**  
Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

Auburn  
**DENTAL** *Spa*

*Where going to the Dentist is relaxing*

**Auburn Dental Spa  
invites you to join  
our growing practice**

**New patients  
who schedule  
a cleaning receive a  
FREE 30 minute  
Custom Facial  
or Massage from  
our spa, e'Leve'.**

**Dr. Brad Litkenhous**  
**334.821.2846**  
**[auburndentalspa.com](http://auburndentalspa.com)**

Auburn  
**DENTAL** *Spa*

1575 Professional Parkway  
Auburn, AL 36830

# Health & Safety

## Backing the Blue

**OPD Citizens Police Academy gives residents a first-hand experience with local law enforcement**

*By: Kate Asbury Larkin*



**A**s a new resident to Opelika, take some time to get unpacked, but once you are feeling settled in your new home, look into applying to attend the next session of the Opelika Police Department's (OPD) Citizens Police Academy. Held each spring, this eight-week course is an opportunity to learn the ins and outs of the OPD and hear and feel what they face every day. This interactive course gives participants a chance to get to know officers from every area of the OPD. Sessions cover patrol, traffic, investigations (detectives and narcotics), SWAT, K-9 officers and FATS (fire arms training simulator). There is no cost to take the course and upon completion, a graduation event is held. Those who complete the course have the opportunity to join the CPA alumni group.

"We want to give our citizens a chance to learn – to see – what police work is really like," said Capt. Bobby Kilgore, public information officer for the OPD. "As officers, we want to interact with the citizens of Opelika and we want them to experience the inner workings of the police department. We need the trust, confidence and support of the citizens in our community."

The unique and thought provoking course is aimed at adults ages 18 and up. Its goal is to educate the public on the various aspects of police work within the City of Opelika, including the various divisions, the training officers must go through and the challenges and dangers faced by Opelika's force on a daily

basis. Each week participants have the opportunity to listen and interact with officers and participate in simulated situations to get a first-hand glimpse of what life is like as a police officer in Opelika.

"The Citizens Police Academy is a tremendous opportunity for residents who are interested in learning more about our police department to do that in an intensive, face-to-face course," said Opelika Police Chief John McEachern. "They will learn about the duties and assignments and get real insight into law enforcement on a local level. Participants get some of the same training we do and participate in some of the same drills and simulations our officers take part in. They are also invited to sit with our dispatchers at the station and ride along with on-duty officers."

McEachern encourages newcomers to sign up for the class and get to know the OPD.

"People moving into Opelika are interested in schools, churches, medical care and crime rates," McEachern said. "The police academy gives them an invaluable experience and give us, as officers, the opportunity to meet and get to know new residents and for them to meet and get to know us, too."

For more information, visit [www.opelika-al.gov](http://www.opelika-al.gov). 







# Smart Mortgages. Brilliant Staff.

## Steven Soltau

Mortgage Originator  
334.321.2384  
ssoltau@myMAX.com  
NMLS #657097



**Get to MAX and we'll get you home.** At MAX, we know you want smart mortgages. So we have experienced Mortgage Originators who will not only help you choose the right loan option for you and your family, but will carefully walk you through the process every step of the way. **We offer Conventional, VA, FHA and AHFA Step Up loans, and will work hard to ensure your loan closing experience is as smooth and timely as possible.** Oh, and did we mention we have awesome rates! Mortgages with MAX... it doesn't get any smarter than that.

*Two Great Ways to Apply : Call us at 334.321.2384 or Online @ [myMAX.com/MAXmortgages](http://myMAX.com/MAXmortgages)*



©2017 MAX. Alabama properties only. Equal Housing Lender.  
For qualified borrowers. Certain restrictions apply. Rates subject to change.  
Federally insured by NCUA. NMLS #410580



## RehabWorks

Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy

Neuro Rehabilitation • Pediatric Rehabilitation • Industrial Rehabilitation  
Sports Medicine • Sports Performance • Lymphedema Therapy  
Orthopaedic Therapy • Vestibular Therapy

