

THE NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI

# Business Journal

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF JOURNAL PUBLISHING AND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

JANUARY 2010

# FOCUS ON FITNESS

A photograph of a yellow apple, a black digital scale, and a yellow measuring tape on a light blue surface. The apple is on the left, the scale is in the center, and the measuring tape is in the foreground. The text 'FOCUS ON FITNESS' is overlaid in large red letters.

# No sweat

## Fitness centers report mixed economic effects



Suzanne Cockrell, left, Caroline Underwood, center, Lynn Replogle, and Tonya Barker participate in a cycling class at Anytime Fitness in Tupelo.

C. TODD SHERMAN

BY CARLIE KOLLATH ■ BUSINESS JOURNAL

**T**he recession may be wrapping up its second year, but a handful of gyms and fitness clubs in the region say they aren't seeing much of an effect from the financial downturn.

"2009 was oddly the best year we've had with membership, turnover," etc., said Judy Gaillard, who co-owns Total Body Gym in Ripley with her husband. "It's really an inexpensive way to get healthy, get entertained and have a hobby. With the economy, people are

looking to spend their money wisely."

The results were a welcome relief to Gaillard, who has owned the gym since 2002. In 2008, the gym went through its worst ever October, November and December.

According to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association, North American fitness clubs held solid ground in 2008, the most recent year the figures were compiled.

In the U.S. and Canada, health club revenue totaled \$21.2 billion, up nearly 4 percent from 2007, the group said.

Membership grew by more than 10 percent year-over-year, according to the IHRSA.

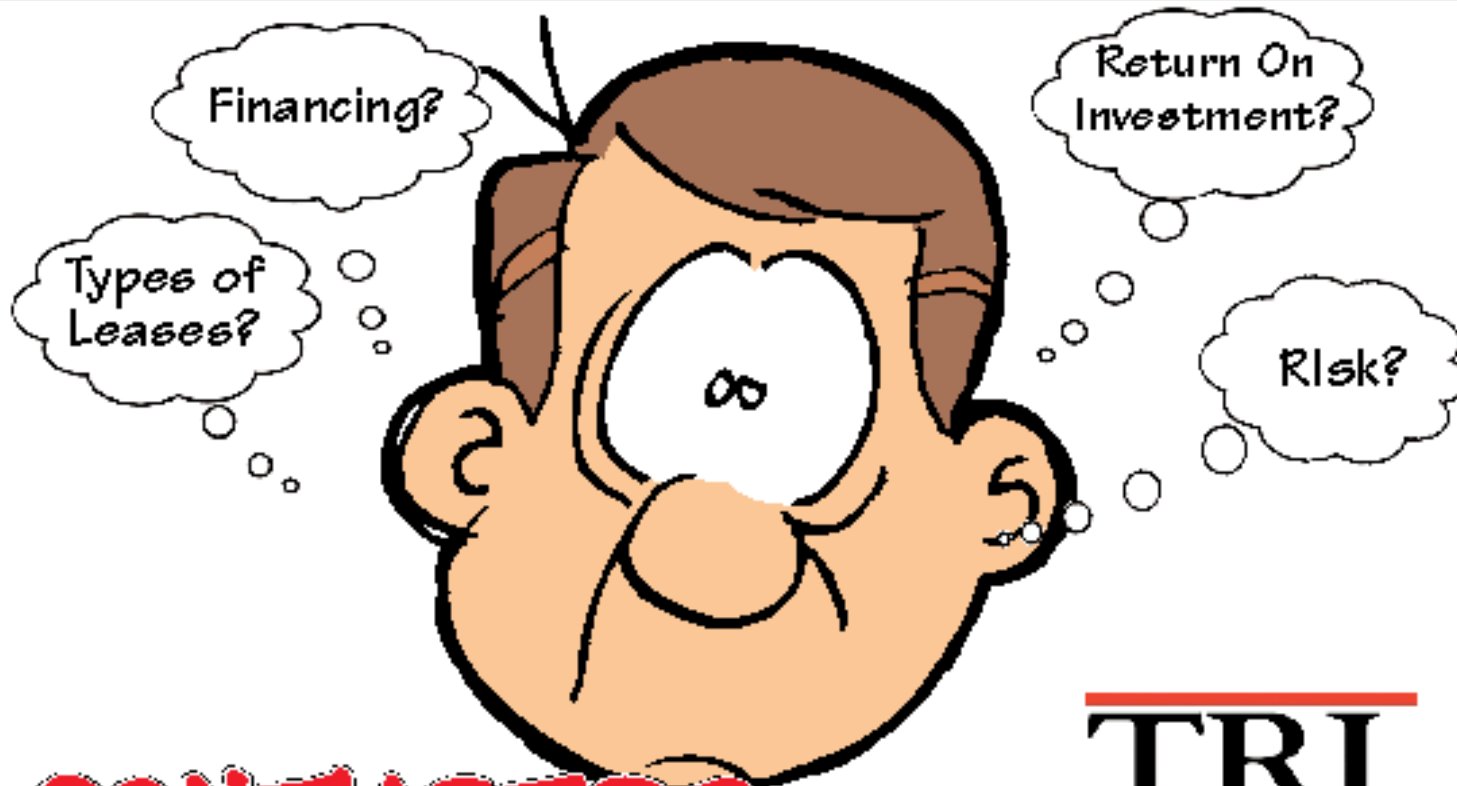
The membership numbers aren't out yet for 2009, but in a September sampling of 54 IHRSA member clubs, 53 percent reported revenues were

Turn to **FITNESS** on Page 18

### The U.S. health club industry at a glance, as of January 2009

- Health clubs: 30,022 (includes YMCAs and community centers)
- Health club members: 45.5 million
- Total industry revenues for '07: \$19.1 billion
- Total industry payroll, benefits: \$8.2 billion
- Total full-time employees: 300,000
- Total part-time employees: 1.2 million

SOURCE: International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association



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# As economy improves, the waiting, wondering begin

The last three months of 2009 certainly were much better than the first three.

The stock market bottomed out in March, but by the end of the year, the major stock indices rallied to gain 60 percent.

Considering how far stocks had to climb, that is an impressive feat.

It took the stock market, as measured by the Dow Jones Industrial Index, about a quarter-century to recover from the Great Depression.

While the Great Recession of 2007-2009 may be officially over, the road to recovery will be long and difficult. Unemployment still is high, businesses still are reluctant to spend and credit still is tight for many.

