



NEW HORIZONS
FROM PROGRESS TO PROSPERITY
2024-2028
STRATEGIC PLAN



Meet Your Leadership Team

Jeff Lynn



Campaign Chair
President, Central Alabama
Community College

Lois Ann Murphree



Campaign Co-Chair
Owner/Operator,
Chick-fil-A

Amanda Thomas



Campaign Co-Chair
Community Development,
City of Alexander City

Kevin Speaks



Campaign Co-Chair
Chamber Second Vice Chair
Central State Bank



Cecily Lee
Chamber Chair
Healthcare Consultant,
C&G Healthcare



Amanda Luker
Chamber First Vice Chair
Attorney, Morris & Haynes



Lee Williams
Chamber Past Chair
CIO, Blalock Williams



Woody Baird
Board of Directors
Mayor, City of Alexander City



Dr. Beverly Price
Board of Directors
Superintendent,
Alexander City Schools



Daniel Yates
Board of Directors
L&D Properties



Rep. Ed Oliver
Board of Directors
State Representative,
Alabama House 81



Denise Walls
Board of Directors
Executive Director,
Lake Martin Area EDA



Jernell Anderson
Board of Directors
Owner, Anderson
Headstones & Memorials



Karen Channell
Board of Directors
Owner, Karen Channell
State Farm



Brian Bice
Board of Directors
Owner, Bice Motors



Tippy Hunter
Board of Directors
GM, Tallapoosa
Publishers



Tyler Mitchell
Board of Directors
Marketing Manager,
Russell Lands



Michelle West
Board of Directors
Executive Director,
MainStreet Alexander City



Chad Carter
Board of Directors
Partner, Henderson &
Coker



Rev. Ronnie Palmer
Board of Directors
Reverend, Alex City
Methodist Church



Lacey Carlisle
Board of Directors
Executive Assistant,
SACS



Jennifer Morris
Board of Directors
Tallapoosa County
Clerk's Office



Matt Fisher
Board of Directors
CFO, Russell Medical

A Message from your Campaign Chair

In my role as President of Central Alabama Community College (CACC) I have experienced first-hand the local economic and community development impacts and witnessed the strong desires to develop common strategic goals and objectives to make our community the very best we can. With the pandemic behind us our community emerges on a **New Horizon**. One definition of New Horizon is the limits of what one wants to do or of what one is interested or involved in. I encourage each of us to embrace the **New Horizon** for our Chamber and create opportunities in new and innovative ways. We must challenge the status quo and reach out to everyone in our community. Creating a team approach, working together and continuously improving will allow us to achieve great outcomes for our City. Alexander City has a bright future, let's dream big! I remind our team at Central Alabama Community College (CACC) that we work each day to make a difference for our students and our community that we serve. We can all do the same for our City through our Chamber.

CACC has its on-going relationships/partnerships with the private and public sectors and non-profit organizations well established, including a strong association with the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce. I am fully aware of the Chamber's long-standing record of community involvement and contributions to the well-being of the citizens of our Alex City communities.

This new five-year plan, **New Horizons**, detailed in the pages that follow was not created in a vacuum by the Chamber board and staff, but rather is the culmination of one-on-one input gathered from throughout all the communities in the Alex City area. Over 60 community leaders encompassing all sectors provided individual input resulting in prioritized action items that make up the Chamber's new programming. Thus, the resulting three overarching initiatives truly represent our direction as to the deliverables desired from the Chamber to carry out its role as our community leader and convener.

- ▶ *Workforce & Career Readiness*
- ▶ *Targeted Business Recruitment*
- ▶ *Business & Community Engagement*

I have been personally involved in the creation of this new five-year initiative, bringing four decades of both private and public sector leadership experience in economic and workforce readiness to the table. Therefore, I was both humbled and excited to be asked, and to accept, the **New Horizons** Campaign Chair responsibilities to help provide the resources to help fuel Chamber programming. And I am so pleased to be joined by three campaign co-chairs: Lois Ann Murphree, Amanda Thomas and Kevin Speaks—community leaders in both the private and public sector.

I fully believe in and am committed to both the process and this program of work going forward and I am confident that each of you, along with many public and private leaders who are already on board, will see the vital importance of investing your time, talent and dollar resources together with us to make our Alex City area all it can and should be.



