

Business Journal

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SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK

Companies are figuring out their policies for employees.

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Social media raises questions in the workplace

■ **Businesses vary on their employee guidelines for Facebook and other sites.**

BY CARLIE KOLLATH
Business Journal

Companies have a love-hate relationship with technology when it comes in the form of social media.

They love sites like Facebook and Twitter for getting information out to their customers, but they don't like the distraction they pose for their employees.

Across the country, companies are figuring out how to deal with social media in the office. Some have blocked access to the sites on work computers, but that doesn't stop employees who have Internet access on their mobile devices.

"We understand social networking is a part of our employees' daily lives," said Rodger Brown, vice president of human resources at Tupelo-based North Mississippi Health Services. "But it's almost like people are addicted to being on there all the time. It kind of takes over their daily lives and it cuts down on work time."

People spend about six hours each week engaged in social media, according to a Toolbox.com study. It's a 35 percent increase from the previous survey, and the Society for Human Resource Management is cautioning its members to address social media usage now.

Many companies, including NMHS, are turning to social media policies to specifically

spell out what is allowed. Yet, the Toolbox.com global survey found that more than half of businesses worldwide have no social media policy or are unsure if they do.

NMHS published its social media policy in July 2007 and frequently updates it. Brown said the system's 6,300 employees have the policy and are held accountable for their actions online.

Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Wikipedia and various blogs – anything not related to work – are blocked on NMHS computers. Brown said employees are allowed to access the sites via their mobile devices during their breaks and meal times.

Regulated industries

But when they do log on, the employees have guidelines.

"Being in health care, we do not allow them to put anything up about a patient," he said. "We view that as violating the patient's confidentiality. ... It's easy for a nurse to say, 'I had a difficult patient last night.'"

Social media updates like that are not allowed, Brown said. Plus, NHMS considers divulging patient information, whether online or in person, as a legitimate reason for firing an employee.

NHMS also asks that employees don't involve the organization in their personal



Linked in
myspace

sites, and they are discouraged from posting negative views of their employer.

Brown said people have violated the social media policy and employees have been fired for their infractions.

Renasant Bank is in a similar situation to NMHS. Social media sites are blocked on work computers, but employees have access on their mobile devices.

Employees aren't allowed to access the sites during work hours, said John Oxford, Renasant's director of external affairs. The bank has made exceptions for people in marketing and public relations who need to be able to use the sites during the day for work purposes.

Oxford said Renasant is strict about prohibiting social media usage during the day because it wants to keep client information confidential and wants its employees to be productive.

"If people are logged on to

Social media factoids

- Employees are spending, on average, more than 4.5 hours a day on e-mail and social media combined.
- 39 percent of survey respondents said their use of social media at work is more for personal than work reasons vs. nearly 33 percent who use it more for work than personal reasons.
- A smaller percentage (21.4 percent) said their social media use is completely for personal reasons, while 6.8 percent use it only for work.
- E-mail usage during work outweighs social media 3-to-1. Twitter has little traction except among Generation Y.
- Social media use is on the rise – 58.5 percent check Facebook regularly, and nearly 50 percent check LinkedIn regularly. About 23 percent check Twitter, and 22 percent read blogs.
- Generation Y spends an average of 1.8 hours per day on social media; Generation X, 1.2 hours; Baby Boomers, 1 hour; and Traditionalists (older Americans), 0.59 hours.
- Employees at companies with fewer than 1,000 workers seem to have adopted social media more than those at large companies.

– Society for Human Resource Management

Facebook all day, they probably aren't getting a lot of work done," he said. "We encourage people to engage in relationships through social media but we work in an industry that's heavily regulated so you have to find a balance."

Consider the content

The bank released its social media policy in 2009 to help keep employees out of social media trouble in their free time.

"Please keep in mind that our overall goal is simple: to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects our reputation and, of course, follows the letter and spirit of the law," Renasant's social media policy says.

The policy has 10 guidelines for employees. It calls for employees to be transparent online, posting comments under their real names and stating

Turn to **SOCIAL MEDIA** on Page 7




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Tomorrow's jobs need well-educated workers

So what do we want to be when we grow up?

The question is lobbed at us early, almost from the time we take our first breath. And some of us, near the midpoint of our lives, still are trying to figure out the answer.

Hoping for a multimillion-dollar winning lottery ticket or hitting the jackpot at a casino is not the ideal career-planning method.

Most of us need jobs to pay for food, clothing and shelter, not to mention cars, phones and big-screen TVs.

But what are those jobs that we're looking to land, the jobs we hope will be around in 10, 15, 20 years when our kids are ready to hit the job market?

As we've seen and experienced during the past three years, few jobs are recession-proof.

Whatever we want to become, and whatever our children want to become, largely depends on the education we receive – and the education we pursue.

"Education," said 19th-century entrepreneur and philanthropist George Peabody, "is a debt due from present to future generations."

In Northeast Mississippi, we have



**Dennis
SEID**

A college education guarantees neither a job nor success, but it certainly is an advantage. Getting a high school diploma also is far more advantageous than not having one.

We have to get out of the cycle of thinking a job will exist always in a particular company or industry because our parents or grandparents had jobs.

put a great emphasis on educational attainment for our students. While the message hasn't fallen on

deaf ears, it's clear we still have a long way to go.

No need to go over the grim statistics – we still have too many not finishing high school, too many not going to college, too many not finishing college.

If we fail to educate our children, then we fail them. But it's not a one-way street. Responsibility lies not only with our education system, but with us, as parents and guardians. We have to provide that spark, that motivation to get them to school, and to convince them that education is important – and that life-long learning is important.

We're blessed to have a strong manufacturing presence in our region, but it hasn't been immune to economic cycles. The furniture industry knows this better than any other.

The good news is that some furniture companies are rebounding and adding jobs. But thousands of furniture-related jobs still have been shed in the past decade.

Manufacturing will continue to be a pillar of the economy with Toyota and its suppliers coming online.

But even the furniture industry and the automotive industry won't provide all the jobs the people of our region need. Neither will the service industry.

Pursuing high-tech companies is important because they provide high-paying jobs. Think of the work being done at General Atomics in Tupelo,

SemiSouth Laboratories in Starkville, FNC Inc. in Oxford, to name a few.

These are companies – the last two homegrown – that we want to attract. But we need more of them, and the only way to attract more is to provide them with a well-educated work force.

Nicholas Murray Butler, an educator and former Columbia University president, who died in 1947, said, "America is the best half-educated country in the world."

Unfortunately, that's still the case more than a half-century later.

A college education guarantees neither a job nor success, but it certainly is an advantage. Getting a high school diploma also is far more advantageous than not having one.

