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# BusinessJournal

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF JOURNAL PUBLISHING AND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

SEPTEMBER 2009



## THE RETAIL ROLLER COASTER



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# Retailers review operations to survive recession

**One retailer said cuts will allow her to stay open, while another plans to close by the end of the year**

By Carlie Kollath  
BUSINESS JOURNAL

TUPELO – The recession is hitting retailers hard, forcing them to evaluate their businesses from every angle in order to make their stores survive longer.

They are scrutinizing the lines they carry, the inventory they keep and their fixed expenses, such as rent.

The Willow Bend Village shopping center has two prime examples of retailers that are trying to figure out how to make ends meet.

Jody Lehman, owner of A Cook's Place, earlier this year consolidated from two spaces into one, calling the move a "right sizing."

She's also cut back stock levels and eliminated products that weren't selling. She believes those changes, combined with other smart money management practices, will be enough to get her business through the recession intact.

Two stores down, it's a different story. The owners of Sugarbump's, a children's boutique and gift shop, said they expect to close at the end of the year unless a miracle happens.

Mother-daughter pair Lynn Palmertree and Lori Hood moved about a year ago from a previous location on West Main. The rent is more at the Industrial Road location, but they said sales doubled because of the increased traffic to the retail-heavy center.

Then the economy sagged, cutting into their customers' spending habits. Palmertree and Hood dropped lines and adjusted their inventory. It still hasn't been enough to save the store, they say.

They are pinning their hopes on winning a national competition called "Shine a Light," which is sponsored by American Express and NBC Universal. The winner receives a \$50,000 grant and another \$50,000 for marketing support. The finalist will be announced Oct. 19.

## 'Survival, pure and simple'

It's a tough ride for two homegrown retailers as they adjust to doing business during a recession in which consumers are watching their pocketbooks and pinching pennies.

Lehman opened A Cook's place in April 2004 in the current Yummy Yogurt loca-

tion. A year later she moved to the other side of the shopping center and doubled her square footage. Last year, she started looking at her overhead costs to see "what we needed to do to stay standing at the end of the day."

She chose to consolidate her space, cutting the square footage in half and doing away with her office and much of her storage space.

► To vote for Sugarbump's in the Shine A Light contest, go to [shinealight.village.com](http://shinealight.village.com). The winning business gets a \$100,000 prize.

"We chose to go this way instead of laying off," Lehman said. "Most customers will go, 'Oh, I'm so sorry.' Honestly, I've never felt sorry. Then people will go, 'It's so much cozier.' People have been very positive about it. But it's survival, pure and simple."

For the last six months, she's also scrutinized every line item, including utilities, phone services and advertising, to make sure she is getting charged accurately and that the expenses are necessary.

She's also cut inventory and adjusted

Turn to **OPERATIONS** on Page 4

# Economy deals blow to retail spec building

**Developers scale back plans as lenders tighten loan requirements.**

By Carlie Kollath  
BUSINESS JOURNAL

TUPELO – The recession has brought the days of speculative building to an end, say three Northeast Mississippi real estate veterans.

Speculative buildings are constructed before they have a buyer – with the idea of "build it and they will come."

Tommy Morgan of Coldwell Banker Tommy Morgan Realtors said that a few years ago, having spec buildings for commercial use was a common strategy.

"With the way the market is now, lenders wouldn't loan you the money unless you have it fully rented," Morgan said. "The market predicts you just have to have the people before you build."

He represents Fairpark at Main, the commercial development on Main Street that houses five tenants, including Park Heights and Fairpark Grill. There are four vacant spaces.

"Two or three years ago, it would have leased up," he said. "Right now, the supply is greater than the demand ... We're pleased to have the Fairpark at Main development. But all in all, we wouldn't have done it now if we knew what we know now."

He also suspects the lender wouldn't have written the loan.

V.M. Cleveland owns Tupelo Commons, the shopping development anchored by Best Buy, Hancock Fabrics and Ashley Furniture HomeStores.

He said usually when he develops a shopping strip center, he wants to have "at least one or two pretty good size big box retailers" sign a lease before he builds the

Turn to **SPEC** on Page 7

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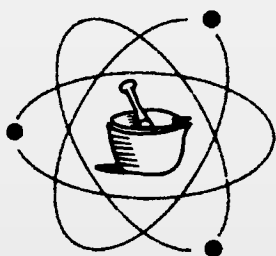
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## Operations

Continued from Page 2

her stock levels.

"It's gotten to the point where there's no more room at the inn," she said. "If it doesn't turn, it doesn't stay. You can't just keep it if one person wants it."

She's also cut the in-stock items of some of her higher priced lines, such as Le Creuset and Viking, but she keeps the top colors and models on display.

"Retail's hard because you don't ever want to look thin," Lehman said. "You still have to spend the money to look

the part. Customers notice that."

Palmertree and Hood also reevaluated their inventory to see how they could better adjust to customer demands. They cut back on clothing lines and added more gifts.

But Hood said customers are still watching their dollars and sales are not where they need to be to keep the business open. They plan to close the shop and continue the business via their Web site, [sugarbumps.com](http://sugarbumps.com).

"It's hard to compete with Walmart, Penneys," Palmertree said.

Hood said, "They say the recession is heading up."

"But it might not head up quick enough," Palmertree finished.

Palmertree and Hood are hoping that if they win the Shine A Light competition, it might provide the capital they need to stay afloat. The business needs at least 50 votes to get to the judging round. At the beginning of this month, Sugarbump's had 94 votes.

The top 150 businesses then are narrowed down to three finalists by judges Diane Von Furstenberg, JJ Ramberg and Ellen Degeneres. Visitors to the Web site then vote for the winner.

"It's a long shot, but that can be the answer," Palmertree said.

