Alabama



From the President



Change Constant When Customer Comes First

Retail's transformation continues

Two years ago, I wrote that retail remains strong despite reports of its demise.

Within these pages is more evidence of Alabama retailers who adapt and change based on consumers' preferences.

Consider Jimmy Wright, an independent, one-store grocer in east Alabama, who embraced technology and delivery years before those trends became standard operating procedure.

Another example is the Yeager family, which takes the cotton from their north Alabama farm directly to the consumer. Red Land Cotton's farm-to-home luxury linens reach customers worldwide from its brick-and-mortar and online operations in downtown Moulton. I own a set of these quality sheets.

At publication time, Alabama's monthly retail sales were growing at an average of 4.4% over the same month in the year previous. In the first three months of 2019, the state's simplified sellers use tax grew 175% over the same period in 2018.

Unless outside factors intrude, prospects look good for the upcoming back-to-school shopping season.

Retail continues to open doors of opportunity in Alabama. From March 2018 through March 2019, food services and drinking places added 5,500 jobs, topping growth in the services sector.

Wolf Bay Restaurant now employs 350 along the Gulf Coast in its three restaurants. It has grown from a Momand-Pop enterprise to a regional operation by providing a quality product with an eye on caring for its customers and employees.

The one constant is change.

State Traditions' John McElrath puts it this way: "You must recreate yourselves every six months or so. You can carry items through, but you always have to have something fresh."

Rick Brown

Rick Brown, Publisher and President

Retailer

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BETTER TOGETHER

Mark Your Calendar for Alabama Retail Day 2019

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2019 | Registration opens Monday, Aug. 19 Reserve your seat by Friday, Sept. 27, at alabamaretail.org/retaildayregistration

Come celebrate all things retail at the Annual Alabama Retail Day luncheon and awards program set for Tuesday,

Oct. 22, in Vestavia Hills.

Retail Day recognizes successful retailers who make noteworthy

contributions to their communities, significantly enhance the welfare of their associates and positively influence the Alabama economy. The guests of honor are the 2019 Alabama Retailers of the Year and Alabama Centennial Retailers.

This year marks the 20th time the Alabama Retail Association will present the Alabama Retailer of the Year awards. So far, 174 retail businesses have been honored. This year, more than 70 businesses were nominated as Retailers of the Year and up to 16 will be able to count themselves as Retailers of the Year on Oct. 22.

Award winners will receive invitations to the event. Any Alabama Retail Association member is encouraged to attend. Seating is limited.

No cost for students, Alabama Retail board and Alabama Retail Comp trustees as well as Retailers of the Year, Centennial Retailers and their nominators. All other seats are \$40.



🖒 Visit us at alabamaretail.org

'HIGH TECH, HIGH TOUCH'

Opelika Grocery Embraces Technology While Maintaining Core Value of Personal Service

FRESH PRODUCE AND MEAT FROM WRIGHT'S MARKET AVAILABLE IN STORE AND THROUGH SHUTTLE SERVICE, VAN DELIVERY AND ONLINE ORDERING

Story by Nancy King Dennis. Photos by Nancy Dennis and Melissa Warnke



right's Market in Opelika began 46 years ago as a 2,100-square-foot convenience store under a different name and a different owner, but it has always been operated by a Wright.

"My dad built the original store for the (previous owner). When my dad completed the construction in 1973, the owner said, 'You know, I don't have anybody to run this store. Would you and your wife operate it until I find someone who can?' Nobody else was ever found," said Jimmy Wright, who bought the store on Pleasant Drive in Opelika in 1997 and rebranded it as Wright's Market.

Gary and Linda Wright lived across the street from the store, so it made sense for the couple and their then 12-year-old son Jimmy to run the neighborhood store.

Under the Wrights' leadership, the store expanded three times over the years, growing into a full 22,000-square-foot independent grocery known for its fresh meat and produce.

Serving on a Broader Scale

It was the secondgeneration-operator-turnedowner though who had the vision to "think outside of the physical box."

In 2014, Jimmy Wright repurposed a van and began a shuttle service for his customers who no longer could drive to the store. "We would go to a customers' home and bring them to our physical store to shop, then take them back to their home," he said.

Two years later, in 2016, Wright's Market moved into e-commerce. "The customer could order their groceries and pick them up at the store or have them delivered in the Opelika-Auburn area."

The next step was serving nearby rural communities.