We have to get out of the cycle of thinking a job will exist always in a particular company or industry because our parents or grandparents had jobs.

Education begins early and should never end. If we want to remain an economically vibrant region, we have to stay focused on keeping our people, young and old, educated and trained.

Contact **Dennis Seid** at (662) 678-1578 or dennis.seid@journalinc.com.



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Despite rhetoric, net will never be neutral

Consider two nations: One has thousands of miles of oceanic coastline, petroleum, minerals (including gold, silver, and copper), plentiful land for agriculture and livestock and abundant forests. The other has coastline, but not much else. Which nation is the more prosperous? Conventional wisdom says that the first nation must be the richer.

To some people, the issue of net neutrality is equally as obvious. Which would be better – an Internet that observes net neutrality or an Internet that does not? Conventional wisdom tells us that net neutrality is the better choice.

According to savetheinternet.com, “Net neutrality means that Internet service providers may not discriminate between different kinds of content and applications online. It guarantees a level playing field for all websites and Internet technologies... with Net Neutrality, the network’s only job is to move data – not to choose which data to privilege with higher quality service.”

But net neutrality is an idea that is doomed to fail, and here are some of



Ted
HOLT

TECHTALK

the reasons:
 ■ Some applications are more important than others. Take for example the growing field of telemedicine, which permits a doctor at one location (e.g. the Mayo Clinic) to consult and even participate-through the manipulation of robotic arms-in an operation that is taking place somewhere else (e.g. a small-town hospital). I argue that a telemedicine conference deserves priority over a teenager who is playing an online game.

■ Some applications require more resources than others. Some people

According to savetheinternet.com, “Net neutrality means that Internet service providers may not discriminate between different kinds of content and applications online. It guarantees a level playing field for all websites and Internet technologies... with Net Neutrality, the network’s only job is to move data – not to choose which data to privilege with higher quality service.”

would say that Voice over IP, or VoIP, which permits people to make telephone calls over the Internet, is one of the best things to ever happen to the Internet. But VoIP requires more bandwidth than what is required for everyday web-surfing. Of course, VoIP customers pay for the privilege.

■ Internet service providers must inspect traffic in order for the Internet to remain viable. For example, about nine of 10 emails are spam. By inspecting traffic, ISP’s can stop spam messages rather than pass them along. This reduces the traffic on the Internet, which benefits the rest of us. These facts won’t change, even if

net neutrality becomes law. Net neutrality or not, the traffic of some users will have priority over the traffic of others. What will change is the way that priority is granted. Current users of the Internet pay extra for better or additional service, similar to the way that first-class airline passengers pay more than those who fly coach. Under net neutrality, the lobbyists will come out in full force. Priority will be granted politically. Whatever chance the little guy has now, he’ll have even less in that environment.

The irony is that proponents of net neutrality, if they have their way, will see the Internet become the very thing they are trying to get rid of.

Net neutrality sounds good because it sounds fair to everybody. Conventional wisdom says that net neutrality is the best policy. But conventional wisdom can be wrong. After all, does anybody believe that Mexico is more prosperous than Japan?

Ted Holt is president of BINaRE, a Tupelo-based organization of professionals interested in the application of technology to the workplace. BINaRE welcomes new members. For more information, visit www.binare.org.

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Investors drawn to exploding social media

BY HANAH CHO
The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE – For every powerhouse like Google, there are dozens of Internet companies that flop. Still, a decade after the dot-com bubble that burst, there is no shortage of investors trying to get a piece of the next online blockbuster.

Lately, much of the hype has centered on social media.

While many of the big names – Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter – may sell stock publicly through IPOs one day, they have been raising capital by selling stakes to institutional investors, venture capitalists and wealthy investors. Mom-and-pop investors – and users of social media – also are angling for ways to invest in these private companies.

In January, California investment company NeXt BDC Capital Corp. started a closed-end mutual fund to buy shares in fast-growing private tech startups, which could include Facebook and other social media. That would give the public, who can buy closed-end shares that are traded like stocks, a chance to get in on the action.

And some mutual funds are reporting stakes in social media, though those investments are often only a frac-

tion of a fund’s portfolio. Baltimore’s T. Rowe Price Group was one of several companies reportedly in talks to buy stakes in online deal site Groupon. T. Rowe Price is not commenting, but after avoiding the tech fads during the Internet bubble, the company has dabbled in the social media space through several of its funds.

But while early investing can mean the potential payoff is greater, so are the risks.

“The question for investors is: When you look at some of the private companies out there, are they the next Google or not?” said Jordan Rohan, an Internet analyst at Stifel Nicolaus. “There’s no easy answer to that.”

With little public information about the financial performance of social media, it’s difficult to put a value on these private companies and many other tech startups, analysts said. And questions remain about whether the hot startups can turn a profit and sustain it.

“One of the major issues – this goes back to the dot-com crisis and the bubble effect – is everything is based on an estimation,” said Roger Staiger, an adjunct professor of finance at Johns

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University research parks envisioned as economic engines

■ **MSU's Cochran Park opened in 1989 and has nearly filled its initial 220-acre site; Ole Miss' Insight Park is scheduled to open its first building in early fall.**

BY ERROL CASTENS

Business Journal

Questions lead to concepts, concepts lead to plans, plans lead to products, products lead to jobs and profits.

Stanford University began building on such a realization in 1951, creating a research park that has played a major role in the formation of "Silicon Valley" as the world's computer-industry capital. North Carolina's Research Triangle Park has partnered with three universities since its 1961 founding and now claims more than 170 high-tech companies and some 42,000 full-time resulting jobs.

Such successes fuel the push by Northeast Mississippi's two doctorate-granting universities to create and grow their own research parks and to harness the combined assets of academia and business to bring ideas to the real-world marketplace.

Mississippi State University created the Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park in 1989 on a 272-acre site on the north side of the university's Starkville campus. In its 21-year life, all but one lot of the 220-acre Phase I property has been built out. The latest addition, a multi-tenant building that serves as the new research park headquarters, opened Dec. 1, and a groundbreaking for the park's ninth building is tentatively scheduled for March.

"With MSU being a top 100 research university in the country, the research park gives the university a chance to benefit from business through sponsored research," said Marc McGee, director of the park and the MSU Re-



COURTESY

MSU's latest research park building opened in December.

search and Technology Corp.

Developing businesses using MSU-generated research also provides a ready pool of high-tech jobs that employ technology already familiar to the university's students.

"Our graduates can stay in the state and be close to their alma mater," McGee said. "Currently we have over 1,500 people who work at our research park."

