



ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVES

2024 CHAMBER OF THE YEAR



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2024: 83 Years. Five Stars. One Exceptional Organization.

The Opelika Chamber champions business and this past year only served to propel that mission to a new level. We are mere months away from seeing the finished product of our \$3M newly renovated 15,000 SF facility that will be home to:

- Business Resource Center
- Training Center
- Meeting spaces for 8 to 120+ people
- Auburn-Opelika Visitor Experience
- Opelika Chamber Team Offices
- Auburn Opelika Tourism Team Offices

We can't wait for it to become a highly-utilized staple in this community!

As we look at our partnership with the City of Opelika, we are especially proud of a few key programs and events that have driven significant economic impact, including:

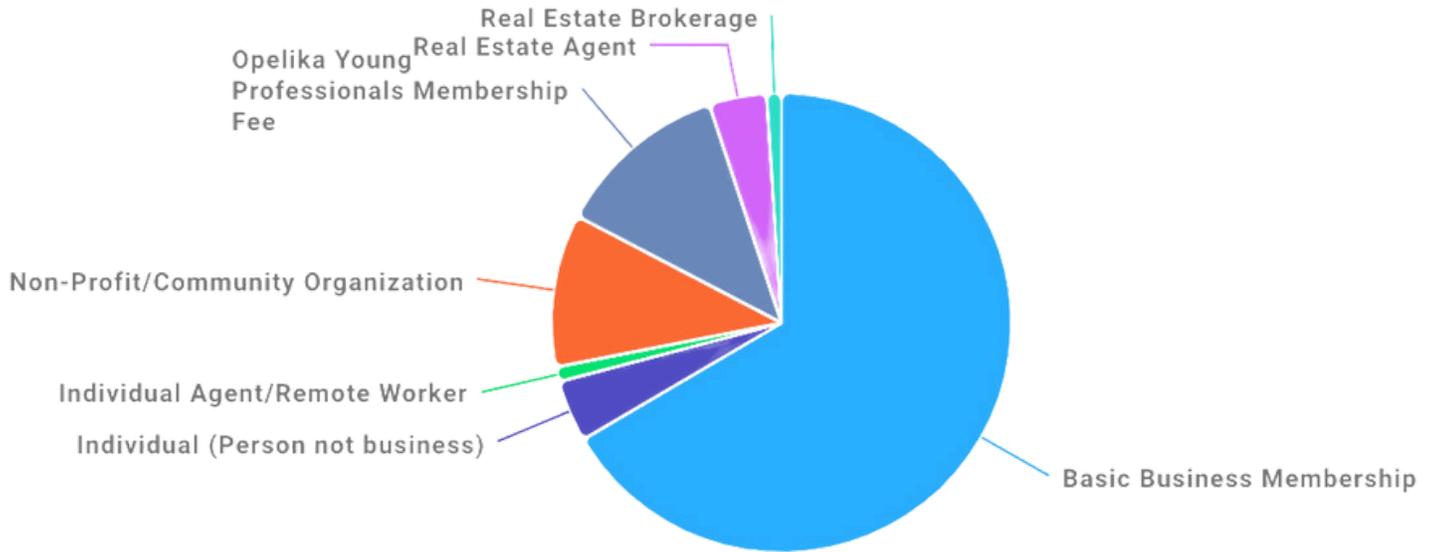
- **Tax Renewal Vote Campaign:** The Opelika Chamber led the charge to drive a 92% passing vote of the Opelika Schools 11-mil tax renewal vote, which will generate more than \$9.3M this year alone in essential funds for our city schools.
- **Food Truck Friday:** More than 45,000 attendees come downtown to dine, shop, and experience Food Truck Friday, where they stay 2+ hours, and more than 40% frequent at least one of our downtown businesses. Nearly \$675,000 in consumer revenue, \$27,000 in sales tax revenue, plus additional permitting fees affiliated with the more than 400% increase in licensed trucks in Opelika show a strong economic impact of the event.
- **Snopelika:** Our transition of this event to an evening/weekend event has driven a massive increase in impact, with our 2022 event welcoming nearly 10,000 attendees, an increase over prior year of nearly 600%. Attendees spent more than 2 hours in our beautiful downtown, and of those, nearly 5,000 attendees frequented a downtown business while attending Snopelika, December 6, 2024 will be a magical night!
- Some of the less visible, but equally important efforts we're proud of include the launch of the **Opelika Workforce Council**, and the introduction and execution of **first responder appreciation events** like the annual **BBQ & Valor Public Safety Awards**, which has created a new level of support, civic pride, and a sense of connection for our first responders.