And while the economy may have bottomed out, we're far from being out of the hole.

About a year ago, at the Northeast Mississippi Eco-

nomie Forecast Conference, Tulane University finance professor Peter Ricchiuti predicted that the economy would improve by the end of the year.

"I think we'll see some improvement in the back half of 2009," said Ricchiuti, who also is the assistant dean of Tulane's Freeman School of Business.

And he was right.

But so was state economist Phil Pepper, who at the conference took a more pessimistic view. Those who have listened to Pepper weren't surprised when he said the recession "will be the longest and deepest recession



Dennis SEID

While the Great Recession of 2007-2009 may be officially over, the road to recovery will be long and difficult. Unemployment still is high, businesses still are reluctant to spend and credit still is tight for many.

we've had."

No argument there.

Pepper said that Mississippi's growth following the last two recessions lagged the nation's rebound, which means recovery will be slower in the Magnolia State.

A look at the state's current budget numbers confirms that.

So when this year's conference is held on Jan. 20, we should listen carefully to what's being said. And then wait and see what happens.



### Still waiting on Toyota

Speaking of waiting, it's been nearly three years since Toyota announced it was going to build vehicles in Blue Springs. It would have been later this year that the first one rolled off the assembly line.

But that was before the recession, before the automotive market tanked.

Recently, Northeast Mississippi got excited (again) when reports spread that Toyota would build the Corolla first, followed by the Prius, in Blue Springs.

Toyota officials played down the report, again insisting that no decision had been made. We'll know when they tell us.

But there are some reasons why Toyota could build both vehicles in Blue Springs:

- The Corolla and Prius share a similar platform.
- Production of the Corolla

ends in March at the California plant that Toyota and GM ran together.

■ Toyota is importing all Prius (and some Corollas) to the U.S. The yen-dollar exchange rate negatively affects the company's profits if the dollar continues to be weak.

Will Toyota eventually open here? The consensus is yes.

Plus, an agreement between Toyota and the state calls for the company to invest at least \$500 million within five years of the start of construction. It also calls for the employment of at least 1,500 workers "within two years of the start of production."

Toyota has said it would take about 18 months to get production equipment and have workers trained.

Suddenly, 2012 looks like a possibility. But you didn't hear that from Toyota.

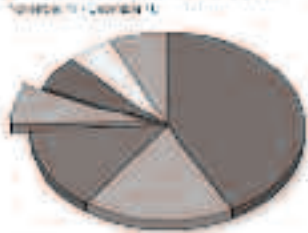
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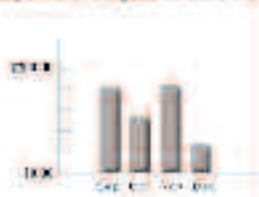
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# Education drives health food sales

■ **Store owners say cleansing and detox products have been popular.**

By **Carlie Kollath**  
BUSINESS JOURNAL

TUPELO – Health food store owners in the region say they are benefiting from consumers’ continued desire for a healthy lifestyle.

Susie Buskirk, owner of Healthy Habits in Tupelo, says cleansing products have been popular, along with whole grain food.

“When the holidays are over, people want to start a healthier lifestyle,” Buskirk said.

She said their desire has led to better sales at Healthy Habits. In addition, she said more people are becoming aware of gluten allergies, so they are buying gluten-free products.

“Business is actually good,”



Sports supplement sales are holding their own at Sunshine Health Foods in Tupelo. Owner Mark Welch attributes the popularity to people’s continued desire to workout.

she said at the end of last month. “It’s better this year than last.”

On a grander scale, GNC, a global retailer of nutritional products including sports nu-

trition products, in the third quarter of 2009 reported an increase in sales and income over the previous year.

Same-store sales were up 4.3 percent in the domestic

retail business (including e-commerce sales), the company said.

Mark Welch, owner of Sunshine Health Foods in Tupelo, said sales are “a little off” at his 26-year-old store compared to 2008.

“It’s slower with the economy being slower,” he said. “I have as many people coming in. They’re just not spending as much.”

He said he’s noticed many of his customers buying smaller sizes of products.

But, they are buying items. He said cleansing products were popular all of last year. Consumers also bought a lot of organic products, such as meats and pastas.

He cited increased education for the popularity in or-



Mark Welch said that sales were down a little from previous years.

ganic products.

One area that is doing well is sports supplements. Welch, a former gym owner, said he thinks the supplement category is holding its own because people view working out as a cheap form of entertainment.

He expects the organic and health food industry will grow in the coming years as more people become educated about the benefits.

“I think it’s going more mainstream,” he said.

He added that he isn’t bothered by the trend for larger chains such as Walmart and Kroger to increase their organic offerings.

“The main reason people come here is for information,” he said. “People don’t know what they want when they come here. We spend an awful lot of time with people.”

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

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## NEWSMAKERS

■ Four Work Link staff members recently received a Certificate of Competency in Occupational Health Practice Management:

**Dr. Dee Dee Coker**, Work Link medical director; **Barbara Hamilton**, office manager; **Dr. Nazia Javed**; and **Aarthur Rodgers**.

Certification is earned through the National Association of Occupational Health Professionals, who provide the training and testing.

Coker joined the Work Link staff in January. She received her bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and her medical training from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences. She completed her family medicine residency at the North Mississippi Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Center.

Hamilton has been employed at Work Link since June 2007. She is also



COKER



HAMILTON

certified as an emergency medical technician, a certified hearing conservationist and a certified forklift trainer.

Javed joined Work Link staff in February. She completed her medical studies at King Edward University in Pakistan, and her family medicine residency at Phoenix Baptist Hospital.

Rodgers received his nursing degree and family nurse practitioner training from Mississippi University for Women in Columbus.

■ **Marsha Tapscott**, director of North Mississippi Medical Center's marketing department, was recently named president of the Mississippi



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TAPSCOTT

Hospital Association's Society for Health Care Marketing & Public Relations. She will serve in that role until November 2010.

She has been employed by NMMC since 1990.

■ **Karen Yelverton** has joined the university development team to seek private funds for the University of Mississippi's School of Business Administration.

Yelverton earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in higher education from Ole Miss.

■ **Dr. Charles Pigott**, who practices at the Surgery Clinic of Tupelo, was recently elected chairman of the North Mississippi Medical Center medical staff for 2010.