Enabling a blending of scholarship and entrepreneurship gives MSU another incentive for star faculty members. While some MSU-developed technology – grass seed, for instance – is licensed at fee to other companies, the ability to bring their own research to market is an enticement for some academics.

"You do have some faculty who are more aggressive in wanting to develop their research in the marketplace," McGee said.

One example of such success is Cochran Research Park tenant Semi-South, whose semiconductor products are used in solar and wind inverters, high-efficiency power supplies and other applications within the "green energy" sector. Another is Camgian, which applies microelectronic technology to medical and military purposes, among others.

Other tenants at Cochran Research Park include the Tennessee Valley Authority's customer service center; MSU centers on advanced vehicle systems, social science research, clean energy and high-performance computing; and

several other high-tech companies.

The research park and other university resources also are attractions for companies that eventually outgrow on-campus facilities.

"We've been involved in the recruitment of American Eurocopter, Stark Aviation and Aurora Flight Sciences," McGee said. "All three of those at one time were located in our Raspet Flight Research Center."

Ole Miss: Getting on board

At the University of Mississippi, the effort to establish a research park is much younger. After nearly a decade of planning and securing funding, Ole Miss broke ground in June on the first building of its Insight Park research campus.

Slated to open no later than early October, the high-tech, energy-efficient structure is being built just north of state Highway 6 and west of Coliseum Drive. It will include a 12,000-square-foot business incubator.

The co-location of business on the university campus is advantageous to both sides.

"It would help grow the university's research but would also provide business opportunities to the tenants," said Executive Director Sydney Spain, a Booneville native who previously helped develop and lead a research park at Auburn University. "We will have all the services any business incubator would have, but we can also offer advice, oversight of their business

plan, mentors and direction."

Through a joint effort with Harvard Law School, the University of Mississippi's School of Law can provide transactional legal services to some low-capital entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations. The Office of Technology Management can help handle licensing of university-owned intellectual property, and both the Small Business Development Center and students in the School of Business' MBA program will add to the services.

"We anticipate also having assistance from other university colleges and schools – the School of Engineering, the Center for Manufacturing Excellence and the physics department, for instance," Spain said. "Typically people in research have need of resources that our faculty can provide."

Several prospective tenants from Mississippi and other states have already identified themselves, Spain said.

"We also have some good prospects internal to the university," he said. "We have some others who want to see the space before they make a commitment."

As soon as the first building begins to pay for itself, Insight Park's master plan calls for building a bridge across Highway 6 to reach a 550-acre tract on the other side. A second building could be on the north side if necessary, but that is not the preferred direction.

"If we receive the funds, our next step will be to the south parcel," Spain said. "We'll put up a bridge and a building at the same time."

Ole Miss Chancellor Dan Jones summed up the university's vision for Insight Park at its groundbreaking last year.

"We are trying to move ideas into practical application," he said. "We're trying to make the world a better place."

Contact Daily Journal Oxford Bureau reporter **Errol Castens** at (662) 281-1069 or errol.castens@journalinc.com.



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Social media

Continued from Page 2

their relationship to Renasant if they post about the bank or its competitors.

It reiterates that employees protect Renasant's confidential information and its customers.

"What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully," the policy warns. "Google has a long memory."

BancorpSouth also has a social media policy that encourages proper social etiquette.

Please keep in mind that our overall goal is simple: to participate on-line in a respectful, relevant way that protects our reputation and, of course, follows the letter and spirit of the law."

Renasant Bank's social media policy

BancorpSouth, according to corporate communications VP Chuck McIntosh, expects employees to act professionally and ethically at all times when dealing with social media.

The Mall at Barnes Crossing finds itself in a different situation from the

banking and health care worlds.

The mall office – the developing and leasing side, not any of the individual stores – maintains an active Facebook page for the public.

"We do it a bunch because we're a special events, big public venue," said Jeff Snyder, the mall's general manager.

Plus, the mall headquarters has a relatively small number of employees.

"I'm around the employees," Snyder said. "I'm friends (on Facebook) with all of them. We haven't had any problems."

The mall doesn't have an official social media policy, but Snyder said he discusses social media practices at staff meetings.

"We want them to have conduct of a professional shopping center person," he said. "We don't want one of the employees going and badmouthing one of our retailers or restaurants."

But if the employees do post something negative, it better not be during work hours, he added.

"From an employer standpoint, it's easier to say this was posted at home on a personal account, not during work hours," he said.

The concern, Snyder said, is that the public may view the comment as being representative of the mall and not of the individual.

But Snyder doesn't have a problem with his employees accessing social media for a "reasonable amount" during the work day, as long as it doesn't interfere with their job responsibilities.

"If they are on two or three times a day, that's OK," he said. "If they are on all day, that's a problem."

He also relies on the mall's employee handbook, which has policies about confidentiality and behavior.

He compared the distraction of social media to other productivity distractions, such as smoking breaks or hanging out in the break room.

"Any of those taken to the extreme can be a problem," he said.

Contact **Carlie Kollath** at (662) 678-1598 or carlie.kollath@journalinc.com.

Investors

Continued from Page 4

Hopkins University's Carey School of Business. "It's not really based on real cash projection."

Consider swift changes

Investors also need to consider the fluidity of social media – where technology, trends and consumer interest can swiftly change, analysts said.

Just a few years ago, MySpace was the dominant social networking website, and it was snatched up by News Corp. for \$580 million in 2005. But Facebook has now taken over, and MySpace announced plans last week to lay off nearly half of its work force.

"Sustaining a social network allure is difficult to achieve," said Rohan of Stifel. "So far, Facebook and a handful of others have done so. The allure of MySpace has faded."

But unlike the buying frenzy during the 1990s dot-com boom, which pumped up the stocks of many companies, today's investors are putting up the cash for a more select group of private startups, said Harry Weller, a general partner of venture capital firm NEA, an early investor in Groupon.

"People are more focused on investing in the winners because of the les-

sons learned during the Internet bubble," said Weller, who sits on Groupon's board.

Indeed, venture capitalists and other big investors are pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into recognizable names.

Goldman Sachs, which bought a stake in Facebook for \$450 million a few weeks ago, has offered wealthy international clients an opportunity to buy shares of the social networking site now valued at \$50 billion. Groupon raised \$950 million during its most recent private fund-raising. Groupon is pushing ahead with plans for a public offering that could value the company at \$15 billion, according to published reports late last week.

Some of today's hot social media startups will eventually sell stock to the rest of the investing public, but right now they haven't needed to because they have been able to raise capital privately, said Weller of NEA.

For average investors, it makes sense to wait for an initial public offering, he said.

Weller recalls the IPOs of the dot-com era: "What happened was the institutional and individual investor base got so excited about a fundamental movement, the Internet, that they took bigger and bigger risks letting early-stage companies do IPOs. That's what created the Internet bubble."



