

# BLOUNT COUNTY-ONEONTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## CHAMBER NEWS

**JANUARY 2010**

*Membership Coffee*

*Thursday  
January 28, 2010  
7:30 a.m.  
Twin Oaks*

**SPEAKER**

**Bradley Byrne**

**SPONSOR**

**Sherrer & Sherrer  
P.C..**

**WELCOME NEW  
MEMBER**

**Terry and Opal Lewis**

118 Runway Drive,  
Hayden, AL

### **Bradley Byrne set to speak at January 28 Chamber Breakfast**

Bradley Byrne will be the featured speaker at the chamber breakfast to be held on Thursday, January 28, 2010, at Twin Oaks. The program begins at 7:30 a.m. and will be sponsored by Sherrer & Sherrer, P.C., a law firm located in Oneonta.

Bradley Byrne was born and raised in Mobile. After earning his law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law, he practiced in Mobile for more than 25 years. In 1994, he was elected and in 1998 re-elected to the Alabama State Board of Education. In 2002, he was elected and in 2006 re-elected as a state senator representing district 32. Byrne was appointed to the Alabama State Board of Education in May 2007 as chancellor of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education to serve as the chief executive officer of Alabama's two-year college system.

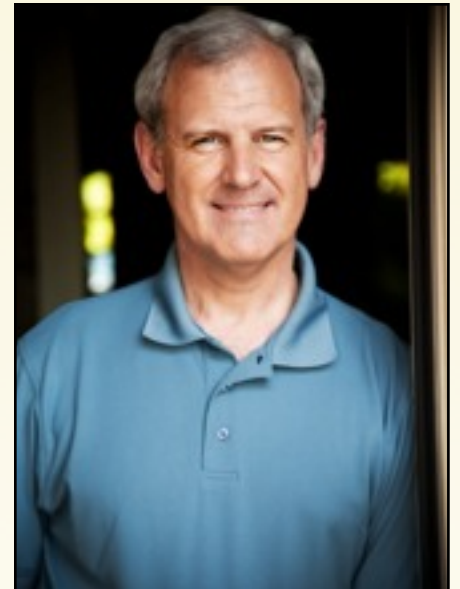
Byrne, who is 54 years old, has been married to the former Rebecca Dukes of Montgomery for 28 years. Rebecca is the executive director of United Way of Baldwin County, and they are the parents of four children. The Byrnes live in Fairhope where they are members of St. James Episcopal Church.

You can find out more about Byrne and his platforms by visiting his website at [www.byrneforalabama.com](http://www.byrneforalabama.com).

The breakfast sponsor, Sherrer and Sherrer, P.C., is a full-service law firm that has been in existence since 1965. The firm can assist you in the practice areas of real state, domestic relations, criminal defense, wills and estates, and governmental affairs. The law firm is located in Oneonta at 231 Second Avenue East across the street from the Blount County Courthouse.

This is another opportunity to hear a 2010 gubernatorial candidate present his platform for operating state government and for dealing with the many economic problems that the state will be facing in the near future. The format will allow those in attendance to ask questions about the issues of their choice at the meeting.

Please accept this as a personal invitation to come and enjoy a delicious breakfast, participate in a worthy public event, and meet some good folks from all across Blount County.



# Chamber Update...

The speakers at the monthly Blount-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce breakfasts have been scheduled through May 2010. We resume our speakers program with Bradley Byrne on Thursday, January 28; Bill Johnson, February 24; Artur Davis, March 31; and Roy Moore, April 20. The candidates for Blount County District Attorney will speak at the May 26, 2010 breakfast. This schedule includes the remaining major candidates seeking the Democratic and Republican nominations for Governor of Alabama in 2010. The gubernatorial speakers' initiative began in May 2009, and four of the eight candidates seeking party nominations for 2010 have already appeared at chamber breakfasts. They are Tim James, Kay Ivey, Ron Sparks, and Robert Bentley.

## LEADERSHIP BLOUNT COUNTY

The second meeting of Leadership Blount County occurred on Thursday, December 17, with a focus on local health services. The purpose of this class meeting was to gain an in-depth knowledge of the many services available in the county.

Libby Nash did an excellent presentation on the Blount County Healthcare Authority and the many programs that body offers to local residents. Bud Jones gave a tour of the Hope House and the new services being offered in the Family Services Mall (FSM). The FSM has been recognized by Governor Bob Riley as one of the 10 most outstanding service providers in Alabama. Presentations by a number of program leaders at the Blount County Health Department proved to be enlightening.

Following lunch at St. Vincent's Blount, hospital Chief Operating Officer Sean Tinney and Vice President of Operations Lisa Nichols gave a tour of the facility and new health service being offered at the Oneonta location. Quality service, expanded physician care, improved patient relations and efficiency, and an upgraded physical plant are just a few of the new features being offered by St. Vincent's Blount.

A tour of the Magnolia House, a local assisted living facility, proved to be one of the highlights of the day's itinerary. The last session was with Dr. Richard Craig, Director of the Jefferson Blount St. Clair Mental Health Authority. Dr. Craig led a spirited discussion on the prevalence of mental health problems in the local community and services that are offered to deal with such problems.

## CRIME STOPPERS

Blount County Crime Stoppers is operational and receiving phone calls at 274-2746 that may lead to an arrest of an individual or individuals who have committed an unsolved crime that has been advertised through the local media. Application with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has been filed for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3). By-laws and articles of incorporation have been filed in the probate judge's office. Donations continue to be received.

