



Annual Meeting - “Building for the Future”

The Chamber and Industrial Foundation Banquet is right around the corner. The event will be held on Tuesday, October 24, 2017. A reception will begin at 6:00 p.m., with dinner to follow immediately at 6:30 p.m. This year’s event will feature Chip Morgan, Executive Vice-President of Delta Council of Stoneville, MS. Delta Council is a key player for communities of the Delta in the areas of economic development, agriculture, transportation, legislation, and so much more. The evening will feature brief comments from the Chamber and Industrial Foundation, retiring directors will be honored, and the special “Citizen of the Year” Award will be presented. This recognition is kept secret until the night of the event. We feel it appropriate to recognize these key individuals for their unselfish service to the improvement and growth of our community. They give without expectation of personal return and deserve to be honored for that. The 13th Annual Small Business of the Year Award will also be given out to a small business Chamber member, selected from within the community. Past winners include Newson, Inc., Quapaw Canoe Company, Yazoo Pass, Rancho, Meredith-Nowell, and many others. We want to keep the tradition of recognizing these quality businesses going. They deserve celebrating for their hard work and dedication to this community. Tickets for the event are now on sale for \$30 per person for Chamber members and \$35 for non-members. Be sure to make your reservations today! Deadline for ticket purchases is Friday, October 20. Get yours today!



WHAT YOU DO IN CLARKSDALE STAYS IN CLARKSDALE

Shop locally! Support your hometown, friends, and neighbors.

10 Reasons to Support Locally-Owned Businesses

- (1) It keeps our community strong. In a study from a Chicago-based economics firm, it was revealed that...
 - a) every \$100 spent at a locally-owned, independent merchant creates a \$68 return to the community through taxes, payroll, and other expenditures.
 - b) the same number drops to \$43 per \$100 for purchases at retail franchises
 - c) the number drops to \$0 per \$100 for on-line purchases
- (2) When you purchase goods at locally-owned businesses rather than nationally-owned or web-based retailers, more money is kept in the community because locally-owned businesses recycle a much larger share of their revenue back into the local economy, enriching the whole community.
- (3) Small businesses create jobs for residents.
- (4) It keeps our community unique as small businesses are the integral part of the distinctive character of our community.
- (5) Small businesses support community groups and schools.
- (6) Small businesses are invested in the community and its future.
- (7) Entrepreneurship fuels America’s economic innovation and prosperity.
- (8) Local businesses tend to value you more as you receive better customer care and service.
- (9) This is your home, and your way of life depends on the support of your independent, locally-owned businesses.
- (10) Competition and diversity leads to more consumer choices. A marketplace of small businesses is the best way to ensure innovation and low prices over the long-term.

presented by



For more information, please visit www.clarksdale-ms.com • 662-627-7337 • 662-627-1313 fax



“The season for enjoying the fullness of life -- partaking of the harvest, sharing the harvest with others, and reinvesting and saving portions of the harvest for yet a another season of growth.”

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November 5

Annual Christmas Parade

This year's event is set for Tuesday, December 5 at 7:00 p.m. in downtown Clarksdale. Entry forms are now available through the Chamber of Commerce office. The theme of this year's parade is "Christmas Traditions". Volunteers will be needed to assist along the route. Any organization or individual wishing to enter a float, band, character, troop, motorcycle, horse, or special entry, or to lend their assistance in any way should contact the Chamber at 627-7337. It will be upon us before we know it! We are also seeking donations to be able to once again present our fireworks display over the Sunflower River, which is always well received by young and old alike. All support in this effort is greatly appreciated.

Coming Soon...

Strong people don't put people down. They lift them up!

We Want to Visit You!

The Chamber of Commerce is always seeking businesses to host Business After Hours/Open House events for fellow Chamber members. If you are interested, please let us know. Please take advantage of this opportunity to showcase your business, make contacts, and have fun in the process. Call 627-7337 to schedule a date.

WHY Support the Chamber?

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being a Chamber member and encourage you to renew your membership at the appropriate time. It is an investment in your community's future progress. The Chamber works hard to make strides in education, transportation, legislation, agriculture, recreation, and so much more. We constantly seek out new opportunities to involve more sectors of our community in community events and special projects. We work to support and grow our local businesses and industries. We couldn't do these many things without your continued support and encouragement, as well as your volunteer service. We are always open to your suggestions and ideas. This is, after all, YOUR Chamber of Commerce. Please let us know what we can do for you. How can the Chamber be of service to you in your business or organization? We are here to serve our community. Let us hear from you!!

Youth Leadership Clarksdale Set to Begin

Youth Leadership Clarksdale is getting set to kick off its 25th year. The program works with sophomores and juniors from all 4 local high schools. Topics include leadership, communication, responsibility, team building, the justice system, economic development, social issues, and arts and culture. The program is presented free to all participants, so donations are always needed to help support the program. \$250 sponsors one student throughout the course of the program. Contributions may be sent to:

Youth Leadership Clarksdale
P. O. Box 160
Clarksdale, MS 38614

All contributions are greatly appreciated! For additional information, contact Tana Vassel at 627-7337.