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NEWSMAKERS

■ Renasant Bank recently announced these promotions:

• **Lucius Brock** to commercial relationship officer. He joined Renasant in October as a commercial relationship manager. Before joining Renasant, he was a commercial lender with an Oxford bank and a bank examiner with the Mississippi Department of Banking.



BROCK

He received a bachelor's degree in business from Mississippi State University and a master's degree from the University of Mississippi.

• **Mary Haley Crisp** to credit department manager and vice president. She has been a credit analyst in the credit department since 2002.



CRISP

Crisp attended Western Kentucky University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in accounting, and she is a certified public accountant licensed in Alabama and Kentucky.

• **John Michael Green** to senior credit analyst. He has been a credit analyst with Renasant since 2006. Before joining Renasant, he was an environmental engineer in Decatur, Ala.



GREEN

Green attended Mississippi State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree.

• **Wesley Moore** to assistant vice president in Hernando and DeSoto County.



MOORE

He has been with Renasant since 1988 and was most recently a branch manager.

Moore attended the University of Mississippi, graduating with a bachelor's degree in business administration. He also attended the American Institute of Banking.

• **Jeff Welford** to assistant vice president of operations. He joined Renasant in 1997 and was named deposit operations manager in 2001. Before joining Renasant, he was an accountant for J.E. Vance & Co. in Tupelo.



WELFORD

Welford attended the University of Mississippi, graduating with a bachelor's degree in accountancy. He has earned the designation of Certified IRA Services Professional with the Institute of Certified Bankers.

■ **The Mississippi Department of Transportation** recently recognized its District 1 employees for their length of service and dedication to the agency.

The Lee County employees recognized by MDOT include:

• **Five years:** Danny Franks, Patsy Kemp, Bradley Richey and Jeff Wages

• **10 years:** Eddie Harris

• **15 years:** Rodney Lindsey

• **25 years:** Bonnie Pounds

The Union County employees include:

• **15 years:** Danny Cox, Keith Dunlap and Brenda Pannell



ROBERTS

of USGBC.

■ **Bessy Roberts**, project administrator for The McCarty Co.-Design Group, was recently elected to serve a two-year term on the state board of the Mississippi chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

She also is vice-chair for the North Mississippi branch

■ **Donnie Kisner** has joined Community Bank as a financial planning consultant with the Community Investment Professionals, the investment firm for Community Bank.



KISNER

He has more than 30 years of investment management and insurance planning experience. Before joining CIP, he worked with Merrill Lynch.

■ **Mack Spencer** has been named managing editor of The Daily Review in Morgan City, La.

He joined the Review staff in April 2010 as senior reporter and copy editor.

Spencer twice was managing editor of The Monitor-Herald in Calhoun City. He also was education reporter for the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal and a general assignment reporter and area editor for The Commercial Dispatch in Columbus.

Spencer is a native of Calhoun City, where he attended the public schools and of Mississippi University for Women, from which he graduated in 1997.

■ **Carman Jones** has been promoted to branch manager of BancorpSouth's Presley Heights location in Tupelo.



JONES

She has been a teller, a customer service representative and CSR coordinator in her 12 years of banking experience.

A native of Tupelo, Jones has an associate's degree in liberal arts from Itawamba

Community College.

■ **Cooper Tire & Rubber Co.** recently recognized its January service award winners at its Tupelo facility.

• **25 years** - Jeff Kellum, Rickey Houston, Pete Betts, Dwight Tesseneer, Fred Bowen and Gladys Burt.

• **20 years** - David Richey, Timothy Birmingham, George Roberson, Bob Pressley, James

Worthey, Walter Witt, Joey Pongetti, Fred Mims and David Griffin.

• **10 years** - Jeffrey Hill.

• **1 year** - Michael Johnson, Johnathan Betts, Lillie Jones, William Galloway, Rebecca Boyett, Michael Wigington, Eric Richardson, Shawn Mabry and Larry Alonzo.

■ **Michael Lindsey**, senior vice president of retail banking for BancorpSouth, is among a nationwide group of 11 senior bank executives selected to provide guidance to Bank Systems & Technology, a leading financial services media brand.

Lindsey also is a member of Bank Systems & Technology's newly-formed reader advisory board.

Lindsey has more than 21 years experience in the financial services industry, having spent his entire career with BancorpSouth.

He has a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance from the University of Mississippi and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Memphis. He also is a graduate of the American Bankers Association's Stonier Graduate School of Banking.

■ **Kevin Tate** of Tupelo has been named vice president of media productions for Haas Outdoor



TATE

Holdings, the parent company of several outdoor brands, including Mossy Oak Brand Camo.

He has been with Mossy Oak since 2000, having joined the company as public relations manager. He was screenwriter and video editor for the television department until being named creative director in 2004. For the past six years, he has supervised the post production team while also editing a television series.



CAMPBELL

■ **Deana Campbell**, office manager at Med Serve, was chosen as the December employee of the month and the 2010 employee of the year for North Mississippi Medical Clinics.

Campbell has worked for North Mississippi Medical Clinics since 1994. She is a graduate of Lafayette High School in Oxford and she attended Itawamba Community College's Tupelo campus.

The employee of the month honor recognizes employees with exemplary job performance and customer service skills, as well as community involvement.

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Chamber Connection

A publication of Journal Publishing and the CDF Chamber Division – February 2011

B2B Connection



The place to be February 17-18

The fifth annual Business to Business Connection (“B2B”) trade show and Taste of Tupelo event will be held Thursday and Friday, February 17 and 18, at the BancorpSouth Arena in Tupelo. This year the door prizes are absolutely outstanding!

“The Business to Business Connection is the perfect opportunity for businesses of all sizes to connect with other businesses in the area,” said Tommy Green, vice president of the chamber of commerce for the Community Development Foundation. “We especially encourage buyers and purchasing agents to attend this event so that they may see the wide array of products and services that are available right here in Tupelo/Lee County.”

The “B2B” is a regional business-to-business and business-to-consumer trade show. It will offer businesses and industries

an opportunity to provide product demonstrations, complimentary samples, and first-hand information about their goods and services. This networking event for businesses of all sizes is a must-attend experience for everyone in the business community.

The Taste of Tupelo, an invitation-only business-after-hours event for CDF members and invited guests, officially opens the “B2B.” The event features Southern cuisine from CDF member restaurants and caterers. Guests enjoy sampling delicacies while visiting the booths of businesses participating in the “B2B.” The Taste of Tupelo historically draws a crowd of several thousand and is the premier business networking event for the area.

