

Big games, Big \$\$\$

Sporting goods now a multi-billion business



PAGE 2

Make no mistake, sports is a business

We Americans love our sports. Football, basketball, baseball, tennis, golf, you name it – even hockey.

We like to participate in sports one way or another. We encourage our children to find something. We like to cheer – and boo – at games, matches and tournaments. Even throw things and cuss at our big-screen TVs when the officials blow an obvious call.

And we often want to play along, either in a pick-up game or on some league team.

According to a July 2009 report by the National Sporting Goods Association, nearly 79 percent of Americans ages 7 and older – about 212 million – participated more than once in nearly two dozen sports and recreational activities in the previous three years.

Among the remaining 21 percent or 57 million people who didn't play along, about 60 percent were female and 40 percent were male.

So about 80 percent of Americans participate in some form or fashion. It shows in U.S retail sales last year of sporting goods including footwear,

clothing and equipment. They reached \$50.7 billion, according to the NSGA.

That was about 3 percent lower than 2008, which itself was 1 percent lower than the year before.

But then, all these numbers came during the Great Recession, and everybody was cutting back – unless you were the federal government, but that's a column or three for another day.

At least for this year, sporting goods sales are expected to reach \$51.5 billion. However, that NSGA forecast was made in May, when the economy looked to be back on track. Now the picture isn't quite so clear.

Nearly half of the overall sales last year – nearly \$24.4 billion – went to athletic and sports equipment. About \$17.7 billion went to footwear, while clothing reeled in about \$9.3 billion.

This probably comes as no big sur-



**Dennis
SEID**

prise, but in the equipment category, hunting and firearms showed the biggest increase in sales, rising 14 percent to \$5.2 billion from \$4.5 billion in 2008.

In fact, in Mississippi, the most popular sports, ranked in descending order, are hunting with firearms, hunting with bow and arrow, target shooting, boating and fishing. Shocking, isn't it?

I know quite a few hunters, including my father-in-law, who can't or don't put a price on the enjoyment they have of being in the woods or fields during hunting season. And few can blame them.

Likewise, I know many parents who get a kick out of taking their kids to baseball, softball and soccer tournaments across the state and region. The cost of equipment, uniforms, gas, hotels, food and other odds and ends adds up to a small fortune.

We do it for our children as much as we do it for ourselves sometimes. Yes, living vicariously through our kids.

Not that any of this is a bad thing. It's the American way.

But sports is as much fun and recreation as it is a business.

Just look at the eye-popping salaries many professional athletes get. Or the huge contracts that some head coaches get.

Is it right that a college football coach gets paid more than a school's president? Probably not, but it makes sense.

Winning football coaches bring fannies to the stadiums. They attract season-ticket holders and big-time donors. Winning garners attention, which garners money, plain and simple.

Fans often complain about the outrageous salaries paid to athletes, yet we still watch and follow them.

It's when they don't win that fans become even more vocal. Get rid of the coach, or our dollars go elsewhere.

Money drives sports, and sports drives money.

Which means sports is big business, for better or worse.

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

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Cities cash in on competitive athletes

■ **Tupelo, Corinth and Oxford have difference emphases on sports development.**

By **Carlie Kollath**
BUSINESS JOURNAL

College football isn't the only sport that brings in money in Northeast Mississippi.

Across the region, communities are making money from events such as youth baseball and softball tournaments, regional gymnastics meets and running events.

In Tupelo alone, the city recorded an economic impact of \$10.1 million from sporting events in fiscal year 2009. Almost 30,000 participants were involved in 23 functions tracked by the Tupelo Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Youth sports are the big moneymakers for Tupelo, said Tupelo Convention and Visitors Bureau Sports Development Director Matt Wyatt, because the participants usually travel with family members.

"Parents and grandparents and everyone else is emotionally invested," Wyatt said. "I've heard others say it that sports in general is about as recession-proof as you'll find."

But he's noticed an economic impact on his industry in the eight months he's had the job.

"Pretty much like every other facet out there, there's been some declines," he said.

In Corinth, SportsPlex Director Grant Roberts also said he's feeling the pinch, but he's still moving forward with events.

"We struggle like every other business right now," Roberts said.

Tupelo's take

Tupelo got its start in cultivating sports development in the early-1990s. According to CVB Executive Director Neal McCoy, who previously was the sports development director, city officials convinced the Croatian team to train in Tupelo for the 1996



FILE/THOMAS WELLS

Coach Igor Kolpakchi works with Natalie Manga, 16, of New York on the uneven bars as they and other gymnast go through their open workouts at the Bancorp-South Arena for the 2009 Level 9 Junior Olympic Eastern Championships.

Olympics, which were held in Atlanta.

The economic boon from that experience, McCoy said, started Tupelo on a path to

developing its niche in the state as a destination for sporting events. The CVB was the first in the state to create a position on its staff for direc-

tor of sports development.

"The leaders in the past have really staked their claim to being a youth sports destination," Wyatt said.

The city's "bread-and-butter" events, Wyatt said, are youth softball, youth baseball, youth soccer and youth gymnastics. The city is attractive for these sports, he said, because Tupelo is known as a safe, family-friendly destination and it has a good number of hotel rooms and eateries.

The top two most desired events are regional tournaments and championships and state championships.

The bigger events that draw people from afar are good financially for Tupelo because the farther participants travel, the more likely it is they will spend the night.

Plus, if it is a state, regional or national championship event, the athletes usually have a larger entourage of friends and family, he said. And more people means more money for the host city because they will eat, sleep, shop and explore the area.

Turn to **COMPETITION** on Page 22

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Cheerleading: 'Not everybody can do this'

■ **An industry has popped up to help potential candidates prepare for tryouts and competitions.**

By **Carlie Kollath**
BUSINESS JOURNAL

TUPELO – Cheer gyms continue to pop up in Northeast Mississippi, which one owner says is evidence that more people are taking the sport seriously.

Cheer gyms, such as Tupelo Cheer Academy, Extreme Cheer and North Mississippi Cheer, are focused on training young men and women about the techniques of cheerleading. Instructors, usually former high school and college cheerleaders, teach students how to tumble, do jumps and do stunts required to get on more competitive cheerleading squads.

Tumbling is the gymnastics component involving flips and other tricks. Jumps include moves such as toe touches.

Stunts include using other cheerleaders to build something, such as a pyramid.

"It's a lot more technical and there's stuff that comes with it that a lot of people don't understand," said Kari Hooker, owner of Kari's Studio and North Mississippi Cheer in Saltillo. "I can't draw. Not everybody can do this. These are a lot of talented kids that work really hard."

Classes at cheer gyms are typically once each week and average about \$40 each month for general cheer instruction. All-star classes and private lessons are available and cost more money.

Along with the lessons, students also need buy uniforms. According to Hooker, it costs on average \$350 to get the necessary clothing for cheerleading: top, shirt, shoes, bow, bloomers and a bag.

Marian Moore, co-owner of Tupelo Cheer with her husband, Freddie, is a former school cheerleading sponsor.



DESTE LEE

Tupelo Cheer Academy opened 12 years ago as a cheer gym. Owner Marian Moore said she teaches students the techniques of cheerleading, which include motions, tumbling, stunts and jumps.

She said that when she opened TCA 12 years ago, the region had no cheer gyms. Instead, there were gymnastics gyms that offered tumbling that could be used in cheerleading.

But she wanted to take it a step further with her cheer gym and focus on cheerleading only.

"The extra help better prepares you and your squad for competition," Moore said.

The training also is geared to-

ward helping potential cheerleaders prepare for tryouts and for helping people prepare to be a college cheerleader.

"To be good in cheerleading

Turn to **CHEERING** on Page 22

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Martial arts schools see growing interest

By Dennis Seid

BUSINESS JOURNAL

The martial arts have been practiced for thousands of years by various cultures.

For some, they are merely a form of recreation or exercise. For others, they are a sport and an art form with deeper meaning.

In the U.S., martial arts are also big business, with some 30,000 schools and 1,500 related businesses. According to the Martial Arts Museum website, nearly 22 million U.S. adults have participated in some form of a martial arts program over their lifetimes.

In the U.S., kung fu and judo gained popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by tai chi and karate. Martial arts movies featuring the likes of Bruce Lee, Chuck Norris, Jackie Chan, Steven Segal and Jet Li have captured fans' attention over the years.

Today, mixed martial arts, or MMA, grabs much of the attention, with stars such as An-

■ To find out more about the martial arts schools mentioned in this story, contact:

- Thanos Kalemeris, Mid-South Kung Fu Arnis Academy at (662) 488-1682 or thanosk@bellsouth.net. The school is located at 718-A W. Bankhead St. in New Albany
- Noel McMichael, Noel McMichael's Kinetic Kick at (662) 842-9661 or visit www.kinetickick.com. The school is located at 126 Fenco Drive in Tupelo.
- Larry Pinson, Pinson's ATA and Martial Arts at (662) 871-5425. The school is located at 2675 Highway 145 in Saltillo

derson Silva, Georges St. Pierre, Fedor Emelianenko, Mauricio Rua, Chuck Liddell and Randy Couture displaying their multiple skills in many disciplines including Brazilian jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai, wrestling and boxing.

Students and participants in Northeast Mississippi have a variety of styles available to them, including karate, kung fu, hapkido, taekwondo and yes, even MMA training.