The Opelika Chamber is tackling big challenges with a focus on transformational impacts for our community, which helps us to fulfill our vision to be a leading catalyst for a better Opelika. We could not do what we do without the support and love our business community and our partnership with the City of Opelika. **Thank you!**



Membership

1,061 TOTAL MEMBERS SINCE JUNE 2024



Member Services



Online Reach



181,095 website page views



46% Average Open Rate for Emails
(10% higher than industry average open rate)
148 Email Campaigns >> 3,464 contacts
>> 123,475 opens >> 7,775 clicks



Facebook – 10,676 likes, **14,110 followers**



Instagram – **4,220 followers**



LinkedIn – **1,600 followers**



Youtube – **60 subscribers**



Opelika Young Professionals

Facebook – 243 likes, 310 followers
Instagram – 650 followers



Lee County Young Leaders

Facebook – 156 likes, 269 followers



20 Under 40

Facebook – 334 likes, 495 followers

OUR PARTNERSHIP



THE ROLE OF THE OPELIKA CHAMBER:

- » Workforce Development
- » Small Business & Entrepreneurship Development
- » Leadership Development Programs
- » Building Community
- » Employee Appreciation & Retention Efforts
- » Visitor & Newcomer Management

An aerial photograph of Opelika, Alabama, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, green spaces, and a clear blue sky with scattered clouds. The text "COME FIND YOUR PLACE IN OPELIKA" is overlaid on the image.

COME FIND YOUR PLACE IN
OPELIKA



OPELIKA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

The Opelika Workforce Council is a new initiative spearheaded by the Opelika Chamber, in partnership with the City of Opelika's Economic Development department. Together, we have formed a council of area leaders, employers, and CEO's who have the decision making capability to move the needle forward on our workforce issues.

The OWC has completed the Q1 and Q2 meetings for 2024, where we've seen some of the most meaningful discussion to date. The initial meeting in Q1 set the stage with understanding our region and its challenges better. In the Q2 meeting there was discussion around SUSCCs Skills for Success program and childcare developments on the horizon. The meeting resulted in a plan to begin an awareness campaign for the Skills for Success program. On the docket for Q3 is discussion around the development of a "Work in Opelika" jobs site that connects our residents & prospective residents to our employers in a more easy-to-use initiative.

As a continuation of these efforts, Ali Rauch is completing the Fellowship for Economic Mobility with ACCE and set the following key performance metrics for our regions workforce plan:

1. Drive growth of Skills for Success through employer engagement (4)
2. Place 30 low- and middle-income workers into well paying jobs.
3. Grow OYP engagement & enrollment by 20%
4. Launch Media campaign with these results:
 - a. 7% Reach Rate
 - b. 3% Engagement Rate
 - c. Drive website traffic with a 3% conversion rate of inquiry form.



Small Business & Entrepreneur Development

EDUCATING & EQUIPPING ENTREPRENEURS

In conjunction with the Opelika Chamber's strategic plan & 2024-2025 goals, we have set the following goals regarding entrepreneurship support & services:

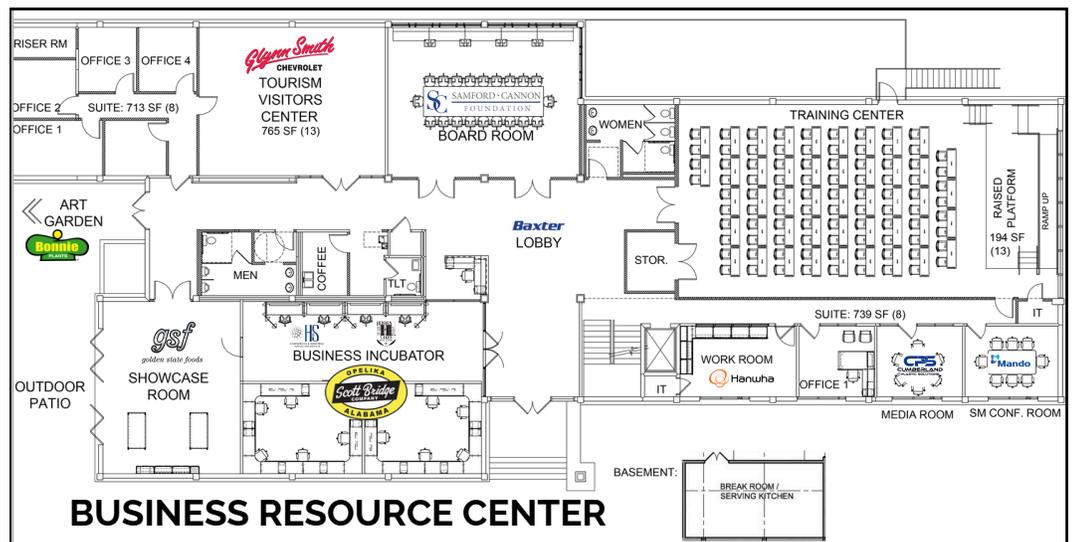
- Expand reach and success of **All Things Marketing Summit** (175/225 attendee goals)
- Collaborate with the AU Guide Resource Group to launch **Entrepreneur Summit** in 2025.
- Serve as a resource center / first stop for businesses in new building to:
 - Provide brochures & connections
 - Develop mentor network
 - Offer **entrepreneur education / start your own business** courses



BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER

As we move into our new facility, the business resource center will be equipped and ready to host classes, business fairs, and more. These coming months are essential to our planning and execution for the new year. The BRC should seat a minimum of 60, and the training center a minimum of 120. Our projected move-in date is mid-Fall 2024.

