

BLOUNT COUNTY-ONEONTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CHAMBER NEWS

OCTOBER 2009

Membership Coffee

*Wednesday
October 28, 2009*

*7:30 a.m.
Twin Oaks*

SPEAKER

Dr. Robert Bentley

SPONSOR

**Birmingham Water
Works Board**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Arts — **Artist In the Country** — Lee Littenberg and Madison Sullivan: 37959 State Highway 75, Oneonta, AL 35121

Individual — **Odin and Gloria Epps** — 828 Lake Road, Oneonta, AL 35121.

Individual — **Bobby and Louise Vise** — 102 Greystone Drive, Oneonta, AL 35121.

Industry — **Alabama Storm Water Control, LLC** — Clay Scofield: 2122 NeSmith Road, Guntersville, AL 35976. 256-738-2936.

Retail — **Elegant Touch** — Andrea Register: 105A Third Street North. 205-274-2936.

Dr. Robert Bentley to Speak at October Chamber Breakfast



Continuing the review of Alabama's gubernatorial candidates, those attending the Blount County-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce breakfast on Wednesday, October 28, 2009, will have the opportunity to hear Dr. Robert Bentley, a candidate for the 2010 Republican

nomination. The program, to be held at Twin Oaks, begins at 7:30 a.m. and will be sponsored by the Birmingham Water Works.

Dr. Robert Julian Bentley currently serves as a member of the Alabama House of Representatives representing a part of Tuscaloosa County. His legislative committee assignments are Agriculture and Forestry, Education Appropriations, Internal Affairs, and Tuscaloosa County Legislation.

He is currently serving his second term in the Alabama Legislature, having been re-elected without opposition in 2006. In 2008, he was elected as a Republican Presidential Delegate for Governor Mike Huckabee.

Dr. Bentley's website, www.robertbentley2010.com, lays out his gubernatorial campaign platform in detail. Issues addressed include gun ownership, health care, state's rights, eminent domain, right to life, marriage and the family, property tax appraisal, gambling, Alabama's criminal justice system, economic development, ethics, education, public safety, roads, and the transportation department.

A native of Shelby County and a graduate of Shelby County High School, Dr. Bentley graduated from the University of Alabama and the University of Alabama School of Medicine where he received his medical degree in 1968. Following military service, he began a three-year residency at the University of Alabama in dermatology. He is a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America and a member of the American Legion.

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Covered Bridge Festival Set for October 24

The fourth weekend of October has been identified with the Covered Bridge Festival for more than 20 years. Set for October 18-24, the 26th Annual Blount County Covered Bridge Festival offers many events and diverse activities including a golf tournament, beauty pageants, pancake breakfast, arts and crafts, 5K and fun runs, car show, motorcycle show, river walk, food, entertainment, quilt show, and plenty of activities for the kids.

You may download a list of events by going to the chamber Web site — www.blountoneontachamber.org. The classic car show will be hosted by the Cross Roads Cruisers Car Club. The motorcycle show will be hosted by Ronnie Wakefield and Crazy Horse Motorcycles of Blountsville.

The arts and crafts show located in downtown Oneonta is the focal point of the Covered Bridge Festival on Saturday, October 24. Hundreds of vendors will offer their food and wares from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The main stage will feature live entertainment throughout the day. There will be a number of activities for children in the Children's Area located behind Downtown Diner and Floral Creations.

The 2nd Annual Doggy Parade will take place around the main stage as well, where entrants are dressed up to compete



for the Covered Bridge Festival Doggy King and Queen. The Doggy Parade is open to dogs of all ages and breeds. Pre-registration is required. For more information, call 205-274-2153 or 205-559-4127. Proceeds from the Doggy Parade will go to the Miss Covered Bridge Pageant.

The Friends of the Locust Fork River will lead its annual river walk on October 24. The guided hike travels from Swann Covered Bridge to Powell Falls and back. This hike is of moderate difficulty and takes about three hours to complete. For more information, call Stephen Guesman at 205-909-6231.

Sponsored by the Blount County Quilters' Guild, the quilt show is scheduled for October 23-24 at Palisades Park from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is \$3. For more information, visit www.blountcountyquiltersguild.com.

The Community Arts Council of Blount County will present *Three on a String* on Saturday, October 24, at the Oneonta High School Auditorium. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. and tickets are \$10 at the door. For more information, call 205-274-0511.

The Miss Covered Bridge Pageant, a preliminary to the Miss Alabama pageant, is scheduled for October 18 at the Oneonta High School auditorium.

Another featured event on October 24 is the Covered Bridge Festival Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the Blount County Children's Center. Held at Lester Memorial United Methodist Church, the breakfast is from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Also, this year the Oneonta Public Library will have a book sale outside the library from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hardback and paperbacks will be available. The book sale will be staffed by local high school students and the money raised will be used to support the young adult (ages 13-18) programs at the Oneonta Public Library.

