Portners In Progress 2019-2023

Chalexander City of Commerce



Message from Chamber President/CEO Ed Collari

Alexander City offers the warmth and charm of a small community and is known for recapturing the spirit of true Southern Hospitality. It is a clean, safe, family-oriented and business friendly city with a historic downtown, good public services, and many cultural, historical and recreational sites. It is the home of Lake Martin, a picturesque 44,000-acre lake with nearly 750 miles of pristine shoreline.

The Chamber of Commerce is building a strong record of community involvement and contributions to the business economy and well-being of Alexander City citizens. A full partner in helping revitalize the Alexander City historic downtown area, providing community one-of-a-kind entertainment opportunities like Sun Festival and JazzFest celebrations, continued hosting of key issues seminars and leadership training, management of the Young Professionals Group, and operation of the Lake Martin Innovation Center. The Chamber is providing a focused emphasis on enabling Alex City area citizens to achieve a higher standard of living and a better quality of life.

All this said there is no "steady state" and based on the success of our current *Our Future Is Now* 2014-2018 plan, volunteer and staff leadership have made the bold decision to move up again to the next level in creating the Chambers' 2019-2023 plan. The focus is on Community Development—a plan for the community based upon what the community said it wanted the Chamber to do.

The Chamber Board of Directors and top-quality leaders in our community have stepped up to each lead a key initiative:

- Retail and Commercial Recruitment
 - Team Leader: Randy Lee—Lee Marketing Group
- Existing Business Growth and Entrepreneurship
 - Team Leader: Mark Spencer—Valley National Bank
- Partnership with Education
 - Team Leader: Randy Haynes—Morris, Haynes Attorneys at Law
- Destination Marketing and Community Engagement
 - Team Leader: Donna Gabel—Alexander City Housing Authority

In the pages that follow you will find an individual program of work for each initiative that defines the Mission, Objectives, Expected Outcomes and the Timelines to accomplish real results. I encourage you to join us with your time, talent, and financial resources as we build a united community to take the next steps forward.

Ed Collari Chamber President/CEO

Message from Campaign Chair David Sturdivant

COO and CFO – Russell Lands On Lake Martin

Positive business growth and community well-being always requires long-term strategy combined with bold approaches and the leadership team to make it happen.

This new five-year plan, *Partners In Progress*, is a plan created by the Chamber board based upon the input of a broad spectrum of over 50 one-on-one interviews through which community leadership in both the private and public sectors and our Young Professional Group provided individual input about the programming that is important to all of us. We will be partnering and collaborating with Alexander City and Tallapoosa County elected officials, the Lake Martin EDA, MainStreet and numerous other organizations of likemind, all working jointly to bring next step up solutions "to the table".

I have been personally involved in the planning of this new five-year initiative. I fully believe in and am committed to both the process and the program of work. As your Chamber Chairman, I am asking you to join me, the Chamber and community leadership, all of whom have already stepped up to partner together as we get underway with the four initiatives set forth in the Chamber's new five-year plan.

DavilStrelivant

David Sturdivant Chairman Partners in Progress

"The quality of life of our citizens in the Alexander City area depends in large measure on adding targeted new retail and commercial entities to our business mix. We need to focus on recruiting the "next step up" retail and commercial we want and need."

> — Randy Lee Lee Marketing Group

Next Step Up Retail and Commercial Recruitment

Mission

As the lead organization, convene and form partnerships with developers, builders, community organizations and the public sector to identify opportunities, develop strategies and execute programs that will result in the ability of developers and builders to provide new retail, commercial and residential development in the Alexander City region.