For more information on the 2011 Business to Business Connection and Taste of Tupelo, please contact the CDF office at (662) 842-4521.



Friday, Feb. 18 Schedule of events

- 9 a.m. - Doors open
- 10 a.m. - John Lindsey seminar: “Seven Steps to Reach 212 degrees”
- 11:30 a.m. - \$6 lunch from:
 - Atlanta Bread Co., Bar-b-que by Jim, Chick-fil-A at Thompson Square, Olive Garden, The Bakery, Old Venice Pizza Company and Nautical Whimsy Italian Bistro & Wine Bar
- 2 p.m. - Deborah Tierce seminar: “Generation Gaps in the Workplace”
- 4 p.m. - Doors close

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Chamber focus

Dear Friends,

This is my first letter for the Chamber Connection. I am excited to be the new vice president of the Chamber of Commerce at CDF. It is an honor to be chosen as Barbara Smith's successor. Barbara is now overseeing our new membership tier structure that you will be learning about as the year progresses. I am enjoying working with the outstanding CDF staff and getting to know our 1400 members. If I can be of service to you, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Since starting my new job on January 3, I have hit the ground running. The Northeast Mississippi Economic Forecast Conference held on January 27 was a huge success with over 600 people attending. Thank you to our sponsors for recruiting such outstanding speakers. This month we are excited to host the "Business to Business Connection" trade show. Mark your calendars for this event to be held on Friday, February 18, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the BancorpSouth Arena. Exhibitors will showcase their goods and services. Be sure to register for an iPad and gas cards to be given away. Two exciting free seminars are scheduled during this event. On Friday morning at 10:00, John Lindsey will pres-



GREEN

ent, "The Seven Steps to Reach 212 Degrees." That afternoon at 2:00, Deborah Tierce will present "Generation Gaps in the Workplace." We look forward to seeing you there. Also, mark your calendars to attend the CDF Annual Meeting scheduled for May 5. As you can tell, 2011 is going to be an

exciting year.

Over the past month, many people have asked me what the Chamber does. The answer is: "By working to increase jobs, enhance workforce training, expand and retain area development, and build community leadership, we are working to ensure the economic strength of our community, which directly affects the success of your own business."

I look forward to working with you.
Sincerely,

Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce

New CDF MEMBERS

307apple.com

Ms. Angie Skinner
108 Windy Hills Ln.
Leicester, NC 28748
(828) 515-0378
Apartments

Mitchell Signs

Mr. Tim Hogan
3200 Hwy 45 N
Meridian, MS 39301
(601) 482-7471
Signs

Mr. Tommy Green

P.O. Box A
Tupelo, MS 38802
(662) 842-4521
Individuals

Modern Woodmen of America

Mr. Jim Brown
398 E Main St., Ste. 204
Tupelo, MS 38804
(662) 678-6935
Financial

Magnolia Business Systems

Mr. Ron Rivers
106 Gardner Blvd.
Columbus, MS 39702
(662) 244-8894
Office Supplies & Equipment

Tek 1 Studio, PLLC

Mr. Chris Root
P.O. Box 1066
Tupelo, MS 38802
(662) 322-0426
Architects

Community Development Foundation's

Board of Directors for 2010-2011

CDF is governed by a 57-member Board of Directors. The Executive Committee is composed of the CDF Officers and eleven additional members of the Board. CDF's goals and objectives are accomplished through the efforts of members appointed to committees operating under one of CDF's three divisions: Chamber Division, Economic Development Division, and Planning and Property Management Division.

2010-2011 Executive Committee

Billy Crews, Chairman	Sue Gardner	Guy Mitchell
David Irwin, First Vice Chairman	Shane Hooper	Aubrey Patterson
David Copenhagen, Second Vice Chairman	Octavius Ivy	Jane Spain
David Rumbarger, President/Secretary	Pat Jodon	Buddy Stubbs
Chris Rogers, Past Chairman	Glenn McCullough	Mitch Waycaster

2010-2011 Board of Directors

R.V. Adams	Gunner Goad	Fred Pitts
Mike Armour	Chauncey Godwin	Harry Rayburn
Bernard Bean	Lisa Hawkins	Jack Reed
Ronnie Bell	David Henson	Scott Reed
Charles Bouldin	Reed Hillen	Rob Rice
David Brevard	Frank Hodges	Eddie Richey
Gary Carnathan	Jerry Maxcy	Cathy Robertson
Mike Clayborne	Robin McGraw	Tom Robinson
V.M. Cleveland	Joe McKinney	Mike Scott
Scott Cochran	Paul "Buzzy" Mize	Randy Shaver
David Cole	Mary Pace	Barry Smith
Norma Cother	Jim Pate	Jeff Snyder
Tom Foy	Mimi Pettit	David Steele
L.E. "Bo" Gibens	Greg Pirkle	Mary Werner

2010-2011 Ambassador's Club

Ms. Richelle Anderson.....	Lighthouse Web Dezines
Ms. Veleka Ball	CB&S Bank
Ms. Beverly Bedford	Honda of Tupelo
Ms. Cindy Black	Prudential 1st Real Estate
Mr. Richard Carleton.....	Mall at Barnes Crossing
Ms. Shavonne Collier	Renasant Bank
Ms. Molly Crews	Express Employment Professionals
Ms. Sheila Davis	PPI, Inc.
Mr. Chris deLambert	Century 21 Sue Gardner Realty
Ms. Danielle Del Grande.....	Comfort Suites
Ms. Shanelle Gardner	BancorpSouth
Mr. Randy Harris.....	M&F Bank
Mr. Toby Hedges	Shelter Insurance
Ms. Waurene Heflin.....	Crye-Leike Realtors
Mr. Karen Hester.....	Community Bank
Ms. Dianne Loden.....	Trustmark Bank
Mr. Tim Long	Cellular South
Ms. Bea Lockett	TRI, Inc. Realtors
Mr. Ben Martin	RE/Max Associates Realtors
Ms. Megan McCarty	Gibens Creative Group
Mr. Marcus McCoy	Prudential 1st Real Estate
Mr. Brad McCully	Sportsman Lawn & Landscape
Ms. Haley McLemore	Alliance Collection Service
Mr. Bill McNutt	WLM Insurance, LLC
Mr. Scott Medlock	The McCarty Company
Mr. Paul Mize	BancorpSouth
Ms. Carolyn Moss	Comfort Inn
Mr. Joe Nobles	Tupelo Radio Broadcasting
Ms. Chandra Pannell	Get It There Auto Transportation
Ms. Kara Penny.....	Tupelo Convention & Visitors Bureau
Mr. Les Perry.....	North Mississippi Medical Center
Ms. Katie Pickens McMillan	Key Staff Source
Ms. Amy Richey	Amedisys Hospice
Mr. Chris Richburg	Lamar Advertising
Mr. Greg Thames	Trustmark Bank
Ms. Dana Thompson.....	Gentiva Hospice
Ms. Susan Webb.....	Room to Room



Link Centre's BBQ Festival

A first for Tupelo is the "Don't Be Cruel BBQ Duel." Yes, the Link Centre is hosting a BBQ festival/competition April 1 and 2, and the Memphis Barbeque Network sanctions the barbeque-cooking contest. Fifty professional teams and an unlimited number of amateur/backyard teams will be eligible to win more than \$16,000 in cash prizes and trophies.