"Our store is back in a neighborhood. A lot of people don't know where we are, especially in Auburn and other areas nearby," said Jimmy. "We also very much saw the need for getting fresh foods to rural areas of east Alabama."

Helping meet the need for fresh foods in areas such as Hurtsboro and Loachapoka is a 2018 federal grant that allows the store to offer half off fresh produce to certain customers and the addition earlier this year of the refrigerated "Wright 2 U Freshmobile." The refrigerated van was made possible by another grant through Alabama's inaugural Healthy Food Financing Program.

"We deliver 30 miles out now," said Jimmy. "It went in gradual stages. It all goes back to serving the customer."

Wright's Market is the only independent, single-store grocer nationwide involved in a pilot program that will allow those on federal food assistance to use their SNAP benefit card to pay for purchases online. That program is expected to launch in November.

Utilizing technology is "an opportunity to serve people, which is what we have done since the doors opened in 1973, but we just do it on a much broader scale," said Jimmy.



The temperature inside the Wright 2 U Freshmobile gets down to 17 degrees. "It keeps everything good and cold," said Jimmy Wright, who uses the van to deliver fresh meat and produce to rural areas around his Opelika store at 603 Pleasant Drive. Visit wrightsmarkets.com and wright2U.com.

"The phrase I use is 'high tech, high touch,' " he said. "My philosophy is no matter where we are – in-store, outside the store or online – we want to maintain the personal relationship we have with our customers."

Hunger, Housing and Healthcare

Besides customers, the innovations at Wright's Market have garnered awards for Jimmy and the store. In 2015,

he was the Opelika Chamber of Commerce's Spirit of Opelika award winner; and in 2016, Wright's Market was the Dream Big Blue-Ribbon Award Winner that won the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Community Excellence Award for that year.

Jimmy is a past board chairman for the Opelika chamber, a past board member of the National Grocers Association and a current member of the Alabama Grocers'
Association board

"I have always tried to advocate for our industry on any level that I could," he said.

These days, "I have tried to place my main focus on hunger, housing and healthcare," he added. He serves on the boards of the East Alabama Food Bank, Opelika Housing Authority and East Alabama Medical Center Foundation.

Communities need independent grocers, Jimmy contends.

"Our small towns, as they grew, were anchored by merchants buying and selling goods and serving their communities," he said. "That is a great legacy to continue." ■

FROM FIELD TO FABRIC

Family Threads Together Its Combined Talents to Create a Farm-to-Home Luxury Linen Brand

THE YEAGERS CONVERT COTTON FROM THEIR
FAMILY 'S NORTH ALABAMA FARM DIRECTLY TO LINENS
SOLD ONLINE AND IN THEIR MOULTON STORE

Story by Melissa Johnson Warnke



fter growing up the daughter of a cotton farmer,
Anna Yeager Brakefield's plans involved anything but
returning to the family farm. Upon graduation from
Auburn University with a degree in graphic design, she got a
job with an advertising agency in New York City, where she
put her love of art and design to work.

A few years later, in 2014, her soon-to-be-husband's career path brought her back South. She began a new job, still as a designer, but she wasn't particularly happy with it. When her dad approached her with a business idea, it seemed like

a good time to change her own path.

"Let's build a direct-toconsumer retail business using our cotton," he told her. "So, I told him, 'Sure!' "

Farming Frustration

Mark Yeager, Anna's father, had been farming cotton on his farm in Moulton since the 1980s, but in recent years, he'd become frustrated.

"He was working so hard and selling his cotton for so little," said Anna. "He knew there had to be another way."

The father-daughter duo combined their talents and began brainstorming what they could produce with their cotton. They landed on bedding and spent the next few months building a supply chain.

"It was really important for us to have 100% American-made products. The South has a rich textile tradition, and we felt strongly about telling the story from the seed in the ground to the final product," Anna explained.

By October 2016, they had their first set of sheets ready to sell, and they named their company after its roots in the rich, red soil of North Alabama – Red Land Cotton. Anna created an online store, and they began selling, packing and shipping out of her dad's cotton gin office.

Timing was right, with the holiday shopping season ramping up, and in their first three months of business, Red Land Cotton had more than \$100,000 in sales.

"That was some great affirmation for us that we had something good, and that we should continue," said Anna.

Growing and Sewing A Worldwide Following

Today, Red Land Cotton sells its farm-to-home luxury linens to customers worldwide through its online store and locally in a retail shop in downtown Moulton. Since the family launched their first sheet set, they have expanded their offerings to include five different design styles. They also partner with a mill in Georgia to create bath towels, and last year, created a new line of quilts, made with batting from their cotton.