But the schools aren't necessarily trying to create tomor-



Jarod Reppert, center, and other students practice their taekwondo form during a class at Pinson's ATA and Martial Arts in Saltillo.

DESTIE LEE

row's new superstar. Rather, they want to share their knowledge of the martial arts, all the while teaching discipline, respect and self-defense.

And many students are young. According to some statistics, more than 75 percent of martial arts students are under age 13.

Thanos Kalemeris, who owns the Mid-South Kung Fu Arnis Academy in New Albany, says he tells kids' parents that what he teaches is more than learning about how to punch, block and kick.

"This is a system. We'll get the exercise, sure, but we also get knowledge about how to do it safely and properly," he

said. "There will be discipline, self-respect and cognitive development."

Kalimeris, a second-degree black belt in kung fu, has been practicing martial arts for 30 years, having trained in various styles, including shaolin kung fu, arnis, tai chi chuan, taekwondo, shotokan and ish-iryu.

Martial arts practitioners and teachers, regardless of their style, say training involves the mind, body and spirit.

Larry Pinson, owner of Pinson's ATA and Martial Arts in Saltillo, agrees.

He, too, has trained for more than 30 years, practicing taekwondo, combat hapkido, jiu jitsu, judo and even boxing.

"I've been doing martial arts practically all my life, and for me, it's helped me stay healthy," he said. "It makes a difference. And you have to remember that kids learn a lot by watching what you do and

Turn to **MARTIAL ARTS** on Page 22

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Banks uncertain how reform will change business model

By Jerry Siebenmark

MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

Banks and credit union executives will be waiting for the next several months, even years, for their business to change, perhaps dramatically, as federal regulators implement the most significant piece of banking legislation in nearly two decades.

While the genesis of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was the subprime crisis and the failure of large investment and traditional banks such as Lehman Bros. and Washington Mutual, the 848-page document has myriad new rules for all banks, thrifts and credit unions.

Not all of the new law's effects on financial services are clear, bankers and credit union executives said.

But a combination of the changes brought about by the rules, as well as the rules themselves, could drive some smaller bankers to leave the business altogether and alter

the way banks deal with retail customers, they said.

Moreover, the new regulations will put additional pressure on bank profits.

"It's going to make it harder to make money, and, with an adjunct to that, it's going to make it harder to serve our customers," said Charlie Chandler, chairman, president and CEO of Wichita, Kan.,-based Intrust Bank, which has \$3.7 billion in assets.

And not all the effects of the new law have yet to be realized.

"Frankly, it's hard to get our arms around it because there are so many tentacles," Chandler said.

One of Dodd-Frank's effects is crystal-clear for John Clevenger, the head of \$17.8 billion Commerce Bank in the Wichita area.

"The economics of retail banking are going to change," Clevenger said. "That's the one thing that's certain."

It's not that retail banking

will become "uneconomical," Clevenger said. But measures within the new law, such as changes to how much banks can charge retailers to process customers' debit and credit card transactions, probably will mean less income for banks. The new law provides for the Federal Reserve, not banks, to set rates on such interchange fees.

"When the market's been setting a price and then the government sets the price, there's a potential danger there," Clevenger said.

Though those interchange fees have yet to be set by the Fed, "we don't think it's going to be better for banks; we think it's going to be worse," Clevenger said.

The anticipated cut to the interchange fee comes on top of a decrease in fee income from ATM and debit card overdrafts implemented by a separate rule change by the Fed earlier this year.

Those fees "did cover quite a bit of the overhead of pro-

viding branch-based services, so we are going to have to be more thoughtful about how we provide branch-based services," Clevenger said.

As fees that support retail banking services such as branches and free checking decline, banks will have to look harder at offering so many "free" services, said Tom Page, president of \$1.4 billion Emprise Bank.

"My sense is community banks will find out they can no longer do these things for nothing," Page said.

Free checking today may mean in the future that there will still be no fees as long as a customer maintains a specific balance in their checking account, Clevenger said.

Banks also will put a lot more scrutiny in deciding to invest in capital-intensive retail banking services, such as building new branches.

"I do think this will slow, if not stop, that branch-building binge that, as an industry, we have been on," Clevenger said.

But the new law's effect probably won't stop at changing retail banking services.

Intrust's Chandler and Emprise's Page said they think the new law's added regulation is so onerous that it might drive some smaller, rural banks to give up banking.

The smaller the bank, the less it can spread out the cost of complying with the added regulations.

The new law's requirement for banks to boost their minimum capital levels and the prospect of having a third regulator – the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection – overseeing them will weigh on banks of all sizes.

Page said his nearly 30 years of experience in the industry lead him to believe that it may be too much for some of those small, family-owned banks.

"There are going to be a lot of people who are going to have some difficult decisions to make," Page said.

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New hobbies, sports could be budget-buster

ASHLEY M. HEHER

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO – New hobbies and exercise regimes may broaden your horizons or shrink your waistline, but they also can break the bank if you're not careful.

Before your well-meaning ambition drives you to shell out hundreds of dollars for sports gear, a new musical instrument or a closet full of craft supplies, stop and take a proverbial breath. You may be able to save big by test-driving your new pastime with rentals, workshops and other shortcuts.

Here are seven tips.

1. Take it slow. The biggest cost saver may be the simplest. Ease in one supply at a time. And upgrade as you go.

"You don't move into your dream house when you move out of your parents' house," said Deborah Moebes, owner of Whipstitch Fabrics in Atlanta, who teaches sewing

classes. "You move into the dorm, and then you move into the apartment and you move into your starter home. You work up to it."

2. Talk to the experts. Before diving into a new hobby, investigate what's involved. Search the Web. Browse a bookstore or library. Get a sense of why people you know like the activity and what it costs. Runners need good sneakers, while projects like woodworking may require lots of space for supplies like saws and chisels and stains, as well as sizable investments of time and money.

3. Take a class. It's increasingly common for studios, stores and gyms to offer introductory classes and clinics where newbies can try their hand. Some last only an hour and are free while others can go for weeks with price tags to match. But almost all let you learn new skills and build confidence under the watchful

eye of an instructor, and many provide materials.

At Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, for instance, instructors offer no-commitment workshops where students can try out an instrument for a few hours. It's a chance to get a sense of how to play, say, a banjo and whether it's worth renting one and committing the funds to sign up for a series of classes.

4. Make a list. Whether you're getting advice from an instructor, a clerk in a sporting goods store or a crafty acquaintance, ask for help compiling three lists: items you can't do without, supplies that would be nice to have and things you might want to splurge on later.

At Home Depot, customers who attend any of six hands-on workshops held each month in each store leave with a list of what they need to complete a project.

"We don't want to overwhelm or confuse anybody,"

said Ken Rye, the home improvement chain's marketing manager of workshops. Lots of other stores and schools offer similar classes.

5. Buy a kit. Vince Parker, the director of training and customer service at Hobby Lobby, an Oklahoma City-based chain that stocks everything from model rocket kits to origami supplies, recommends starting out with a beginner's kit of what you'll need for one project. Then you can assess whether you're interested in expanding your supplies and launching into the next activity.

Beware, though, that kits sometimes cost more than buying items individually.

6. Rent it. If you need big machinery, check for local hardware stores and heavy-equipment companies that rent tools and specialized machines. You can rent everything from a pressure washer to gardening equipment and

tools for laying tiles. Some towns even have tool-lending libraries.

Many music shops will let you rent instruments for a nominal fee, too.

7. Seek deals. Whether you're looking for something as cheap as embroidery hoops or as expensive as an exercise treadmill, remember you rarely need to pay full price. Time your purchase to coincide with sales, and always look for coupons, browse newspaper classifieds and check websites like Craigslist and eBay for gently used or refurbished gear.

If that doesn't work, try hunting for a swap event (or organize one yourself) where you and your friends can trade unused supplies.



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Just right for you



NEWSMAKERS

■ **Jim Hannon Jr.** recently was selected as the newest member of the federal government's Senior Executive Service.

A Fulton native, Hannon will be director of regional business for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Southwestern Division in Dallas. Before this appointment, he was deputy director of regional business for the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division.

Hannon earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Mississippi State University in 1980. He began his career with the Corps as a civil engineer with the Mobile District at the Lock C resident office at the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.



HANNON

■ **Justin Henry**, a Modern Woodmen of American representative from Corinth, recently completed a five-day educational program at Modern Woodmen's home office in Rock Island, Ill.

The program focused on helping families with Modern Woodmen life insurance plans, annuities and fraternal member benefits.



HENRY

■ **Barbara Smith**, vice president of the Chamber of Commerce division of the Community Development Foundation, was elected vice president of chamber development by the membership of the Mississippi Economic Development Council at its recent meeting in Biloxi. It will be her third term in this position.

Since she has served in this position, MEDC has started its regional chamber workshops in Mississippi, the last of which was held in Tupelo.

Smith has worked in the community development and chamber of commerce field for 36 years. She joined CDF in 1983 and served as manager of corporate affairs before being named Chamber division vice president in 2001. She also was secretary/manager of the Indianola Chamber of Commerce for eight years.

Smith is a graduate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for Organizational Management.



SMITH

■ **Franklin Collection Service Inc.** recently made the following announcements:

• **Vaughn Howell** was named vice president and chief financial officer.

