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ECONOMIC SUMMIT A SUCCESS

The recent global economic downturn has created new challenges for our economy, and many people all across the country and throughout Alabama are truly hurting.

Fortunately, there are also many bright spots in Alabama's economy, and I strongly believe the coming years hold much promise for south Alabama and the entire Gulf Coast region.

With a sluggish economy around the globe, now is perhaps the best time to work more closely together to develop plans for how best to position our region to take the greatest advantage of the opportunities in front of us.

For this reason, I chaired the Alabama Economic Summit 2014: Our People and Our Economy in Mobile in February.

Almost 400 public officials, educators, business leaders, community leaders, and concerned citizens gathered to help determine how to position our region to make the most of our opportunities.

Governor Bob Riley, summit co-chair, kicked off the day with an overall outlook of the state's economy.

More than anything, the summit was an opportunity to highlight the strong resources and workforce Alabama has and to unify these forces together under an economic strategy that will help lead the state into the future.

Make no mistake, the past few months – and more than likely the rest of 2009 – provide a real challenge to leaders at all levels of both business and government. We can not – in fact, we must not – lose sight of the fact that we are innately blessed with all the necessary ingredients for future economic success.

As our new president said often on last year's campaign trail, "Yes we can." Today, the challenge before us is to show a determined resolve that "Now we must."



Coordinated by the Public Forum Institute, Alabama Economic Summit 2014 was a tremendous success with almost 400 leaders from throughout southwest Alabama in attendance. Pictured with me at the summit are Jonathan Ortman of Public Forum Institute and Mobile Chamber of Commerce President Win Hallett.

2009 WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS DRAWS BIG CROWD

With over 220 students in attendance, my annual Workshop for High School Leaders, held at Weaver Auditorium on the campus of the University of Mobile, was a tremendous success.

The workshop provides high school government and journalism students the opportunity to question representatives from all levels of state and federal government, as well as members of the Gulf Coast broadcast and print media.

Team Focus co-founder, Mike Gottfried gave the keynote address. As the CEO of the Mobile-based community out-reach program that provides a positive role model to young men without a father at home, Coach Gottfried talked with the students about leadership.

WALA Fox 10's Bob Grip moderated a legislative panel with Alabama Representatives Randy Davis, Chad Fincher, Jamie Ison, and Harry Shiver.

WALA Fox 10's Lenise Ligon, WKRG TV-5's Tiffany Craig, and the Press-Register's Frances Coleman led the students in a discussion of the importance and impact of news organizations on today's society.

Our guests certainly helped make this year's workshop one of the best, and plans are already underway for next year's workshop.



Local students joined me for my annual Workshop for High School Leaders where we had the opportunity to discuss the federal legislative process.



The Press-Register's Frances Coleman, WALA Fox 10's Lenise Ligon, and WKRG TV-5's Tiffany Craig talked with students on the importance and impact of news organizations on today's society.

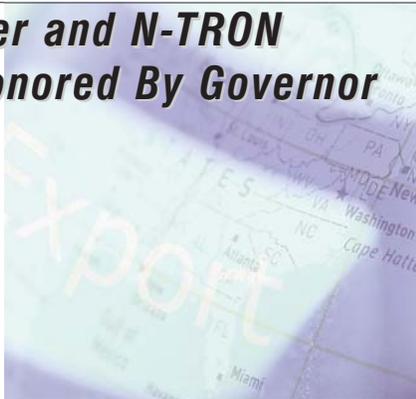
FORMER PAGE HONORED IN ATMORE



Earlier this year, the Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce named Escambia County High School senior Tray Smith Atmore's 2008 "Citizen of the Year." Tray is one of the most exceptional young men I have ever known. I nominated him to serve as a page in the U.S. House of Representatives last year, and as one of only a select few high school juniors in the nation selected, Tray made south Alabama proud. Pictured with Tray above at the awards ceremony are his parents, Ral and Tammy Smith. (Photo courtesy of the Atmore News)

Mobile Chamber and N-TRON Corporation Honored By Governor

In March at an event at the State Capitol, Alabama Governor Bob Riley honored seven Alabama companies, including Mobile-based N-TRON Corp., for its success with exporting.



The Mobile Chamber of Commerce was also recognized with the Governor's Trade Excellence Award.

The award, created in 2005, recognizes Alabama's successful exporters as role models for the Alabama business community.

My deputy chief of staff, Eliska Morgan, attended the ceremony at the State Capitol to show my support for how much the Mobile Chamber of Commerce and the N-TRON Corp. have done to promote Alabama's economic growth through exports.

Earlier this year, Governor Riley announced exports from Alabama increased to \$15.8 billion in 2008, an astounding 10 percent increase over 2007.

From the mailbox...

Dear Congressman Bonner,

I truly appreciate your effort in expediting the issuance of my Permanent Residency Card. Yes, I have received it, and I really believe that your involvement sped up the process.

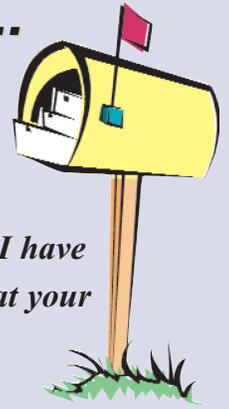
I would like you to know that having been living in Mobile since 1995, earned 2 degrees from South Alabama, met so many great and friendly Mobilians, I have made Mobile my home.

I enjoy volunteering at the Little Sisters of the Poor and with Spring Hill College students cleaning hurricane debris in Bayou La Batre.

Please let me know if I can be of assistance to you and to your offices in the future.

Respectfully,

A grateful resident of Mobile



DISTRICT INTERN KATE LABORDE



Kate LaBorde of Kenner, Louisiana currently serves as an intern in my Mobile office. Kate is a senior at Spring Hill College majoring in political science, and we are pleased that she has agreed to join us in Washington this summer to participate in our intern program.