Opelika 528.1964 • Auburn 844.7616  
[rehabworks.eamc.org](http://rehabworks.eamc.org)

Follow us



A SERVICE OF **eamc**

INVITE US IN AND LET US SHOW YOU WHY

## WEICHERT works



Porter Properties

## 334.887.2070

[www.PorterProperties.com](http://www.PorterProperties.com)

472 N. Dean Road, Suite #200 • Auburn, AL 36830

/WeichertRealtorsPorterProperties  
@Weichert.Auburn.Opelika/AuburnHomes

#findahousemakeahometown





# Lifestyle

## The Rocky Brook Rocket: An Opelika Relic

By: Laura Leigh Chesser

The citizens of Opelika will tell you that the city is an “old railroad town”. While trains still mosey through town, the train that makes Opelika unique is a miniature train that resides at Monkey Park. The Rocky Brook Rocket has been giving rides to the citizens of Opelika and surrounding areas for 62 years, and is now slated to keep chugging for at least 62 more.


The Rocky Brook Rocket came to Opelika in the summer of 1955, before the municipal park received the eight spider monkeys that would eventually give the park its name. The Rocky Brook Rocket ran for almost 40 years with only minor setbacks, but in the mid 1990’s the train began to show its age. The train was given a facelift and received some mechanical upgrades that gave the train a few more years of life before the train parts became unavailable. In the mid 2000’s the Allen Hershell Company began to manufacture parts again for those few G-16 trains that were still operational. Through financial and service contributions the city was able to get the Rocket back on the tracks. However, the train was still experiencing issues.

“We would fix one thing, and then something else would break,” said Matt Battles, municipal area supervisor. “There was always something going on with the train.”

Laura Leigh Chesser, public relations coordinator, remembered a time when the city was getting ready for the Rocky Brook Rocket Reindeer Express, a Christmas event that features train rides through the decorated park, and the train quit working. Another employee had to take the battery out of his car and hook it up to the train to make it work for the event that night.

The City of Opelika wanted to keep the train running, but knew that quick fixes here and there would not give the longevity they longed for. In 2015 the train was sent to Oxnard, California, to receive a total renovation. This renovation included an engine overhaul, wiring, refurbishing the braking systems and a reconditioned body and paint job. While the train was being renovated the park received a brand new track along with a new train shed and depot. The train was completed in November of 2016 and made it back to Opelika at the end of the month.

“Parents who rode the train when they were children are now able to bring children of their own out to the park for a ride on the Rocket,” said Chesser. “It has brought back a lot of memories for those who grew up in Opelika, and it is creating memories for those children who ride it now.”

The Rocky Brook Rocket runs each summer on Saturdays and Sundays, on Tuesday evenings during the Summer Swing Concerts in the park and during the Rocky Brook Rocket Reindeer Express every winter. 







Aging Issues.  
Planning and Economic Development.  
Transit.

## There's a Service for That.

### Find it at the Lee-Russell Council of Governments.

Where do you go when you need transportation? Or when you aren't able to fix your own meals? Or if you're lost in a legal matter?

The Lee-Russell Council of Governments is where you can go. We make the connections and provide help making the right programs and services work for you and those you care for.

There are so many ways we can advocate for you that could make the difference in your quality of life or your future.

If you don't know who can help, chances are, the Lee-Russell Council of Governments can.

Call or visit us at [www.lrcog.com](http://www.lrcog.com) for more information. We're here to serve you.



### We Serve Businesses, Too.

Our Revolving Loan Program may be able to help your new or expanding business in Lee or Russell Co. with financing in conjunction with banks. And, our GIS resources can be a great help to many types of area companies. **Call us.**



**LEE-RUSSELL**  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

(334) 749-5264 • 2207 Gateway Drive • Opelika, AL 36801  
[www.lrcog.com](http://www.lrcog.com)



# Lifestyle

## The New 55+ Communities Expansion in Opelika

By: Emily Goodman



Voted by Forbes Magazine as one of the 25 Best Places to Retire in America, the city of Opelika provides plenty of housing and entertainment for both residents and visitors alike. The Village at Hamilton Lake and the Springs of Mill Lakes in Opelika have redefined private living communities for those 55 years of age and older.