Jeff Lynn

President, Central Alabama
Community College

PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

NEXT STEP UP RETAIL & COMMERCIAL RECRUITMENT

- ▶ Bringing top brands and new selections.
- ▶ Creating jobs and growing our economy.
- ▶ Expanding our tax base.



25+ new-to-the market commercial and retail businesses have helped **create jobs** and contribute to **record sales tax** collection.

EXISTING BUSINESS GROWTH & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- ▶ Supporting new and existing businesses.
- ▶ Business programs and awareness.
- ▶ Fostering entrepreneurs.



20 Professional Development Workshops. **180** businesses assisted through targeted promotion. **500+** business and community meetings in 2022 alone at the Lake Martin Innovation Center. **30+** businesses hosted at the LMIC.

2019-2023 Record of Success

PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATION

- ▶ Aligning businesses and education.
- ▶ Building for the future.
- ▶ Expanding workforce readiness.



150+ Gateway Scholarships awarded, helping build educational and career opportunities for local students. **2500+** students reached through **career advisory** at middle and high school levels.

DESTINATION MARKETING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ Making tourism a priority.
- ▶ Elevating our area's brand and identity.
- ▶ Building community connections.



Lake Martin Tourism Association **launched** in 2019. Won State of Alabama *Tourism Organization of the Year* in 2021. Driving **all-time highs** in local lodging revenue. **350+** community events hosted.

Workforce and Career Readiness

Mission

Lead a targeted, industry-driven workforce and life skills youth development program through collaboration with our community and educational partners.

“As a business owner, I've witnessed the need of workforce and career readiness initiatives firsthand. The Alexander City Chamber is leading a targeted, industry-driven workforce and life skills development program through collaboration with community and educational partners for our local youth. The Chamber's focus on building career pathways and fostering a skilled workforce will contribute to the success of all our local business and the lives of our youth.

—Lois Ann Murphree
Owner/Operator Chick-fil-A



“The Alexander City Chamber of Commerce is an essential partner with Alexander City Schools. Their support for our school system is immeasurable. From helping us out with events such as New Teacher Orientation, Back to School Bash, and our Career Technical Advisory efforts, we have come to depend on the Chamber to assist us as we plant seeds of hope for Alexander City. We're excited to support their expanded focus into Workforce and Career Readiness!

—Dr. Beverly Price
Superintendent, Alexander City
Schools



Initiative Outcomes

- ▶ Convene workforce and training partners to organize local workforce system assets and develop clearly defined local workforce development roles and responsibilities. - *Convene partners immediately and develop agreed upon roles by the end of 2023.*
- ▶ Build a coalition of workforce, education, and industry partners to forge a collaborative approach focused on providing a skilled workforce for targeted industries based upon defined workforce roles. - *Form the coalition by first quarter 2024.*
- ▶ Hire a Director of Workforce and Career Readiness with the required educational background and relevant expertise to lead and elevate our defined workforce development efforts. - *Hire by April 2024.*
- ▶ Partner with the Alexander City School System to implement strategies for career readiness and workforce training for at risk youth and increase the number of Benjamin Russell High School graduates with defined postsecondary training, educational, or workforce pathways. - *Increase 25% by end of school year 2026.*
- ▶ Implement and lead a program to gather crucial information and maintain a database on the skilled

workforce needs of targeted industries in our area and align those needs with curriculum designed by our educational partners. - *Launch end of 3rd quarter 2024.*

- ▶ Lead a workforce recruitment program, in partnership with other local organizations, to meet the growing needs of our existing business, industrial, educational, professional and medical employers through the coordination of annual recruiting visits with local businesses to colleges and universities. - *Launch 3rd quarter 2024.*



► Expand career technical education offerings for targeted industry sectors in Alexander City Schools by increasing and enhancing participation in the Benjamin Russell High School Advisory Council. - *Underway with expansion in 2024.*

► Expand Chamber events, seminars and workshops to better connect business and industry with training information, grant funding opportunities, state and federal workforce initiatives (Career Center / CACC / BRHS / CTE / AOA / OJT). - *Begin immediately.*



► Create a public education dashboard to measure outcomes and improvements in student educational attainment, reduction in dropout rates, career technical enrollment, credentials obtained, dual enrollment, advanced placement courses, and apprenticeships. - *In place by August 2024.*