Pigott earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry and biology from Delta State University and completed his medical training at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson. He completed



PIGOTT

his surgical residency training at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

He is clinical associate professor of surgery at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. He also is a surgical review physician for the Mississippi Foundation for Medical Care and serves as co-director of trauma service for NMMC.

Pigott is board certified by the American Board of Surgery.

■ **Cooper Tire and Rubber** announced its December service anniversary awards at its Tupelo plant:

• **25 years:** Joel Bailey, Hursey Willingham, David Gladney, Phil Walls, Art Palmer, Wayne Weaver, Raymond Fells, Thomas Pearson, Mark McMillen, Joe Munn and Paul Rajacich

• **20 years:** Kenneth Robertson, Terry McMickin, Mike Franks, Todd Rakestraw, Anthony Malone, Cynthia Northington, Terry Tyes, Brenda Cruse, Zonny Bullock, Teddy Bridges, Ricky Blissard, Elisha Sullivan, Jimmy Ridling, David Jones, Larry Garrison, Jeff Worthey, Donald Little, Gary Allen and Jackie Sneed

• **15 years:** Frank Swader, Randy

Stegall, Pat Reed and Quincy Berry

• **10 years:** James Hodges, Charles Gilmore, Shane Bates, Jacqueline Chandler, Tom Jackson, Mitchel Earnest, Stephen Funderburk, Renae Hughes and Jerry Thomas

• **Five years:** Brad Kuykendall, Scott Click, Ronnie Chandler, Linda McCollum and David Dodd

■ **Douglas M. Wright Jr.**, the owner and CEO of a Tupelo-based health care business, has been added to the 2010 board of directors for the Better Business Bureau of Mississippi.

Wright owns 25 health care businesses in Mississippi and western Tennessee, including skilled nursing homes, retail pharmacies, a closed-door institutional pharmacy and a full-service therapy company. His companies include Community Eldercare Services.

Wright has served in the health care industry since 1992 in various capacities as general counsel, chief financial officer and chief executive officer.

Prior to full-time involvement in the health care industry, Wright practiced law in his hometown of Tupelo.

■ **Cindi Barksdale** has been promoted to vice president of sales and marketing of Franklin Collection Service Inc.

She has been a member of Franklin's sales team since April 1998.

• In other Franklin Collection Service news, Bob Ballard was named Employee of the Year for 2009. A member of the collection team, Ballard has worked at Franklin for seven years.

■ **Joseph B. Babb, CPA**, has successfully completed the certification process with the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts to earn his designation of certified valuation analyst.

Babb works in the Tupelo office of Eaton, Babb & Smith, a regional accounting and professional services firm. He graduated in 2005 with a Master of Taxation from Mississippi State University. He finished his undergraduate work at MSU, graduating summa cum laude in 2004 with a Bachelor of Accountancy.

Babb worked in the tax department of Deloitte and Touche in Memphis before relocating to Tupelo.



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**NEW BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT**

# A TASTE OF THE OLE SOUTH

## Brad and Tiffany Franks opened their own real estate company in October

By **Dennis Seid**  
BUSINESS JOURNAL



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TUPELO – After working for another real estate company for several years, Brad and Tiffany Franks decided it was time to build their own company.

So in October, they opened Ole South Real Estate.

Never mind that the economy is climbing out of a recession and the real estate market has seen much better days.

“People have asked us why we wanted to do this now, but really, the market in Tupelo and Northeast Mississippi is doing fine,” Brad said.

“We believe in this market and that things are coming back,” Tiffany said. “People are still buying homes.”

The housing market got a boost with the first-time homebuyers tax credit, which has been extended to

April, and the Franks said timing couldn’t have been better for them to establish their company.

Besides, they were in good financial shape to do so. As followers of financial expert Dave Ramsey, the Franks said they have been good stewards of their money, allowing them to chase their dream.

“That helped put us in a position to establish our company in a down economy,” Brad said.

And having their own real estate company rather than opening a franchise or working for one meant they set the rules.

“We wanted to establish our own policies and work with our clients the way we wanted to,” Tiffany said. “By having our own company, we can be more flexible with them.”

Tiffany was in the real estate business for six years before Brad joined her on a part-time basis. He was in

sales, so it was an easy transition into real estate. Four years ago, he decided to go full-time, and the couple has worked as a team since.

The Franks also are using social networking to help get out their message. They utilize Twitter and Facebook in addition to connecting via e-mail.

“We have four teenage kids – they keep us on top of what’s going on,” Brad said. “We’ve become very Internet-savvy and tech-oriented. We’re doing the things the next generation of buyers is doing.”

The company has another agent plus a secretary working at its current location on West Main Street, but the Franks have bigger plans.

“This place is temporary, but it’s a good spot to start,” Tiffany said. “But we do hope to grow and eventually have a place of our own.”

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# Chamber Connection

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



Loren Scott



Phil Hardwick



Chris Rogers

## NEMS Economic Forecast Conference To Be Held January 20

The annual Northeast Mississippi Economic Forecast Conference will be held Wednesday, January 20 at the BancorpSouth Conference Center. The event will begin with coffee and networking at 8:30 a.m., with the conference commencing at 9:00 a.m. The featured speakers for this year's event are: Dr. Loren C. Scott, president, Loren C. Scott & Associates, Inc.; Mr. Phil Hardwick, coordinator of capacity development, John C. Stennis Institute of Government at Mississippi State University; and Mr. Chris Rogers, chairman, CDF Board of Directors.

**Dr. Scott** will speak on "Gazing into the Crystal Ball: The Outlook for the Economy." A 27-year old economic consulting firm, Loren C. Scott & Associates' clients include such large national firms as BellSouth, Capital One Financial, Entergy, ExxonMobil, J.P. Morgan Chase, and a diversity of others. He is one of the 32-member National Business Economic Issues Council, which meets quarterly to dis-

cuss issues of state, national, and international interest. This group has experts who cover international trade, Washington economic policy, retail trade, trucking, steel, chemicals, etc. Dr. Scott is an energy specialist on the NBEIC. He has been interviewed on MSNBC, CNBC, and Bloomberg TV, in addition to several local TV stations, and his work has been cited in such publications as the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, USA Today, and the Moscow Times, to name a few.