The whole family is involved in the business, not just Anna and Mark. Anna's two brothers farm with her father. Her sister-in-

law works in the store and so does her mom, "when she's not watching my daughter," Anna laughed.

While Anna lives in Nashville, she spends several days a week in Moulton working on the retail side of the business, and she spends a large portion of her time telling the Red Land Cotton story.

"Almost every week, I am in a different city around Alabama sharing about our business and our products. We have shipped to every state in the United States and as far away

as France, Hawaii, Norway and Canada, but I still find that there are people in Alabama who don't know about us," said Anna.

Even so, Red Land Cotton has made its mark. Southern Living came to Moulton to write about the family business and ABC's World News Tonight featured Red Land Cotton in its "Made in America" series last Christmas

The pinnacle of exposure, however, was an invitation from the White House. Last July, Red Land Cotton was asked to represent Alabama in the "Made in America" showcase.

"That was such an honor to set up in the White House and show our products to the president, members of the press and Congress," said Anna.

While Anna, Mark and the rest of the family have plans to continue growing, their heart remains in Moulton. What makes them most proud, they say, is bringing awareness to their hometown as well as the important work of farming.

"We love showing how agriculture can be made into something profitable and consumer-facing. That has been a really cool story to tell as well," added Anna.



Red Land Cotton has a storefront at 558 Lawrence St. on Moulton's historic downtown square. It's open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. It sells worldwide from its online store at redlandcotton.com. Photo by Melissa Johnson Warnke.

PRESERVING HISTORY, BUILDING COMMUNITY

Military Family Brings Revitalization and Relevance to a Dormant Dothan Gem

THE SWAN FAMILY PUT IN TWO YEARS OF SWEAT BEFORE OPENING MURAL CITY COFFEE COMPANY

Story and photos by Melissa Johnson Warnke



Then Gina and Darrin Swan first laid eyes on a nearly century-old building on downtown Dothan's South Foster Street, they knew it had to be saved.

The three-story brick building, known to locals as the old Carmichael building, had been dormant for decades, but the Swans immediately saw past its boarded-up façade.

After a short look inside, the decision was made. They were going to bring it back to life, and before long, a big idea was brewing.

"Coffee has always been a passion of ours," said Gina. "We thought a coffee shop would be the best environment to bring people and the community together."

All in the Family

Gina and Darrin are Army veterans, and their years of service took them all over the world before they landed at Fort Rucker and made their home in the Dothan area.

"We had the good fortune of experiencing a lot of

really good locally roasted coffee in our travels," said Gina. "Even so, we got special training and certifications for roasting. We invested quite a lot to make sure that we could brew the perfect cup of coffee."

Still, their biggest investment was the building itself. Gina and Darrin, along with their son Zach and his girlfriend Destiny Hosmer, put in nearly two years of work to bring their vision to life. Besides the financial commitment, they each dedicated time and elbow grease to peel back the layers of grime and patchwork design.

The family removed dozens of dumpsters worth of trash, saving many items they'd one day put on display, such as match books and bank deposit slips from the 1930s and '40s.

"It was meticulous work bringing the shell of the building up to current electrical and structural code, while also preserving as much of the building's historical charm as possible," said Darrin.

Living Out Their Dream

Named for Dothan's famous murals which line many downtown streets, Mural City Coffee Company has had an outpouring of community support since it's opening in October 2018. Most days, a busy stream of customers keep the shop lively and eclectic. Paintings by local artists hang on the walls, live music entertains night-time crowds, and locally made pastries and baked goods complement their offerings. The menu features both specialty grade coffee roasted on site as well as a large selection of artisan whole-leaf teas.

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2018

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Zach Swan and Destiny Hosmer pose in the Tea Bar section of Mural City Coffee Co. at 192 S. Foster Street in Dothan. Visit the store Tuesday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.; and Sunday noon to 8 p.m. Also visit muralcityroasters.com Unlike other local coffee shops, Mural City isn't known as an early morning coffee spot. Its hours generally run between 9 a.m. and 9 or 10 p.m.

"Our focus has always been about offering a social atmosphere and a place that is open late in a safe setting," said Gina. "To us, that's more important than being a place where people grab a cup of coffee and go."

The Swan family's work has also garnered local and national buzz. Zach won a gold award from the American Advertising Federation for the coffee shop's logo design,

which he created himself. In addition, a national publication – *Preservation Magazine* – recognized the family's efforts to preserve and repurpose a piece of Dothan's history in its Spring 2019 issue.