Reporting and Communications

- Oversight by the Next Step Up Retail & Commercial Recruitment Task Team and reporting to the Chamber Board of Directors
- Semi-annual investor and community partner update and results meeting beginning in 2019
- Quarterly Partners In Progress e-newsletter
- Timely emails on announcements, successes and business spotlights
- Designate role of a Chamber staff member to communicate with and respond to investor and community partner needs











- As a Task Team, determine actions and support needed to encourage the development of new retail, commercial and residential entities in the Alexander City region -- *begin 4th quarter 2018*
- Identify and study similar community's success and challenges in retail, commercial and residential development efforts focusing on such key elements as, infrastructure, education, utilities, incentives, fees, appraisals, zoning and regulations -- *begin 1st quarter 2019*
- Leverage the partnership with retail recruitment partner and utilize their research and market analysis in order to proactively identify opportunities for retail and commercial development and redevelopment -- *begin 1st quarter 2019*
- Partner with City and residential/commercial developers to continue to promote efficient procedures and approval processes to encourage development-- *begin 1st quarter 2019*
- Create a database and map of new development, including available land and redevelopment opportunities such as existing buildings and retail centers -- *begin 1st quarter 2019*
- Convene key public and private stakeholders in order to identify opportunities for retail, commercial and residential development --- begin 1st quarter 2019
- Work with City, County and local utilities to develop a list of desired retailers and potential development locations– begin 2nd quarter 2019
- Establish a database of potential builders and developers -- *complete 1st quarter 2019*
- Conduct interviews/surveys with builders and developers in order to understand what would make the Alexander City market even more attractive to new retail, commercial and residential development -- *complete 3rd quarter 2019*
- Research and maintain a database of commercial development lending options for developers -- *begin 2nd quarter 2019*
- Partner with the local and regional building industry associations in order to best support their mission and advocacy issues

- 2 new retail and/or commercial projects underway by 2021
- Recruit 15 new to the market retail/commercial businesses by 2024
- Maximize the environment to foster new retail, commercial residential development by 2021
- Complete a builder/developer survey to best understand their needs to develop in Alexander City complete 3rd quarter 2019
- Focus on zoning and building regulations that promote growth, investment and new development
- Assist in creating incentive programs for developers who meet specific criteria
- Maintain strong relationships between public and private entities resulting in Alexander City's continued growth and development













"The stability, growth and vitality of our existing business base here in the Alexander City area are crucial to our community. Growth by businesses already vested in our area plus adding entrepreneurial business start-ups nurtured in our Lake Martin Innovation Center is key to a thriving business community offering quality job opportunities."

> — Mark Spencer Valley National Bank

Existing Business Growth and Entrepreneurship

Mission

The Existing Business Growth and Entrepreneurship initiative will identify opportunities and develop strategies to best support the well-being and growth of our existing businesses and leverage the success of the Chamber's Innovation Center to encourage and shepherd entrepreneurs as they build innovative start-up companies.

Reporting and Communications

- Oversight by the Existing Business Growth and Entrepreneurship Task Team and reporting to the Chamber Board of Directors
- Semi-annual investor and community partner update and results meeting beginning in 2019
- Quarterly Partners In Progress e-newsletter
- Timely emails on announcements, successes and business spotlights
- Designate role of a Chamber staff member to communicate with and respond to investor and community partner needs







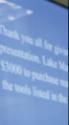


- Determine the actions and support needed to assist existing Alexander City businesses to grow and thrive
- Define and execute a program of work and engage in collaborative efforts with community partners -- *beginning of 1st quarter 2019 and ongoing*
- In partnership with the University of Alabama, conduct a needs assessment to understand and prioritize required skill sets for all Alexander City businesses -- *underway and ongoing*
- Develop industry cluster teams (banking, small business, retail, etc.) that will be comprised of business leaders from existing businesses to assess their specific needs and create programs to meet those needs -- *begin 2nd quarter of 2019 and ongoing*
- Host quarterly professional development workshops that meet the identified needs of our businesses -- *beginning 2019 and ongoing*
- Identify opportunities to best leverage the current success of the Lake Martin Innovation Center and ensure that the facility thrives fiscally and fulfills its mission to start and grow new business in Alexander City -- beginning of 1st quarter 2019 and ongoing
- Develop an entrepreneurial recruitment program to leverage the support services of the Lake Martin Innovation Center -- underway by 2nd quarter 2019
- Identify opportunities to enhance the program offerings of the Lake Martin Innovation Center -- *underway and ongoing*
- Develop an Executive Resources team to provide support, training and insight to existing businesses

- Through existing business and entrepreneurial programs and projects, create 70 new jobs in Alexander City over the next 5 years
- Host 4 professional development workshops annually to help grow and retain existing business
- Engage and provide services to 35 entrepreneurs and small business owners annually beginning in 2019
- Assist 8 businesses or organizations each year beginning in 2020 through the Innovation Center's Executive Resources team
- Populate and manage an ongoing database of existing business employment needs and skillsets. Align those needs with Chamber programming and educational partners
- Compile a renewing and expanding database of Business Development needs based on survey of Chamber workshop attendees











Partnership with Education

Mission

As leaders of the business community, provide full support to the educational system in Alexander City in order to deliver the highest quality education and work skills training.