Hood also said with a grin that she would be open to someone offering her a pile of money to buy the business.

Lehman said she is doing everything possible to avoid the route Sugarbump's has had to travel. She offered the following advice to other retailers who are looking at ways to make it through the recession:

"Take a look at every aspect of your business. It's not necessarily what can you do cheaper but what can you do better. You can't be afraid to try something. You can't just sit there and not try something and wait for the economy to come back overnight like it was five years ago because you're going to be gone."

Contact Carlie Kollath at (662) 678-1598 or [carlie.kollath@djjournal.com](mailto:carlie.kollath@djjournal.com).

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## Mall at Barnes Crossing keeps evolving

■ **The super-regional shopping center has opened five new stores in a little more than a year.**

By Dennis Seid  
BUSINESS JOURNAL

TUPELO – When The Mall at Barnes Crossing opened in 1990 in a former cow pasture, few people thought it would become the retail magnet it has become.

But today, there is little doubt that the mall is a key reason why Lee County has become the retail center of Northeast Mississippi.

Even in the middle of a deep recession, the county still has managed to grow its retail sales. Mississippi State Tax Commission figures show that for the fiscal year ending in June, gross retail sales in Lee County were just over \$1.8 billion. For the previous fiscal year, gross retail sales totaled \$1.78 billion.

Perhaps there's some truth in the mall's slogan, "It's all

right here."

Phillip Purdom, senior vice president of development and mall leasing for David Hocker & Associates, the mall's developer, certainly thinks so.

"I will say that in the 22 years I've been in the business, that mall has evolved as much as any," he said.

**Mississippi State Tax Commission figures show that for the fiscal year ending in June, gross retail sales in Lee County were just over \$1.8 billion. For the previous fiscal year, gross retail sales totaled \$1.78 billion.**

David Hocker & Associates operates 45 shopping centers across the country. It runs The Mall at Barnes Crossing as a joint venture with R.F. Coffin Enterprises.

Two years ago, the mall launched a multi-year, \$13.1 million expansion and renovation plan. Since April 2008, five new stores have opened at the mall. The new stores also have added a new look with their exterior entrances and designs,

adding a "lifestyle center" element to the mall.

Jeff Snyder, the mall's general manager, said two more new retailers will open soon.

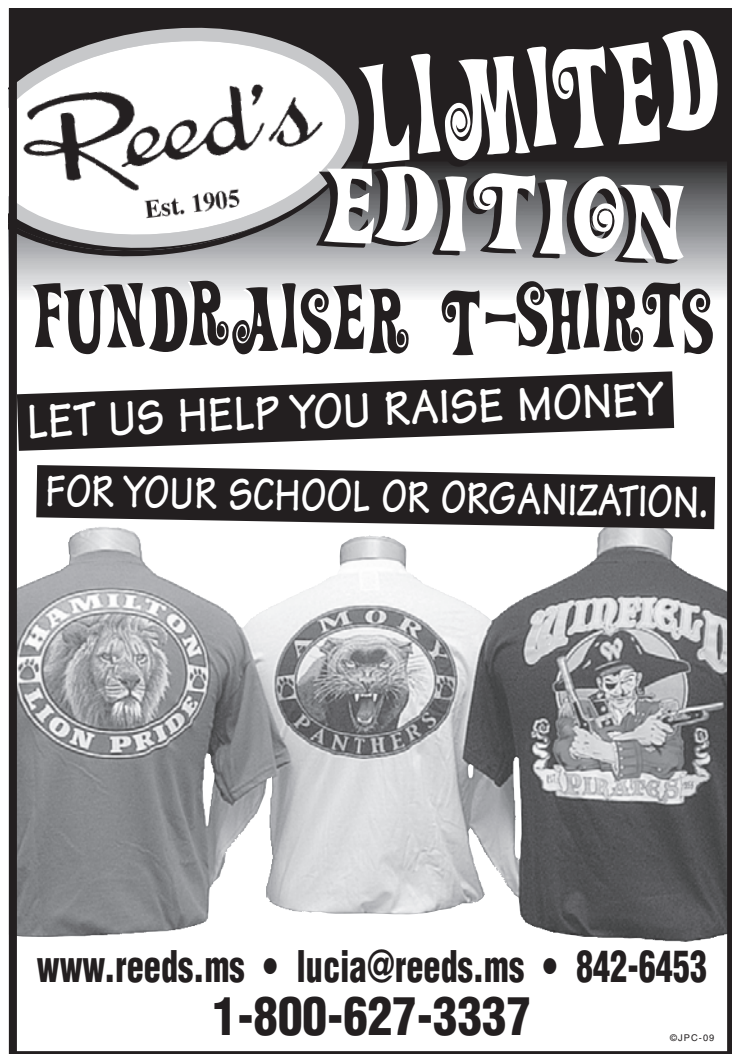
"We've also had several stores renovate, move, expand, and just as important, renew their leases," he said. "The \$13 million isn't just a lump sum to

be used for now, but it's a long-term project."

That investment will maintain the viability of the mall, which generates sales of about \$394 per square foot, the second-highest in the state, Snyder said. Northpark Mall in Ridgeland ranked first.

And even as many retailers and shopping centers have slogged through the recession, the mall is holding its own.


Turn to **MALL** on Page 17



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## Salttillo developer tries to keep dollars at home

By DENNIS SEID

BUSINESS JOURNAL

SALTILLO – Jay Shannon shrugs off descriptions of him being a pioneer in retail development here, but he doesn't hide the fact he's doing what he can.

Shannon has built two retail centers in Saltillo since 2000 – the Town Creek District and most recently, the Center City Market.

His goal: Get Saltillo residents to buy more from retailers and restaurants in Saltillo.