In the coming weeks, they'll also launch Mural City's e-commerce site and open the building's second floor for venue rental space. The Swans live on the third floor.

While Dothan was already amid a remarkable downtown revitalization, mostly on North Foster Street, the Swans are most proud that their work has fanned the flames of revival further south.

"Two years ago, you only saw the necessary traffic on this side of the street. Now, we see people out walking their dogs, jogging or meeting friends. That's been so cool," said Darrin.

Gina agreed, saying, "So much has happened since we started this process, and other buildings have been purchased with plans to revitalize. Our biggest hope is that our journey has been a catalyst to inspire someone else to be brave enough to do this too." •

EMPLOYMENT LAW

Aim to Minimize Risks of Retaliation Claims in Retail

By Richard I. Lehr, Esq.

Retaliation is the No. 1 employment claim filed throughout the United States. That is, an employee engages in what he or she believes is a protected activity, and the employer responds with adverse treatment, therefore the claim of retaliation. Retaliation is prohibited, for example, if an employee:

- Raises an issue about Equal Employment Opportunity, harassment or retaliation.
- Initiates or participates in an administrative agency investigation of the employer.
- Participates in an internal investigation regarding discrimination, harassment or retaliation.
- · Files a workers' compensation claim.
- Speaks up on behalf of others regarding wages, hours or conditions of employment.

Retaliation claims are among the easiest for an individual to assert. All that is needed to get it started is for the individual to allege that he or she did something protected – like raise questions about pay – and then suffered some subsequent adverse action, such as demotion, termination or reduction of hours.

The following principles will be useful to minimize the risks of a potential retaliation claim:

- Timing is key. How close is the adverse action (termination, reduction in hours, suspension) in relation to when the employee engaged in protected activity?
- Document performance issues. Did the employee engage in similar conduct prior to the protected activity and, if so, how was it handled? Assume an employee has cash shortages, then raises a protected issue and the cash shortages continue. The employee is terminated. When the employer can show that the termination was in response to a continuation of documented performance issues that

- arose prior to the protected activity, that employer will be in a stronger position to avoid or defeat a retaliation claim.
- Be consistent. Did the employee engage in a dramatic incident, which is handled in the same manner as other employees with similar behaviors? Examples include dishonesty or theft. You want to be able to show a consistency in how these issues are handled, so that the individual who engaged in protected activity was treated no differently from others and, therefore, no retaliation occurred.
- Make prohibition against retaliation a policy. At times, retaliation occurs that is unknown to the employer, such as retaliation from an employee's immediate manager. In addition to your policies that prohibit discrimination and harassment, establish a policy that prohibits retaliation.
 Define all three areas discrimination, harassment and retaliation and if possible, provide multiple options for an employee to report a possible policy violation.
- Train employees on your workplace culture, which prohibits discrimination, harassment and retaliation and how to report such claims. Stress to managers and supervisors their role to model these policies (1) to not be a source of a policy violation, and (2) to report to human resources and/or the general manager any possible violation.

Be alert to the potential circumstances that may create a retaliation issue. As a practical matter, the burden is on the employer to show that the same decision would have occurred without the protected activity.

Richard Lehr is a founding partner with the Birmingham labor and employment law firm, Lehr Middlebrooks Vreeland & Thompson, P.C.

To learn more, go to www.alabamaretail.org/employment-law

Member News

ORIGINAL OWNER REOPENS MONTGOMERY'S SAM'S BAR-B-Q



Sam's Bar-B-Q reopened at 3510 Atlanta Highway in Montgomery on Jan. 24. Sam's, a Capital City favorite that through the years made several state BBQ rankings, serves traditional barbecue plates, sandwiches, sausages and combos along with the fixings. Founded in 1980, the business operated under the leadership of owner Sam Chambliss until he retired in 2016. Someone else ran the restaurant until it closed in December 2017. Fans encouraged Chambliss to bring his original quality BBQ and service back, so he did. Enjoy "nothing fancy, just GOOD barbeque" from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Visit facebook.com/samsBBQofMGM/