► Develop workforce participation component for Gateway to Education Scholarship. Enlist "Gateway Companies" to serve as locations for required participation through internships, apprenticeships, part and/or full-time work and shadowing. - *Revise scholarship requirements for implementation and enlist companies for Fall 2024.*

► Align with State of Alabama's Region 5 *AlabamaWorks!* Regional Workforce Council (Central Alabama Works) to establish the Chamber as a lead organization for Alexander City, working with our communities and educational partners, for strategic workforce programming implementation. - *Ongoing.*

► Partner with community stakeholders to implement youth development programs focused on character development, civic affairs, self-confidence and leadership with K-12 educational partners. - *Ongoing.*

► Support business and industry hiring efforts through expanded postings on the Alexander City Chamber website, talent/workforce recruitment blogs, building a dedicated space for business workforce resources online, and integration into overall marketing efforts. - *Underway with targeted expansion of job board during first quarter of 2024.*

► Implement a public relations strategy in partnership with Alexander City Schools to improve perception of public schools through highlighting improvements, success stories and improvement data. - *Begin first quarter 2024.*

- ▶ Work with community partners in education, government, and business/industry to explore establishing school for skilled trade training and workforce development. - *Begin discussions immediately.*

Key Success Indicators – How will we measure the success of this initiative?

- ▶ Development of local workforce strategy, roles and responsibilities for local workforce partners.
- ▶ Hire a *Director of Workforce and Career Readiness* for the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce providing a laser focus on bringing solutions to this key area and a single point of contact for **New Horizons** plan investors.
- ▶ Increase in the number of students with defined postsecondary training, educational or workforce pathways.
- ▶ Establishment of database tracking local business workforce needs with structured ways for feedback and implementation into local K-12 curriculum.
- ▶ Number of hiring and recruitment events led through the workforce recruitment program.
- ▶ Number of companies using Chamber job postings and number of jobs filled through use of online platform.
- ▶ Establishment of public education dashboard for regular review and analysis for measurement of educational/workforce outcomes.
- ▶ Enlistment of "Gateway Companies" to partner with Gateway to Education Scholarship for structured workforce programming such as internships, part-time employment, apprenticeships and job shadowing.
- ▶ Number of students reached and served through character / personal development programs.



Targeted Business Recruitment

Mission

Partner with public and private sector stakeholders in targeted, new retail and business recruitment strategies that grow our local economy.

“

The Alexander City Chamber of Commerce's leadership has shown that they are leading the way in an active targeted business recruitment program through partnerships, collaboration, and professionalism. Our community's quality of life continues to improve because of the Chamber's efforts.

—Amanda Thomas
Community Development
Director, City of Alexander City



Initiative Outcomes

- ▶ Partner with all appropriate public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to formulate a comprehensive community economic development strategy and execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with all economic development entities. - *MOUs in place by second quarter 2024.*
- ▶ Actively support and serve as lead partner in the recruitment of targeted, new-to-the-market retail and commercial businesses in Alexander City. - *Ongoing.*
- ▶ Identify and prioritize sites for targeted sector recruitment and redevelopment opportunities. - *Ongoing.*
- ▶ Develop an online platform for marketing of developable sites and redevelopment opportunities. - *Develop and rollout by July 2024.*
- ▶ Partner with the City of Alexander City on a development master plan for the 70+ acres at Hwy 280/63. - *Completed with RFPs for development by January 2025.*
- ▶ Lead or assist in the recruitment of 5 target sector new-to-the-market businesses. - *By 2028.*

- ▶ Serve as an active partner in community and business development initiatives related to residential development, industrial development/redevelopment, tourism and entrepreneurship. - *Ongoing.*

Key Success Indicators – How will we measure the success of this initiative?

- ▶ Development of comprehensive community economic development strategy and MOUs executed with all relevant partners.
- ▶ New inventory of sites identified for new and redevelopment opportunities.
- ▶ Launch of online platform for marketing of sites.
- ▶ Development of retail/commercial/residential master plan for the City-owned 70+ acres at Hwy 280/63.
- ▶ Recruitment of at least 5 target-sector new-to-the-market businesses.
- ▶ Number of new homes constructed through residential development recruitment.



Business & Community Engagement

Mission

Elevate Chamber membership services, business programs and events to serve as the hub for business and community engagement.