The Link Centre board members have been working almost a year to plan, prepare, and work closely with Kyle and Sandra Aylor, a couple affiliated with the Oxford festival. Board member Bev Crossen stated, "We are thrilled to offer this barbecue competition to Tupelo. This event will be a great asset to our community. It will bring lots of folks to Tupelo and will offer all of us an opportunity to come out as a family and enjoy all the festivities. There will be something for everyone – a rare treat for all of us!"

The Link Centre is a non-profit organization that fosters creative partnerships in the arts and social services for the benefit of the community, and this event will be their annual "signature" fundraiser. The variety of groups housed at the

Link Centre range from Girl Scouts Heart of the South to Tupelo Symphony Orchestra to culinary arts classes. So, to add a major event such as this BBQ competition is "brave and exciting" according to Melanie Deas, Link Centre's executive director, because it is such a huge undertaking.

The BBQ festival undertaking has not only been a lot of work but also a lot of fun. Recently, the Link Centre hosted a BBQ judging class for 35 people from throughout the South. After being certified, these students can judge any Memphis BBQ Network competition.

The professional teams will compete in individual categories, and an overall champion will be selected based upon the highest overall score. Amateur/backyard teams will compete, and an overall Backyard Champion will be selected.

There's more! If the BBQ is not enough, the two-day event will also provide live music, art/craft vendors, and a children's activity area. So make plans now to spend the first weekend in April at the Link Centre. For more information, go to tupelobbqduel.com or call 662.690.4011.

JOE JOE'S COFFEE & TEA



To celebrate the new location of Joe Joe's Coffee & Tea, a ribbon cutting was held. Pictured on the front row are: Tommy Green, CDF; Geoff Carter, Hyperion Technology Group; Jeri Carter with Bremen Carter; Joe Moffatt, Joe Joe's Coffee & Tea; Councilman Markel Whittington; Hollie Moffatt with Natalie Moffatt, Joe Joe's Coffee & Tea; and Emily Addison, CDF. Pictured on the back row with CDF Ambassadors are: Jennie Lee; Chuck Moffatt, Select Connect; Laura Moffatt, Select Connect; and Mark Stevens, Anytime Fitness. Joe Joe's Coffee & Tea is located at 1960 McCullough Blvd. in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 823-5637.

ECONOMIC FORECAST CONFERENCE



Mike Randle and John Glascock field questions from the audience after the Economic Forecast Conference January 27 at the BancorpSouth Conference Center.

Fun, family-friendly, and furniture – all at Warehouse 605



Warehouse 605 owners Nena Lowe and Christy Jones.

Ever since they were on PTA committees, Warehouse 605 owners Nena Lowe and Christy Jones have been friends when each had a son in the 5th grade. (Their sons are still great friends as seniors in college.) Both have a history of working mutually: Nena was co-owner of Funky Finds, Christy was one of the original owners of the Weather Vane in Oxford. "We found out we could sell together," said Christy. So the two ladies decided to go into business and in order to keep it as simple as possible – it had to be "family-friendly." They vowed that the business would not interfere with children's activities or family vacations.

In July 2005, they bought the vacant building at 605 Daybrite, painted it, named it "Warehouse 605," and opened all in the same week. It so happens that a company in Dallas was going out of business, and these two bought nine 18-wheeler loads of furniture and accessories.

Their merchandise comes from all over the world, including three containers on their way from India and two from China. After



spending ten days in India, a shipment of rugs is coming with "Warehouse 605" labels on them.

Nena and Christy attend markets in New York, Atlanta, Dallas, and High Point. The wide array of furnishings include upholstered furniture, case goods, wooden furniture, Indian antiques, paintings, draperies, rugs, and a huge assortment of items for your home (inside and out). With 6300 square feet, Warehouse 605 provides a variety of furniture and accessorizing ideas, and the warehouse space has additional

marked down items.

Their hours of business are not your typical Monday through Friday gig. Warehouse 605 is open only three days a month, and they like it that way. They try to make those three days like an open house, fresh every time, from one month to the next. As both stated, "When it quits being fun – we're done."

A clothing line was added last year, but they have since decided to get out of the clothing business and donated all of their inventory to the Gardner Simmons Home for Girls. Donating is big with them. When they have sold all they want of a product – the rest is donated to local charities such as Salvation Army or Sanctuary Hospice. To help out the local artists, a large quantity of frames was given to school art departments.

Warehouse 605 will be open this month February 9, 10, and 11. Drop by and see Nena and Christy with others that come from all over. "We try to make it fun for all our customers," said Nena. You are guaranteed to enjoy your time there.



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Cooper Tire & Rubber Company announces expansion

The State of Mississippi, Lee County Board of Supervisors, the City of Tupelo, and Cooper Tire & Rubber Company announced January 12 a \$9 million capital expansion to the Tupelo/Lee County plant. This project will also create 35 new jobs.

Cooper Tire & Rubber Company has been in business more than 25 years and continues to be a strong fixture in the community. Currently, the industrial plant measures over two million square feet and employs more than 1,300 people. This is the second expansion for the Cooper Tire facility in two years and will enhance their capacity to produce more tires.

Cooper Tire & Rubber Company is a global company with affiliates, subsidiaries and joint-ventures that specialize in the design, manufacture, marketing, and sales of passenger car and light truck tires and has sub-



idiaries that specialize in medium truck, motorcycle, and racing tires.

Joe McKinney, president of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, stated, "Two years ago, our theme of main-

Company here was 'Cooper Proud,' and we were committed to keeping them in Lee County. This expansion reinforces Cooper's dedication to stay."

Jack Reed Jr., Mayor of Tupelo, said,

"Cooper Tire's expansion is another example of the great partnerships we have in this area. Their continued investment in the community is a testament to the excellence of our people."

SEO SPIDER MASTER



A ribbon cutting was recently held at the Renasant Center for IDEAs for SEO Spider Master. Pictured at the event are: Emily Addison, CDF; Councilman Jonny Davis; Bob Wadley, SEO Spider Master; Dr. Frank Wiebe, Small Business Development Center; and members of the CDF Ambassador's Club. For more information about SEO Spider Master, call (662) 840-4969 or visit www.seospidermaster.com.

