



“2017”

Another Year In the Books

The year 2017 has come and gone. As we embark on another year, we take just a moment to look back on some of the sights and sounds we remember most from another busy year at the Chamber and Industrial Foundation. Looking forward to what 2018 has in store...

The 24th class of Youth Leadership Clarksdale graduated in ceremonies held in their honor. The class consisted of 24 graduates representing Clarksdale High, Coahoma Early College High, Coahoma County High, and Lee Academy.



W. J. Jones (shown surrounded by his family and Chamber President Rose Lockett) was recognized as the 2017 Citizen of the Year at the Chamber/Industrial Foundation Annual Meeting in October. What a well-deserved award! Jones has spent years fighting for quality and accessible education and quality housing in the community of Coahoma.



This year's winner of the Chamber Small Business of the Year Award was Southern Duplicating of Clarksdale. Elvin & Debra Yawn (pictured here with outgoing Chamber President Sarah Ruskey) have now served the Clarksdale community for almost 30 years.

The 72nd Chamber/Industrial Foundation Annual Meeting featured a capacity crowd at this year's event, which focused on building for the future. Dinner was catered by the Rancho and guest speaker was Chip Morgan, Executive Vice-President of Delta Council of Stoneville.



inside...

More Photos from 2017
Getting Set for Delta Jubilee 2018
Salute to Local Author; New Member
Industrial Foundation Update
Calendar/Dates to Remember

Page 2
Page 2
Page 3
Page 3
Page 4

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!

More Scenes from 2017....

Ron Hudson received the best retirement gift of all at his surprise party...a custom-made rocking chair, courtesy of local manufacturers Jimmy Walker, Steve Hays, and David Drumheller.



The 2017 Christmas Parade was a hit with young and old. The weather was cold, but the crowd was fantastic. Santa made his usual stop in Clarksdale to visit all the good little boys and girls.



The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.

Mark Twain



Coahoma Community College/CECHS Band is always the musical hit of the parade.



Christmas Traditions



Members of the 25th class of Youth Leadership Clarksdale were chosen and attended their opening retreat, where they discussed leadership skills, team building, communication, and more. This program, presented at no cost to the students, is always in need of donations. All help is appreciated!

Discussions Underway for Delta Jubilee 2018

Plans are being discussed now for the 36th Annual Delta Jubilee scheduled for June 2018 at the Coahoma County Expo Center. We are now working diligently to develop new ideas and activities for this community event and are seeking support and new ideas from groups, businesses, and individuals in the community. Jubilee is a massive undertaking and can only succeed with help from all segments of our community. Stay tuned for further updates as we move along, and be willing to give your assistance when asked.



Delta Jubilee Magician

Thank You!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for supporting the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce & Industrial Foundation for another year. Without your continued support, many of the events, programs, special projects, and community service we sponsor would not be possible. Know that every time you renew your investment in this organization, you also renew your investment in this community. We are all working toward the same goals. The Chamber and Industrial Foundation and Clarksdale/Coahoma County thank you!!



Spotlight on Panny Mayfield, Author

This quarter, we decided to focus on one of our individual Chamber members...Panny Flautt Mayfield. Anyone who is involved in the Clarksdale community knows Panny. She is no stranger to hard work or volunteerism. She has long been an integral part of the Sunflower River Blues Association and is founder/chairperson of the MS Delta Tennessee Williams Festival. What some people may not know is that Panny is also a talented photographer and writer. Over the years, she has compiled thousands of award-winning photographs and stories, particularly in the field of blues. Recently, her hard work was recognized as she published her own photo book. She has participated in book festivals and tours to share with others throughout the state and region her talent and her phenomenal photos. Please take time to peruse her great publication and support her hard work. We always want to support one of our very own!



Welcome, New Member



We are proud to welcome the following new Chamber member from the past quarter:

- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity - this group has been a faithful supporter of Delta Jubilee over the past several years, working tirelessly at the front entry gate

Take a few minutes out of your day to welcome and salute our new member who has chosen to invest in our community and its well-being. We are proud to have this fabulous civic group on board!

If you would like to add something to our calendar of events, please contact us at 627-7337 in advance of publication. The next edition is April 2018.

Industrial Report



New Chamber Executive Director Jon Levingston has taken on his new role and is off to a great start. He brings both the experience of a native son who loves his community and a knowledge of the broader world to his new position. Jon grew up in Cleveland but has lived in Clarksdale for 35 years, with stays in Athens and Atlanta, GA; Richmond, VA; and New York City. "Those are

all great American cities, but I have found that Clarksdale offers a very special combination of small town friendliness and big town sophistication," says Levingston. Living outside the Delta for a number of years, he returned to Clarksdale in 1983 to help his father with business interests. "I also had the opportunity to participate in a variety of appointed positions, including the Mississippi Arts Commission, State Personnel Board, and the Civil Rights Museum Commission. Joining the Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce, he learned a great deal about the community, including its need to recruit and retain industrial jobs. Now, he is in the position to work full-time to make good things happen for Clarksdale/Coahoma County. "Since being on the job, I have really come to appreciate the varied responsibilities of a community economic developer. Not only do we have to work hard at recruiting new industry, but we must work with equal concentration on the retention of existing industry and business. We must develop relationships with our colleagues in other communities as well as regional and state agencies." Levingston cites the good working relationship with the Mayor and Commissioners, County Board of Supervisors, County Administrator, local legislators, and congressional delegation in being essential to achieving economic development success. Levingston is an avid runner, art aficionado, husband, and father. His wife Jennifer and daughters Katherine, Madeleine, and Sarah round out his busy schedule. (Source: *Delta Business Journal*)

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.

Steve Jobs






We would also like to take this time to once again salute Ron Hudson as he takes his leave from this organization. Twenty-seven years went by way too fast! We wish Ron nothing but health, happiness, and plenty of rest in the days ahead.



Dates to Remember

January

- 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY 
- 15 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY 
- 26 - 27 Clarksdale Film Festival 




February

- 9 St. Elizabeth School Draw Down
- 14 VALENTINE'S DAY 
- 19 PRESIDENTS' DAY 

March

- 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY 

April

- 1 EASTER 
- 12 - 15 Juke Joint Festival 
- 27 Friday at the Stage Begins 

This is YOUR Chamber of Commerce & Industrial Foundation. It's a brand new year and we want to know your ideas. Please share your thoughts with us. We could not possibly do many of the things we do without your kind support!



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Chamber & Industrial Foundation Staff

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| Tana Pittman Vassel
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If you have renewed your membership but do not have your 2017 - 2018 membership sticker, please let us know. Duplicates are not sent to multiple employees of any organization unless there are multiple offices.