Vaughn is a graduate



HOWELL



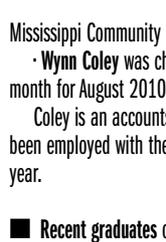
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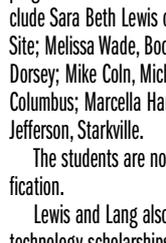
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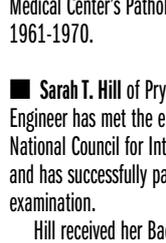
COLEY



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of Itawamba Community College and the University of Mississippi.

Before joining Franklin, Vaughn worked in the financial area of Lane Furniture Industries from 1982 to 2008 and was controller for 11 years.

Most recently, he was the controller for titanium producer RTI International Metals.

• **Tina Wood** was named legal manager. Wood, a paralegal, received her degree from Northeast Mississippi Community College and has 20 years experience in the court system and legal field.

• **Teresa Wilson** was named vice president of portfolio management.

Wilson, who has been with the company for 10 years, is a Houlika native. She attended

Itawamba Community College and Northeast Mississippi Community College.

• **Wynn Coley** was chosen employee of the month for August 2010.

Coley is an accounts receivable clerk and has been employed with the company for more than a year.

■ **Recent graduates** of the Medical Technology program at North Mississippi Medical Center include Sara Beth Lewis of Hatley; Ashley Pace, New Site; Melissa Wade, Booneville; Joseph Rutland, Dorsey; Mike Coln, Michie, Tenn.; Cassie Lang, Columbus; Marcella Harville, Corinth and LaToya Jefferson, Starkville.

The students are now eligible for national certification.

Lewis and Lang also received NMMC medical technology scholarships in memory of Paul Hamblin, who served as director of North Mississippi Medical Center's Pathology Department from 1961-1970.

■ **Sarah T. Hill** of Pryor & Morrow Architects and Engineer has met the eligibility requirements of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification and has successfully passed the standard NCIDQ examination.

Hill received her Bachelor of Science in human sciences with a concentration in interior design from Mississippi State University in 2004. She has been with Pryor and Morrow for four years.

■ **Renasant Bank** recently announced the following promotions:

• **Shawn Clayton** to division president for DeSoto County.



MCLARTY



PREWETT



CONLEY



ARCHER

Prewett attended Mississippi State University, graduating with a bachelor's degree in computer science.

• **Louis Conley** to bank officer in the Tupelo main office.

He has been with Renasant since June 2008 as a record management specialist.

He graduated from Millsaps College, where he received bachelor's degree in business administration.

• **Adam Archer** to bank officer in the information technology department.

He has been with Renasant since 2006 as senior systems administrator. Before joining Renasant, Archer was a systems analyst with a local software company.

He attended Mississippi State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Business Administration in information systems.

■ **Cooper Tire & Rubber Co.** announced its August service anniversary awards for employees at its Tupelo facility.

• **25 years:** Steve Ferguson, Bobby Conaway, Barbara Timmons, Charlie Swords, Mike Graves, Beth Herndon, Dollie Jones and Webster Griffin.

• **20 years:** Deborah White, Mark Perry, Billy Petty, Eric Dufford, Walter Richardson, Roger Reed, Samuel Peach and Richard Owens.

Clayton attended the University of Mississippi and Troy University, graduating with a Bachelor of Accountancy and Masters of Business Administration. He also attended the Mississippi School of Banking at Ole Miss and the Graduate School of Banking at LSU.

• **Shane R. McLarty** to senior vice president and corporate relationship officer for Desoto County. Before joining Renasant, he was a commercial lender with another regional bank in Southaven

McLarty attended the University of Mississippi, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in banking and finance. He also attended the Graduate School of Banking at LSU and the Mississippi School of Banking at Ole Miss.

• **Jay Prewett** to telecommunications specialist in the information technology department.

Prewett has been with Renasant since 2006 as network administrator. Before joining Renasant, he was an IT analyst for Vista III Media, which is now Metrocast.

• **15 years:** Brian Crosby, Eric Stephens, Mike Ratliff, Keith Kent and Keith Seahorn.

• **Five years:** Charlie Duett and Darren Warren.

• **One year:** James Wilcher, Jerry James, Terry James, Robert Camp, Raymond Owen, Joseph Basil, Chad Spears, Michael Dumas, Andrew Taylor, Eddie Fisk, Donnell Goree, Roy Kitchens, Frank Owens, Marvin Griggs, Jason Snyder, Jason Raper, James Tolbert, Jeremy White and Wendy Moore

■ Four attorneys in Phelps Dunbar's office in Tupelo were among 79 of the firm's attorneys named in the 2011 issue of "The Best Lawyers in America."

Phelps Dunbar as a firm received a No. 1 ranking in 44 categories in the publication. This year, Phelps Dunbar had the most first-tier rankings in Louisiana in intellectual property law, the most first-tier rankings in Mississippi in employment law and in labor law.

The Tupelo attorneys who were ranked individually were **F. M. Bush III**, corporate law, health care law, mergers and acquisitions law and trusts and estates; **Mark N. Halbert**, labor and employment law; **Jeffrey S. Moore**, health care law; and **Gregory D. Pirkle**, tax law.

■ **Matthew Oaks** had joined Nail McKinney Professional Association's New Albany office.

Oaks, a Booneville native, received his Bachelor of Accountancy in 2006 and Master of Taxation in 2007 from Mississippi State University. He received his CPA license in December 2008.

Oaks has two years of experience in public practice in Memphis as a tax associate.

■ Six attorneys from the law firm of Mitchell, McNutt & Sams were recently selected by their peers for inclusion in the 2011 edition of "The Best Lawyers in America."

• **D. Andrew Phillips**, a shareholder in the Oxford office of the firm, was selected for his work in the area of bankruptcy and creditor-debtor rights law.

Other lawyers recognized are shareholders in the firm's Tupelo office.

• **William C. Murphree** and **William C. Spencer Sr.** were chosen for product liability litigation, and **Dennis W. Voge** was selected for workers' compensation law. **John G. Wheeler** and **L.F. "Sandy" Sams Jr.** were recognized for their work involving medical and professional malpractice.

Also, Sams was associated with the areas of commercial litigation, personal injury litigation and product liability litigation.



MCDOWELL

■ **Michelle McDowell** has joined Galloway-Chandler-McKinney Insurance as a life and health customer service representative in Columbus.

She has five years of experience in the insurance field. GCM has offices in

Aberdeen, Amory, Columbus, Starkville and West Point.

■ **Dr. Allen Justice** has joined Digestive Health Specialists in Tupelo.

Justice, a Saltillo native, graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Mississippi State University. He received his medical training at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine, where he graduated in the top quarter of his medical school class. He completed his internal medicine and

pediatrics residency at the University of Tennessee - Memphis, where he served as chief resident. He recently completed a fellowship in gastroenterology and hepatology at the University of Tennessee-Memphis.

■ **Dr. Bryan C. Fagan** has joined North East Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine in Tupelo.

Fagan graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. He received his M.D. from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in 2004 and completed his orthopaedic residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in June 2009.

Following his residency, Fagan completed a one year arthroscopy and sports medicine fellowship at Mississippi Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center in Jackson.

Fagan will be practicing general orthopaedics.

■ **Michael R. Alef**, of BNA Bank, and a registered representative affiliated with broker-dealer and registered investment adviser Sorrento Pacific Financial, has received SPF's President's Award.

The award honors the top producing registered representatives among SPF's 80 community bank programs. Alef has been with BNA Bank for 10 years.

■ **Brenda Spencer** of Coldwell Banker Tommy Morgan Inc. Realtors in Tupelo was recognized recently for being a top 10 sales associate in the state for second-quarter sales, listing units and total units.



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Chamber Connection

A publication of Journal Publishing and the CDF Chamber Division – September 2010

Toyota announces start of hiring at Blue Springs plant

Governor Haley Barbour and officials from Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Mississippi, Inc. (TMMMS) announced August 23 that the company is resuming hiring at its Blue Springs, Miss., plant.

“We have looked forward with great anticipation to the day when Toyota was ready to fully staff its Blue Springs facility, and that day has come,” Barbour said. “I am so pleased that Toyota is moving forward with its hiring process and is creating so many high-quality jobs for the residents of Mississippi. Today is a great day for not only north Mississippi but the state as a whole.”

When Toyota Motor Corporation announced in February 2007 that it was locating an automotive assembly plant in north Mississippi, it committed to creating 2,000 direct jobs.

While in 2008 the company announced a delay in its plans to start producing vehicles in Blue Springs due to market conditions and a weak economy, Toyota completed construction at the north Mississippi facility and retained its existing workforce there. Recently, the company announced its plans to resume preparations for production at the plant, where it will begin producing the best-selling Corolla model in the fall of 2011.

“The reputation of the outstanding workforce in northeast Mississippi was a major factor for Toyota when we chose Blue Springs for our newest U.S. plant,” said David Copenhaver, vice president of administration at TMMMS. “Today marks a big milestone for Toyota Mississippi as we begin building our team.”

TMMMS is coordinating all hiring for its hourly production and skilled

maintenance positions through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) and the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) Job Centers.