Dr. Scott's career started at Louisiana State University in 1969 where he spent the next 33 years rising through the ranks from assistant professor to the prestigious Freeport McMoran Endowed Chair of Economics and the Director of the Division of Economic Development and Forecasting. Over the 13 year period from 1983-96, he was the chairman of the Economics Department at LSU. During that time, the Department's ranking among the 3,000 economics departments in the U.S.

rose from 101st to 38th. He is presently Professor Emeritus at LSU. He received seven awards at LSU for outstanding classroom teaching and gives 50-70 speeches a year on the state of the economy.

**Phil Hardwick** will address the conference on the economy on a state level. Hardwick is coordinator of capacity development at the John C. Stennis Institute of Government at Mississippi State University. He also serves as president of The Hardwick Company, LLC, which provides strategic planning, goal-setting, web-design, branding, and related services to corporate and nonprofit clients. Prior to joining the Stennis Institute in August 2003, Hardwick served as vice president of community and economic development at Mississippi Valley Gas Company.

Hardwick is past-president of the Mississippi Main Street Association, Mississippi Economic Development Council, and Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum. He served as 2006-2008 president of the Mississippi Asso-

ciation of Partners in Education. He received his undergraduate degree from Belhaven College and his MBA from Millsaps College. He is also a graduate of the Senior Executives in State & Local Government executive program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. During his military service he was security team leader for Army One, the Presidential helicopter.

**Chris Rogers**, CDF chairman and chief appraisal officer of Renasant Bank, will speak on the state of economic affairs on a local level.

Mr. Charles Russell, Trustmark Bank, will serve as chairman of this year's conference. Other sponsors of the event include BNA Bank, BancorpSouth, CB&S Bank, Community Bank, Community Development Foundation, Journal, Inc., M&F Bank, Regions Bank, and Renasant Bank.

*For more information or to request complimentary tickets for the conference, please contact CDF at 662.842.4521.*

# Chamber focus

Dear Friends:

We want to thank our sponsors for agreeing to host the NEMS Economic Forecast Conference scheduled for January 20 at the BancorpSouth Conference Center. We invite you to attend and hear what the economists have to predict on the national, state, and local horizon. The speakers, as well as the sponsors of the event, are included in the article on the front page of this issue. If you would like to attend and have not received an invitation, please call the CDF office at (662) 842-4521.

The CDF's Business to Business Connection trade show will be held on Wednesday, January 27 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the BancorpSouth Arena. Booth registration forms have been mailed to our members and it's not too late to reserve a booth. Businesses will be demonstrating and promoting their goods and services, and you will have an opportunity to register for some great prizes. John Lindsey, Lindsey & Associates of Phoenix, AZ, is making a return visit to speak on conventional and unconventional ways to survive these tough economic times. During the workshop, he will prescribe



SMITH

seven remedies that will help businesses survive. The seminars were well attended last year and we predict this year will be the same.

Also, an added benefit this year is a free workshop for all the businesses that have a booth. The workshop will be conducted by Carey Snyder, owner of Snyder and Company, and is scheduled for January 13 at 4:00 p.m. in the CDF boardroom. Carey will be sharing ideas on how to properly market businesses to trade show attendees.

As we prepare for the year ahead, CDF pledges to work smarter, be available, and to seek services or opportunities to better serve our members.

To our members, THANK YOU for your investment and support.

Vice President of Chamber Services

## Community Development Foundation's Board of Directors for 2009-2010

CDF is governed by a 59-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.

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(901) 508-1657  
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161 N COLEY RD.  
TUPELO, MS 38801  
(901) 508-1657  
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### GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

MR. KEITH CHAPMAN  
1889 MCCULLOUGH BLVD.  
TUPELO, MS 38801  
(901) 508-1657  
RETAIL AND SPECIALTY SHOPS

13 14  
**Dates to remember**

### Business to Business Connection Booth Seminar

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

4:00 p.m.

CDF Boardroom

### Northeast Mississippi

### Economic Forecast Conference

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

8:30 a.m. – coffee and networking

9:00 a.m. – conference

BancorpSouth Conference Center

### Business Roundtable

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

4:00 p.m.

CDF Boardroom

### Business to Business Connection and Taste of Tupelo

Tuesday, January 26 -

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

BancorpSouth Arena

### First Friday

Friday, February 5, 2010

7:00 a.m.

Mall at Barnes Crossing

For more information on any of the above events  
please contact the CDF office at 662.842.4521



# General Atomics' Electromagnetic Systems Division Breaks Ground on Phase IV Expansion at Tupelo Facility; Project to Create 20 New Jobs

General Atomics' Electromagnetic Systems Division (GA-EMS), manufacturer of advanced linear motors for Electromagnetic Aircraft Launching Systems (EMALS), broke ground December 3 on its Phase IV, 50,000 square-foot expansion at its 72,000 square-foot manufacturing facility in Shannon, MS. The expansion, a \$4.5 million capital investment by the company, will accommodate the plant's role as the logistics supplier and depot-level support for the U.S. Navy's Gerald R. Ford aircraft carriers. The project will create at least 20 new jobs.

"This expansion is proof of the confidence General Atomics has in the workers in northeast Mississippi," said U.S. Senator Roger Wicker. "The expansion will result in at least 20 more quality jobs and will strengthen General Atomics' ability to continue serving our Navy for decades to come. This is a win for both local workers and our nation's defense."

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) provided the company with Momentum Mississippi incentives to help facilitate the facility's Phase III expansion, which was recently completed. The success of Phase III directly impacted the company's decision to undertake its Phase IV expansion. The MDA-assisted Phase III project resulted in a 37,000-square-foot ex-



Pictured participating in the groundbreaking ceremony are: Todd Beadles, CDF; Joe Geddie, NMIDA; V.M. Cleveland, Cleveland Properties; Gerald Warfield, Southland Construction; Drew Robertson, U.S. Senator Roger Wicker's Office; Supervisor Bobby Smith; Harry Gibbs, MDA; Chandler Russ, MDA; Peter Rinaldi, General Atomics; Supervisor Tommie Lee Ivy; David Rumbarger, CDF; Bill Canty, U.S. Senator Thad Cochran's Office; Mike Armour, ARC; and Lee Oswald, ICC. Also pictured are employees of General Atomics.

pansion at the facility. General Atomics invested \$3.5 million in the Phase III expansion and added 25 new jobs.

"I am thrilled that we were able to assist General Atomics in expanding their Mississippi operations. The work they perform at their Shannon facility is invaluable to our defense industry, and the creation of new jobs in the current economy is imperative in helping our state move forward," said Gray Swoope, MDA executive director. "The expansion demonstrates the company's belief in Mississippi and its workforce, and we look forward to working with them on future projects."