"For Saltillo to grow, we have to spend as much money here," Shannon said. "We can't send all of our tax dollars in Tupelo. We need people to shop at home."

Shannon's task may seem daunting.

For fiscal year 2008, gross retail sales in Lee County were about \$1.78 billion. Of that, Tu-

pelo accounted for \$1.41 billion. Saltillo's (small) piece of the pie? About \$57 million.

Shannon says he just wants to keep more of Saltillo's money at home.

"I think a lot of people have become accustomed to stopping by Walmart on the way home and picking up their things, or going to the mall and shopping in Tupelo," he said. "I'm not saying we're going to have everything here, but we do have a lot of what people need in Saltillo. Sometimes it is convenient if you're working in Tupelo and live in Saltillo to stop in Tupelo – but we have to change our thinking and spend money with Saltillo merchants, too."

### Betting on Saltillo

Emily Floyd agrees – and she's betting that the community will respond.

Floyd opened Movie Magic in Town Creek 15 years ago and recently decided to expand her retail offerings by opening a women's apparel, and gift store at Center City.

"I've driven all over to find the clothes and things I like and I thought people might like the same things at a store here," she said.

Emi Lou's Boutique, which opened last week, sells clothing, shoes, purses, jewelry and gifts.

Opening a store in a middle of a recession is a risk some entrepreneurs would avoid, but Floyd isn't too worried.

"I've been doing this for awhile," she said. "I know what I'm getting into, so I can't complain."

Shannon hopes to attract other small and unique retailers to his developments, but said

Turn to **SALTILLO** on Page 18

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## Spec

Continued from Page 2

entire center.

"You used to do that, but you don't do that any more," Cleveland said. "The first thing banks want to see are your leases."

It's been his experience that lenders want the center to be 60 percent to 70 percent leased before they will write the loan.

### Harder to sell

The change from spec building to pre-signed leases is creating a hard situation for a developer trying to sell a property, because a physical property is easier to sell to a retailer than a plan on paper, Morgan said.

Cleveland said before the recession hit, he could build a full 15-tenant shopping center once he had three or four tenants. He then could market the finished development to attract additional businesses.

Today he would have to build it in stages.

"I would draw it up for 15 tenants and then build for seven tenants and have three tenants signed and call it phase 1," Cleveland said.

As the center is built, he would expect the growth to draw interest from additional tenants.

"In a good economy, that's the way it works," Cleveland said.

But not always. The buildings behind the

Tupelo Commons Cinema (also known as the Malco Theater) are a good example. The Tupelo Commons Courtyard was built several years ago with four signed tenants, said Clay Short, the vice president of TRI's commercial sales and leasing division and the marketing broker for the property.

"The developer would not have built those buildings on a purely speculative basis," Short said. "One of those buildings was almost leased out."

Yet when one tenant went bankrupt, Short said the other tenants backed out as well. It's been empty since then.

"We were sort of victims of multiple hits due to the economy and some bad luck with tenants," Short said.

However, it soon will have a tenant with FAA Federal Credit Union, which closed a deal in August for a space at the southern end of the development. The business also is adding a drive-through.

As far as the rest of the building, Short said he is optimistic.

"Eventually, it will look, feel and act like it was designed to," Short said. "It's just a matter of the right tenant at the right time."

Morgan also sees hope for commercial real estate in Tupelo.

"I have confidence that the market will come back, but the question is 'when' and I don't know that," Morgan said.

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# Chamber Connection

A publication of Journal Publishing and the CDF Chamber Division – September 2009



## CDF Promotes Members Through



# twitter

**F**or CDF members, the latest news about your company is just a tweet away. The Community Development Foundation is now offering an added benefit to its 1,400 members through its page on Twitter.

Twitter is a free social networking site that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the sender's profile page and delivered to the followers of the sender's page. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS), or external applications. The Community Development Foundation has created a Twitter informational page on its website at [www.cdfms.org/twitter](http://www.cdfms.org/twitter) to share

information about how CDF is using this social networking tool and how its members can reap the benefits of its use, as well. For those who have not ventured into the social media realm, a Twitter tutorial may also be found on the CDF website.

"When we leave the office to go to a ribbon cutting, we tweet. When our membership director, Emily Addison, recruits a new member, we tweet. When a CDF member is offering a special 'deal of the day,' we tweet," said Jennie Bradford Curlee, Chief

Communications Manager for CDF. "Our goal is to make CDF members even more visible and encourage consumers to do business locally with members of the chamber of commerce."

First, everyone is encouraged to follow CDF on Twitter @CDFMS, to stay up-to-date on all that is going on with Tupelo/Lee County's chamber of commerce and economic development organization. Updates will include upcoming chamber events, news releases, posts from CDF President and CEO David Rumbarger, and more. Most importantly, @CDFMS will serve as a forum for CDF members to publicize daily specials, significant anniversaries, member-only deals, and anything else that you, as a CDF member, would like to share via Twitter's vast reach. To get your information posted on CDF's Twitter page,

simply send a direct message on Twitter @CDFMS, call the CDF office at 662.842.4521, or e-mail your tweet to [jcurlee@cdfms.org](mailto:jcurlee@cdfms.org).

CDF would also like to follow its members on Twitter. Members will then be listed in CDF's "followers" list allowing more networking possibilities with Twitter. CDF will also be able to watch your tweets and re-tweet them regularly, further expanding the sphere of publicity for your business.

Twitter is defined as "a short burst of inconsequential information." CDF's goal is to continue to broaden its range of benefits to meet the changing and expanding needs of the business community it serves. By using the latest social networking media to promote its 1,400 strong membership base, CDF is tweeting in a very consequential way.