The Village at Hamilton Lake is located within the Saugahatchee Country Club golf course, where residents can enjoy the comforts of up-to-date houses and have access to all country club amenities. Convenience is a major factor in choosing the right home. The Village at Hamilton Lake is located close to TigerTown, a 60+ shopping and dining area, and right outside historic Opelika. This living community is just minutes away from area attractions including Auburn University, Chewacla State Park, and beautiful Lake Martin in Dadeville.

Located just off Hwy 280, the second luxury residential community, The Springs of Mill Lakes focuses on an easy-living

lifestyle surrounded by nature. Residents have the option of 13 various floor plans that resemble English and French cottage style architecture, with Tudor influences.

Surrounded by two mature lakes, occupants can enjoy views of the nearby wildlife and nature sanctuary. Community clubhouse and amenities include a zero entry pool, full fitness center, walking and nature trails, and bass-stocked lake for fishing.

Although The Springs at Mill Lakes is located in a rural area, it is just minutes away from East Alabama Medical Center, which is a great resource in 55+ communities, TigerTown, and Auburn, Alabama.

Opelika takes pride in its communities and organizes year-round events for the residents as well as visitors to enjoy. Whether it's live music, plays, museums, sporting events, or shopping and dining, you won't be bored if you are looking for something to do. Opelika has it all. 





## HILYER & ASSOCIATES

**JEFFERY A. HILYER**

*ATTORNEY AT LAW*

*CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT*

**JIM LEVINS, EA, ABA   JACKIE H. MOON, CPA   ERIN K. ARRINGTON, CPA**

**614 2nd Ave, Opelika, AL 36801-5062   (334) 745-2564**



Perry G. Smith, Sr.  
CLU®, ChFC®



## Smith-Kastner Wealth Management

1800 Airport Road, Opelika, AL 36801

Ph: 334-749-5001

[www.smith-kastner.com](http://www.smith-kastner.com)



Nathan A. Kastner  
CFP®

*Insurance ~ Investing ~ Estate Planning*

Securities offered through Valmark Securities, Inc. member FINRA, SIPC. Investment advisory service offered through Valmark Advisers, Inc. an SEC registered investment advisor. 130 Springside Drive Suite 300, Akron, OH 44333-2431. Ph:800-765-5201

## Citizens Encouraged to “Love Where You Live”

By: Donna Williamson



"Love Where You Live" is a campaign created by Keep Opelika Beautiful (KOB) to encourage people to take pride in their community and to commemorate the organization's 20th anniversary. According to Tipi Miller, KOB director, this campaign will be about changing attitudes toward responsibility for litter, creating a beautiful environment and working together to make Opelika a more beautiful place to live, work and play.

"We see this as an opportunity to reduce litter in our city, to remind people to shop local, support local schools, leave parks cleaner than they found them, walk their neighborhoods and more," Miller said.

Because of the publicity through newspapers, digital billboards, social media and group presentations, Miller said that all of KOB's activities for at least the next year will be associated with the "Love Where You Live" campaign.


To get the public more involved, the campaign has been introduced into the schools through the new recycling program. "Every school has several recycling containers and every classroom has a recycling bin," said Miller. "We have worked with each school to develop the best procedure for recycling. While we started the "Love Where You Live" campaign, I would like to see other organizations and businesses jump on board."

According to Miller, the campaign has given KOB a platform to tell the community what successes the organization has had in the past 20 years and it allows KOB to see what the community desires and what people expect out of KOB. "For example, we

started the electronics recycling event in 2009 because residents and business owners wanted to recycle electronics responsibly and knew KOB could help," said Miller. "We no longer host a biannual electronics recycling event because the City of Opelika saw the value and the need in this community. Today, electronics can be taken to the Jeter Recycling Center six days a week for recycling."