Individuals interested in employment opportunities at Toyota’s Blue Springs plant may apply online at www.mdes.ms.gov. Persons needing assistance with the application process or access to an internet accessible computer may visit any WIN Job Center in Mississippi. For a complete list of the WIN Job Centers in the state, please visit: <http://mdes.ms.gov/Home/find-WinJobClaimCenter.html>.

“We are pleased to be working with Toyota to help the company staff its facility,” said MDES Executive Director Les Range. “Thanks to an investment by Toyota and the Mississippi Development Authority, we have been able to expand our online system to help Toyota take job applications for its Blue Springs facility.”

“Residents may apply for Toyota jobs at any computer with Internet access: at home, at libraries, at a friend’s home or anywhere else, and help is always available at one of the 53 WIN Job Centers across the state,” Range said.

Individuals interested in salaried positions at the facility are encouraged to visit www.toyota.com/jobs for more information and to apply online.

“We were delighted when Toyota announced in early 2007 it was locating an automotive assembly plant in north Mississippi and would create 2,000 jobs in the area,” said Gray Swoope, executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority. “Today, I am pleased Toyota is ready to start filling those positions and putting Mississippians to work.”

TO APPLY FOR SALARIED POSITIONS AT TOYOTA:

1. Visit www.toyota.com/jobs.
2. Click on the “Search Jobs” link in the middle of the page.
3. Another dialogue box will open with the list of all available job openings.
4. Review the open positions and click “Apply” underneath the open position of interest.
5. If you have applied for positions with Toyota in the past, enter your username and password.
6. If you have not applied for positions with Toyota in the past, select the “New User” button.
7. Create a unique username (utilizing letters and numbers) and a password.
8. Please complete all pages in order to be considered.



TO APPLY FOR PRODUCTION AND SKILLED MAINTENANCE JOBS AT TOYOTA:

1. Visit www.mdes.ms.gov, and click the “Applicants” link underneath the “Access Mississippi Online Services” section.
2. Select “Employment Services”.
3. For applicants with an existing account, log into the system with a username and password. For applicants without an account, follow the easy steps to create an account.
4. Once logged in, select the “Search for Jobs” link.
5. Enter keyword “Toyota” to view a complete list of available jobs at the Toyota plant.
6. Follow the prompts to apply for a position of interest.



Chamber focus

Dear Friends:
They're back! The First Friday programs are back, and we have a good roster of speakers for the eight programs. The breakfast meetings are a good business to business networking opportunity, and you could walk away with some new leads in your pocket and new clients for your business.

Congratulations to Dianne Loden, Trustmark Bank, and Toby Hedges, Shelter Insurance, on their recognition as Ambassadors of the Quarter. Dianne and Toby both had perfect attendance at the 12 ribbon cuttings held this quarter. This year has been a very busy time for all of our Ambassadors. They are busy attending all of the various events welcoming the new businesses and expansions to the area.

If you did not have an occasion to attend the Business Boxed Lunch and Learn Series last week, you missed a great session. Deborah Tierce did a good job of explaining the generational gaps in the workplace. She made us all aware that each generation adds value and synergy to the workplace, and it is our responsibility to understand the gaps and nurture the differences. Please visit the CDF website, www.cdfms.org, and take advantage of the business seminars and other activities planned for this year.



SMITH

Congratulations to the new class of the Jim Ingram Community Leadership Institute. The class was selected last month and will be featured in the October issue. Thanks to all who sent in nominations.

Mark your calendar for Friday, February 18, 2011. The annual Business to

Business Connection trade show and Industry Education Day are teaming up this year for a one-day event. Basically, this means there will be an additional 1,200 people attending the trade show. Registrations for booth space will be mailed next month.

As always, THANK YOU to our members. Your membership supports CDF's efforts to create more and better jobs for Tupelo/Lee County and to foster businesses big and small.

Vice President of Chamber Services

New CDF MEMBERS

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Aero Studio
Aerial Photography
Mr. Reggie Furtick
6970 County Road 600
Booneville, MS 38829
(662) 552-5199
<i>Photography and Framing</i> | Handy Man Home Repair
Mr. Galen Prouty
1532 Mitchell Rd.
Tupelo, MS 38801
(662) 523-7117
<i>Contractors/Construction/
Building Materials</i> | National Agents Alliance
Campbell Agency
Ms. Sandra Forster
398 E Main St., Ste. 122
Tupelo, MS 38804
(662) 269-2216
<i>Insurance</i> | The Shot Center-Exam One
Ms. Cindy Schneider
398 E Main St.
Tupelo, MS 38804-4026
(901) 832-8148
<i>Health Care</i> |
| Belle Ame Salon & Spa
Ms. Erica Griffin
3265 McCullough Blvd.
Belden, MS 38826
(662) 840-5555
<i>Barber Shops, Salons
and Spas</i> | Infinite Views Development
Mr. Ti Simpson
318 Robins St.
Tupelo, MS 38804
(662) 322-8740
<i>Computers and Internet</i> | Rollins 3pL
Mr. Tony Grindol
1226 Mapleview Dr.
West Point, MS 39773
(937) 925-6689
<i>Logistics</i> | Tony Barber Wrecker Service, LLC
Mr. Malcomb Driskill
P.O. Box 910
Slaton, MS 38866
(662) 871-5039
<i>Automotive</i> |
| Cavalier Business Communication
Ms. Stephanie Skelton
2650 Thousand Oaks Blvd.,
Ste. 2300
Memphis, TN 38118
(662) 259-4906
<i>Telecommunications</i> | LSI (Lamination Services Inc.)
Mr. Guyton Nunnally
2950 Brother Blvd., Ste. 103
Memphis, TN 38133-8943
(800) 737-3032
<i>Signs</i> | Select Connect
Mr. Chuck Moffatt
1960 McCullough Blvd.
Tupelo, MS 38801-7105
(662) 620-1386
<i>Telecommunications</i> | Traylor's Janitorial & Detail Services, Inc.
Ms. Sheryl Traylor
602 N Gloster St.
Tupelo, MS 38801
(662) 842-8666
<i>Janitorial</i> |
| Corporate Housing Experts
Mr. Mike Rowell
P.O. Box 98207
Jackson, MS 39298
(601) 981-7368
<i>Apartments</i> | Luxe
Ms. Jade Gaskin
341 A E Main St.
Tupelo, MS 38804
(662) 823-6440
<i>Retail & Specialty Shops</i> | ServiceMaster Commercial Cleaning Services
Mr. Matt Copeland
P.O. Box 3727
Tupelo, MS 38803
(662) 842-5301
<i>Janitorial</i> | Wound Healing Group, P.A.
Mr. M. C. Ausbon
5221-B Cliff Gookin Blvd.
Tupelo, MS 38801
(662) 620-8123
<i>Health Care</i> |
| | Melange
Ms. Deborah Gardner
3265 McCullough Blvd.
Belden, MS 38826
(662) 842-5505
<i>Retail & Specialty Shops</i> | | Mr. Hunter Aycock
P.O. Box A
Tupelo, MS 38802
(662) 255-2432
<i>Individuals</i> |

Community Development Foundation's

Board of Directors for 2010-2011

CDF is governed by a 60-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 Copenhaver, 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 | L.E. "Bo" Gibens | Fred Pitts |
| Mike Armour | Gunner Goad | Darrell Rankin |
| Richard Babb | Chauncey Godwin | Harry Rayburn |
| Bernard Bean | Lisa Hawkins | Jack Reed |
| Ronnie Bell | David Henson | Scott Reed |
| Chris Berryman | Reed Hillen | Rob Rice |
| Charles Bouldin | Frank Hodges | Eddie Richey |
| David Brevard | Jerry Maxcy | Cathy Robertson |
| Gary Carnathan | Robin McGraw | Tom Robinson |
| Mike Clayborne | Paul "Buzzy" Mize | Mike Scott |
| V.M. Cleveland | Alan Nunnelee | Randy Shaver |
| Scott Cochran | Mary Pace | Barry Smith |
| David Cole | Jim Pate | Jeff Snyder |
| Norma Cother | Mimi Pettit | David Steele |
| Tom Foy | 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. Wanda Johnson | Sleep Inn & Suites |
| Ms. Suzanne Kirby | Advanced Screening Solutions |
| Ms. Dianne Loden | Trustmark Bank |
| Mr. Tim Long | Cellular South |
| Ms. Bea Luckett..... | 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 |
| Ms. Shanda Millican..... | Inside Out |
| 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 |

Baber's, Inc. wins National Buyer Appreciation Award

Baber's, Inc. was the recipient of the Fall 2010 Buyer Appreciation Award at the Tupelo Furniture Market in August. Baber's, Inc. is a furniture, appliance, electronics, and computer rental source with over 50 stores throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

"This award recognizes those furniture industry retailers and their buyers who have consistently supported the state's furniture industry and the biannual Tupelo Furniture Market," said Greg Giachelli, "This award is the premier honor bestowed in connection with the Tupelo Furniture Market by the Tupelo Furniture Marketing Association."

Baber's was founded as Baber's Firestone on South Market Street in Pascagoula in 1959 by the late James B. Baber. Baber's strives to provide its customers with exceptional service and great products, by offering a wide variety of products available for rent in their stores. They have shopped for much of that product at the Tupelo Furniture Market and have attended

"This award recognizes those furniture industry retailers and their buyers who have consistently supported the state's furniture industry and the biannual Tupelo Furniture Market."