The purpose for which Blount County Crime Stoppers was founded include the following:

- 1) Provide a fund and oversee a system by which anonymous callers may telephone the Blount County Crime Stoppers tip line;
- 2) Provide information to the appropriate respective law enforcement agency that may lead to the investigation, arrest, and conviction of certain criminals;
- 3) Utilize a coding system that will provide a method of

payment of a cash reward for such information upon the arrest of such criminals; and

4) Guarantee anonymity to all such callers while in compliance with controlling state and federal laws.

The mission of Blount County Crime Stoppers is to assist local governments and their respective law enforcement agencies in the prosecution of criminal cases, thereby increasing the productive and efficiency of the same. The public will be better served by such increases and will thereby benefit by the saving of public funds, the recovery and prevention of private losses, and the promotion of community welfare by providing safer communities.

A special thanks to local attorney Jeff Sherrer and certified public accountant Lori Criswell for their assistance in filing procedures. Board members include Sherrif Loyd Arrington, Chief Ray Baxley, Edwina Bryan, Charles Carr, Chief James Chapman, Lori Criswell, Joe Hughes, Cathy Irvin, Bud Jones, Doug McBee, Becky McMillian, Rob Rice, Chester Thomas, and Chief Phillip Weaver.

## ST. VINCENT'S HEART DAY

St. Vincent's Blount will hold its annual Heart Day on Saturday, February 20, from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. Screenings, which cost \$40, include an EKG, lipid profile, blood pressure screening, basic metabolic profile and a T-shirt. For more information, visit [www.stvhs.com](http://www.stvhs.com). To register, call 939-7878 or 800-331-6777. You must register by February 10.

## COVERED BRIDGES

The chamber continues to promote the three Blount County covered bridges through promotional materials. This includes our website, [www.blountoneontachamber.org](http://www.blountoneontachamber.org), two new and updated videos, and a newcomer's book and brochures recently published by the chamber. We have maps specifically designed to provide self-guided tours for visitors and packets that we mail to those inquiring about the bridges. Unfortunately, there has not been enough interest to conduct tours at the Covered Bridge Festival.

Probate Judge David Standridge and the Blount County Commission have been instrumental in supporting chamber efforts to promote the bridges. As the governing body of Blount County, the commission is having to make difficult decisions in a time of economic crisis in order to make wise use of limited resources.

Also a special thanks to Sheriff Loyd Arrington and the Blount County Sheriff's Department for supervising inmates in periodic clean-ups in and around the bridges. The covered bridges are more than tourist attractions, they are part of Blount County's history.

## CONCLUSION

The speakers program involving the 2010 gubernatorial candidates has been set making the Blount County-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce the only chamber in the state to give each candidate the opportunity to be a featured speaker. This is a great venue for Blount citizens to learn about each candidate's stand on the issues. I hope you will mark each of the dates on your calendar.

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

~ Charles Carr

# November Unemployment Rate Released

The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) released unemployment numbers for November 2009, on December 18, 2009. Director Tom Surtees announced the state's jobless rate fell to 10.5 percent as compared to the 10.9 percent rate recorded in October 2009. This is the first decrease in the unemployment rate since September 2007.

The rate represents 217,350 Alabamians without jobs as compared to 226,466 in October. Of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Alabama had the 13th highest jobless rate in the United States.

The report shows that 43 Alabama counties had jobless rates of 10 percent or higher in November in contrast to 49 counties in October. Three counties had jobless rates of 20 percent or higher in November as compared to four in October.

Blount County's jobless rate continues to improve, dropping from 9.5

percent in October to 9.2 percent in November. During November, there were 2,318 countians out of work, while the number for October 2009 was 2,405. Blount County had the ninth lowest unemployment rate among the state's 67 counties. There were 1,314 Blount Countians out of work one year ago.

The Alabama counties with the lowest jobless rates for November 2009 are as follows: 1) Madison and Shelby, 7.3 percent; 2) Coffee, 7.8 percent; 3) Pike, 8.2 percent; 4) Tuscaloosa, 8.5 percent; 5) Houston and Elmore, 8.7 percent; 6) Lee, 8.8 percent; 7) Autauga and Cleburne, 9.0 percent; 8) Dale 9.1 percent; and 9) Blount, 9.2 percent.

The Alabama counties with the highest jobless rates include: 67) Wilcox, 24.3 percent; 66) Monroe, 21.1 percent; 65) Dallas, 20.3 percent; 64) Conecuh, 19.9 percent; and 63) Chambers, 18.2 percent.

The states (and District of Columbia) with the lowest jobless

numbers for November include: 1) North Dakota, 4.1 percent; 2) Nebraska, 4.5 percent; 3) South Dakota, 5.0 percent; 4) Kansas and Utah, 6.3 percent; and 5) Montana and Vermont, 6.4 percent.

The states (and District of Columbia) with the highest jobless rates are as follows: 51) Michigan, 14.7 percent; 50) Rhode Island, 12.7 percent; 49) California, Nevada and South Carolina, 12.3 percent; 48) District of Columbia, 11.8 percent; and 47) Florida, 11.5 percent.

Although the jobless picture is getting better in Blount County, a disturbing trend is developing in the monthly numbers released by DIR.

There are fewer people actively seeking work or there benefits have been exhausted. During November 2009, 25,270 Blount Countians were in the civilian labor force as compared to 25,404 in October. One year ago, there were 26,308 countians in the work force.

*Join the Chamber Today!*



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

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