GA-EMS is the prime contractor for EMALS equipment, which is used to

launch planes from next-generation aircraft carriers. The Shannon facility assembles and tests the majority of the aircraft carriers' launcher systems, which are the largest induction motors in the world. There are four systems per carrier.

"We appreciate the impact that General Atomics continues to make in Lee County," said Lee County Board of Supervisors President Tommie Lee Ivy. "Their investment in our area and commitment to creating quality jobs for our workforce is valued and appreciated."

"General Atomics appreciates all the support we have received over the past five years while we have pushed to

maintain our manufacturing and expansion plans in Mississippi. Thanks to these cooperative efforts we are on schedule to support the Navy in the building and commissioning of the next generation aircraft carrier, the Gerald R. Ford," said GA-EMS Tupelo Facility Manager, Pete Rinaldi.

"General Atomics has been an asset to the Tupelo area and Lee County since 2005, and we anticipate many more prosperous years working with company officials and employees," said Chris Rogers, chairman of the Community Development Foundation of Tupelo/Lee County. "Our business leaders and public officials commend the company for its ongoing investment in our people and community."

GA-EMS is a supplier of advanced electromagnetic systems and related power equipment for a variety of defense, energy and commercial transportation applications. The division has leading-edge expertise in the design and fabrication of linear motors, power inverters, high-voltage DC power distribution systems and numerous other energy conversion, distribution and storage systems. GA-EMS is a world leader in applying electromagnetic technologies to aircraft launch recovery, projectile launch and magnetic levitation systems. To learn more about General Atomics, please visit [www.ga.com](http://www.ga.com).

## SMOOTHIE KING



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the opening of Smoothie King in Tupelo. Pictured on the front row at the event are: Waurene Heflin, Crye-Leike Realtors; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Councilman Mike Bryan; Councilman Markel Whittington; Nanette Shoemaker, Smoothie King; Daryl Owens, Smoothie King; Casey White, Smoothie King; and Jennie Bradford Curlee, CDF. Pictured on the back row are: Moe Bristow, Culligan Water Depot; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Veleka Ball, CB&S Bank; Johnna Moore, WTVA/WLOV/WKDH; Bert Sparks, WTVA/WLOV/WKDH; Richard Carleton, Mall at Barnes Crossing; Barbara Smith, Tupelo Airport Authority; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Toby Hedges, Shelter Insurance; Scott Medlock, The McCarty Company; Louis Conley, Renasant Bank; and Paul Mize, BancorpSouth. Smoothie King is located at 3982 North Gloster Street in the King's Crossing Shopping Center in Tupelo. Smoothie King can be reached at 662.842.5277.

## MAC CURLEE RECEPTION



A retirement reception was held to thank Mac Curlee, principal of Tupelo High School, for 40 years of service in education in the state of Mississippi. Pictured, Todd Beadles, director of workforce development for the Community Development Foundation, presents Curlee with the excellence in education award.

## OPEN AIR WINDOWS AND DOORS



To celebrate the grand opening of Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC, a ribbon cutting was held. Pictured at the event are: Percy Garner; Emily Addison, CDF; Angie Garner; Erica Garner; Ty Garner; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Councilman Mike Bryan; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Eric Garner, Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; Mayor Jack Reed, Jr.; Veleka Ball, CB&S Bank; Todd Everett, Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Bea Lockett, TRI, Inc. Realtors; Monte Montgomery, Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC; Bo Gifford, Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC; Andy Chism, Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC; and Lisa Hudson, Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC. Open Air Windows & Doors of Tupelo, LLC is located at 1715 McCullough Boulevard, Suite C in Tupelo and can be reached at 662.269.2134.

The Community Development Foundation presents



**2010 Business to Business Connection**  
**Wednesday, January 27, 2010**  
**9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**  
**BancorpSouth Arena**

Join us for a special seminar presented by  
**Mr. John Lindsey**  
**Lindsey & Associates**  
**Phoenix, Arizona**

“Seven Remedies for Business Survival”  
**10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.**  
 and  
**2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.**  
 On the floor of the BancorpSouth Arena

Visit booths from businesses throughout North Mississippi  
 Learn more about their products and services

Register to win great prizes

For more information, please contact the CDF office at  
 662.842.4521.

## PARVIN DISABILITY



A ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the opening of Parvin Disability in Tupelo. Pictured at the event are: Waurene Heflin, Crye-Leike Realtors; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Bert Sparks, WTVA/WLOV/WKDH; Stephanie Price, Parvin Disability; Les Perry, North Mississippi Medical Center; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; Gary Parvin, Parvin Disability; Richard Carleton, Mall at Barnes Crossing; Councilman Fred Pitts; Blair Hill, Master Hospitality; Sonya Main, Parvin Disability; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Libby Jobe, Parvin Disability; Louis Conley, Rensant Bank; Shanna Gaskins, Parvin Disability; and Jennie Bradford Curlee, CDF. Parvin Disability is located at 1150 South Green Street, Building 2, Suite F-1 in Tupelo and can be reached at 662.844.5770.

## TOUR OF APPLE FACILITY



Following the Tupelo Public School District's announcement of its partnership with Apple to provide MacBook laptops for district administrators, teachers, and sixth to 12th-grade students, a group of community members visited Apple's headquarters in California. Pictured are David Rumbarger, CDF; Mary Ann Placencia; Glenn McCullough, Jr., GLM Associates; David Copenhaver, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Mississippi; Randy Shaver, Tupelo Public School District; Mitch Waycaster, Rensant Bank; Jane Spain, WTVA; and Lloyd Gray, Journal, Inc.

## “How to Remember Just about Anything”

Sponsored by CDF—Chamber of Commerce

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

CDF Boardroom  
 300 West Main Street  
 Tupelo, MS

Lunch  
 will be  
 Provided

CDF  
 Members  
 \$15.00

Non  
 Members  
 \$25.00

Space  
 is  
 Limited

Presented by

*Mr. Daren Howard, Managing Partner*  
*Howard Mohorn & Associates*  
*Dale Carnegie Training of the Midsouth*

You'll learn how to remember names and numbers, use stacking to remember a speech, and improve your concentration.