Reporting and Communications

- Oversight by the Partnership with Education Task Team and reporting to the Chamber Board of Directors
- Semi-annual investor and community partner update and results meeting beginning in 2019
- Quarterly Partners In Progress e-newsletter
- Timely emails on announcements, successes and business spotlights
- Designate role of a Chamber staff member to communicate with and respond to investor and community partner needs

"I feel it is critical that the entire Alexander City community step forward and engage with our local public schools. We must all fully support our school leadership to allow each school to hire the best teachers, provide the finest learning environment, and prepare each student to thrive in their chosen career path."

> — Randy Haynes Morris, Haynes Attorneys at Law









- Form a Business Advisory Council to work directly with our school leaders to provide strategic counsel and public support of key actions and initiatives.
- Lead efforts to remove barriers that restrict our schools from hiring and retaining the best and brightest faculty and staff.
- Partner with the Alexander City Schools Education Foundation to raise funding and awareness for the programs they administer for the public school system.
- Identify opportunities to better champion and promote Alexander City School System
- Champion efforts that will allow for the best possible facilities and equipment to enable the faculty to deliver the highest level of education and training
- Support the development of diverse curriculum that provides educational and career pathways that prepare every student for success
- Partner with the Benjamin Russell High School (BRHS) for the *Wildcat Entrepreneurs Academy* (WEA) student entrepreneurial program to provide mentors, programming, schedule company visits, recruit investors and provide mentorship to students following their business pitch -- underway and ongoing
- Serve as a liaison between the administrator of the Co-Op program at BRHS and local businesses for students to find employment within our community -- underway and ongoing
- Administer and enhance the *Gateway to Education* program to better meet and fulfill the existing work force needs of our business community
- Recruit local business leaders to serve as mentors to annually administer *Choices* program to local 8th graders -- *underway and ongoing*

- Enhanced partnership at all levels of education with local businesses and community leaders
- Partner with the BRHS to engage a minimum of 10 students each year in the *Wildcat Entrepreneur Academy* program
- Increased student success in choosing career paths toward higher education or skilled trades
- Administer and promote Gateway program to pay tuition expenses at CACC for over 60 students annually
- Through the Benjamin Russell High School (BRHS) Co-Op program, assist 100 students per year to find gainful employment
- Recruit 8 mentors annually to administer *Choices* program to over 200 local 8th graders









— Donna Gabel Alexander City Housing Authority

Destination Marketing and Community Engagement

Mission

Partner with Alexander City leadership to establish a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). The Chamber will engage with the DMO to develop a unified tourism strategy to promote our area as a tourist destination. Involve the community in a plan that will lead to repeat tourist visits to enjoy Alexander City and Lake Martin activities, entertainment venues, recreation opportunities and sports tournaments/events.

Reporting and Communications

- Oversight by the Destination Marketing and Community Engagement Task Team and reporting to the Chamber Board of Directors
- Semi-annual investor and community partner update and results meeting beginning in 2019
- Quarterly Partners In Progress e-newsletter
- Timely emails on announcements, successes and business spotlights
- Designate role of a Chamber staff member to communicate with and respond to investor and community partner needs