Greg Giachelli

the Market from its very beginning. Baber's currently employs over 275. Customer service is their first priority, and a friendly, warm atmosphere is a must. Baber's works hard to be a good neighbor in each community supporting youth sports, local interests, and numerous charitable organizations such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, American Heart Association, Boys and Girls Club, Special Olympics, the Home of Grace, Our Daily Bread, and the Bacot-McCarty Foundation, as well as significant contributions to The Rental Industry Charitable Foundation.



Darrell Rankin, president, Lee County Board of Supervisors, presents the National Buyer Appreciation Award to Baber's, Inc. representatives, Cynthia Baber-Strunk, Shannon Strunk, and Sheldon Strunk.

REGGIE WHITE SLEEP DISORDERS CLINIC



A ribbon cutting was held at The Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic. Pictured at the event are: April Potts, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Sheila Roberts, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Kristy Hester, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Teresa Lyons, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Derek Denman, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Sara White; Carelyn Hughes, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Councilman Nettie Davis; Dr. Michael Rack, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Dan Adams, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Loretta Harrell, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Cindy Fowler, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; Mike Camp, Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic; and Emily Addison, CDF. The Reggie White Sleep Disorders Clinic is located at 1150 S Green St., Bldg. 2, Ste. B in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 407-0862.

Welcome to Tupelo/Lee County, Mississippi!

Tupelo/Lee County has so much to offer its residents including beautiful parks, a charming and historic downtown, annual festivals, museums, theatrical productions, art galleries, golf, tennis, free outdoor summer concerts, a thriving workforce, and a wonderful community spirit. Part of the "Tupelo Spirit" is a warm, welcoming group of citizens who want to help you make a smooth transition to your new home. The Tupelo Newcomers Club was created just for this.



Tupelo Newcomers Club

Participation in the Tupelo Newcomers Club is FREE!

The mission of the Tupelo Newcomers Club is to help ease the transition for newcomers moving to Tupelo and Lee County, by hosting special events, offering community information, and connecting you with area citizens and other newcomers.

By joining the Tupelo Newcomers Club, you are gaining instant access to a network of people in your new hometown, who can help you get acclimated and learn the ins and outs of this special community that you now call home. Tupelo Newcomers Club events are designed to help you meet other individuals and families, and to provide information on everything from schools and events, to parks and recreation activities and special attractions in the area.

For more information on the Tupelo Newcomers Club, please log on to our website at www.tupeloneewcomersclub.com or register as by contacting Angela Glisner at 662-842-4521 or aglisner@cdfms.org.

after HOURS

Join us for a Business-After-Hours Sponsored by:

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Following the 4th Annual CDF Membership Golf Tournament

5 to 7:30 p.m. | Tupelo Country Club | 4462 Winged Foot Road | Belden, MS



First Friday

Mark Your Calendar

First Friday, October 1

SPEAKER:

Scott Stricklin

Director of Athletics, Mississippi State University

SPONSOR:

Community Bank

The Mall at Barnes Crossing Food Court
7 a.m.

Continental breakfast will be served.

For more information, call: 662.842.4521

TUPELO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



The August TYP event was held at the Gum Tree Museum of Art. Pictured at the event are: Shipman Sloan, TYP; Rebecca Cook, TYP; Betty Harris, Gum Tree Guild; Emily Addison, CDF; Kit Stafford, Gum Tree Museum of Art; Mary Ruffing, Gum Tree Guild; Virginia Chambers, Gum Tree Guild; Rebecca Jones, Gum Tree Guild; Peg Oakes, Gum Tree Museum Board of Directors; Kim Deaton, Gum Tree Museum Board of Directors; and Michael Addison, TYP.



Community Bank is Tupelo's home of friendly, personalized service from local staff members who actually own the bank. It's the bank that makes decisions about you and your needs right here at home. And it's home to experts who have years of experience to help you meet your financial goals.

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COMMUNITY BANK



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the grand opening of Community Bank in Tupelo. Pictured on the front row of the event are: Glenn McCullough; Supervisor Joe McKinney; Supervisor Phil Morgan; Supervisor Tommie Lee Ivy; Jeff King, Community Bank; Mayor Jack Reed, Jr.; Councilman Mike Bryan; Councilman Jonny Davis; Councilman Nettie Davis; Councilman Markel Whittington; Greg Moore, Community Bank; and Cindy Baird, Community Bank. Pictured on the second row are: David Rumbarger, CDF; Billy Crews, Journal, Inc.; Brad Stevens, Community Bank; Senator Alan Nunnelee; Wyman Jones, Community Bank; Justin Martin, Community Bank; Chuck Nicholson, Community Bank; Freddie Bagley, Community Bank. Community Bank is located at 1317 N Gloster St. in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 844-8653.



SAVE THE DATE
 2011 Business
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 and
 Taste of Tupelo
 Feb. 17-18
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- Warehouse
- Ship

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Sweet Treats Bakery offers lots of smiles

Anne Byrn, author of *The Cake Mix Doctor*, said that "When you look at a cupcake, you've got to smile." Sweet Treats Bakery in Tupelo offers 85 varieties of smiles from strawberry and Oreo, to fudge yummy and caramel apple. Owner Melinda Conerly began her foray into the dessert industry as a hobby and has created a delectable business that truly delivers smiles to each client who walks through her door.

Sweet Treats Bakery offers a plethora of options to tame even the strongest sweet tooth. Conerly features three to four flavors of cupcakes each week from the 85 flavors on her current list. She bakes custom decorated birthday cakes, and offers a selection of pies including chess, lemon chess, chocolate chess, and coconut chess, but can provide any custom order by request. Assorted cookies are served daily at the bakery, with special orders available for iced, cut-out, or decorated cookies. Conerly also makes fudge and other homemade candy during the holidays, and offers 15 varieties of cake balls.

While Valentine's Day is Conerly's busiest holiday of the year, and Thanksgiving and Christmas bring an array of orders for cakes and pies for family celebrations, football season is a busy and exciting time for Sweet Treats Bakery. They offer cookies, bars, cupcakes, and the like for your tailgate, as well as many savory dips,

small bite appetizers, and sauces. Sweet Treats Bakery can create iced sugar cookies with your favorite football team's school colors or cookies in the shape of a football, paw print, helmet, and more. A favorite for tailgates are the cookie poppers, cookies baked in mini-cups and topped with a swirl of icing.

Sweet Treats Bakery has been open for almost three years, and in Conerly's eyes, it has flown by.

"I got into this business as a hobby, turned it into a part-time business out of my home, then decided to bite the bullet and go full-time. Three years later, here I am," said Conerly. "We've been blowing and going ever since."

As a member of the Community Development Foundation, Conerly has been able to welcome even more clients to her business.

"I knew there was a demand for this type of business in Tupelo," said Conerly. "The benefit of being a CDF member is that people who didn't otherwise know about my business are now aware of who and where I am."

Conerly feels very blessed to be where she is, doing something that she loves. She is passionate about baking and it shows in every bite as she delivers smiles to patrons throughout the community.

Sweet Treats Bakery is located at 1708 Stephen D. Lee Drive in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 620-7918.

THE FURNITURE OUTLET



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the grand opening of The Furniture Outlet in Tupelo. Pictured seated at the event are: Mark Pearson, The Furniture Outlet; Councilman Markel Whittington; Sudie Clark, The Furniture Outlet; Betty Harness, The Furniture Outlet; and Scott Bell, The Furniture Outlet. Pictured on the back row along with the CDF Ambassadors is Emily Addison, CDF. The Furniture Outlet is located at 589A N Coley Rd. in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 205-4336.

CPR: CELL PHONE REPAIR



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the grand opening of CPR: Cell Phone Repair in Tupelo. Pictured at the event are: Emily Addison, CDF; Kristian Burrell, CPR: Cell Phone Repair; Gabbie Lindsey, CPR: Cell Phone Repair; Tatum Pannell; Jennifer Pannell, CPR: Cell Phone Repair; Nancy Pannell; Hayden Pannell; Brad Pannell, CPR: Cell Phone Repair; Councilman Jim Newell; Drew Pannell; Jabari Bowdry, CPR: Cell Phone Repair; Matthew Moore, CPR: Cell Phone Repair; and Jeremy Kwaterski, CPR: Cell Phone Repair. Also pictured are members of the CDF Ambassador's Club. CPR: Cell Phone Repair is located at 3851 N Gloster St. in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 841-7855.

Hedges, Loden receive Ambassador of the Quarter honor

Two members of the CDF Ambassador's Club were awarded the Ambassador of the Quarter honor at the first quarterly meeting of the club. Toby Hedges, Shelter Insurance, and Dianne Loden, Trustmark Bank, were recipients of the award. 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.

Toby Hedges has spent 12 years in the insurance business as owner of Shelter Insurance in Tupelo. A regional company, Shelter Insurance is headquartered in Columbia, Missouri, and offers auto, home, and life insurance. Hedges is involved with the local chapter of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, serving as immediate past president and treasurer. He is married to the former Jennifer Parham of Fulton, and they have two sons, Michael and John Thomas. The time Hedges has spent as an Ambassador has been very beneficial to him and his business.