Please call (662) 842-4521 to reserve your space  
 Online registration is available at [www.tupelochamber.com](http://www.tupelochamber.com)





**FIRST FRIDAY**



The December First Friday networking breakfast featured guest speaker, Dr. Randy Shaver, and was sponsored by Comcast. Pictured at the event are: David Rumbarger, CDF; Amy Thomas, Comcast Business Services; Sharon McCombs, Comcast Business Services; Dr. Shaver; Russ Wilson, Comcast, Comcast Business Services.

# Rebelanes Offers Family Fun for Everyone



Pictured are members of a bowling league at Rebelanes in Tupelo.

Please join us for the next meeting of the

**TUPELO  
YOUNG  
PROFESSIONALS**  
www.typs.biz

at the

**Taste of Tupelo  
Tuesday, January 26, 2010  
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
BancorpSouth Arena**

Tickets are required for this invitation-only event.  
Each ticket admits two people.

To request a ticket for the event, please RSVP to [typ@cdfms.org](mailto:typ@cdfms.org)

The fastest growing high school sport in the state of Mississippi is not what you would think. While most would assume football, basketball, baseball, or softball, bowling is an accredited high school sport and is the fastest growing in the state. In fact, Tupelo High School has won the state championship in bowling for the past three consecutive years.

Kevin and Lisa Hartigan, owners of Rebelanes in Tupelo, believe that the addition of bowling to high school athletics gives kids who would not otherwise participate in a sports program, the chance to play a sport, letter in a sport, and gain access to the many scholarship dollars available to high school bowlers. While the Hartigans have opened their facility to the high school team, they also have leagues and events for people of all ages.

"There is something here for everyone to do at a very economical price," said Kevin Hartigan. "This is something mom, dad, grandma, and grandpa can do with the kids. Your family can come in here for \$10 and live like a king."

Family owned and operated, Rebelanes has been in Tupelo since 1958. The Hartigans purchased it from Lisa's uncle and moved to Tupelo from upstate New York in 1999. Since then, they have put every effort into making the bowling alley a place for families to enjoy a nice, cost-effective night out together, including the prohibition of smoking in the facility.

Aside from bowling, Rebelanes boasts an arcade, three pool tables,

snack bar, and party room. They offer leagues for young and old. One such league is an adult/youth league that meets on Monday nights for an hour and a half, for a two person team made up of one adult and one youth bowler. They also host Saturday morning youth leagues, senior, women's, men's, and mixed leagues throughout the week.

"We have bowlers from three to 93," said Lisa Hartigan. "Everyone has a story about this place."

Rebelanes also hosts fundraisers, lock-ins, and group discounts tailored to your group or party. Each February, they host the annual Bowl for the Cure event that has historically raised almost \$10,000 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. They also offer birthday packages that include an hour of bowling, half hour in the party room, shoe rental, party set-up, balloons, drinks, invitations, and a special gift for the birthday child. Rebelanes can also be a unique place to host a corporate event.

The Hartigans have purchased land next door to the current facility and have plans for expansion in the future. With a rich history of wholesome family entertainment in Tupelo, the future looks bright for Rebelanes.

Rebelanes is open Monday and Tuesday from 2:00 p.m. to close; Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to close; Friday from 1:00 p.m. to close; Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to close; and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to close. Rebelanes is located at 625 Robert E. Lee Drive in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 842-1132.

## TUPELO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



The December Tupelo Young Professionals event was held at Reed's in downtown Tupelo. A service project to benefit the Salvation Army was held in conjunction with this meeting. Pictured at the event are TYPs Courtney Higgs, Mario Hilliard, Heather Hardy, and Melissa Griffin.

# The 2010 CDF Membership & Manufacturing Directory is going digital!



To be sure your company's information is accurate and up-to-date before this publication is complete, visit [www.cdfms.org](http://www.cdfms.org) to check your listing in the Membership Directory.

*Should you need to make changes to your listing, please contact CDF at (662) 842-4521 or [jcurlee@cdfms.org](mailto:jcurlee@cdfms.org)*

## PERFORMANCE REHAB



A ribbon cutting was held for Performance Rehab in Tupelo. Pictured at the event are: Barbara Smith, CDF; Amy Passmore, Performance Rehab; Meagen Mallett, Performance Rehab; Daron Walter, Performance Rehab; Suzanne Walters, Performance Rehab; Blair Hill, Master Hospitality; Councilman Fred Pitts; Jima Alexander, Performance Rehab; Tim Alexander, Performance Rehab; Shirley Bennett, Performance Rehab; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Danyel Filgo, AvonLea Retirement Community; Kathy Bailey, Crye-Leike Realtors; Sonya Reed, Performance Rehab; Jane Myers, Wiggles & Wags Pet Sitting; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; and Waurene Heflin, Crye-Leike Realtors. Performance Rehab is located at 2429 Lawndale Drive in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 840-6163.

## ALFA INSURANCE - GREG OTT



A ribbon cutting was held at ALFA Insurance-Greg Ott in Tupelo. Pictured at the event are: Bea Luckett, TRI, Inc. Realtors; Moe Bristow, Culligan Water Depot; Cindy Bryant, LSI Human Resource Solutions; Louis Conley, Renasant Bank; Beverly Bedford, Honda of Tupelo; Johnna Moore, WTVA/WLOV/WKDH; Councilman Jonny Davis; Mike Maynard, Weatherall's, Inc.; Greg Ott, ALFA Insurance; Les Perry, North Mississippi Medical Center; Sabrina Raley, ALFA Insurance; Josh Mabus, The Mabus Agency; Carolyn Moss, Comfort Inn; Jane Myers, Wiggles & Wage Pet Sitting; and Jennie Bradford Curlee, CDF. ALFA Insurance-Greg Ott is located at 623 West Main Street, Suite 1 in Tupelo and can be reached at (662) 844-5162.



# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

*First Friday*  
Friday, February 5, 2010

Speaker:  
Mr. Robin McGraw  
President  
Mississippi Bankers Association

Sponsor:  
Yocona Area Council Boy Scouts of America

The Mall at Barnes Crossing ■ Food Court ■ 7:00 a.m.  
Continental Breakfast Will Be Served.

For more information, call: 662.842.4521

Look for this sticker in the window of participating CDF member businesses to receive your special discount. To be a participating partner of ChamberAdvantage, call the CDF office at (662) 842-4521.

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## CDF and THS Partner to Keep Kids in School

Currently, in Mississippi and across the nation, students are dropping out of high school at an alarming rate. This has a tremendous impact on our local and state economy and our community's ability to compete from an economic development standpoint. To combat this alarming issue, the Community Development Foundation has partnered with Parents for Public Schools and Tupelo High School to promote and recruit mentors for a program designed to help at-risk students at Tupelo High School.