# Chamber focus

Dear Friends:

Congratulations to Michael Blankenship with Old Venice Pizza Company on his recognition as Ambassador of the Quarter. The 42 Ambassadors are your special liaisons to CDF, bringing back your ideas and suggestions, which allows us to provide better service. The Ambassadors are a hard working group, and we appreciate their service to CDF.

They're back! Following a four month summer hiatus, our First Friday programs are back on schedule, and we have a good roster of speakers for the eight programs. The First Friday programs are a good business to business networking opportunity, and we hope our members are taking advantage of this event. You may walk away with some new leads in your pocket and new clients for your business.

One of the goals of the Chamber is to offer seminars on topics of interest to the business community. The newly initiated Business Boxed Lunch and Learn Series is proving to be quite successful. Seventy five participated in the August series and we are anticipating the October 7 series to be equally successful. Dick Brodbeck with the Better Business Bu-



SMITH *Images of Tupelo*. The magazine is distributed through a

web of qualified distribution channels all year long, reaching new residents, key business prospects, and visitors to the Tupelo area. Thanks to each of the businesses that support this outstanding community magazine through advertising. If you would like a complimentary copy, please stop by the CDF office.

We invite our members to visit the CDF website [www.cdfms.org](http://www.cdfms.org) and take advantage of the many activities and events listed.

Vice President of Chamber Services

## Community Development Foundation's Board of Directors for 2009-2010

CDF is governed by a 59-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.

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## Dates to remember

**3rd Annual CDF  
Membership Golf Tournament**  
Thursday, September 17  
Big Oaks Golf Club

**First Friday**  
Friday, October 2  
Mall at Barnes Crossing Food Court  
7:00 a.m.

**Business Roundtable**  
Wednesday, September 23  
CDF Boardroom  
4:00 p.m.

*For more information on any of the  
above events please contact the  
CDF office at 662.842.4521*

# Blankenship Receives Ambassador of the Quarter

Michael Blankenship, operating partner and executive vice president of Contemporary Restaurants, was awarded the Ambassador of the Quarter honor at the first quarterly meeting of the CDF Ambassador's Club. The CDF Ambassador's Club is made up of a variety of professionals from the CDF membership who serve as official representatives of the Community Development Foundation. Blankenship garnered this honor by attending seven ribbon cuttings, mentoring five CDF member businesses, and recruiting 12 new CDF members.

As operating partner and executive vice president of Contemporary Restaurants, Blankenship oversees operations at Old Venice Pizza Company in Tupelo and Starkville, and The Varsity Grille in Tupelo and Oxford. Blankenship is a marine, graduate of the University of Memphis, and 15 year veteran of the restaurant industry. In his first year as a CDF Ambassador, Blankenship enjoys networking with other busi-



Pictured are Emily Addison, director of member services, CDF; Jennie Bradford Curlee, chief communications manager, CDF; Michael Blankenship, CDF Ambassador of the Quarter, and Clyde Whitaker, Whitaker Realty and Contemporary Restaurants.

nesses through the Ambassador program.

"I enjoy being a part of the CDF Ambassador's Club," said Blankenship. "I like being involved in the community,

learning about other businesses in the area, and sharing my business with them. It is an honor to represent my company on behalf of my partners, Clyde Whitaker and

Mike Greer."

The Varsity Grille is slated to open near the end of September or first of October 2009. Touted as "casual dining, refined atmosphere," The Varsi-

ty Grille will feature upscale food such as fresh fish and prime beef, for a reasonable price. Located in the former Ruby Tuesday space at the Mall at Barnes Crossing, shoppers will enjoy outdoor dining on their patio and an array of flat screen televisions.

Old Venice Pizza Company, on McCullough Boulevard, has something for everyone. A lunch buffet is available throughout the week for \$7.95, featuring a myriad of delectable lunchtime favorites. On Sundays, patrons can enjoy an expanded brunch buffet. Wednesdays at Old Venice Pizza Company offer customers a chance to "Eat up and Wine down," offering half off single topping pizzas and house wines by the glass. Diners can also enjoy Five-Star Saturdays where a bottle of house wine is just \$5.

For more information on the CDF Ambassador's Club or to learn how your business can have an Ambassador, please contact Jennie Bradford Curlee at 662.842.4521 or [jourlee@cdfms.org](mailto:jourlee@cdfms.org).

## CHICK-FIL-A



To celebrate the grand opening of the newly remodeled Chick-Fil-A in the Mall at Barnes Crossing food court, a ribbon cutting was held. Pictured at the event are: Veleka Ball, CB&S Bank; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Jane Myers, Wiggles & Wags Pet Sitting; Kathy Bailey, Crye-Leike Realtors; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; Ben Martin, RE/Max Associates Realty; Richard Carleton, Mall at Barnes Crossing; Cindy Hale, Tupelo Automobile Museum; Barbara Smith, CDF; Abbie Moreno, ABasket Kase; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Randy Harris, M&F Bank; Carey Snyder, Snyder & Company; Blair Hill, Master Hospitality; Councilman Jonny Davis; Toby Hedges, Shelter Insurance; Justin Flowers, Chick-Fil-A; Lesli Flowers, Chick-Fil-A; Les Perry, North Mississippi Medical Center; Connie Snell, My Elegant Clutter; Waurene Heflin, Crye-Leike Realtors; Jennifer Noel, American General Life & Accident Insurance; Tim Long, Cellular South; and Emily Addison, CDF. Chick-Fil-A is located in the food court at the Mall at Barnes Crossing and can be reached at 662.844.9616.