"CDF is a great organization and the Ambassador program is fabulous," said Hedges. "CDF gives you a resource that every business needs. It

is a great way to give back to the community. Being a member of CDF helps make the pie bigger for everyone."

Dianne Loden serves as branch manager and loan officer for Trustmark Bank's Barnes Crossing branch. A part of the banking industry since 1973, Loden came to Trustmark in 2000. She serves her community through such organizations as the United Way Distribution Fund Committee, former Exchange Club treasurer, NEWMS, and Relay for Life. Married to Aaron Loden, she has two sons and two granddaughters. With a passion for race horses, Loden and her husband enjoy buying and selling the animals. Serving as a CDF Ambassador has been an important piece of the puzzle for Loden in making business contacts.

"I love going out and meeting people," said Loden. "My goal is to make so many business contacts a year, so by being an Ambassador, it works out perfectly. Getting to meet people is the best part of my job and the best part of being an Ambassador."

Both Hedges and Loden had perfect attendance at the 12 ribbon cuttings held this quarter. They both understand the benefit of being a CDF member and are eager to share that



Pictured are Dianne Loden, Trustmark Bank; Jennie Bradford Curlee, CDF; and Toby Hedges, Shelter Insurance.

knowledge with businesses who may not be taking advantage of the benefits that CDF membership offers.

"If you're not a member of CDF, you need to be!" said both Hedges and Loden.

TUPELO TIRE & WHEEL



To celebrate the grand opening of Tupelo Tire & Wheel, a ribbon cutting was held. Pictured with the CDF Ambassadors are: Councilman Nettie Davis; Reverend Robert Jamison, People's Community Baptist Church; Lucille Partlow; Walter Partlow, Tupelo Tire & Wheel; Ruthlyn Goree, Tupelo Tire & Wheel; Regina McCarter, Tupelo Tire & Wheel; Ricky Kimbrough, Journal, Inc.; Councilman Markel Whittington; Randy Kelley, Three Rivers Planning & Development District; James Hunter, Hunter Construction; Emily Addison, CDF; Fred Cook, Renasant Bank; and Fred Davis, Tupelo Tire & Wheel is located at 1938 McCullough Blvd. in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 823-1980.

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Lunchtime Learning Series

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Mr. Jack Reed, Sr.

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Internet a wonderful resource that can be dangerous

Technology is neither good nor bad. There are only good and bad uses of technology. The use of computers is no exception.

Officers Joseph D. Giroux and James Cunningham of the Cyber Crime Unit of the Lee County Sheriff's Department recently spoke about the criminal use of computers during the monthly luncheon meeting of BINaRE, a local organization of professionals who are interested in the application of technology to the workplace.

Some of the activities about which they spoke were child pornography, child exploitation and identity theft. Cybercrime is generally defined as any crime involving a computer and a network.

Giroux and Cunningham extend that definition to include any type of digital media device. After all, cell phones are small special-purpose computers, even though they're not usually thought of in that way.

Cybercrime is a growing enterprise. Much of early cybercrime, especially the spreading of computer viruses, was the work of lone individuals

whose only motivation was personal enjoyment. Nowadays much, if not most, cybercrime is the work of organized criminal organizations, which are involved in such activities as drug trafficking, identity theft, money laundering, and the smuggling of weapons and nuclear material.

Giroux and Cunningham gave an overview of their involvement in the fight against cybercrime. While they investigate a variety of crimes, they used most of the brief time allotted to them to tell how they work to protect children.

Pedophiles have existed for millennia, but only recently did they acquire access to computers and the Internet. Giroux and Cunningham work to find and prosecute these predators, and so far they have helped send some 20 people to prison.

Obtaining a successful prosecution



Ted HOLT

TECHTALK

is an arduous and meticulous process. Everything must be documented – major evidence which includes the communication between an adult and a minor, photographic and video pornographic images and computer network addresses – as well as a host of minor details.

The burden of proof rests on the officers to prove that the adult behaved as accused. Therefore, everything must be done legally and ethically. The officers must acquire the necessary search warrants, and once a suspect's computer equipment is in their hands, they must carry out extensive forensics in such a way that the evidence will stand up in court.

To carry out their mission, the officers rely on sophisticated equipment, almost all of which has been provided by sources outside of Lee County.

The Internet is a wonderful resource. Before the Internet, I found it very difficult to get the information I needed for my work as an information professional and a writer. I ordered books through the mail and visited university libraries. Now a quick trip to Google gives me all the information I need or tells me where to get the information.

At the same time, the Internet is a dangerous environment, especially for children. Parents should tell children not to give strangers identifying information, such as full name, street addresses, telephone numbers and the name of the school they attend. Parents should also use a filtering service, such as K9 Web Protection (www.k9webprotection.com) to prevent children from visiting harmful Web sites.

Even adults should not let their guard down. There is no shortage of people who are looking for credit card numbers, bank account numbers, user identifiers and passwords, in order to steal from other people.

I hope that computers and the Internet will someday be redesigned in such a way that the commission of cybercrime becomes much more difficult. In the meantime, I am glad to know that officers Giroux and Cunningham are working for the benefit of Lee County families, including mine.

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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BRIEFING

LEE COUNTY

Former manufacturing exec offers free small business help

■ BELDEN - Jerry Massa, a former executive with Heartland Building Products in Booneville, is offering free advice to small business owners.

Massa, who has worked with the SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) chapter in Gulfport and Memphis, is offering the same structured advice that the organization provides.

He hopes to establish a SCORE chapter in Tupelo in the future.

For more information, contact him at (662) 416-2116 or e-mail him at jkmire1@aol.com,

New Tupelo Regional flight schedule begins

■ TUPELO - On Sept. 7, Tupelo Regional Airport began offering 15 daily flights. All flights are to and from Memphis.

• Sundays: Arrival 8:09 p.m.; Departure: 7 a.m.

• Mondays: Arrivals 10:14 a.m., 3:15 p.m., 8:09 p.m.; Departures 7 a.m., 12:05 p.m., 5:23 p.m.

• Tuesdays: Arrivals 3:15 p.m., 8:09 p.m.; Departures 7 a.m., 5:23 p.m.

• Wednesdays: Arrivals 3:15 p.m., 8:09 p.m.; Departures 7 a.m., 5:23 p.m.

• Thursdays: Arrivals 10:14 a.m., 3:15 p.m., 8:09 p.m.; Departures 7 a.m., 12:05 p.m., 5:23 p.m.

• Fridays: Arrivals 10:14 a.m., 3:15 p.m., 8:09 p.m.; Departures 7 a.m., 12:05 p.m., 5:23 p.m.
• Saturdays: Arrival 3:15 p.m.; Departure: 7 a.m.

■ For more information, visit www.flytupelo.com or call (662) 841-6570.

Japanese etiquette classes offered at CDF boardroom

■ TUPELO - Two free Japanese etiquette classes will be held at the Community Development Foundation, which is sponsoring the sessions along with the Japan-America Society of Mississippi.

The classes will be held on Sept. 16 and Oct. 14, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the CDF boardroom.

Limited space is available, and registration is required. Please call Zandra Hereford at (662) 842-4521 to reserve a spot.

Intro to welding classes offered at ICC-Belden

■ TUPELO - Registration is under way at Itawamba Community College for a short-term career training class in introduction to welding.

The class will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Sept. 14 through Oct. 12, at ICC's Tupelo campus in the Building E welding lab.

Highlights of the class, which is designed to provide entry-level skills, include shielded metal arc welding and gas metal arc or mig welding, safety and significant "hands-on" practice. The in-

tent is to prepare students to do the very basic welding jobs that some industries and small businesses require. The instructor is Jimmy Belk.

Cost of the class is \$285. Preregistration is required.

For more information or to register, contact Becky Kelly, continuing education specialist, at rakelly@iccms.edu or (662) 620-5240.

CHICKASAW COUNTY

New win Job center marks grand opening

■ HOUSTON - A formal opening for the Houston WIN Job Center was held recently at the facility located at 210 South Monroe St.

The 3,600-square-foot facility houses representatives from Itawamba Community College and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

Itawamba Community will offer ABE/GED class two mornings and two nights each week, along with Word and Excel classes and WorkKeys testing.

Also located within the facility is an executive conference room, which is available for the use of outside businesses and industries, on a scheduled basis.

ITAWAMBA COUNTY

Online job application classes given by WIN, ICC

■ FULTON - Itawamba Community College and the area WIN Job Centers are offering free one-

hour classes about completing online job applications.

The classes will assist those who want to apply for a new job but don't know how to complete on-line applications.

For more information on the classes, contact the WIN Job Centers at ICC-Belden Center, (662) 620-5205; Houston, (662) 456-1561; Pontotoc, (662) 489-1800 or Amory, (662) 256-5617.

OKTIBBEHA COUNTY

MMSA designates Starkville as Main Street Community

■ STARKVILLE - The Mississippi Main Street Association has designated the city of Starkville as a Main Street Community.

Starkville is the 50th Main Street Community in Mississippi and the only community designated for 2010.

Jennifer Gregory, vice president of tourism for the Greater Starkville Development Partnership, will oversee the Main Street program, and Robyn Cain will serve as the Starkville Main Street Program Coordinator.