Miller is confident that this campaign will help KOB increase public awareness and grow as an organization. "This organization is unlike other organizations because it deals with the entire city," she said. "Our job is not always pretty; there is nothing appealing about picking up litter."

Studies show the presence of litter affects the housing market, economic development, unity within neighborhoods, tourism, animal health, waterways and physical health. "Many times people do not see their behavior as having an impact on other people," said Miller. "To make our area a better place, we must force our personal space to extend to our neighborhood and community."

Businesses and citizens are encouraged to join KOB in promoting "Love Where You Live." For more information, contact Keep Opelika Beautiful at [tipi@keepopelikabeautiful.com](mailto:tipi@keepopelikabeautiful.com) or call (334) 749-4970. 





## Country and Commercial Properties

201 South 9th Street - Opelika, Alabama 36803

Land - Timber, Agricultural & Recreational and Commercial

### Jimmy Collins, Broker

jimmy@countryandcommercial.com

334-749-1221

800-828-8042

www.countryandcommercial.com • info@countryandcommercial.com

**5 > 1**

**The Ashley Smith Durham Team**  
Experience the power of a winning team. With our combined experience, versatility, and attention to detail, you'll receive the best service in the business.

**PRESTIGE PROPERTIES**

334.539.8817  
ashley@ashleysdurham.com  
OpelikaAuburnRealEstate.com  
2016 LCAR Realtor of the Year  
2016 OA News Reader's Choice Award



**Free Delivery  
Prescription Compounding  
Compliance Packaging  
Immunizations  
Real Customer Service**

512 2nd Avenue, Opelika, AL 36801  
334-749-3426 | www.bubbamedicinestore.com

A **true** community partner.  
Not just another bank.

Every year, Trustmark associates devote thousands of hours to volunteer projects in the markets we serve - from teaching financial education classes to providing resources to help local communities thrive. **Serving the community isn't just something we do. It defines who we are.** After all, we want to be more than just another bank. We want to be a community partner you can count on. To learn more about Trustmark, visit [trustmark.com](http://trustmark.com) today. People you trust. Advice that works.



## DEDICATED ATTORNEYS LICENSED IN ALABAMA AND GEORGIA

Committed to meeting your needs from Opelika-Auburn to Columbus, Georgia and all points in between



Zachary D. Alsobrook

Barbara Agricola



CRIMINAL DEFENSE



FAMILY LAW



PERSONAL INJURY



EMPLOYMENT LAW



ESTATE PLANNING  
PROBATE & TRUST

334.737.3718 | [www.alsolaw.com](http://www.alsolaw.com)



# Worship

## ***The Exodus Ranch Serves the Children God Brings to Its Door***

*By: Donna Williamson*



**T**he Exodus Ranch, founded by Joe and Shelley Tufts, is a non-profit charity that focuses on providing a home for local children in need. According to their mission statement, "The Exodus Ranch is a place for children to receive the love of a Christian family and to come to understand the unconditional, unwavering love of Jesus."

Shelley said the idea of The Exodus Ranch began because the Lord inspired them to help children in need. "We began asking friends to pray for us in God's direction for opening a home," said Shelley. "We were directed to the Frederick House riding past for a soccer game. We talked with the owners and it became possible for us to purchase the property."


Joe and Shelley purchased the two-story house from the Price family who had moved the house from land belonging to Trinity United Methodist Church to their Lake Condry property on Andrews' Road.

"We purchased the property in faith, knowing that God would provide for all of our needs in His timing," Shelley said. "There have been many times that we have looked to the conventional direction of loans to complete work, but felt the Lord saying, 'No.' We believe if we stand in faith, He will bring all things to our door."

Shelley's upbringing acquainted her with homes like The Exodus Ranch. Until the age of 11, she lived in Columbus, Mississippi where children from the Palmer Home for Children attended

her family's church. "Some of the children would often stay with my family, going on vacations, eating Sunday meals and even spending the Christmas holidays," Shelley said. "There were other times when my sister and I would stay with the Palmer Home children, being babysat by the older girls and eating meals in their mess hall."