“

The Chamber's business programs and its membership services, specifically the Young Professionals, were a catalyst in igniting my own business & community engagement approximately 7 years ago. Investing in this organization and its mission to be the hub for prosperity in our community has provided me with an immeasurable positive ROI in the personal, professional, and civic arenas. Consistently challenging ourselves and those around us to be fully engaged and active participants in local business & community affairs will play a major role in keeping us all moving in the right direction. I am proud to reaffirm my commitment to these efforts with the Chamber and their strategic partners and challenge anyone reading this to join us in making our community a prosperous place to live, work and play.

— Kevin Speaks
Central State Bank



“

The Alexander City Chamber of Commerce exemplifies professionalism and commitment to community engagement. Its strategic approach to fostering local connections has set a benchmark. With the next five years in view, I anticipate continued growth and impactful collaborations. Its partnership is pivotal to our community's success.

— Scott Hardy
Alexander City, City Council Member &
Director of Institutional Advancement,
Government Affairs and Public Relations
at CACC



Initiative Outcomes: Business

- ▶ Conduct forums and convene community partners to engage with policy makers and proactively advocate for issues important to business growth, retention and recruitment. - *Ongoing.*
- ▶ Develop and implement a Business Expansion and Retention Program focused on target sector businesses. – *Implement program by July 2024 and assist in expansion/retention efforts of at least 2 businesses per year.*
- ▶ Create and deliver programming resulting in continuous improvement of local businesses by providing expert, no-cost business advising, low-cost workshops and business trainings. - *Ongoing.*
- ▶ Host a quarterly series of training workshops annually, focused on business improvement and professional development. - *In place by first quarter 2024.*
- ▶ Lead the development and coordination of a local investor network to support startup and emerging businesses. – *Identify, recruit and convene a nucleus of investors by year-end 2024.*

- ▶ Assist with local business growth through targeted outreach, marketing and promotion via annual Total Resource Campaign, participation in Chamber business programs, networking opportunities and special events. - *Ongoing.*
- ▶ Support all marketing, promotion and programming efforts of the Lake Martin Innovation Center and assist with recruitment, development and growth of facility tenants. - *Graduate two businesses per year from Lake Martin Innovation Center.*

Initiative Outcomes: Community

- ▶ Through ongoing Chamber events and programs and the implementation of new strategies, serve as the community leader in civic and cultural engagement.
- ▶ Lead the implementation of community branding and identity-building initiative.
- ▶ Through ongoing and regular media, events, public relations and community outreach, lead, implement and sustain a community wide



branding and identity building initiative. - *By end of year 2024.*

- ▶ Continue to coordinate and lead annual community visits to benchmark ourselves with other successful communities. - *Conduct one visit per year beginning in 2024.*
- ▶ Act as ongoing convener for nonprofit sector entities to assist in building organizational capacity and addressing community needs.
- ▶ Lead networking and professional development opportunities for the local nonprofit community to focus on strategies for improvement of board participation, fundraising, public participation, volunteer support, event management and other industry best practices. - *Convene local network of nonprofits and community agencies in early 2024 to assess needs and develop programming.*



Key Success Indicators – How will we measure the success of this initiative?

- ▶ Number of business visits performed annually through BRE program.
- ▶ Number of businesses served through workshops, business advising and training programs.
- ▶ Number of workshops hosted and number of people/businesses served.
- ▶ Development of local investor network to support startup and emerging businesses.
- ▶ Growth and graduation of Lake Martin Innovation Center businesses.
- ▶ Number of community events held and number of people attended/served.
- ▶ Implementation of community-wide branding initiative.
- ▶ Participation in community leadership visits and strategic initiatives launched as a result.
- ▶ Number and quality of community and business engagement events hosted and number of participants.



The Investment

Annual Budget: \$225,000
Five-Year Budget: \$1,125,000



- 40% Workforce & Career Readiness
- 30% Targeted Business Recruitment
- 30% Business & Community Engagement

Annual Investment Level

Chairman's Circle:	\$20,000 +
CEO Council:	\$10,000 +
President's Forum:	\$7,500 +
Growth Partner:	\$5,000 +
Community Leader:	\$2,500 +

New Horizons

Beginning in 2024 the Alexander City Chamber will implement a new investor relations plan. We have "raised the bar" on how we will interface with all our investors.