PONTOTOC COUNTY

Ashley Furniture receives ESGR Patriot Award

■ ECRU - Ashley Furniture Industries Inc. of Ecu recently was presented with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award from the

U.S. Department of Defense.

ESGR is a volunteer organization under the Department of Defense. To be eligible for the award, an employer must be nominated by an employee within its organization who currently serves in the Reserve component of the U.S. military.

Spc. Jonathan M. House of the 287th Engineer Company Mississippi Army National Guard nominated his civilian employers at Ashley Furniture for the award. House is stationed in Afghanistan.

In his absence, Larry Tatum of ESGR Employer Outreach presented the award to Mike Bell, director of operations, and Mike Hall, director of human resources, of Ashley Furniture in Ecu.

RANKIN COUNTY

Mobility Medical owner named NFIB Champion

■ FLOWOOD - The Mississippi office of the National Federation of Independent Business named Danyelle Carroll, co-owner of Mobility Medical of Flowood and Mobility Medical of North Mississippi of Tupelo and Starkville, as the 2010 Solveras/NFIB Small Business Champion for Mississippi.

Carroll, a three-year NFIB member, serves on the NFIB/Mississippi Leadership Council, a volunteer group of activist members who advise the association on small business issues. She recently was elected to her second, non-consecutive term as president of the Mississippi Association of Medical Equipment Suppliers.

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BusinessRewind

LEE COUNTY

Hancock Fabrics narrows 2Q loss by more than \$1M

■ BALDWIN - Hancock Fabrics narrowed its losses for the second quarter by more than \$1 million.

The craft and fabric retailer also reported an increase in same-store sales and in net sales.

In a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Hancock reported a net loss of \$757,000, compared to a net loss in last year's second quarter of nearly \$2.3 million.

For the most recent quarter, which ended July 31, the company reported net sales of \$60.5 million, up slightly from \$59.6 million in the prior-year quarter.

Same-store sales also improved, with Hancock reporting 0.7 percent growth compared to a 4.2 percent drop in the comparable period.

In a conference call, Hancock Executive Vice President and CFO Rob Driskell attributed the growth to an increase in transaction counts and in average ticket amounts.

CEO Jane Aggers on the call said cotton, quilting and apparel sales were strong during the quarter, as well.

Hancock also had a bright spot with its operating income, which was \$590,000, up \$1.3 million from the prior-year period.

However, Hancock took a hit from bankruptcy reorganization expenses, interest expenses and losses from continuing operations, which resulted in the company posting a net loss for the quarter.

Hancock ended the quarter with 4,000 employees in the stores and 300 employees at the corporate office in Baldwin.

New restaurant opens in former Guthrie's spot

■ TUPELO - Peggy's Place is now open in the former Guthrie's chicken restaurant at 451 S. Gloster St. in Tupelo.

Owner Peggy Hurlley previously was the manager of Back Yard Burger for eight years. She has 10 employees at the new restaurant.

The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Menu items include sausage biscuits, grilled chicken salads, cheeseburgers and black bean burgers. It also has soft-serve ice cream.

The hours are 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday. The phone number is (662) 840-0439.

Renasant OKs dividend payment on Oct. 1

■ TUPELO - The board of directors for Renasant Corp., the parent of Renasant Bank, approved the payment of a quarterly cash dividend of 17 cents per share, payable Oct. 1 to shareholders of record as of Sept. 17.

Community Bank celebrates opening of new office

■ TUPELO - The state's fifth-largest bank has gotten a little bigger with a new three-story building in the financial hub of Northeast Mississippi.

Community Bank, with nearly \$2.2 billion in assets and 37 locations in four states, marked the

grand opening of its 11,000-square-foot office on North Gloster Street on Aug. 10.

Bank, city and county leaders, flanked by hundreds of onlookers, also sealed a time capsule to mark the occasion.

Community Bank entered the market in 2006, opening a temporary location in The Belfrey in downtown Tupelo. In less than three years, deposits have grown to nearly \$50 million.

The bank is open Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Caney Fork hopes to resolve equipment issues this month

■ TUPELO - Without the equipment to run five other restaurants, officials with Caney Fork Restaurant said they had no other choice but to shut down the three that already were operating.

Marc Barhonovich, president of the Nashville-based chain, said the company had to shutter the Caney Fork locations in Tupelo, Columbus and Leeds, Ala., earlier last month.

"We have leases for eight locations, and after we got the first three opened, we ran into the equipment problem," he said. "We still had to pay the leases, the insurance, the upkeep on all eight."

That situation put the company in a tight cash-flow situation, and Caney Fork opted to close the locations until the issue could be resolved.

Barhonovich said Caney Fork filed a federal lawsuit against Spirit Finance Corp., of Scottsdale, Ariz.

Barhonovich said Spirit, which entered lease and equipment agreements with Caney Fork for eight former Santa Fe Cattle Co. locations, did not fulfill its promise to supply the equipment necessary to run the restaurants.

But Barhonovich said he wants to reopen the restaurants as soon as possible if and when the equipment problems are fixed. He said he hopes the dispute can be resolved by the end of September.

ALCORN COUNTY

Kmart plans to reopen, but exact date unknown

■ CORINTH - Discount retailer Kmart, which has had its store in the Fulton Commons Shopping Center closed since May, said it is trying to resolve several issues before setting a firm reopening date.

Company spokeswoman Kimberly Freely said Kmart is working with its landlord and getting fixtures for the store.

The Corinth building has been cleared of damaged merchandise, and most of the remaining store contents have been removed. Freely said that new shelves, racks and displays will be ordered for the store, which opened in 1992.

But the negotiations with the landlord may play a key role in why the store hasn't reopened. DLC Management of Tarrytown, N.Y., owns Fulton Crossing along with about 100 other shopping centers in 26 states.

Kmart is one of the anchors for the nearly 180,000 square-foot Fulton Crossing Shopping Center. The other major anchor, Kroger, reopened June 18. Both stores, along with some of the smaller shops sharing space in the center, were flooded with more than 18 inches of water after the May 2 storm.

Freely said talks with the landlord revolve around who is responsible for what.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Lawmakers ask Olin to not move operations to Oxford

■ OXFORD - Two federal lawmakers from Illinois have urged Olin Corp. to reconsider plans to move 1,000 jobs from its ammunition-making operation in Illinois to Mississippi, cautioning the company to be mindful of their efforts in Washington to steer business in its direction.

Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Jerry Costello, in a letter to Olin President and CEO Joseph Rupp, pressed for a meeting to discuss the company's plans to shift its Winchester ammunition division's Centerfire production from East Alton, a village 20 miles northeast of St. Louis, to Oxford.

The legislators suggested they deserved the courtesy, saying they worked hard on Capitol Hill to help Olin get sizable government contracts. Those deals included supplying Winchester munitions to the Army and a \$54 million deal the lawmakers called "the largest ammunition contract in the history of federal law enforcement," the letter said.

Valerie Peters, a spokeswoman for Olin's Winchester division, said that no decision has been made as to when or if the division would move. She said talks were continuing between the company and "key stakeholders," including union workers. She added that Olin would be willing to discuss the matter with Durbin and Costello.

OKTIBBEHA COUNTY

Lane, American awarded energy-efficiency grants

■ STARKVILLE - Two Northeast Mississippi furniture manufacturers have received federal grants to help them improve their energy efficiency.

Tupelo's Lane Furniture and Ecu's American Furniture Manufacturing Co., with the help of Mississippi State University's Franklin Furniture Institute, obtained a total of \$650,000 to upgrade lighting and cooling and heating systems.

Funding availability was provided by the Mississippi Job Protection through Energy Economic Development program administered by the Mississippi Development Authority. More than \$40 million was distributed to the state by the U.S. Department of Energy for improving energy efficiency.

According to a press release, Lane expects the improvements to create a 50 percent energy reduction in the lighting and HVAC systems at the company's Saltillo facility.

Sitel adding another 300 workers to call center

■ STARKVILLE - After adding 110 jobs recently the Sitel call center is adding another 300 full-time jobs by the end of October.

The Nashville-based company said it would provide technical, customer care, concierge and sales workers to support long-term contracts it had signed with a financial services provider, a retailer and an electronics manufacturer.

The companies' names were not revealed in a press release.

Sitel has been in Starkville since 2000. The company claims to be the top global call center provider, with 140 locations in 27 countries and 60,000 employees. The company is privately

held, majority owned by Onex Corp. of Canada

PONTOTOC COUNTY

Enerkem moving ahead with plans for facility

■ PONTOTOC - Enerkem Corp. CEO Vincent Chornet said a proposed \$100 million ethanol-producing plant is still on track for an early 2011 construction start.

Enerkem, with headquarters in Montreal, broke ground on a similar plant in Edmonton, Alberta, on Aug. 1. The company is going through the permitting process in the U.S., much like it did in Canada, Chornet said.

"We are making good progress and expect to break ground on the Pontotoc facility in the first quarter of 2011," he said.

The Edmonton plant is the world's first industrial-scale biofuels project to use municipal solid waste as feedstock. It will have the capacity to produce 10 million gallons of ethanol. It is expected to be operational by the end of 2011.

In Pontotoc, Enerkem has said it will convert about 190,000 tons of unsorted municipal solid waste from the Three Rivers Solid Waste Management Authority to produce about 10 million gallons of ethanol and "green chemicals" annually.