## NEWMS



A ribbon cutting was held for NEWMS (New Expectations for Women in Mississippi), at the Renasant Center for IDEAs. Pictured on the front row of the event are: Cheryl Hendrix, Shari Long Neely, Rae Mathis, Raylin Mathis, Cheryl Comer, Debra Bates-Wuichet, Martha Swindle, Lee Oswald, Mary Werner, Terri Williams, Kim Sistrunk, Deborah Tierce, Rubye Del Harden, Tess Mason, and Emily Addison. Also pictured are CDF Ambassadors and members of the NEWMS Success Skills course. For more information on NEWMS, they may be contacted at 662.823.4336.

## CARLOCK TOYOTA



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the grand opening of Carlock Toyota in Tupelo. Pictured on the front row of the event are: Wes Young, Gulf States Toyota; Supervisor Tommie Lee Ivy; David Rumbarger, CDF; Corbett Hill, Carlock Automotive; Sy Brazeal, Carlock Toyota; Michael McLellan, Carlock Toyota; Ellis Humphries, Toyota Financial Services; Trace Carlock; Wesley Carlock; Campbell Carlock, Clay Carlock, Carlock Automotive; Dot Carlock; Mayor Jack Reed, Jr.; Toby Hines, Gulf States Toyota; Councilman Jonny Davis; Councilman Mike Bryan; Councilman Fred Pitts; Mark Thomas, Carlock Toyota; David Vaughn, Carlock Toyota; Matt Rogers, Carlock Toyota; and Jesse Morris, Carlock Toyota. Also pictured are members of the CDF Ambassador's Club, representatives from Gulf States Toyota, and customers of Carlock Toyota. Carlock Toyota is located at 882 Cross Creek Drive and can be reached at 662.842.6428.

## “Schemes Against Businesses”

Sponsored by CDF—Chamber of Commerce

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.  
CDF Boardroom  
300 West Main Street  
Tupelo, MS

CDF  
Members  
\$15.00

Non  
Members  
\$25.00

Lunch  
will be  
Provided

Space  
is  
Limited

Presented by Mr. Dick Brodbeck, Director of Communications  
Better Business Bureau, Jackson, MS

At this session, participants will learn:

The most common scams such as phony invoices,  
office supply and paper pirates, the brush off, and the vanity pitch

How to Protect your Business and Train your Staff

Please call (662) 842-4521 to reserve your space  
Online registration is available at [www.tupelochamber.com](http://www.tupelochamber.com)



## 2009-10 *Images Tupelo* Magazine Published [imagestupelo.com](http://imagestupelo.com)



The Community Development Foundation is pleased to announce the debut of *Images Tupelo* 2009-10, a spectacular new edition that showcases the best of the community through all original features and photography.

The Chamber and select area businesses will distribute the magazine to prospective residents, visitors and other key venues such as medical, professional and real estate offices. Copies will also go out to attendees at various trade shows, conferences and events throughout the year.

*Images Tupelo* is part of a complete publishing program that also includes an online edition of the magazine, a photographic video tour of the community, a targeted distribution network and customer retention and acquisition program.

This unique marketing publication is truly a collaborative effort, and we sincerely thank all of the local businesses that supported the project through advertising. *Images Tupelo* is published annually.

Advertising is available for purchase year-round on the online magazine. For information on how your company or business can get involved, please contact our publishing partner, Journal Communications, directly at (800) 333-8842 or inquire through the online magazine.

Get connected! Enrich your Web site instantly with engaging community content. Go to [imagestupelo.com](http://imagestupelo.com), “Links” and “Link To Us.” We also invite you to pick up a copy of the magazine anytime at the Chamber office.



## OREN DUNN MUSEUM



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Oren Dunn City Museum. Pictured on the front row at the event are: Tim Long, Cellular South; Libby Bell, Sanctuary Hospice House; Waurene Helfin; Crye-Leike Realtors; Connie Snell, My Elegant Clutter; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Janice Anthony, Oren Dunn City Museum; Don Lewis, Tupelo Sports Council; Councilman Mike Bryan; Councilman Nettie Davis; Rae Mathis, Oren Dunn City Museum; Harold Hudson, Friends of the Oren Dunn City Museum; Kenneth McGehee, Oren Dunn City Museum; Jerry Duckett, Oren Dunn City Museum; Tony Lute, Tupelo Veterans Museum; and Emily Addison, CDF. Pictured on the back row at the event are: Bill Yarbrough, Friends of the Oren Dunn City Museum; Frances Williams, Friends of the Oren Dunn City Museum; Cheryl Land, Sanctuary Hospice House; Lawrence Stanley; Jane Myers, Wiggles & Wags Pet Sitting; Les Perry, North Mississippi Medical Center; Barbara Smith, Tupelo Airport Authority; Cindy Hale, Tupelo Automobile Museum; Randy Harris, M&F Bank; Benjamin Hill, Renasant Bank; Blair Hill, Master Hospitality; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Johnna Moore, WTVB/WLOV/WKDH; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; Cindy Black, Prudential 1st Real Estate; Richard Carleton, Mall at Barnes Crossing; Bryan Collier, The Orchard; and Boyd Yarbrough, City of Tupelo. The Oren Dunn City Museum is located at 689 Rutherford Road in Tupelo, and can be reached at 662.841.6438. For more information on the Friends of the Oren Dunn City Museum organization, please call 662.841.6438.

# Youth Villages: Helping Children and Families Live Successfully

Since 1997, Youth Villages has operated in Tupelo, providing intensive in-home and therapeutic foster care services for children and families throughout Northeast Mississippi. Through their essential program of work, more than 200 children are served each year in Tupelo and the surrounding area. With the core value that children's needs come first...always, Youth Villages does everything possible to help kids in need reach their fullest potential.

Headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee, Youth Villages annually helps more than 14,000 children and families in 10 states and Washington, D.C., through such assistance as intensive in-home services, residential treatment, foster care and adoption, transitional living services, mentoring, and crisis services. With a focus on strengthening families, Youth Villages consistently produces an 80% success rate of children successfully living at home or in a home-like setting two years after completing one of its programs.

With 23 counselors who work from the Tupelo office,



Front Row L - R: Stefanie Stanfield, Angela M. Lowery, Latika Speller, Young Anderson Second Row L - R: Rodney Turner, Kristen O'Quinn, Nakii Kincaid, Brandy Ferguson, Shana Morton, Natalie Richey, Kelly Marcy, Connie Montgomery, Sarah Chandler, Robin Michael, Brooke Stanford, Ashley Fowler, Gayle Sanders, Barbara McCain, Shawna Wallace Third Row L - R: Monica Chandler, Amanda Coleman, Bethany Herring, Casey Sappington, Jessica Masur, Jessica Brooks, Kala Leathers, Kristen Schwenk, Stephanie Bamard Fourth Row: L-R: Didi Udofiah, Benjamin Starkey, Shandi Thornton, Jacqueline Randle

Youth Villages Tupelo serves Lee, Pontotoc, Union, Itawamba, Tishomingo, Alcorn, Tippah, Calhoun, Monroe, and Chickasaw counties. The Tupelo office focuses on two primary programs: a foster care program and intercept program. Currently, Youth Villages has 38 foster homes in Northeast Mississippi and there is a desperate need for more foster parents who are willing to help

children in the community. The intercept program has three facets. First, care is given to children who are in Department of Human Services (DHS) custody and have a diagnosis. The goal is to get them out of custody within four to six months. Second, the Family Preservation program is a preventative service for children who are not currently in DHS custody. This

program generally runs for 20 weeks. Finally, the Mississippi Youth Programs Around the Clock (MYPAC) program is funded through Medicaid and can provide services to anyone. Children must have a diagnosis, some treatment, and risk of being placed in a residential setting. This is the highest level of care and can run from 11 months up to five years.

There are many ways for members of the community to get involved with Youth Villages. The highest level of assistance comes with actually becoming a foster parent. Youth Villages provides free training, 24-hour support, and a monthly reimbursement to help cover the costs associated with having a child in the home. Youth Villages counselors are always willing to speak at area civic, community, and church group meetings, to educate the public on the array of services offered through its care. Finally, each holiday season, Youth Villages seeks community support to make sure each of the children given aid through their programs in Northeast Mississippi

receive gifts. Contributions and donations from individuals and community groups make this possible.

Heather Flowers serves as a regional manager for Youth Villages and her goal is to make sure that every citizen in Northeast Mississippi knows what Youth Villages is and how they can help make a difference in a child's life.

"We strive to get involved in the community and connect with other community agencies. We are trying to broaden the community's picture of what we do," said Flowers. "We want to support our community if we are going to ask them to do the same for us."

The mission of Youth Villages is to help children and families live successfully. Through its enduring program of work, the staff of Youth Villages in Tupelo is truly fulfilling this mission by enabling children and their families to have a better life at home.

Youth Villages is located at 252 South Veterans Blvd. in Tupelo and can be reached at 662.840.3008. For more information, please visit their website at [www.youthvillages.org](http://www.youthvillages.org).

## UNDERCONSTRUCTION FITNESS



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the opening of Underconstruction Fitness in Pontotoc. Pictured at the event are: Emily Addison, CDF; Johnna Moore, WTVA/WLOV/WKDH; Barbara Smith, Tupelo Airport Authority; Orlando Pannell, CDF; Randy Harris, M&F Bank; Vice Mayor Herman Austin; Dennis Montgomery, Underconstruction Fitness; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; Kathy Bailey, Crye-Leike Realtors; Waurene Heflin, Crye-Leike Realtors; and Renee Kelton, Lyons HR. Underconstruction Fitness is located at 166 Highway 15 North in Pontotoc and can be reached at 662.296.1388.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

First Friday ■ Friday, October 2, 2009

Speaker: TBA | Sponsored by The Pines at Barnes Crossing

THE MALL AT BARNES CROSSING

Food Court

7:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast Will Be Served.

For more information, call: 662.842.4521



A "Secrets of Advertising" seminar was held on August 26. Pictured, Josh Mabus, Mabus Agency, and Katie Drewery, Mississippi Small Business Development Center, conducted the seminar. For more information on upcoming Chamber Seminars, please contact the CDF office at 662.842.4521.

## PINES AT BARNES CROSSING



To celebrate the grand opening of The Pines at Barnes Crossing, a ribbon cutting was held. Pictured on the front row are: Emily Addison, CDF; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Michael Blankenship, Old Venice Pizza Company; Gene Hanlon, RH Plumbing; Randy Rhudy, Rhudy's Heating & Air; Councilman Jonny Davis; Bob Starnes, The Pines at Barnes Crossing; Nancy Oliver, The Pines at Barnes Crossing; Debbie Hall, The Pines at Barnes Crossing; David Rumbarger, CDF; Waurene Heflin, Crye-Leike Realtors; Bea Luckett, J. Guyton Group Realty; James Hunter, Hunter Construction. Pictured on the back row are: Brain Stout, Stout's Carpet; Mike Miller, Insurance Services; Nancy White, Insurance Services; Paul Mize, BancorpSouth; Jim Repult; Johnna Moore, WTVB/WLOV/WKDH; Abbie Moreno, ABasket Kase; Louis Conley, Renasant Bank; Bert Sparks, WTVB/WLOV/WKDH; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; Toby Hedges, Shelter Insurance; Chris Grubbs, Home Décor Innovations; Jane Myers, Wiggles & Wags Pet Sitting; Cindy Hale, Tupelo Automobile Museum; Bill McNutt, WLM Insurance, LLC; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Ben Martin, RE/Max Associates Realty; Blair Hill, Master Hospitality; Danielle Del Grande, Comfort Suites; Randy Hanlon, RH Plumbing; Kyle Finley, Home Décor Innovations; Russ Watson, Rhudy's Heating & Air; Les Perry, North Mississippi Medical Center; Gary Sparkman, Regions Bank; Charles Owens, The Pines at Barnes Crossing; Hoot Wilder, Regions Bank; Leslie Baker, Premier Bride of Mississippi/Mother and Child; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Jim Ivy, Ivy Fence Company; Clyde Whitaker, Whitaker Realty; Jonathan McCoy, BNA Bank; and Tim Long, Cellular South. The Pines at Barnes Crossing is located at 4100 North Gloster Street in Tupelo and can be reached at 662.346.6896.