The Tufts have five children of their own and the name for the home actually came from one of their older daughters. "She felt it should be named The Exodus Ranch because it is in Exodus where the Lord led the children of Israel out of slavery and into the Promised Land," Shelley said. "My daughter felt that was what God was going to do for every child that came to The Exodus Ranch."

The Exodus Ranch is a private home for children who become part of the Tufts' family. It survives by the generous donations that people feel led to give. "It is our desire to serve the Lord in caring for the children God brings to our door," Joe said. 







# RUTHELISE THOMPSON, MCC

CRUISE AND TRAVEL ADVISOR

River and Ocean Cruises • Escorted, Hosted and Independent Tours  
All-inclusive Resorts and Hotels • Concierge Level Service • No Travel Advisor Fees

**ExclusiveCruisePlanners.com**

PHONE: 863.644.1014 / 863.660.6434 EMAIL: rethompson@cruiseplanners.com

Access hours: 8:30 am – 9:00 pm | Office hours: By appointment

5015 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE SUITE 404 LAKELAND, FL 33813

@ExclusiveCrPl ExclusiveCruisePlanners

FST # ST39068 / CST # 2034468-50



INDEPENDENTLY OWNED & OPERATED



Implants  
Extractions  
I.V. Sedation  
Teeth Whitening  
Invisalign  
Crowns and Bridges  
Wisdom Tooth Extraction

Root Canals  
TMJ Therapy  
Dentures  
In-House Lab  
Preventive Care  
Periodontal Therapy



Crawford A. Tatum, Jr. D.M.D.  
Christina H. Cox, D.M.D.

**745-6393**

614 Avenue A  
Opelika, AL

[www.tatum3dental.com](http://www.tatum3dental.com)

Serving East Alabama & West Georgia For Three Generations





**We have a simple formula...**  
*"Better ideas create better results."*  
**Period.**

**McNutt & Company Creative Solutions, LLC** has built lasting relationships with our clients by providing exceptional advertising and marketing solutions for their businesses and being accountable in every aspect of our work. Through strategic guidance, creative talent and a proven methodology, we take ideas from concept to application and from brand to market. Harnessing the power of unconventional thinking, we adapt our ideas to reach your target market with maximum results at minimum cost. Combining a full spectrum of advertising, marketing and public relations solutions, we help clients tell their stories and bring their business success.

**We are focused. We are experienced. We are "Leadership by Creativity™"**

**mcnutt&company**  
 creative solutions / concept arts

Located in Auburn University's Research Park

570 DeVall Drive, Suite 303 / auburn university, alabama 36832 / office: 334.501.4807 / mobile: 334.707.1109 / john@leadershipbycreativity.com

[www.leadershipbycreativity.com](http://www.leadershipbycreativity.com)



# NATIONAL VILLAGE

Happiness awaits just outside Auburn University. Hidden away in the world-class golf courses at RTJ Grand National, the community of National Village offers everything you'll need for everyday living. Reside in award-winning craftsman-style cottages, explore miles of picturesque nature trails, and enjoy multiple fishing and boating options on our lakes. Dive into the resort pools and serve up some fun at the tennis and pickle ball complex. Golfers will love the three courses at Grand National on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. Homes from the high \$200,000's to over \$500,000 in three distinctive neighborhoods.

FURNISHED MODELS OPEN DAILY  
FROM *the* \$200's to OVER \$500,000

[nationalvillage.com](http://nationalvillage.com)  
(334) 749-8165



**NEW DESIGNS LOCATED ON THE GRAND NATIONAL GOLF COURSE**

# Advertising Partner Profiles



**Advantage Chiropractic Clinic**  
(334) 821-2552  
[www.AdvantageChiropracticClinic.com](http://www.AdvantageChiropracticClinic.com)  
See Ad pg. 15