Lee County Justice Court Drug Court reaches two-year milestone

January 2011 marks the second year that the Lee County Justice Court-Adult Drug Court has been serving the Lee County community. There are currently 2,559 Drug Courts in the United States and its territory. Mississippi currently has 38 drug courts operating throughout the State serving over 2,800 participants. The Lee County Drug Court is the second Drug Court of its kind (Justice Court-Drug Court) in the state of Mississippi and the first Drug Court to be implemented in Lee County.

Since the implementation of the Lee County Drug Court, there have been 38 individuals who have enrolled in the Drug Court and 7 par-



participants have already successfully completed and graduated from the program. Last year, the Lee County Drug Court's participants completed over 100 hours of community service. During 2010, the Lee County Drug Court also implemented an adult mentorship program and implemented the use of electronic monitoring devices. There were also two drug free babies born to two of the drug court participants last year. Chief Tony Carlton and the City of Tupelo's Police Department also donated a vehicle to the Drug Court.

The Lee County Drug Court was recently chosen by the National Drug Court Institute

to attend Drug Court Mentorship Training and visit a Mentor Court Site at Billings Adult Drug Court in Billings, Montana.

The Lee County Justice Court-Drug Court is a collaborative effort, and the court's main goal is to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals and their families, as well as the community, by addressing the root of the problem that keeps the offender engaged in the criminal justice system, which is the offender's drug and alcohol addiction or abuse.

Judge Rickey Thompson is the presiding Judge for the Lee County Justice Court - Drug Court, and Shirley Moon is the drug court director. For additional information about the Drug Court, you may contact the Drug Court director at (662) 407-2409.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR TWO TYP EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Poet Glenis Redmond will instruct a class
Feb. 8 at CDF from 5 to 7 p.m.

The TYPs are invited to the Taste of Tupelo
at the BancorpSouth Arena Feb. 17.



RSVP is required for both events.

A national study by The Schapiro Group, an Atlanta-based market research firm, revealed a number of important findings about how consumers and business owners perceive the local chamber of commerce and the businesses that are their members.

63%

Percentage of consumers who are more likely to buy goods and services in the future from a company that they believe is a member of the local chamber of commerce.

51%

Percentage of consumers who are highly aware a business is a chamber member after being told.

57%

Percentage of consumers who think positively about a business that is a chamber member.

82%

The percentage of respondents who believe the local chamber of commerce helps create jobs and promotes local economic development.

the results

Positive perception increases among consumers and business owners when a business is identified as a member of the local chamber of commerce.

SOUTHERN HOME SOLUTIONS



To celebrate the grand opening of Southern Home Solutions, a ribbon cutting was held. Pictured on the front row are: Chad Grayson, First Baptist Church; Jean Watson; Alan Brown, Methodist Senior Services; Marilyn May; Amy Kirby, Southern Home Solutions; Emily Addison, CDF; Chaz Kirby, Southern Home Solutions; Courtney Hall, Southern Home Solutions; Jason Maynard, Southern Home Solutions; Jay Ramsey, Southern Home Solutions; Josh Tollison, Southern Home Solutions; Dave Cofer, Southern Home Solutions; and Steve Bates, Southern Home Solutions. Pictured on the back row with CDF Ambassadors are: Lee Alred, First Baptist Church; Charles Watson, Weatherall Printing Company; Jenny Jones, Girl Scouts Heart of the South; Tanja Traylor, Southern Home Solutions; Wanda Reaves, CPA; Bob DeTorres, Paramount Uniform Rental; Ricky Young, First Baptist Church; Hugh Holcomb; Elna Clark; Elmer Clark; and Carl Crumpton, Picture Perfect Painters. Southern Home Solutions is located at 157 Fenco Lane in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 844-5556.

JIM INGRAM COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



The January session of the Jim Ingram Community Leadership Institute was held January 13-14 at Whispering Woods in Olive Branch, MS. Dr. Vaughn Grisham presented "Tupelo/Lee County: A Legacy of Leadership."

JANUARY FIRST FRIDAY



The January 7 First Friday featured Mr. Phil Hardwick, Stennis Institute of Government, Mississippi State University. The event was sponsored by Northeast Mississippi Board of Realtors. Standing with Mr. Hardwick is David Rumbarger, President/CEO of Community Development Foundation.

TONY BARBER WRECKER SERVICE



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the new location of Tony Barber Wrecker Service. Pictured on the front row are: Emily Addison, CDF; Judge Rickey Thompson; Alderwoman Jessie Gilmore, City of Verona; Vice Mayor Eddie Tucker, City of Verona; Councilman Markel Whittington, City of Tupelo; Mayor Bobby Williams, City of Verona; Terri Driskill, Tony Barber Wrecker Service; Malcomb Driskill with Fayth Driskill, Tony Barber Wrecker Service; and Tommy Green, CDF. Pictured on the back row with CDF Ambassadors are: Chief Leo Mask, City of Verona; Nita Westbrook, City of Verona; Billy Booth, Tony Barber Wrecker Service; and Tony Barber. Tony Barber Wrecker Service is located at 2809 S Gloster St. in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 871-5039.

JANUARY TYP



Sixty TYPs enjoyed networking at Olive Garden for their January meeting.

DID YOU KNOW?

During 2010, the following nine Lee County industry expansions created 762 new jobs:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Advanced Innovations | MTD Products |
| Alan White | Okin America |
| Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. | Omega Motion |
| Lane Furniture Industries | T&L Specialties |
| Martinrea Fabco | |



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Belle Ame Salon & Spa	Chocolates
Billie's Catering, Inc.	Martin Dental Clinic, PA
and Mt. Vernon Place	Midnite Pottery
Bishop's BBQ Grill	
	Nails City of Tupelo
Clayton O'Donnell, PLLC	New Beginnings
Comfort Suites	Adoption and
Confortaire, Inc.	Family Services
Country Flooring	NEWMS
Covenant Storage	North Mississippi
Creative Cakes	Orthodontic
& Supplies	Associates, PA
	Northwestern
Dillard Enterprises, Inc.	Mutual Financial
Dr. Rebecca S.	Network-Wesley Jones
McDougald	
	Old Venice
Easy Find Directories	Pizza Company
	One D'Ville Place
Great American Cookie	Open Air Windows
Gum Tree Mortgage,	& Doors
LLC	
	Papa John's Pizza
Hampton Inn	Premiere Lady Fitness
New Albany	Pro Golf of Tupelo
Hilton Garden Inn-	Pro Oil Shop,
Great American Grill	Inc./Xpress Lube
Honda of Tupelo	
Honey Baked Ham	Reggie White
& Café	Sleep Disorder Center
	Renasant Bank
La Vino Wine & Spirits	Room to Room
Lighthouse Web	
Dezines	



Look for this sticker in the window of participating CDF member businesses to receive your special discount. To be a participating partner of ChamberAdvantage, call the CDF office at (662) 842-4521.