## TUPELO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



The August Tupelo Young Professionals event was a luncheon at the BancorpSouth Arena, featuring Ms. Kimberly Nastasi, IOM, CEO of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce. Nastasi addressed the young professionals on how to co-exist in the workplace with different generations. For more information on TYP, please visit [www.typs.biz](http://www.typs.biz).

## Renasant Center for IDEAs Business Client Profile

**songShine Entertainment**  
vaz Vanelli, Owner



### WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS IS SONGSHINE?

The Renasant Center for IDEAs is now home to songShine Entertainment, a digital media company focused on the creation of computer-generated images and other digital content. Originally started as a management company to maintain and license intellectual property, songShine has acquired software and hardware to focus on the creation and storage of that intellectual property content as well. songShine also serves as a booking agent for musicians and comedians who perform at local venues.

### WHAT KIND OF SERVICES DO YOU OFFER YOUR CLIENTS?

Though songShine is concerned primarily with creation in artistic fields, (music and fictional storytelling) they also produce television and internet advertisements, and have provided 2-D and 3-D computer animation services for other production companies. They create training videos, music videos, computer animations, short films, logos, and other motion graphics. songShine provides post-production services for independent filmmakers

and has edited two feature-length movies, as well as numerous short films. A songShine animated short film was awarded best "Made in Mississippi" at a recent Tupelo Film Festival.

### WHAT KIND OF PROJECTS ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

Currently, songShine has several projects on-going, including a Map Project which explores the application of 3D modeling to user-driven map services.

### CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR OFFICE IN THE RENASANT CENTER FOR IDEAS! HOW CAN BUSINESS OWNERS CONTACT YOU?

songShine Entertainment  
vaz Vanelli, owner  
Phone: 662-823-1234  
[russell@songshine.net](mailto:russell@songshine.net)  
398 East Main Street - Suite 135  
Tupelo, MS 38804

## Join us for the next meeting of the TUPELO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

at



sponsored by



**Thursday,  
September 17, 2009  
6:00 p.m.  
Fairpark Park**

TYPs will receive access to the VIP area at  
Downtown Main Street.

A ticket is required for entrance into the VIP area, so interested participants must RSVP to [TYP@cdfms.org](mailto:TYP@cdfms.org) to reserve a ticket, no later than Friday, September 11.

There is a limit of one ticket per person.  
Tickets can be picked up at the CDF office at  
300 West Main Street in Tupelo.

## HEART TO HEART HOSPICE



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the new location of Heart to Heart Hospice in Tupelo. Pictured on the front row are: Barbara Hall; Waurene Heflin, Crye-Leike Realtors; James Griffin, Heart to Heart Hospice; Debra Griffin, Heart to Heart Hospice; Pholecia Whitehead, Heart to Heart Hospice; Lil Henry, Heart to Heart Hospice; Jessica Dillard, Heart to Heart Hospice; Rhonda Fancher, Heart to Heart Hospice; Phyllis Goddard, Heart to Heart Hospice; Roseanne Hicks, Heart to Heart Hospice; John Hicks, Heart to Heart Hospice; Mayor Jack Reed, Jr.; Tawanna Martin, Heart to Heart Hospice; Caroline Gross, Heart to Heart Hospice; Tonya Rogers, Heart to Heart Hospice; Tiwana O'Rear, Heart to Heart Hospice; Heather Palmer, Heart to Heart Hospice; Emily Addison, CDF. Pictured on the back row are: Sheila Davis, PPI; Virginia Smith, Access Family Health Services; Kristie Dickey, Heart to Heart Hospice; Joann Young, Heart to Heart Hospice; Stephanie West, Heart to Heart Hospice; Michael Blankenship, Old Venice Pizza Company; Pat Henson, Traceway Manor; Louis Conley, Renasant Bank; Cheryl Land, Sanctuary Hospice House; Johnna Moore, WTVA/WLOV/WKDH; Libby Bell, Sanctuary Hospice House; Cindy Bryant, LSI Staffing Solutions; Connie Snell, My Elegant Clutter; Bill McNutt, WLM Insurance, LLC; Jane Myers, Wiggles & Wags Pet Sitting; Randy Harris, M&F Bank; Barbara Smith, Tupelo Airport Authority; Renee Kelton, Lyons HR; Blair Hill, Master Hospitality; Bea Luckett, J. Guyton Group Realty; Cindy Black, Prudential 1st Real Estate; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Les Perry, North Mississippi Medical Center; Danielle Del Grande, Comfort Suites; and Kyle Finley, Home Décor Innovations. Heart to Heart Hospice is located at 1140 West Main Street and can be reached at 662.844.7372.

## R.E.A.L. L.O.V.E.: Yes You Can!

**W**ith the success of the pilot summer literacy program for children, the Community Development Foundation is sponsoring a similar program for adults. Beginning September 17, adult education assistance will be offered with the positive enforced theme: Yes You Can!