- Convene with City leadership to strategize and establish a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Alexander City and the Lake Martin area
- Gathering data and information from tourism entities throughout the state on how to best organize and establish a DMO
- In partnership with the established DMO, determine actions and support needed to leverage the attributes of the Lake Martin Area as a tourist destination, focusing on increased revenue streams, sales tax and enhanced economic and community development
- Identify key stakeholders/organizations and existing tourism related efforts underway regionally to implement the best image, branding and marketing plan
- Expand and promote community events, such as the Sun Festival, Jazz Fest and Christmas Parade in order to provide quality of life opportunities that deliver economic impact and aid in the attraction and retention of workforce and business in our area
- Partner with the DMO to research and identify new opportunities for sports tourism, fishing tournaments and recreational opportunities
- Increase participation in the *Clean Community Partnership* and embark on additional beautification efforts
- In partnership with the Lake Martin Resource Association (LMRA), promote programs to reduce lake litter and increase safety on the lake
- Support and leverage successful developments in Alexander City and Lake Martin that will bring more opportunity, tourism dollars and future development
- Develop a plan and raise required funds to install a decorative fence along Tallapoosa Street in Strand Park to ensure safety at community events
- Lead the Young Professionals and provide a platform to enhance its events, social activities and community engagement opportunities
- Administer Leadership Lake Martin to engage 20+ new community leaders in education, health care, economic development, public safety, public service and community service

- Partner with City officials to create a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)
- Partner with Clean Community Partnership to organize, promote and execute regularly-scheduled trash walks
- Host annual Alabama Bass Trail fishing tournament
- Host annual community events like Sun Festival, Jazz Fest and Christmas Parade
- Develop, implement and advise fundraising efforts to install fence in Strand Park along Tallapoosa St.
- Partner with DMO to execute a market study to understand community assets and implement a marketing strategy in order to drive tourism Complete by end of 2020
- Increase Young Professional participation to exceed 100 members by 2024







The Partners In Progress Campaign Goal

How Your Investment Dollars Are Spent

The five-year investment goal for the campaign is \$1,250,000 over five years (\$250,000 per year) in new dollars over and above existing revenue primarily received from Alexander City Chamber dues and targeted event and sponsorship revenue. The funds would be allocated in the following manner:

Annual Budget \$250,000 Five-Year Budget \$1,250,000

Partnership With Education

Destination Marketing and Community Engagement

Next Step Up Retail and Commercial Recruitment

Existing Business Growth and Entrepreneurship

32%

28%

20%

Annual Investment Levels

\$15,000 + Chairman's Circle
\$10,000 + CEO Council
\$5,000 + President's Forum
\$2,500 + Growth Partner
\$1,200 + Community Leader

Investor Benefits

Beginning in 2019, with the rollout of our new *Partners In Progress* business and community development program of work, the Chamber will implement a new Investor Benefit plan. This new plan replaces the one from *Our Future is Now* program, provides a more focused and personalized approach centered on relationship building with our investors, and creates the necessary resources to successfully implement our new program of work. With your investments and the partnership of our business and community leaders, our entire region will benefit...A measurable ROI for our investors with greater opportunities and prosperity for our residents.

The Chamber's five investor groups will receive the following benefits:

Chairman's Circle: \$15,000+

- Chamber CEO will actively engage with you to ensure we are delivering an ROI for your investment
- Highest recognition in Chamber media, website, and at key events as a leader in advancing our *Partners In Progress* agenda
- Complimentary table at each of our major meetings/conferences: Annual Meeting; Lead Forward; and our 4 "State of" conferences
- As available choice of one complimentary Gold Level sponsorship for an upcoming event
- Access to Chamber senior staff to address issues of importance to your business/organization
- VIP invitations to investor only meetings/briefings and networking opportunities with other key business and community leaders
- Other "tailored benefits" of specific interest to you will be developed as part of your ongoing one-on-one meetings with Chamber leadership

CEO Council: \$10,000+

- Chamber CEO will actively engage with you to ensure we are delivering an ROI for your investment
- Recognition in Chamber media, website, and at key events as a leader in advancing our *Partners In Progress* agenda
- Four complimentary seats at our major meetings/conferences: Annual Meeting, Lead Forward, and our 4 "State of" conferences
- As available choice of one complimentary Silver Sponsorship for an upcoming event
- Access to Chamber senior staff to address issues of importance to your business/organization
- VIP invitations to investor only meetings/briefings and networking opportunities with other key business and community leaders
- Other "tailored benefits" of specific interest to you will be developed as part of your ongoing one-on-one meetings with Chamber leadership