"This is one approach in a multi-pronged dropout prevention strategy, and simply put, it is the right thing to do to make a difference in a young person's life," said Todd Beadles, vice president of workforce development for CDF. "We are very fortunate to have good, caring people in our community who are willing to give their time for such a worthy endeavor."

This program is voluntary for all involved, including the students. Possible mentees are identified for various reasons and asked to participate. A mentor is then assigned to the



Pictured are students and mentors enjoying the dinner meeting at Tupelo High School.

mentee, where a relationship is forged and the mentor visits the mentee on campus twice a month to talk about course work, goal setting, and the mentee's concerns or challenges. This is not a tutoring program, but rather a program to partner community volunteers to be good role models and lend an ear to students who may be at risk. The pro-

gram was the idea of Mac Curlee, former Tupelo High School Principal. Sally Gray with the Parents for Public Schools, along with Tupelo High School Counselor, Brandie Harris, also worked hard to ensure a successful program.

On Thursday, November 19, CDF hosted a dinner for Tupelo High School mentors, their

mentees, and a parent or guardian. More than 80 people participated in this event that focused on dinner, fellowship, and a brief presentation from CDF.

Approximately 10,000 students per year drop out of school in Mississippi. Studies show that dropouts are more than twice as likely as high school graduates to slip into

poverty in any given year. Almost two out of every three of all public assistance recipients in Mississippi did not complete high school. If the male high school graduation rate increased just 5%, the reduced crime rate and increased earnings would give Mississippi a combined savings and revenue of \$93 million annually. School dropouts are more likely than graduates to go to jail. Past studies have shown that 75% of inmates in state prisons, 59% of federal prisoners, and 69% of local jail inmates are high school dropouts. Overall, high school dropouts cost the state of Mississippi more than \$458 million annually in lost revenue and added public assistance and incarceration costs.

The dropout problem cannot be solved by the education system alone. It takes each community to get involved and partner with their respective school districts. If you are interested in helping combat this problem, please contact Orlando Pannell at [opannell@cdfms.org](mailto:opannell@cdfms.org) or (662) 842-4521.



Community Development Foundation

Application for Membership

Please tell us about your organization

Organization Name

Mailing Address

City, State, Zip Code

Physical Address (if different)

City, State, Zip Code

Website

Number of Employees

Category (list located on the back of this application)

Keywords (choose up to 10 words that describe your business)

Main Contact (will receive all chamber correspondence)

Contact Name

Title

Phone

Toll-free phone

Fax

Email address

Additional Contact

Name

Title

E-mail

Areas of Interest (please circle your selections)

Ambassador

Business Roundtable

Sponsorship Opportunities

Tupelo Young Professionals

Do we have your permission to use your photos in our chamber publication(s)?

\_\_ Yes \_\_ No

Signature and title of authorized person with your company

 My CDF membership check is enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please send me an invoice Please bill payment to: \_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_ American Express

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

300 West Main Street, P.O. Box A  
 Tupelo, MS 38802-1210  
 662.842.4521 Phone  
 800.523.3463 Toll-free  
 662.841.0693 Fax  
 www.cdfms.org



## BusinessRewind

## CALHOUN COUNTY

**Kidz World Furniture grows to 50 workers**

■ CALHOUN CITY - Four months after opening, Kidz World Furniture is growing like the kids for whom its furniture is made.

The company, which started with 18 employees in August, now has 50 workers cranking out 3,000 pieces of furniture a week.

The company, which makes upholstered children's furniture, celebrated its grand opening in mid-December with a ceremony at its 120,000-square-foot plant.

The company has licensing agreements to use logos of teams from the NCAA, NFL, Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League, the Mexican professional soccer league, Nickelodeon cartoon characters and Mossy Oak camouflage patterns.

Company owner A.D. Blount invested \$200,000 in Kidz World. Blount also owns Med-Lift and Mobility Inc., which makes lift chairs and adjustable beds.

The Mississippi Development Au-

thority provided \$95,000 in Rural Impact Funds to help with public improvements.

**Bollinger buys former Roscoe's restaurant**

■ CALHOUN CITY - The reach of Bubba T. Chickenbone is expanding.

Anthony Bollinger, owner of Bubba T's restaurant and the Bollinger Family Theatre in Bruce, has bought the former Roscoe's restaurant in Calhoun City.

"We're doing remodeling and freshening up down there," Bollinger told Bruce Chamber members. "It'll be a duplicate of this restaurant."

The chamber group meets at Bubba T's each month.

Bollinger, who is a member of the chamber board of directors, said he hoped the group would continue to come to Bubba T's for its monthly meetings, but that he probably would be in Calhoun City for a while as the new restaurant opens and gets established.

The new restaurant is expected to open in mid- to late-January.

## ALCORN COUNTY

**Goodwill opens store in Corinth**

■ CORINTH - Goodwill Industries opened its newest resale store Dec. 22.

The store occupies 21,000 square feet in the Corinth Commons and will employ about 20 workers.

The store occupies a space that was originally planned for Office Depot, which decided not to open there.

Goodwill is a charity that sells used clothing, housewares, furniture, toys, books and sporting goods to support their free mission services of job training, job placement and other social services. Hours of operation are Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

## LEE COUNTY

**Former Lane execs to open HomeStretch**

■ NETTLETON - Former Lane Home Furnishings executives William "Skipper" Holliman and Gentry Long have

formed HomeStretch LLC, which will build upholstered reclining furniture including chairs, sofas, love seats and sectionals.

The company is expected to begin operations in March with 30-40 employees and grow to 140 employees within four years.

Applications are being accepted at the WIN Job Centers in Belden and Amory.

HomeStretch will be in the former Advantage Furniture building in Nettleton, a 220,000-square-foot plant with another 9,000-square-foot office.

HomeStretch will lease the building from Monroe County, which bought the building for \$1.5 million borrowed from the Mississippi Development Authority's capital improvements revolving loan program.

The MDA kicked in another \$298,000, while the Appalachian Regional Commission provided \$240,000. Together, that money will be used to replace a roof over an older 86,000-square-foot portion of the building.

**General Atomics adding workers with expansion**

■ SHANNON - General Atomics will create at least 20 jobs with its fourth expansion at its Lee County facility.