Adult participants will receive individual assistance with learning to read, improving reading skills, preparing for GED, interview skills, resume preparation, and much more.

"This program coincides with Mayor Jack Reed Jr.'s plan to establish Tupelo as a center for lifelong learning," said Orlando Pannell, director of community development for the Community Development Foundation. "We want



adults to know that they can further their education and improve their lives at any age."

The program will begin Thursday, September 17, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the A.M. Strange Library. It will be held every Thursday and will run through the last week in October. Future courses are planned and will include such subjects as basic computer skill training.

For more information or to sign up for the R.E.A.L. L.O.V.E. adult education assistance program, please contact Orlando Pannell at 662.842.4521.



Busylad and the Community Development Foundation hosted an informal reception with United States Senator Roger Wicker at Busylad on August 26. Senator Wicker spoke about pending healthcare initiatives on small businesses, and took questions from the large crowd. Pictured, Buddy Stubbs, Busylad owner, reads a question from an audience member for Senator Wicker to answer.



The August Business Boxed Lunch and Learn featured John Lindsey's presentation of "Treat Customers as Guests to Generate More Sales." Over 75 CDF members attended the luncheon. The next Business Boxed Lunch and Learn will be held October 7 in the CDF Boardroom.

### NETWORK WITH OTHER CDF MEMBERS

following the 3rd Annual CDF Membership Golf Tournament at a

**BUSINESS-AFTER-HOURS**

*Thursday, September 17, 2009*

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Big Oaks Golf Club  
3481 Big Oaks Boulevard  
Saltito, MS

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Community Development Foundation

Application for Membership

Please tell us about your organization

Organization Name

Mailing Address City, State, Zip Code

Physical Address (if different) City, State, Zip Code

Website Number of Employees

Category (list located on the back of this application)

Keywords (choose up to 10 words that describe your business)

Main Contact (will receive all chamber correspondence)

Contact Name Title

Phone Toll-free phone Fax

E-mail address

Additional Contact

Name Title E-mail

Areas of Interest (please circle your selections)

Ambassadors Business Roundtable Sponsorship Opportunities Tupelo Young Professionals

Do we have your permission to use your photos in our chamber publication(s)?

\_\_Yes \_\_No

Signature and title of authorized person with your company

My CDF membership check is enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please send me an invoice

Please bill payment to: \_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_ American Express

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

300 West Main Street, P.O. Box A  
 Tupelo, MS 38802-1210  
 662.842.4521 Phone  
 800.523.3463 Toll-free  
 662.841.0693 Fax  
 www.cdfms.org



# Mall

*Continued from Page 5*

Purdom said sales in July were up 16.2 percent compared to July 2008. Sales from January to July are up 2.8 percent versus the same period a year ago.

"Traffic is up, sales are up, so we're pleased," Purdom said. "Things are looking better."

And while a couple high-profile tenants have left or are leaving, Snyder and Purdom said the moves shouldn't set off alarms.

They say that malls and mall retailers change business models all the time, a necessary step in order to stay relevant – and attract shoppers.

"The mall started with promotional-priced and discount retailers, then we moved to better youth and women retailers and now we're going after the better box stores," Purdom said. "Look at Barnes & Noble and Jos. A. Bank for example.

The changes in the mall's

## What is a super-regional mall?

According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, a super-regional shopping center is similar to a regional center (which provides general merchandise and services in full depth and variety) but because of its larger size, a super-regional center has more anchors, a deeper selection of merchandise and draws from a larger population base.

makeup of tenants is a sign of the times, Snyder said.

"There are certain retailers who have been mall retailers for 10-15 years and are closing or becoming strip-center tenants, and that's a business decision on their part," he said. "But at the same time, our business model is changing, and we're going after the new lifestyle-center retailers who are for the first time looking at coming to the mall. It's a cycle.

"As retailers look to expand, they look at where the big names are, and I don't mean to brag, but The Mall at Barnes Crossing is where they look first. We go for the A-list and we've been very successful."



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Online Marketing

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662-869-1413

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Richelle Anderson  
Designer/Developer

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**Saltillo**

*Continued from Page 6*

that any new business opening in Saltillo is a positive sign.

For example, a State Farm insurance office also opened Tuesday at Center City.

Sometime this fall, North Mississippi Pediatrics is set to open a satellite clinic at the former McCallum Building Supply location, which Shannon has developed, too.

And he's been hot on the recruiting trail, looking for a restaurant or two to open in Saltillo.

Retail development has come slowly in Saltillo, but Shannon sees plenty of opportunity.

"We've got so many things going on – good schools, good places to work and live," he said. "I think we're doing a pretty good job of having the places where you can buy what you want without having to go somewhere else. And we're going to keep working on that."



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Bank deposits are FDIC insured. BancorpSouth Investment Services Inc. and BancorpSouth Insurance Services Inc. are wholly owned subsidiaries of BancorpSouth Bank. Insurance products are offered by BancorpSouth Insurance Services Inc. Investment products are offered by BancorpSouth Investment Services Inc. Member SIPC. Insurance and investment products are •Not a deposit •Not FDIC insured •Not insured by any federal government agency •Not guaranteed by the bank •May go down in value

# Business Directory

## Air Conditioning

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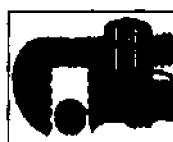
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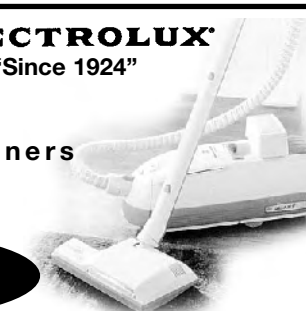
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