President's Forum: \$5,000+

- Chamber's VP Business Development & Investor Relations will actively engage one-on-one with you to ensure we are delivering an ROI for your investment
- Recognition in Chamber media, website, and at key events as a leader in advancing *Partners In Progress* agenda
- Two complimentary seats at our major meetings/conferences: Annual Meeting, Lead Forward, and our 4 "State of" conferences
- Access to Chamber senior staff to address issues of importance to your business/organization
- VIP invitations to investor only meetings/briefings and networking opportunities with other key business and community leaders

Growth Partner: \$2,500+

- Chamber's VP Business Development & Investor Relations will actively engage one-on-one with you to ensure we are delivering an ROI for your investment
- Recognition in Chamber media, website, and at key events as a leader in advancing *Partners In Progress* agenda
- One complimentary seat at our major meetings/conferences: Annual Meeting, Lead Forward, and our 4 "State of" conferences
- Access to Chamber senior staff to address issues of importance to your business/organization
- VIP invitations to investor only meetings/briefings and networking opportunities with other key business and community leaders

Community Leader: \$1,200+

- Chamber's VP Business Development & Investor Relations will actively engage one-on-one with you to ensure we are delivering an ROI for your investment
- Recognition in Chamber media, website, and at key events as a leader in advancing *Partners In Progress* agenda
- VIP invitations to investor only meetings/briefings and networking opportunities with other key business and community leaders

Our Future Is Now - 2014-2018 Progress Report

Business Development

- Lake Martin Innovation Center, the state-of-the-art home of the Alexander City Chamber, houses seven business start-ups and provides co-working space for over 30 business professionals. The 17,000 sq. ft. facility hosts 15-20 events/meetings each month as the various conference room spaces are a complimentary benefit of Chamber membership.
- Annual participation in the *International Council of Shopping Center Convention (ICSC) in Atlanta* ensures Alexander City is noted/respected as an "up and coming" location for retail establishments. Attendance entails educational speaking forums on retail recruitment topics, meetings with local and regional developers as well as face-to-face meetings with retail tenant representatives.
- Partnered with retail recruitment and site selection specialists Retail Strategies and Next Site to assist with recruiting 10 *new-to-market retail businesses located in the area.*
- Hired Jacob Meacham as the Vice President of Business Development. Meacham oversees the Wildcat Entrepreneurial program and Young Professionals, along with assisting in business recruitment, marketing, events and professional development workshops.
- More than 800 business owners, community leaders and citizens in the area have attended the Chamber's 20+ *Business Development* programs during the past four plus years to enhance their skills and celebrate the contributions of local businesses to our community's quality of life.
- Shop Local Initiative includes year-round local business promotion with special emphasis on Holiday Open House and Shop Local Saturday each December to encourage residents to do their holiday shopping with local retailers.

Community Building/Networking

- Sun Festival Alexander City, a week-long schedule of 50+ events offering something for every age, has been presented every year during this reporting period. Sun Festival 2018 was attended by over 2,000 individuals.
- The annual *Alexander City JazzFest* continues to draw thousands of local residents and visitors from all across Alabama and the Southeast with festivities in both downtown Alexander City in Stand Park and at the Lake Martin Amphitheatre.
- **Chamber Ambassadors** welcomed over **25** businesses into the Chamber with ribbon cuttings, volunteered for countless community and Chamber events, and represented the Chamber and its goals and programming throughout the community.
- A **Community Leadership Visit** in Fall of 2018 will assemble a team of community activists, business leaders and elected officials to visit a comparable city and examine its successes and challenges with the intent to apply "lessons learned" applicable to the Alexander City area.
- The Chamber hosted more than 30 networking activities open to all Chamber members, including Coffee & Connections and Business After Hours.
- The Chamber advocated for and served as host for the Alabama Bass Trail the past three years, and the Bassmaster Elite Series in 2018.
- Regularly scheduled and organized information trips to key areas of the state to visit with successful community leaders, elected officials, Chamber, EDA and tourism representatives. Locations have included Auburn, Opelika, Florence, Birmingham, Tuscaloosa and Cullman.