**Alsobrook & Agricola**  
(334) 737-3718  
[www.alsolaw.com](http://www.alsolaw.com)  
See Ad pg. 43



**Auburn-Opelika Tourism**  
(334) 887-8747  
[www.aotourism.com](http://www.aotourism.com)  
See Ads pgs. 26-27



**Auburn Bank**  
(334) 742-9100  
[www.auburnbank.com](http://www.auburnbank.com)  
See Ad Inside Front Cover



**Auburn Cardiovascular, P.C.**  
(334) 821-1219  
[www.auburncv.com](http://www.auburncv.com)  
See Ad pg. 17



**Auburn Dental Spa**  
(334) 821-2846  
[www.auburndentalspa.com](http://www.auburndentalspa.com)  
See Ad pg. 35



**Auburn Pediatric Dentistry**  
(334) 826-6651  
[www.auburnpediatricdentistry.com](http://www.auburnpediatricdentistry.com)  
See Ad pg. 21



**AU Regional Airport**  
(334) 844-4597  
[www.auoairport.com](http://www.auoairport.com)  
See Ad pg. 15



**BancorpSouth**  
(334) 749-2041  
[www.bancorpsouth.com](http://www.bancorpsouth.com)  
See Ad pg. 17



**Bubba's Medicine Shop**  
(334) 749-3426  
[www.bubbasonline.com](http://www.bubbasonline.com)  
See Ad pg. 43



**Burger Fi**  
[www.burgerfi.com](http://www.burgerfi.com)  
See Ad pg. 19



**Century 21 Koullas Realty**  
(334) 887-2000  
[www.century21koullasrealty.com](http://www.century21koullasrealty.com)  
See Ad pg. 15



**Country and Commercial Properties**  
(334) 749-1221  
[www.countryandcommercial.com](http://www.countryandcommercial.com)  
See Ad pg. 43



**Cruise Planners**  
(844) 722-6342  
[www.ExclusiveCruisePlanners.com](http://www.ExclusiveCruisePlanners.com)  
See Ad pg. 45



**Dick's Sporting Goods**  
(334) 749-8123  
[www.dickssportinggoods.com](http://www.dickssportinggoods.com)  
See Ad pg. 31



**EAMC - Rehab Works**  
(334) 528-1964  
[rehabworks.eamc.org](http://rehabworks.eamc.org)  
See Ad pg. 37



**East Alabama Pediatric Dentistry**  
(334) 321-0780  
[www.gatorgrins.com](http://www.gatorgrins.com)  
See Ad pg. 15



**Focus Pay**  
(334) 321-4226  
[www.focuspaysolutions.com](http://www.focuspaysolutions.com)  
See Ad pg. 25



**Hilyer & Associates**  
(334) 745-2564  
[www.hilyer CPA.com](http://www.hilyer CPA.com)  
See Ad pg. 41



**J. Smith Lanier & Company**  
(334) 749-3401  
[www.jsmithlanier.com](http://www.jsmithlanier.com)  
See Ad pg. 21



**Jackson Thornton**  
(334) 749-8191  
[www.jacksonthornton.com](http://www.jacksonthornton.com)  
See Ad pg. 19



**Lee-Russell Council of Governments**  
(334) 749-5264  
[www.lrcog.com](http://www.lrcog.com)  
See Ad pg. 39

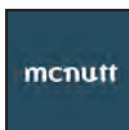


**Machen, McChesney, LLP**  
(334) 887-7022 • (334) 364-0906  
[www.machenmcchesney.com](http://www.machenmcchesney.com)  
See Ad pg. 25



**Max Credit Union**  
(334) 260-2600  
[www.mymax.com](http://www.mymax.com)  
See Ad pg. 37





**McNutt & Company, LLC**  
 (334) 501-4807  
[www.leadershipbycreativity.com](http://www.leadershipbycreativity.com)  
 See Ad pg. 46



