

CHAMBER NEWS



Blount-Oneonta
Chamber of Commerce

CHAMBER BREAKFAST

February, 24, 2010
7:30 a.m.
Twin Oaks

SPEAKER

Bill Johnson



Bill Johnson to speak February 24

Bill Johnson, candidate for the Republican Party 2010 gubernatorial nomination, will speak at the monthly Blount County-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce breakfast that will be held on Wednesday, February 24, 2010, at Twin Oaks. The program begins at 7:30 a.m. and continues the chamber series featuring the eight major candidates of the the Republican and Democratic parties.

As the son of a career Army soldier, Bill grew up in Fort Benning, Georgia. His parents instilled in their children the principles that America was founded on and taught them about sacrifices made in protecting those freedoms. Johnson's parents stressed the importance of hard work, a good education, marketable skills, military service, and a profound faith.

His character was strengthened in the mountains of Afghanistan and Honduras. Johnson received a full academic scholarship to Spring Hill College in Mobile to study pre-medicine. He flew to Pakistan in 1980 between his junior and senior years at college to volunteer as a medic with the Afghan Mujahideen fighting the Soviet Union. In January 1985, he traveled to Honduras and volunteered as a medic on the front lines with the Contras fighting the Communists. From 1980-93, he lived and worked with people from

more than 40 counties on five continents.

Johnson worked as a political consultant specializing in the innovative use of information technology. He gained experience in community development from 1997-2001 as a member of the Birmingham City Council. Following his commitment to politics, Johnson led the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) for more than six years and managed the statewide grassroots efforts in Bob Riley's successful bid for U.S. Congress in 1996 and governor in 2002 and 2006.

In 2004, Bill and Kathy Johnson joined not only in marriage but also in working together to improve the quality of life for all Alabamians. Until just recently, Kathy served as Governor Riley's Director of the Alabama Broadband Initiative and Connecting Alabama, a statewide project to increase access and use of high-speed internet.

Bill Johnson's gubernatorial platform and campaign can be accessed at www.billjohnson.org. The website states that Johnson will not support any increased or new taxes. He is against gambling but would allow Alabamians to vote to

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Chamber Update...

SESSIONS TOWN HALL

The Blount County-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce, Town of Hayden and the West Blount Development Association will host a town hall meeting for Senator Jeff Sessions on Wednesday, February 17, 2010. The program will begin at 7:30 a.m. and will be held at the Hayden Community Center. Breakfast will be provided by the chamber through the sponsorship of Superior Bank.

Superior Bank is an important member of the chamber and supports many of our programs and activities. It is due to Superior Bank's generosity that the chamber can help host this meeting in the fastest growing area of Blount County.

Senator Sessions will address many issues of importance to the nation, state of Alabama, and Blount County. It is a practice of Senator Sessions to visit each of Alabama's counties on a regular basis and to report to the people.

The meeting is open to the public and the media is encouraged to attend.

SHELBY TOWN HALL

The Chamber will hold a town hall meeting for Senator Richard Shelby at noon on Saturday, February 27, 2010. The meeting will be held in the courtroom housed within the Family Services Mall (formerly Blount Memorial Hospital). Senator Shelby will provide information regarding the next session of Congress. Among the topics of discussion will be health care, terrorism, the economy, immigration and national defense.

Senator Shelby visits each of the 67 Alabama counties each year to discuss his legislative agenda and to remain in touch with constituents. This is a great opportunity to meet Senator Shelby and learn about important issues facing Alabama and the nation and to have the opportunity to ask questions.

SPRING FASHION SHOW

Big Brothers Big Sisters presents its 2nd Annual Spring Fashion Show and Luncheon. The event begins at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday March, 6, 2010, at the World Outreach Center. All proceeds from the luncheon remain in Blount County to help support the programs that have been established in Blount County schools. For more information, contact Michelle at 274-2728 or Lynette at 625-5159. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children under 12. They are available at Century 21/Town n' Country Realty and the chamber office.

RED CROSS HEROES CAMPAIGN

It's hard to imagine a world without heroes. The American Red Cross trains and deploys heroes everyday. They are

the backbone of every hometown and represent the essence and ideal of every humanitarian nation. Heroes touch our lives each day making us feel safe, making us feel proud.

You can be a Hero for the Blount County Red Cross as it kicks off its annual Hero's campaign and fund drive that will take place during March 2010. The drive kicks off on March 3 and ends March 24. All donations to the Red Cross are tax deductible and all funds raised will remain in Blount County to be used in Blount County.

For more information, please contact Christine Arnold at 274-2115 or christine.arnold@redcrossal.org.

LEADERSHIP BLOUNT COUNTY

The Leadership Blount County class will meet on Thursday, February 18, 2010, and will study all facets of education in the area. Topics will range from the two excellent school systems serving the county, home schooling opportunities, the career center, the alternative school, the Snead State Community College Extension Center and GED classes at The Hope House.