The Pontotoc plant would employ 40-50 people.

Construction of what company officials have called the "first phase" of the Pontotoc project would take about 18 months once all state and federal environmental permits are granted. Up to

130 construction jobs would be created as well.

Enerkem received a \$50 million U.S. Department of Energy grant in December to help build and operate the Pontotoc plant.

Southern Motion breaks ground on \$7M project

■ ECRU - By January, Southern Motion should be producing furniture from its newest expansion.

The company, which makes reclining furniture, has run out of room at its 400,000-square-foot facility that now employs 700 workers.

Within two years, the company will add at least 200 jobs. And if business really takes off, that number could double within five years. In fact, on the 25 acres where Southern Motion is building its newest 180,000-square-foot expansion, there's room for another exact duplicate.

The expansion will give Southern Motion more production lines, said company CEO Guy Lipscomb.

The Mississippi Development Authority provided help to Southern Motion with the Development Infrastructure Program and the Rural Impact Fund Program to help with infrastructure improvements.

Southern Motion is investing at least \$4 million of its own.

The company was founded in 1996 by Lipscomb and Larry Todd. The company makes recliners, sofas, love seats, sectionals and home theater furniture.

Earlier this year, the company added 70 jobs. And in early 2009, another expansion added 65 jobs, along with new production lines and equipment.

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Competitive

Continued from Page #X

Traditionally, Tupelo's primary target market is athletes ages 8 to 18, Wyatt said.

"Sometimes the younger, the better" because younger players typically have a larger entourage when they travel, he said.

And, Wyatt said, younger, female athletes usually have more people in travel parties than their male counterparts.

"But it's not enough to make a difference in what we target," Wyatt said.

Looking ahead, Wyatt said he sees tremendous growth potential in youth football, youth basketball and disc golf.

He also hopes Tupelo's host duties of the University of Memphis-LSU college basketball game in November will put Tupelo's facilities on the radars of other colleges.

Wyatt also has had informal discussions about hosting large video game competitions.

He said he hopes his open mind will help Tupelo's sports market continue to grow.

"If I believe in the end that it will bring in the numbers, I'm going to consider it," he said.

Corinth's Sportsplex

The Corinth SportsPlex is the hub of the city's sporting events. According to director Grant Roberts, the SportsPlex is a nonprofit organization that is driven by its 400 to 500 members.

The SportsPlex started in 1944 as the YMCA and evolved over the years. It recently absorbed the training facilities of AdvantEdge when the company went out of business.

Now, the SportsPlex has four baseball and softball fields, one soccer field, a training facility, a basketball gym, a weight room, a dance room and an aerobics room.

Roberts, who has held the job since July 1, said the SportsPlex emphasizes the instructional side of sports.

"We're in the business of making kids better players, but, more importantly, better people," Roberts said.

The SportsPlex has an indoor baseball training facility, as well as coaches who spe-

cialize in teaching players how to improve their game. Plus, sports lessons are available to kids how to play a game.

The organization teaches players as young as 3 years old. The T-ball and soccer classes for 3-year-olds, Roberts quipped, is much like herding cats.

"We have a lot of people who come in and take classes and then play in the leagues," he said. "In the spring it's more competitive and in the fall, it's more instructional."

He said the trend right now is for players to participate in travel ball instead of league ball. Travel ball, Roberts said, is the "all-star" team and usual has better players who travel for games.

The league games typically are played at the SportsPlex. The sports league, he said, has predominantly plays from Alcorn County, but there are some Tishomingo and Prentiss Counties.

The SportsPlex also competes with the school system for players. Roberts expects this fall to be slower for the league because some of the Corinth schools have merged, giving students more options to play within the school system.

"Fall leagues have taken a hit," he said.

The SportsPlex is branching out this winter with a program called Junior Grizzlies. It's sports league that is sponsored by the Memphis Grizzlies. Participants will get a reversible jersey from the NBA team and will get to go a game. They'll also get a signed certificate from Grizzlies players that they participated.

Beyond this winter, Roberts said he is thinking about adding volleyball to the sports offered at the SportsPlex. He also is looking into converting an unused pool area into an indoor soccer field.

Oxford and health

Oxford hosts many youth sporting events at its FNC Park, but it also is making headway with adult sports, such as marathons, 5K runs and bike races.

"We're trying to do a little bit of both," said Mary-Kathryn Millner, director of tourism for the Oxford Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Certainly, we're a marketing

for youth sports but they are in limited seasons. We fill the void (with adult sports) in the late summer before hotels start filling up before the fall."

The efforts dovetail with city and state's emphasis on becoming healthy and combating obesity.

The city recently hosted its first "endurance weekend," which combined outdoor activities with Oxford's Square.

The weekend had a triathlon, three bike races and a 5K run. The event drew 550 participants from around the country, Millner said.

"We will we can double those numbers next year," she said.

The city also draws 700 to 800 participants for its 5K and 10K runs for the Double Decker Arts Festival every April. The city hosts several other 5Ks and half marathons throughout the year.

"It's neat to see that these races attract people from all over – not just in our region – that are looking for new and different races to participate in," Millner said.

The races are good for sales tax revenues, she said, because they usually start early in the morning so participants arrive the night before and stay in a hotel and go out to eat.

"Bike racing and triathlons are not necessarily inexpensive hobbies," she said.

But the people who participate in the sports events are passionate and dedicated, she said.

"We find people participate in them year after year," she said. "We feel there's a good repeat market."

The goal, she said, is to continue to grow the adult sports and the youth sporting events so that they will produce a noticeable increase in monthly sales tax revenues, similar to what Double Decker does.

And from the tourism standpoint, Millner said it's important that the city keeps a diversity of attractions and events – art festivals, film festivals, shops, restaurants, sporting events – because when one group comes in town, the participants usually will spend money if the opportunity is available.

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

Martial arts

Continued from Page 5

they learn from what you do."

A fifth-degree black belt and three-time world champion in forms and sparring, Pinson said students who join a martial arts school shouldn't join merely to learn to fight.

"That's not what any true martial artist teaches," he said. "We want to learn to avoid a fight. You learn that through discipline, respect and attitude. Fighting is always a last resort – but we will teach you how to defend yourself, no doubt about it."

Kalimeris and Pinson say martial arts training helps people improve their balance, strength, flexibility, speed and coordination.

Noel McMichael, who also is a fifth-degree taekwondo black belt, said a martial art like taekwondo also develops a person into a better student and athlete.

"Most of the time, you're either a true right or true left, but taekwondo teaches you to use your hands and feet from both sides," he said.

"You're also using both hemispheres of your brain and developing both sides of your

body, so that can help you in school and in other sports. It's more of a holistic approach."

School owners say they are attracting students and growing. But they also insist their goal isn't to simply inflate their rolls.

"I don't attract the lazy, which creates a unique problem," Kalimeris said with a laugh. "But this is reality. I don't teach watered-down stuff. You will work hard."

Added Pinson: "We teach a variety of life skills that go beyond the martial arts – discipline, self-confidence, for example. Taekwondo is the fun part. And you're never, ever too old to learn anything."

"I didn't open a school to get rich; I opened a school to share what I know and to give back all that's been given to me," Pinson said.

Martial arts schools' fees vary, so it's best to check with each one individually. Also, schools invite interested students to visit them to see what's offered.

"Call or drop by just about any school and they'll offer to let you try a class," McMichael said.

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

Cheering

Continued from Page 4

these days, you need that intermediate to advanced tumbling and the experience in stunting to be competitive," Moore said.

She said the recent trend is for more private classes before tryouts to help cheerleaders get an extra edge.

Hooker agreed, saying her cheer prep classes have been a big hit in the seven years she's offered them. The former gymnast and cheerleader teaches students what judges look for at tryouts and hosts mock tryouts every month.

"Whenever you try out, I teach them, the very first thing the judge sees is the confidence," Hooker said.

She also works skills such as voice projection and their entrance to the field or the court.

Since opening her gym 10 years ago, she said the No. 1 request she gets from parents

and students is that they want to learn how to do a back handspring.

Jaylin Baker is one such student who's learning the ins and outs of the sport. The 10-year-old fifth grader at Lawhon Elementary School has been taking cheerleading classes at Tupelo Cheer Academy since she was 5.

"I saw people on television doing it and I said, 'Mom, I really want to learn how to do that,'" said Baker, who is on TCA's all-star squad. "I mostly don't do (the cheerleading moves) outside of school. I don't want to get hurt."

She hopes to make the cheerleading squad in high school when she's the right age.

But Baker said cheerleading and her other sports – karate, ballet and softball – have a more short-term payoff.

"I want to stay in shape for sure," Baker said.

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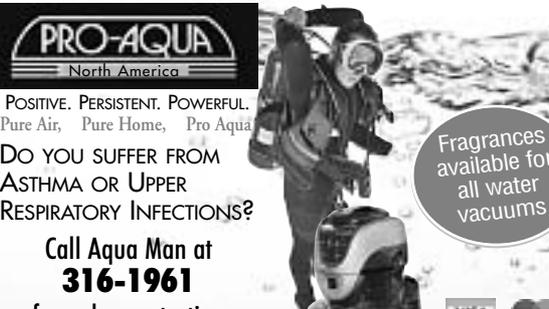
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