New Members

- Delta Southern UAS
- Principle Toyota
- Sandy Stillions

Thank you for being a part of the Chamber of Commerce. Your input is always valuable to us.



**Spotlight
on**

Ron Hudson & Jon Levingston



Ron Hudson will soon be taking a back seat and getting the break he has so rightfully earned and deserves. Although under contract until the end of the year, Ron will be serving in a reduced capacity and no longer as Executive Director. Ron has served as Director for 27 years and accomplished many things during that time, including establishing relationships with local companies, throughout the Delta region, and throughout the state and country that have helped attract and retain manufacturing jobs in our com-

munity. Don't let his quiet demeanor fool you. He has always been a tough negotiator and managed to get deals done. He was also never afraid to get his hands dirty helping laborers move equipment for Delta Jubilee or even taking out the trash and changing office light bulbs. All in all, Ron Hudson fulfilled his role with dignity and heart and will be missed.

Stepping into Ron's shoes beginning October 1 is local businessman Jon Levingston. Jon was president of Levingston Furniture Companies of Cleveland and Clarksdale for 30 years. He served as chairman of the Mississippi Arts Commission, President of the Mississippi Development Bank board, as a member of the State Personnel Board, and as a member of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum Commission. Locally, he chaired the fundraising efforts to save the Cutrer Mansion, served as president of the Delta Area Council Boy Scouts Board, and as a member of both the Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Foundation Boards. He looks forward to working with the Chamber staff, the Mayor and Board of Commissioners, the Coahoma County Board of Supervisors, and all sectors of our community to continue the great economic development efforts of his predecessor, Ron Hudson. Jon is married to the former Jennifer Jones, a Merit Health Physician Recruiter. They have three daughters: Katherine, Madeleine, and Sarah. We are proud to welcome Jon to the Chamber family!



**Salute to
Madam President**

Rose Lockett, Ed. S., Director of Library Services and Co-Coordinator of the Honors College at Coahoma Community College, is the incoming president for the Chamber of Commerce. Rose has served on the Chamber board for a number of years. She is the consummate professional and a very hard worker. We look forward to her term as President.



Industrial Foundation Report

This is my last writing. I want to thank all the many board members of the Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Foundation, and Economic Development Authority who have served during my tenure here in Clarksdale and Coahoma County. We had many successes and, of course, some disappointments, which is just the nature of the business. I also personally thank Tana Vassel who has been here only three months less than I have. We have had a great working relationship! She is a caring, compassionate, and capable professional who works extremely hard to do her best for the community regardless of the task at hand. Also, thanks to my wife of 51 years, Diane Sawyer Hudson, who has always supported me 100% in whatever my job is. She has celebrated with me the successes and has boosted me up whenever I was disappointed. She constantly amazes me with the insight she provides on a subject that she is not directly involved with. I look forward to retirement and being able to sit on the sidelines and cheer for this community that we all love dearly. Thank you for allowing me to serve you all these years. It has been my pleasure. I know with Jon's capable leadership, we will enjoy many successes in the future. I am always willing and ready to help in whatever capacity I am able to do so.

Ronald E. Hudson

**Changing of
the Guard**

October 1 also means new officers and directors for the Chamber, Industrial Foundation, and Economic Development Authority. Chamber President Sarah Ruskey is turning over her duties to incoming president Rose Lockett. Sarah has done a great job and looks forward to staying involved. She had a tough year overseeing the selection and hiring of a new executive director, among other things. Rose is up to the challenge of her new position and looks forward to working closely with the staff. Industrial Foundation President Charles Langford has turned over his duties to Michele Fondren, local President of Regions Bank. Michele is excited about working on a year of existing industry programs, industrial recruitment, and business retention and expansion. Also, long-time Economic Development Authority President Hartley Kittle is turning over the reins to Henry Dorsey, who has served on the board for many years as Treasurer. Henry will, no doubt, do a fabulous job following in the footsteps of Hartley. Please congratulate these new Presidents as they take on their new duties. As always, they need your support and assistance!

**We are only
as strong as we
are united, as
weak as we
are divided.**

J. K. Rowling

Dates to Remember

October

6 - 8 Second Street Blues Party

8 Pinetop Perkins Memorial Homecoming/
Cat Head Mini Blues Fest

12 - 15 Deep Blues Festival

13 - 14 MS Delta Tennessee Williams Festival
Various Locations Around Town

24 Chamber/I. F. Annual Banquet

26 - 29 Hambone Festival

31 



November

7 Election Day



23 **THANKSGIVING**



December

5 Christmas Parade
7:00 p.m., Downtown Clarksdale

25 **CHRISTMAS**



January

1 **NEW YEAR'S DAY**



If you have an event that you would like to have listed on our calendar of events, please contact us at least 3 weeks in advance of publication. *On Target* is published quarterly. Next publication date is January 2018.