The Covered Bridge Golf Tournament on Thursday, October 22, 2009, will be held at Heritage Golf and begins at 11:30 a.m. The cost of entering a four-person team is \$280 (includes two mulligans per player and lunch sponsored by Superior Bank). A shotgun start and best ball play begins at 1:00 p.m. Prize money will be offered for the top three teams. Hole-in-one prizes will be offered on all par-3 holes. For more information, call 205-446-8856.



Chamber Update...

Applications for Leadership Blount County are still being taken in the chamber office for 2009-10. The class includes nine sessions, one per month, and a graduation banquet. Members learn about local government, processes, organizations, groups, institutions, and people that make the county function in an orderly and efficient manner.

There is a cost of \$250 for the class, and this includes all study materials, meals and the trip to Montgomery by chartered bus. The first class will be held Thursday, October 29. For more information, call 274-2153.

FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY

Oneonta Legion Post 72 will conduct a flag retirement ceremony at 4 p.m. Saturday, October 24. The

event will take place at the depot on Highway 75 in Oneonta. Retired Major Chad Richmond will conduct the ceremony. The public is invited to attend.

CONCLUSION

A number of chamber activities are taking place during October. The Covered Bridge Festival and the monthly breakfast featuring another gubernatorial candidate will highlight the month. Crimestoppers will have its first organizational meeting. Plans are being made for the second strategic planning meeting. Kay Ivey has accepted an opportunity to speak at the November breakfast.

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

August Unemployment Rate Released

The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations announced on September 18, 2009, that Alabama's unemployment for August 2009 rose to 10.4%, up from 10.2% in July. The same press release revealed that Blount County's jobless rate rose to 9.8% in August, up from 9.3% in July. The national rate rose to 9.7% in the same time frame.

During August, wage and salary employment decreased by 11,100 bringing the number of unemployed Alabamians to 217,306 persons. Most of the monthly job losses occurred in the sectors of hospitality and leisure, financial activities, trade, transportation, utilities, and construction. Monthly gains occurred in the education and health services sector and the professional and business service sector. Alabama's 10.4% unemployment rate for August has not been matched since April of 1984.

Blount County had the tenth lowest rate for August 2009. There

were 2,494 countians on the jobless roll for the month.

The civilian workforce numbered 25,540, a decline of 800 from August 2008. The unemployment rate for Blount in August 2008 was 4.3%.

The Alabama counties with the lowest unemployment rates were as follows: 1) Shelby and Madison, 7.6%; 2) Coffee, 8.5%; 3) Baldwin and Lee, 8.7%; 4) Houston, 8.9%; 5) Pike, 9.0%; 6) Dale, 9.1%; 7) Elmore, 9.2%; 8) Limestone, Tuscaloosa, Crenshaw, and Marshall, 9.4%; 9) Autauga and Cullman, 9.6%; 10) Blount, Chilton, and Covington, 9.8%.

The counties with the highest unemployment rates included: 67) Wilcox, 25.4%; 66) Dallas, 21.3%; 65) Conecuh, 19.9%; 64) Perry, 19.3%; 63) Chambers, 18.9%.

During August, 24 of Alabama's 67 counties showed improvement in jobless rates compared to July. Alabama ranked thirty-ninth

nationally during August and was one of fourteen states and the District of Columbia with rates higher than 10%.

Tom Surtess, Director of the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, encourages those without jobs to take advantage of unemployment compensation (UC) extension and training programs.

Congress has passed two unemployment compensation benefit extensions and last month Governor Bob Riley signed a law entitling qualified unemployed Alabamians up to an additional 20 weeks of unemployment compensation benefits.

This means that Alabamians are now eligible for up to 79 weeks of UC benefits.

Claimants can file for unemployment compensation benefits online at www.dir.alabama.gov or by calling 1-866-234-5382.

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He is married to Martha Dianne Jones of Montgomery. After completing his residency, Robert and Dianne decided to make Tuscaloosa their home to raise a family and for Robert to start his practice. They have four sons and are proud grandparents and great grandparents.

He is an active member of First Baptist Church Tuscaloosa where he serves as a deacon and Sunday school teacher.

The chamber breakfast will be a great venue to ask questions and learn more about this candidate's views. Please accept this as a personal invitation to join us.

BREAKFAST SPONSOR

The Birmingham Water Works Board (BWWB), the largest water system in Alabama, will sponsor the October breakfast. Johnnie Mayfield, Superintendent of Industrial & Commercial Accounts, has been an integral and active member of the chamber. Binnie Myles, Public Communications Director, will speak at the breakfast.

The BWWB is the largest water system in Alabama. Its primary focus is to provide its customers with the highest quality water possible at the most affordable rates. Since 1951, the company has met this goal successfully and is a highly regarded leader in the water purification industry (ranked fifth nationally for water quality). The BWWB has begun "Choose Water Birmingham," a campaign to promote water drinking.

Join the Chamber



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

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