Specific benefits of most interest to each individual investor will be developed and implemented as part of ensuring we are delivering a measurable ROI for our investors.

We fully expect over 60 companies and organizations to invest \$1,125,000 in our five-year program of work. This major commitment to our communities will be used to implement the long-term area economic development initiatives along with our partners as outlined in this document.

Investor Benefits

Communication about Key Issues

- Invitations to specific briefings and presentations.
- Access to senior staff at ACCC for counsel and/or assistance on business issues important to your business/ organization.
- Senior staff at Chamber will actively engage with you to ensure we are delivering a measurable ROI for your investment.

Enhanced Visibility

- Included in high-level networking opportunities and social events.
- Recognition in Chamber media/website/and at major events as a leader in advancing our **New Horizons** agenda.
- Exposure to other key community and business leaders supporting the Chamber's business development efforts.

Recognition of your level of support

Chairman's Circle / CEO Council

- Prominent logo recognition and profile on ACCC website.
- Top billing as **New Horizons** investor in Chamber media and at key events.
- Other "tailored benefits" of specific interest to you will be developed as part of your ongoing one-on-one ROI meetings with Chamber CEO.

President's Forum / Growth Partner / Community Leader

- Company name and link on ACCC website.
- Recognition as **New Horizons** investor in Chamber media and at key events.
- Other "tailored benefits" of specific interest to you will be developed as part of your ongoing one-on-one ROI meetings with Chamber senior staff.



A Message From Your Chamber President/CEO **Jacob Meacham**

The Alexander City area's workforce, economic and community development landscape has changed dramatically over the past five years. As a direct result, the needs of the business community, governmental agencies and educational institutions and their respective workforces have changed as rapidly as at any time in our history.



Recognizing and accepting your Chamber's signature role as a community leader and convener to deal with key quality of life issues, and provide seminars, training, community-wide events and activities, the leadership of the Chamber's volunteer board of directors has built upon the success of our two previous five-year plans and has developed an exciting, innovative and challenging 2024-2028 path forward.

Although our community has experienced progress along many fronts, now is no time to stop. Progress alone is not the goal. Continuing to move our community forward and building upon the successes we've had requires new vision, new strategy, and a new plan for how to achieve ambitious goals.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and community partners, we're excited to roll out **New Horizons**, the latest plan for your Chamber and our community designed with a focus on continuing the momentum and moving our community **From Progress to Prosperity**.

The key to successful execution of the initiatives in this **New Horizons** action plan relates directly to fulfilling our leading and convening role with community-focused private sector leaders from business and industry, elected and appointed officials in the public sector, decision makers at all grade levels in the academic sector, and many other community-minded organizations—all of whom are committed and engaged as full partners in bringing solutions to key community issues.

As your new Chamber President and CEO, resident of Alexander City, father to two children in our public schools, husband and son of local business owners, and a multi-generation native to this area, I am energized, motivated, and I fully embrace the opportunity to help move us forward. It is clear that working as full partners, we are better positioned than ever to build on the current progress achieved in community well-being in both the private and public sectors.

I appreciate those of you who have supported our efforts and programming as an investor in **Our Future is Now** and **Partners In Progress** over the past ten years. If you have not yet become an investor, I hope after reviewing the recap of the Chamber results achieved over the past five years, our newly prioritized 2024-2028 programming initiative objectives and expected positive outcomes, you will consider joining with us as we embark on a progressive and bold, new five-year strategic plan for the citizens in Alex City and the Lake Martin area.





ALEXANDER CITY
CHAMBER
of COMMERCE





Liz Holland

VP of Marketing & Membership

Jacob Meacham

President & CEO

Kim Dunn

VP of Special Events & Sponsorship

Thank you for taking the time to explore our **New Horizons** strategic plan. Your commitment to understanding our vision and embracing our journey **From Progress to Prosperity** means a great deal to us.

Your investment not only supports our initiatives but also reinforces the strong sense of community and partnership that we hold dear. We are excited to embark on this new chapter together, creating **New Horizons** of growth and opportunity for our members, businesses, and the entire community.

Thank you for your trust and support. We look forward to achieving new heights with you by our side.

Jacob Meacham

President and CEO
Alexander City Chamber of Commerce



Deep Connections. Fresh Vision.