TRAINING CENTER / MEETING ROOMS



Leadership Programs



Lee County Young Leaders is a county-wide program designed to nurture and develop positive leadership qualities in 34 high school students representing all of Lee County. **8 students are from Opelika**, the most in program history! The program begins in September and includes 8 sessions concluding with a graduation ceremony in April.



Opelika's 20 Under 40 Program is made up of 20 outstanding individuals under the age of 40 who live in Opelika. The program is in its 15th year & is designed to expose highly motivated young professionals the intricate workings of The City of Opelika, school system, industry, public service and more through 2 retreats, 2 socials, 16 sessions and a class selected service project. We spotlight and promote the city in a meaningful way that cultivates civic pride among young residents. **The 2024 Service Project with the Opelika Learning Center funneled nearly \$25,000 back into our city.**



The Opelika Young Professionals (OYP) is a new membership organization for people ages 21-45. OYP will provide opportunities to make meaningful connections with other young professionals and local leaders. We attract, retain, and empower young talent with skills, resources, and community connection. We have **132 current members**, and are growing.

FOOD TRUCK FRIDAYS



This monthly event averages over 3,500 attendees per event. All planning & execution is managed by the Opelika Chamber, and our partners in Revenue ensure we're executing to code/standards.

Reports show that more than 45,000 attendees have come to downtown Opelika to dine, shop, and experience Food Truck Friday, where they stay at least 2 hours, and more than 40% frequent at least one of our downtown businesses during the event.



Calculating a conservative spend of \$15/per person, that calculation shows nearly **\$675,000 in consumer revenue** driven by this event. At 4% sales tax, the city has experienced an increase by \$27,000+ additional permitting fees affiliated with the more than **400% increase** in licensed trucks in Opelika.

SNOPELIKA CHRISTMAS PARADE & TREE LIGHTING

Our kickoff to Christmas event brought over 10,000 attendees and their families gathered in downtown Opelika for a magical night. Our 2022 transition of this event to an evening/weekend event has driven a massive increase in overall impact, a nearly 600% of traffic to downtown over prior year. Reports show attendees spent more than 2 hours in our beautiful downtown. Of those, nearly 5,000 attendees frequented a downtown business while attending Snopelika,

Additionally, the 2023 Snopelika parade was the longest/largest parade to date, with more than **100 parade entries**. We look forward to continuing to provide a prominent role for our city officials at the event, and continue to be supremely grateful for our Opelika Police Department partners for their safety management and overall support.



Employee Appreciation & Retention Efforts

FIRST RESPONDERS APPRECIATION BBQ

In 2023, the Opelika Chamber created new events to shower our first responders and their families with appreciation. Our inaugural **First Responders BBQ** brought families & leaders together to enjoy this free event with fun outdoor games, food, snacks, sponsor goodies, music and more! We served approximately 250 first responders & their families, and are prepared to host 2024's on Saturday, August 10th at the Opelika Sportsplex.

The meaningful notes of appreciation are what made this event so special and memorable, as we heard time and time again, **"Thank you. This is what makes Opelika so great!"**



VALOR PUBLIC SAFETY AWARDS

This black tie event is free to all first responders to attend, and last year, we served nearly 350 first responders at this event, complete with an inspirational keynote speaker. We look forward to hosting again in the Fall. The same sentiments were also heard... **"Thank you so much... this is what makes Opelika such a special place."**



TEACHER APPRECIATION EFFORTS

Teachers and First Responders continue to be the two fields that most businesses want to find a way to support. The recent launch of our teacher appreciation efforts have been very well received by our teachers & administration. We execute these 2X/year across Opelika City Schools.



VISITOR & NEWCOMER MANAGEMENT

AUBURN-OPELIKA VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Our contract has long since included the responsibility of acting as the official hosts of the City of Opelika, responsible for fielding visitor questions and requests, mailing visitor packets, and more. With the future opening of the Auburn-Opelika Visitor Experience, which will be housed in our building, our role and responsibility in this endeavor is growing. Our expectation is we will offer extended operating hours to accommodate this addition.

For 2024-2025, we set the following goals in our strategic plan:

- Host Auburn-Opelika Visitor Experience in new location
- Welcome 1000 visitors in Year 1
- Collaborate with Opelika Library on a new **Welcome Wagon** program:
 - The intent with this program is to get new residents into our system quicker. If they've moved here and need a job, we can accept resumes and work on placements. If they're looking for amenities, or to find groups/friends, this will be the place to do that.



AUBURN-OPELIKA TOURISM VISITOR EXPERIENCE



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

FIVE STAR ACCREDITED



Our **VISION** is to be the Leading Catalyst **FOR A BETTER OPELIKA.**

Our **MISSION:** The Opelika Chamber Strengthens our Community as the **Champions of Business.**

KEY PILLARS:



Build
Bridges



Elevate
Business



Cultivate
Community



Achieve
Excellence

CORE VALUES: Practice Positivity, Earnestly Build Bridges, Aspire to Excellence, Earn Trust, Seek Continuous Growth, Execute Servant Leadership



ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVES

**CHAMBER OF THE YEAR
2024 WINNER**