Leadership Blount will travel to Montgomery on March 11, 2010, for our state government day.

The class provides many venues and opportunities to study the people, organizations, elected officials, institutions, processes, industry and history that make Blount County an exceptional area.

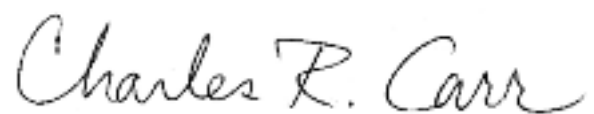
CONCLUSION

The chamber continues to strive to provide opportunities for public figures to come to the county and to speak on topics of interest. Bill Johnson will be the sixth gubernatorial candidate to speak at a breakfast. Senators Sessions and Shelby will conduct their annual town hall meetings. Crime Stoppers, with Sheriff Loyd Arrington as spokesman, has begun airing public service announcements.

A note of congratulations goes to the people of Hayden and West Blount for joining together to fight the unwarranted taxation of the area by the town of Warrior. The chamber is an active member of the West Blount Development Association and applauds the good work done by the group.

For an electronic version of the newsletter and to receive updates on chamber events, please send your email address to the chamber at info@blountoneontachamber.org. It is also posted, along with current news and events, on the chamber's website at www.blountoneontachamber.org.

By working together, we are making a very good community even better.



State unemployment rate rises during December 2009

Alabama's Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced on January 22, 2010, that Alabama's unemployment rate for December rose to 11 percent, an increase from November's rate of 10.5 percent. During this same time frame, the national average remained constant at 10 percent.

Alabama tied with Oregon during December for the ninth highest jobless rate among the 50 states and Washington, D.C. States with the lowest unemployment rates included: 1) North Dakota, 4.4 percent; 2) Nebraska and South Dakota, 4.7 percent; and 4) Iowa, Kansas, and Oklahoma, 6.6 percent. States with the highest unemployment rates were as follows: 51) Michigan, 14.6 percent; 50) Nevada, 13 percent; 49) Rhode Island, 12.9 percent; 48) South Carolina, 12.6 percent; and 47) California, 12.4 percent.

December's rate for Alabama represents 225,596 unemployed persons.

There were 9,300 job losses during the month. For 2009, Alabama's preliminary average jobless rate was 9.8 percent. Wage and salary employment slots declined by 65,100. Annual losses occurred in manufacturing, construction, trade, transportation, utilities, professional and business services, and natural resources and mining. The only annual gains were recorded in education, health services, and government.

During the month of December 2010, 15 of Alabama's 67 counties had unemployment rates of 15 percent or higher. During the same time period, 51 of the 67 counties had unemployment rates of 10 percent or higher. Also during December, only 16 of Alabama's 67 counties had unemployment rates of 10 percent or lower.

Alabama counties with the lowest jobless rates included: 1) Shelby, 7.6 percent; 2) Madison, 7.7 percent; 3) Coffee, 8.1 percent; 4) Pike, 8.6 per-

cent; and 5) Tuscaloosa, 8.8 percent. Blount County tied with Crenshaw, Cullman, and Limestone counties for 12th lowest at 9.9 percent.

Counties with the highest unemployment rates were as follows: 67) Wilcox, 24.5 percent; 66) Monroe, 20.2 percent; 65) Dallas, 20.1 percent; 64) Conecuh, 19.9 percent; and 63) Perry, 18.2 percent.

During the month of December 2010, there were 25,143 Blount Countians in the civilian labor force, a drop of 83 from November 2010. During December, 174 Blount Countians lost jobs. From December 2009 to December 2010, the county's jobless rate increased from 5.8 percent to 9.9 percent.

Alabama's December rate was the highest since the jobless rate in the state reached 11.1 percent in January 1984. Several economists were quoted in the state's daily newspapers as saying the unemployment rate will likely rise during the next year.

Chamber Vision

Create and maintain an environment conducive to economic development and community enrichment.

Chamber Mission

Serve as leaders in planning, execution and maintenance of programs that continually raise the standards for education, economic development, business ethics and civic endeavors.

THE CHAMBER... *Your Bridge to a Brighter Tomorrow.*

Johnson

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tax and regulate the gambling that already exists in the state. Johnson is a supporter of the second amendment and gun owners' rights and is pro-life with no exceptions. He has a plan for economic, job and workforce development; distance learning; drop-out prevention; ethics reform; initiative and referendum; and state's rights. He will commit to keep Alabama as a right-to-work state.

The breakfast will be sponsored by a chamber member that does not seek publicity, but has always promoted chamber activities. This generosity allows the chamber to continue our practice of not charging for breakfast.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Helping Hands Child Care Center

Director Heather McMillian
Owners Ken and Becky McMillian
40 Tidwell Hollow Road
P.O. Box 289, Allgood, AL 35013
205-625-4449



Blount-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce

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