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 & Landscape
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 & Gifts Inc.
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The Cotton Bolt
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 Tupelo Christian
 Preparatory School
 Tupelo Diamond Brokers
 Tupelo Diesel Service, Inc.
 Tupelo Eye Center Optical
 Tupelo Manufacturing
 Company
 Tupelo Smiles

Tupelo Tint/
 The Blind Side
 U-Save Auto Rental
 Vanelli's
 Water Depot of Tupelo,
 Your Culligan Dealer
 Wheeler Roofing, Inc.
 Whitetail Ridge Outdoors
 Williams Transfer
 & Storage

Great teams can accomplish great things

Nothing motivates like meaning. Think about it: When is the last time you were really motivated? You couldn't wait for daylight so you could get started. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have employees jumping out of bed in the mornings to get to work and start the day?

Sound like a fantasy? Not likely to happen? Try the following tips for motivating employees and see what happens.

1: Share the mission/vision. Have you tried sharing the mission with your subordinates in such a way that they catch the enthusiasm? Do they see how they fit in to the big picture? Do they understand why they are important to the organization? It's called a vision because employees can see it. When they can see it, they get excited.



Deborah TIERCE

then they are more motivated. Meaning has to be experienced through the senses. When employees see the product in the hands of the end user having a positive impact, then meaning motivates. When employees hear stories of how they or their product made a difference, then meaning motivates.

When employees can shake hands with a customer or client who is grateful for their service or product, buy-in

2: Make work meaningful. All people want to do meaningful work. If they see how what they do everyday has meaning

and commitment to the mission is established.

3: Mission, not money focus. Get their minds off money and onto mission. When the focus is money, there will never be enough. How do you do that? Two ways – pay them well and use positive reinforcement, like praise and true gratitude for their hard work. Don't attach a dollar sign to every desired behavior or you'll kill personal gratification. Money cannot satisfy the human soul. Helping others is the most powerful motivator; helping others satisfies the soul.

Link work to human needs and the focus becomes helping, not wanting more money. With an attitude and atmosphere of "helping others," more money will be the automatic by-product. But first, you must focus on helping others.

4: Reward "right" behaviors. When employees

work hard and stay focused on mission, meaning and helping others, intrinsic rewards manifest themselves. Intrinsic rewards come from doing good for others. They don't have a dollar sign attached. Praise from the supervisor is always the greatest reward. Intrinsic rewards plus praise are powerful motivators and reward the "right" behaviors. We are born with an altruistic nature – to help our fellow man. Tap this great human need and watch employees get energized.

5: Team membership. Belonging is a great human need. To "fit in" and be accepted and appreciated as a team member is the ultimate motivator. It ensures a stronger commitment, a sense of camaraderie and greater success for all. Only through great teams can great things be accomplished. Try these five tips and

watch your employees begin to get more involved, become more committed and have greater enthusiasm for their work.

Deborah Tierce is owner of Tierce Motivational Training in Tupelo and has a free conference call on the third Thursday of each month. Contact her at (662) 790-5331 or deborah@deborah-tierce.com. Readers also can visit deborah-tierce.com for more information.

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What is business law and why you should care

Allow me to introduce myself and the series of articles I will be writing for the Northeast Mississippi Business Journal. I'm Bill Turner, a business law attorney in Oxford. I grew up in Philadelphia, Miss., and graduated from the University of Mississippi Business School and Mississippi College School of Law. I practiced entertainment law in New York City for five years following law school graduation, and for the past 10 years I've practiced business law in Nashville with a large Southeastern-based law firm.

I have negotiated and closed a variety of transactions for both small, family-owned businesses and international corporations involving deals ranging from the resolution a partnership dispute to multi-billion dollar Wall Street financings. Recently, I moved back to my native Mississippi to raise my family and establish my own business law practice in Oxford.

Starting this month, I'll be writing articles in the Northeast Mississippi Business Journal, introducing various business law concepts and principles, spanning company formation and the basics of contracts to commercial real estate investing, franchising and buy-



**Bill
TURNER**

ing or selling businesses. None of the articles are to be construed as legal advice but merely as an introduction to certain ideas which can have legal significance in business formation and operations. You should always seek the counsel of a knowledgeable at-

torney when establishing a business or negotiating, financing, documenting and closing a business transaction.

So, what is Business Law and why should you care? Business Law is a collection of legal disciplines that attempt to limit a business' exposure to liability with the intent of increasing the business' bottom line. Let's face it – we live in a litigious society. Litigation, although sometimes necessary, is a costly and oftentimes counterproductive experience for a business.

The goals of a business law practitioner are to assist a business or business owner in (1) properly setting up a business and (2) negotiating, financing, doc-

So, what is Business Law and why should you care? Business Law is a collection of legal disciplines that attempt to limit a business' exposure to liability with the intent of increasing the business' bottom line. Let's face it – we live in a litigious society. Litigation, although sometimes necessary, is a costly and oftentimes counterproductive experience for a business.

umenting and closing business transactions, both in an efficient and legally sound manner that achieves the long-term goals of the business or business owner while at the same time reducing the vagueness and ambiguity that can lead to dispute and costly litigation.

Properly setting up a business can reduce the personal liability of the business owner so that the business owner's personal assets (such as their house and vehicle) are not at risk in the event the business is sued and a judgment rendered against it. The proper negotiation and drafting of contracts is vital to a successful business transaction because they lead to a clear understanding of the contracting

parties and provide structure for sometimes complex contingencies. Improperly drafted or insufficient contracts can cause disagreement between the contracting parties and put considerable funds at risk, not to mention the cost of litigation if the disagreement cannot be amicably resolved.

These and other business law topic will be explored and addressed in greater detail in future articles.

Bill Turner is a business law attorney and the principal of William F. (Bill) Turner Law PLLC in Oxford. He is licensed to practice law in Mississippi, Tennessee, New York and Washington, D.C. Contact him at (662) 234-8137 or bturner@billturnerlaw.com.

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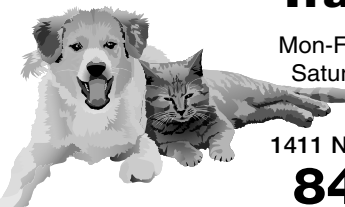
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