• The Chamber partnered with the *MainStreet* organization to advocate for an entertainment district in downtown Alexander City to help market and host events. The City Council approved in March of 2015.

Leadership Development

- Leadership Lake Martin, the Chamber's premiere leadership development program, has graduated more than 80 community leaders, business professionals and non-profit executives over the past four years. As part of the program's community project component, participants donated over \$100,000 and hundreds of service hours to completing community projects and assisting local non-profit organizations.
- The *Lead Forward Women's Conference* conducted each March is a powerpacked day of workshops and sessions designed to energize and invigorate the over 400 participants. The event also includes a Business Expo with booths manned by local businesses, and the conference concludes with a regionally respected keynote speaker.
- **YP** *Lake Martin,* the Young Professional Leadership program, involves a group of **80 "YP's"** who coordinate, collaborate and promote programs that feature both networking opportunities and top-notch speakers with the goal to improve careers, social lives and character of the members.
- Quarterly *Professional Development Workshops* offer "real-world-of-work" workshops and seminars, sponsored by local businesses, to offer members an opportunity to stay current on trends in the business marketplace. Workshops are held in the "Bullpen" of the Lake Martin Innovation Center with *more than* 40 attendees at each session.
- Each year the Chamber hosts a series of business community update leadership sessions featuring local experts providing insights regarding the top issues facing Alexander City. Four subject areas are explored: *State of Education; State of Healthcare; State of the City; and State of the Lake.* Each session attracts an audience of over 100 businesses, non-profit and civic leaders.

Support of Education

- Over **300** students participate in the CHOICES program, which focuses on all 8th grade students at Alexander City Middle School. Students are provided leadership training, career development, soft skills and social engagement training, and are introduced to career and training opportunities that do not require a four-year degree.
- The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a year-long program that teaches middle and high school students how to start and run their own real businesses. As of 2018, YEA! Has graduated 25 students who have started over 4-5 successful businesses/social movements.
- Each January is designated as School Board Member Appreciation Month. The Chamber *hosts breakfast for the local school board members and Central Office employees* as a thank you for the services they provide the Alexander City community
- The Chamber's annual *State of Education* luncheon is designed to facilitate meaningful discourse and inform the business community regarding pressing issues faced by today's educators.
- Chamber President Ed Collari serves as the Chairman of the newly created *Career Advisory Committee* at BRHS with the goal of uniting teachers, administrators and students with business leaders in the community to build a partnership and help understand each other's needs.

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE BOARD

David Sturdivant Chairman Russell Lands On Lake Martin

Mark Spencer First Vice Chairman Valley National Bank

Jeff Smith Second Vice Chairman Tallapoosa Ford

Randy Lee Jr. Immediate Past Chairman Lee Marketing Group

SECOND YEAR OF TWO-TERM FIRS

Jim Peace Russell Medical

Amanda Luker Morris, Haynes

Glenda Bland Central Alabama Community College

Daniel Yates Playhouse Cinema

Dr. Anthony Wilkinson Benjamin Russell High School

Emily McDaniel Russell Lands On Lake Martin

FIRST YEAR OF TWO-TERM

Natalie Dark Dark Insurance

Brantley Newton *Prime Management, LLC.*

Mike Densmore Alexander City United Methodist Church

TC Coley Tallapoosa County Commissioner

Randy Dawkins River Bank & Trust

Stephanie Daughtry Daughtry Insurance Agency

Donna Gabel Alexander City Housing Authority

Steve Baker Tallapoosa Publishers, Inc.



Staff

Jacob Meacham VP Business Development & Investor Relations **Lauren Fields** Customer Service Specialist **Carla Culligan** Membership Director & Customer Service Kim Dunn Director of Marketing & Special Events

Ed Collari President & CEO

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Mayor of Alexander City

Lake Martin Economic Development

Mark Tuggle

Jim Nabors

Alliance

Bre Smith

Don McClellan

MainStreet Director

State Representative



175 Aliant Parkway Alexander City, AL 35010 (256) 234-3461 www.alexcitychamber.com