**National Village**  
 (334) 749-8165  
[www.nationalvillage.com](http://www.nationalvillage.com)  
 See Ad pg. 47



**City of Opelika**  
 (334) 705-5150  
[www.opelika.org](http://www.opelika.org)  
 See Ad Inside Back Cover



**Opelika City Schools**  
 (334) 745-9700  
[www.opelikaschools.org](http://www.opelikaschools.org)  
 See Ad pg. 29



**Opelika Power Services**  
 (334) 705-5170  
[www.opelika.org](http://www.opelika.org)  
 See Ad pg. 33



**Opelika Utilities**  
 (334) 705-5500  
[www.owwb.com](http://www.owwb.com)  
 See Ad Back Cover



**Prestige Properties – Ashley Durham**  
 (334) 887-5274  
[www.opelikaauburnrealestate.com](http://www.opelikaauburnrealestate.com)  
 See Ad pg. 43



**RealtySouth**  
 (334) 826-0111  
[www.realtysouthauburn.com](http://www.realtysouthauburn.com)  
 See Ad pg. 31



**Saugahatchee Country Club**  
 (334) 749-3441  
[www.saugahatcheecountryclub.com](http://www.saugahatcheecountryclub.com)  
 See Ad pg. 35



**Scott Bridge Company**  
 (334) 749-5045  
[www.scottbridge.com](http://www.scottbridge.com)  
 See Ad pg. 48



**Smith-Kastner Wealth Management**  
 (334) 749-5001  
[www.smith-kastner.com](http://www.smith-kastner.com)  
 See Ad pg. 41



**Southern Union Community College**  
 (334) 745-6437  
[www.suscc.edu](http://www.suscc.edu)  
 See Ad pg. 31



**Tatum & Cox**  
 (334) 745-6393  
[www.tatum3dental.com](http://www.tatum3dental.com)  
 See Ad pg. 45



**TownePlace Suites**  
 334-466-8390  
[marriott.com/CSGAU](http://marriott.com/CSGAU)  
 See Ad pg. 13



**Trustmark**  
 (334) 745-2113  
[www.trustmark.com](http://www.trustmark.com)  
 See Ad pg. 43



**Weichert Realtors - Porter Properties**  
 (334) 887-2070  
[www.porterproperties.com](http://www.porterproperties.com)  
 See Ad pg. 37



# *Scott Bridge* COMPANY, INC.

**CONSTRUCTORS/ENGINEERS  
SINCE 1933**

**BRIDGING THE SOUTHEAST  
INVESTING IN OPELIKA**

**2641 INTERSTATE DRIVE  
OPELIKA, ALABAMA 36804  
334-749-5045  
WWW.SCOTTBRIDGE.COM**





# LOVE YOUR CITY. LIVE YOUR CITY.

*Opelika, Alabama*

AWESOME RETAIL  
GREAT FOOD CHOICES  
NIGHTLIFE & FUN  
ENTERTAINMENT  
PGA GOLF  
TOURNAMENT LOCATION



100% FIBER **GIG CITY**  
TOP CUSTOMER SERVICE  
**FASTEST INTERNET**  
BEST TV CHOICE IN TOWN  
CLEAREST PHONES



**DIVERSE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**  
**WORKFORCE READY**

HISTORY OF GROWTH  
ATTENTION TO THE **ARTS**  
93% GRADUATION RATE  
QUALITY TEACHERS  
**SUPERB ATHLETICS**  
TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN  
LEARNING



**FUN-FILLED PARKS,**  
RECREATION & **AQUATICS**  
FAMILY-FRIENDLY **CONCERTS**  
COMPETITIVE SPORTS  
NEWLY RENOVATED **LIBRARY**



204 South Seventh Street • Opelika, Alabama 36803 • [www.opelika.org](http://www.opelika.org)



2017 BRAND CHAMBER LIFESTYLE





# Clean, Plentiful Water. How Much Fun Is That?

Abundant water is one of the keys to attracting industry, new development and businesses to Opelika. But equally important, it's at the heart of a city where families can enjoy their water resources without the worry of running dry. At Opelika Utilities, we're all over that!



## OPELIKA UTILITIES

Clean, Plentiful Water.

4055 Water Street • Opelika, AL • 334.705.5500 • [www.owwb.com](http://www.owwb.com) • Follow us on Twitter: @OpelikaWater 