The \$4.5 million expansion, announced in early December, will add a 50,000-square-foot building to GA's 72,000-square-foot manufacturing plant in Shannon.

It's the company's fourth expansion since it broke ground on the main facility five years ago. The company now has about 50 employees at the Tupelo-Lee Industrial Park South.

The General Atomics facility in Shannon assembles and tests advanced linear motors for electromagnetic aircraft launching systems. The EMALS will be used in the U.S. Navy's next generation of aircraft carriers.

The new building will be used to help the plant fulfill its role as a logistics supplier for the carriers. The first of the new ships, the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford, is scheduled to join the fleet in 2014, said GA general manager Pete Rinaldi. The building will be used mainly as a storage warehouse.

*Business Journal reports*

# For Employers Who Want Healthy Employees

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## Fitness

Continued from Page 2

down from membership fees and dues. In the same survey that compared September 2009 to September 2008, 17 percent said membership revenues were about the same and 30 percent said they were greater in the most recent year.

It's a mixed bag in Northeast Mississippi, as well.

With the region's unemployment rates in the double digits, consumer spending is down. Some fitness centers, such as the North Mississippi Medical Center Wellness Center in Tupelo, are seeing the penny-pinching affect their bottom line.

"Like any business, we're down some," said Edwin Crenshaw, the fitness supervisor at the Wellness Center. "With discretionary spending, the first thing they drop is health."

He said several people canceled their memberships because they were laid off.

Thomas Cain, general manager at Snap Fitness in Tupelo,

said he's seen the same thing.

"We do have people who cancel their memberships, but we have just as many sign up to replace them," Cain said. "We're still growing in numbers. It's almost as if people are joining the gym to get their mind off it."

He added that the personal training business is up, along with supplement sales. Cain also said Snap is looking into expanding the Tupelo location.

### Incentives to stay

Gaillard in Ripley said she's had a few members who are now unemployed, but she's found many of them are keeping their memberships because they have more time to workout and are drawing unemployment payments.

"It also relieves stress," she said.

She's had a few unemployed members want to cancel contracts, but said she tries to work with them by offering a three-month delay and tacking the time to the end of the contract.

"We normally use it for medical delays so they aren't

► **In 2008, health club members attended their clubs an average of 101 days, with affluent and over 55 age groups having shown above average attendance. Weight training and treadmills were popular club activities of choice among consumers, who were also active outside the club.**

► **A survey of 180 member clubs comparing January 2009 to January 2008 showed the majority of clubs (70 percent) saw member attendance equal or higher than the previous January.**

SOURCE: International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association

wasting their money," Gaillard said. "It's not normal procedure, but we live in the real world and we are independently owned so we can do that."

At the Anytime Fitness location in Tupelo, co-owner Susan Presley said she noticed very little negative impact on membership in 2009.

A second Anytime location in Tupelo is scheduled to open soon in the former Southern Video store on East Main Street. Once that is open, the current gym on West Main will be renovated.

"The economy has not been a major factor," Presley said. "We've seen a little bit of difference, but it's not a major factor."

Business has been steady, she said, and membership has been up for the past couple of months. The gym also has hired two new employees.

"Just because the economy is bad doesn't mean your health has to be," said Presley, who owns eight Anytime Fitness locations in Alabama and Mississippi. "It works out to be

about \$1 a day – the cost of bottled water. It's all about priorities. ... When you ask people what their priorities are, health is going to be in the top five each time."

Other gym owners and managers echoed Presley's statement about the money, breaking down the membership fees to the per-day rate instead of a monthly rate of about \$30, which translates to \$360 per year. Many also discussed the health benefits of working out, saying it lowers the risk of future health problems.

"Women can spend the money now or spend it later," said Cathy Barnett, owner of the Curves franchise in Amory.

### Pushing promotions

Barnett along with the other gym managers and owners said their membership counts have been helped out as companies push the health benefits of exercising. Each year, more local companies and insurance companies are paying for some or all of the membership fee, they said.

Special promotions also help draw members. Barnett said her gym was successful in 2009 with getting new members by offering alternatives to enrollment or service fees.

One month, new members could join free if they donated a turkey. Another month, new members could join free if they proved they had a mammogram in the past year.

Promotions also helped out at Premiere Lady Fitness in Tupelo, said co-owner Chris Beckish. Business was "stagnant" during the summer, the gym's traditional slow period.

Then Beckish and his wife, Kristi, rolled out several specials for the gym's 15-year anniversary. The efforts bumped up business enough that Chris Beckish said he expects final figures for 2009 will show the business is on par with 2008 or up about 10 percent.

Many of the fitness centers are rolling out special promotions this month, as people follow through on their New Year's resolution of losing weight or getting in shape.

"They are pretty much going to flood the doors, with or without any specials," said Coy Vail, manager of Anytime Fitness in Tupelo.

Cain added that this month is the busiest time of the year at Snap, as well.

Barnett at Curves said she expects to see a lot of people exercising this month, too.

"It's not something people like to do, but something people have to do to stay healthy," Barnett said.

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

# Murphree

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### LEE COUNTY

#### Appointments to be taken for free income tax help

■ TUPELO – Free tax preparation is available again, but only by appointment.

Scheduling will begin Jan. 12 by calling United Way of Northeast Mississippi at (662) 841-9133.

Appointments will be for appointment dates of Jan. 19 and afterward.

The free tax preparation will be done at Spanish Village I, located at 144 S. Thomas Street Ste. 201, in Tupelo.

The site will be open Jan. 19-April 10 on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. In March, the site will

open only on Saturdays.

#### Small business boot camp to run Jan. 28-March 25

■ TUPELO – The third annual Small Business Boot Camp on how to start and grow your small business will be held on Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. from Jan. 28-March 25.

All sessions will be at the Renasant Center for IDEAs.

To register, call (800) 725-7232. Deadline for registration is Jan. 26. Registration is limited to 40 people.

#### Vector project wins regional design/construction award

■ TUPELO –The McCarty Company-De-

sign Group P.A. and The McCarty Company Construction Group recently was recognized in South Central Construction magazine's "Best of 2009 awards program." The annual competition recognizes construction and design excellence from Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee.

McCarty's work on the the Vector Transportation renovation project on McCullough Boulevard won "Best in Category" for renovation/restoration.

An independent jury of industry experts judged several nominated projects. The jury awarded projects based on entry criteria including safety, innovation, contribution to the community or industry, construction quality and craftsmanship, and function and aesthetic quality of design.



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