P. O. Box 160
Clarksdale, MS 38614
662.627.7337 • 662-627-1313 fax
www.clarksdale-ms.com

Chamber & Industrial Foundation Staff

Jon Levingston
Executive Director

Ron Hudson
Executive Director, Retired

Tana Pittman Vassel
Economic Dev. Director

Cecily Allen
Administrative Assistant





William spent his childhood years in Clarksdale and soaked up a lot of the local flavor of the community and its people, which feature prominently in his writings.

Tennessee Williams Festival Coming Soon

The 25th Annual Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival is scheduled for October 13 - 14 in Clarksdale and promises to be as grand an event as you can imagine. It's been said that being here "is like being IN a Williams play!" of the prestigious Mississippi Delta Festival honoring America's great playwright. Coahoma Community College is again funding the elite student drama competition, which features schools from throughout the state. The Mississippi Humanities Council and MS Division of Tourism approved a request for a bicentennial grant underwriting the "Walking Into Clarksdale" tour, combining scenes from Williams' great Delta plays performed in historic settings.

Included during the two-day festival will be live drama, panel discussions, lectures, readings, blues and gospel music, Southern cuisine, porch plays, tours through Clarksdale's historic district and St. George's Episcopal Church (former rectory where he lived with his mother, sister, and grandparents), and more. The prestigious scholar panel will include Dr. Kenneth Holditch, Dr. Ralph Voss, Dr. Ann Fisher-Wirth, and Coop Cooper to provide previews and insights into the plays and scenes being performed and direct Q & A sessions afterward. Theatre directors Dr. Matt Foss and Karen Kohlhaas will be directing Saturday's acting workshop, working with talented

actors Alice Walker, Johnny and Susan McPhail, Sherrye Williams, and the Vandal Theatre group.

The Festival is free and open to all, with the exception of food events that require advance reservations. Friday night's Grande Reception/Buffer (\$25) will be catered by The Dutch Oven and Saturday's luncheon (\$10) is at CCC. For more information on the Festival or reservations, please call 662-627-6149.



Community Thanksgiving Dinner To Be Held Soon

Clarksdale's annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner is set for Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 23. This is a community event and depends on the generosity and hard work of the community in order to happen. Jay and Lori Burchfield have chaired the event for a few years and look forward to serving those in need once again, with the help of others. The meal will be delivered and served from the Care Station on Blues Alley Thanksgiving morning. Call the Care Station or Chamber of Commerce to donate, volunteer, or submit names of families in need.

Mini Blues Events

The Second Street Blues Party, Cat Head Mini Blues Fest, and Pinetop Perkins Memorial Homecoming, will be held in Clarksdale the weekend of October 6 - 8. The Hambone Festival will also be held October 26 - 29. These mini blues events provide excitement and just the right atmosphere for both visitors and locals alike to enjoy some down-home blues. For more information on these events, just go online to www.blues2rock.com or www.cathead.biz.

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINATION



CLARKSDALE/ COAHOMA COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD

Small business contributes significantly to the vitality of our community; therefore, we wish to acknowledge a small business in our community with the Clarksdale/Coahoma County Small Business of the Year Award.

Please help the Chamber to recognize its Small Business of the Year!

Businesses must meet or exceed these criteria:

- Is a Chamber member
- Has been in business for more than 3 years
- Has at least one employee other than the owner and up to 50 employees
- Community Involvement
- Quality Customer Service
- Innovative Business Approaches
- Business must be located in Coahoma County
- Business must be locally owned

**PLEASE SUBMIT
ALL NOMINATIONS
(by October 13) TO:**

Small Business Award
Chamber of Commerce
P. O. Box 160
Clarksdale, MS 38614
Fax: 662-627-1313
Phone: 662-627-7337
tanapvassel@clarksdale-ms.com

The Clarksdale /Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominees for the 13th Annual Small Business of the Year Award. Three business finalists will be chosen from all nominees. One overall winner will be recognized **Tuesday, October 24, 2017** at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet. Multiple nominations are allowed by any individual (separate form on each nominee). All nominations are due at the Chamber of Commerce office by **Friday, October 13.**

Businesses must meet or exceed these criteria:

- Is a member in good standing of the Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce (visit www.clarksdale-ms.com for list of current members)
- Has been in business for more than 3 years
- Has at least one employee other than the owner and up to 50 employees
- Community Involvement
- Quality Customer Service
- Innovative Business Approaches
- Business must be located in Coahoma County
- Business must be locally owned

NOMINEE:

Business Name: _____
Owner(s): _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____
Email: _____

Submitted by:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____
Email: _____

DESCRIBE YOUR NOMINEE:

Please state briefly why you would like this business to be considered for this award.

(Nominations must be at least 250 words and a maximum of 2 typed pages.)

Please attach description on separate page (s).