

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



THE CHAMBER

GADSDEN • ETOWAH COUNTY • BUSINESS • COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2020 board of directors

Chair: Jonathan Tang
Tang Mart, LLC

Chair Elect: Morgan Lavender
Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial

First Vice Chair: Wilbur Masters
Regions Bank

Immediate Past Chair: Jeff Allen
River Bank & Trust

Treasurer: Angela Lipscomb
GKL Companies, Inc.

Barry Cherry
Hokes Bluff Welding & Fabrication

Corey Ewing
Gadsden Regional Medical Center

Derrick Griffey
Somewhere in Time Antiques & Collectibles

Tena King
King's Olive Oil Company

Kendall Lowe Hamilton
Devan Lowe Cadillac Buick GMC Lincoln

Bethanne Mashburn
The Factory

Clint Mizell
Buffalo Rock Company

Nanda Patel
Holiday Inn Express & Suites

Glen Porter
The Gadsden Times

Aimee Quizon
Yoga Aims Studio

Jan Rowe
Honda Manufacturing of Alabama

Tony Smith
Alabama Power Company

Daryl Thomas
Inteva Products, LLC

Melissa Whorton
Gadsden Tool, Inc

Legal Counsel: Christie Knowles
Knowles & Sullivan, LLC

Heather Brothers New
President & CEO

Leslie Stephens
VP of Finance & Administration

Kristin Barton
Development Manager

Miranda Fairel
Marketing & Operations Manager

Will Mackey
Program Manager

staff

The Chamber, Gadsden & Etowah
County

One Commerce Square
Gadsden, Alabama 35901

256.543.3472

info@etowahchamber.org

perspective

"Hindsight is 20/20" is an old proverb that has been used for years to explain that it is often easier to understand something after all the events surrounding it have already happened. Sometimes it is used to tell us that we should have known better or that we could have done something differently. Sometimes it is used to simply state that, in the current moment, there's clarity.

Looking back on 2019, one could compare the year to a roller coaster. There were highs and lows, some spills that exhilarated and a couple of dips that may have evoked some fear. The adage that "hindsight is 20/20" couldn't be more appropriate than this moment, as we embark on 2020.

Perspective is the key. That's what makes "looking back" often easier than "looking ahead". The viewpoint is established, the timeline has been written and locked in and the outcomes have occurred and been measured.

But I propose to you that we use 2020 as a chance to use that same perspective for our future. We can determine now what outcomes we want to see, in what timeline they'll happen and set our vision on achievement.

Let our perspective be one of opportunity, not obstacle. In fact, I'd like to challenge each of you reading this that in 2020, any time someone says (including yourself) "we can't", you follow it

up with the world "unless", and you find the perspective that would bring the impossible to possible.

In 2020, we commit that we won't lose sight of our four key strategies to move our community forward:

- Business-driven talent development
- Partnering with public education
- Existing business growth and retention, and
- Entrepreneurship, innovation and incubation

In fact, in each of those four sectors, our perspective is that we as a community are already ascending to new heights. We are looking beyond challenges and ambiguity, and we are focused on what tomorrow can and will be. There are incredible opportunities already being recognized and many more that are continuously being developed.

So, in the new year my wish for all of us is that we are inspired, we feel free to reach and grow, that we are enthusiastic about working toward our goals and that we feel empowered to find new and innovative paths to success.

Let 2020 be the year that our eyes are opened to new opportunities.

Let our perspective be visionary.

heather brothers new

PRESIDENT/CEO

2019: a banner year

The Chamber of Gadsden & Etowah County's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth in Etowah County by serving member businesses through advocacy, education and community partnerships. We are pleased to share with you the following achievements in 2019 aligned with our current strategic drivers.



business-driven talent development

- Expanded Etowah Workforce Academy: a day-long program that provided over 400 area educators an immersion in manufacturing and healthcare jobs with major staffing gaps, and provided a professional development credit incentive for completion.
- Partnered to produce regional Worlds of Work and helped grow to include all 8th grade students throughout Etowah County, including private schools.
- The Inaugural Etowah County Community Spring Job Fair was held in May. More than 90 employers participated, and more than 500 job seekers attended – many of which were high school seniors. Participant surveys indicated a high level of satisfaction, hires made and desire to participate again next year.



partnering with public education

- In the 2019-2020 school year, all 2nd grade classrooms received the Libby Liberty Super Citizen Program – a program designed to teach crucial lessons in civics, character, financial literacy, careers and social studies. The program has been a part of Etowah County Schools for several years and with great results.
- Graduated 21 high school juniors from The Chamber's Student Leadership program..
- The Chamber partnered with leaders of the Lambda Eta Omega chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Gadsden City Schools to provide a 6-week soft-skills training in all 6th grade classrooms, teaching students fundamentals like proper dining etiquette, handshakes and introductions and more.



existing business growth & retention

- Produced the inaugural Etowah County Restaurant Week, with fixed menus from participating restaurants at no cost to the restaurants to participate.
- The Rise & Shine Economic Development Speaker Series had six sessions in 2019. They featured speakers from across Etowah County and the state of Alabama to discuss economic development in our area.
- Produced annual Etowah Small Business of the Year Awards
- Began a year-long shop local campaign known as "Driving the Community", a video series which features members of our communities.
- Launched quarterly "What Keeps you up at Night?" Small Business Roundtables and quarterly Chamber "Pop-Ups" throughout the county.



entrepreneurship, incubation & innovation

- Established Building a Better Etowah County as a 501(c)3 foundation to support the efforts of education, business incubation and economic growth
- Deployed the inaugural Young Entrepreneur Fair to all 5th grade classrooms, and 9 classrooms throughout all systems elected to participate in the program and curriculum.
- Ascend Coworking Lab is being established by The Chamber in Downtown Gadsden and is slated to being accepting contracts soon!
- Partnered to produce TechStars Startup Weekend powered by Google.

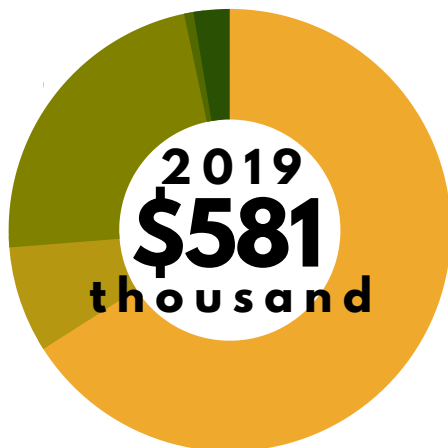


101-500 3%
500+ 1%
26-100 12%

1-25
employees
84%

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

REVENUE



| | 2019 Actual | 2020 Projection |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Membership Renewals | 43% | 46% |
| New Memberships | 5% | 6% |
| Economic Development | 23% | 25% |
| Sponsorships | 15% | 15% |
| General Support | 1% | 1% |

EXPENSES



| | 2019 Actual | 2020 Projection |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Programming | 56% | 57% |
| Marketing & Promotion | 2% | 9% |
| Administrative | 36% | 30% |
| Travel, Lodging & Training | 3% | 2% |
| Building, Auto & Equipment | 3% | 2% |