STATIONERY STORE OPENS SECOND LOCATION



Please Reply celebrated the opening of its second location May 1 at 2111 Whitesburg Drive in Huntsville. The stationery, gift and invitation store first opened 20 years ago in Birmingham, located now in Crestline Village in Mountain Brook. Owner Katie Smith is joined by longtime employee Kimberly Rodgers, who will co-own and oversee the Huntsville store. "We are thrilled to be a part of the growing city of Huntsville," said Katie. "Kimberly has an eye for trends, while remaining true to classic and traditional gifts. She is an expert in etiquette, especially when it comes to wedding invitations and has a price point for every budget." Visit pleasereplyhsv.printswell.com

ABC FILMS TELEVISION SERIES INSIDE JASPER COFFEE BAR



Lavish Coffee Bar in Jasper played host to a 30-person camera crew when episodes of "What Would You Do," hosted by John Quiñones, were filmed inside the shop. In the hidden camera TV show, the public is observed responding to actors, who pose as employees and customers in controversial scenarios. Owners Dustin and Shannon Beaty said producers chose their coffee shop based on Google and social media searches. Beaty says he is proud for viewers throughout the country to see the graciousness and hospitality the Jasper community showed in the experiment. The two episodes featuring Lavish Coffee Bar are expected to air sometime this summer. Visit facebook.com/pg/lavishcoffeebar/

CHILTON CHAMBER HONORS PEACH PARK



SINCE 2016 Peach Park was named the Distinguished Business of the Year by the Chilton County Chamber of Commerce at its annual banquet Jan. 24. The late Gene Gray opened what began as a fruit stand in 1984. Peach Park has become a thriving market, restaurant, convenience store and park - and an iconic landmark and pit stop – at Interstate 65's Exit 205. Brothers Mark and Derek Gray now co-own and manage the family business. The Gray family earned the 2016 Bronze Alabama Retailer of the Year Award in the Annual Sales \$1 Million to \$5 Million category. Visit peachparkclanton.com



Inspired Apparel

By Melissa Johnson Warnke

AN INTERVIEW WITH

John McElrath President and Chief Executive Officer of State Traditions

Photos By Brandon Robbins

John McElrath in his Avondale warehouse

n 2012, John McElrath decided it was time to take a leap. He looked at his wife, who was holding their newborn baby, and said, "I think its time for me to guit my job and really do this."

He was talking about jumping full time into State Traditions, a state-themed apparel and accessory line that he and two friends created and launched in Birmingham five years prior.

Up until that point, the men had been running the business part time, first out of the trunks of their cars and then out of McElrath's dining room, selling both online and wholesale to high-end men's clothing stores throughout the Southeast.

"At that point, the wheels had started spinning pretty quickly," he remembered. "It was sink or swim."

How It All Started

State Traditions was born out of a simple observation. John remembers he and friend Keith Brown, his co-founding partner, started noticing the rise in popularity of something they referred to as "critter brands."

"People were wearing shirts with whales, fish or some other type of animal. We thought, 'What does that symbol actually mean to the people wearing it?' That gave us the desire to create a brand that really meant something to the person wearing it," said John.

The friends started with the idea that everyone is from somewhere and had special traditions created in the places they consider home. John, Keith and another friend, Marty Lyons, officially incorporated State Traditions in 2007, with their first product being a cotton polo shirt.

John McElrath is president and CEO of State Traditions, which embroiders, silk-screens or embosses private-label, state-themed products that feature all 50 states. You can find the State Traditions label online and in fine men's stores, outdoor specialty stores, golf shops and even children's boutiques.

"To be successful in today's retail climate, you have to have both a retail location and a website. Both drive traffic to each other."

- IOHN

"We started an online site, which was much different than it is now, and our first retail customer was The Locker Room in Tuscaloosa," John recalled.

In the beginning, they were embroidering and putting private labels on the shirts themselves. John explained the brand was more of a creative outlet for them until they went to their first men's apparel market. That's when the orders started flooding in, and so did the demand for products other than polo shirts. Soon after, they rolled out state-themed belts and hats followed by T-shirts and other men's accessories.

"Once we figured it out, we allowed ourselves to continue to grow. We found that you must recreate yourselves every six months or so. You can carry items through, but you always have to have something fresh," described John.

Continued on page 14

THE ESSENTIALS

Founded June 2007

Number of Employees

Mentor

No formal mentor, but many informal mentors

Smart Move Bringing our inventory and

distribution in-house to our Avondale location

Learning Moment

Too many to count. Learning moments happen often. We must be aware of them, so the lessons are not lost.

Wisdom Shared Trust, but verify

See more of this story at alabamaretail.org



Keeping the Brand Fresh

The company has long outgrown John's dining room. After first occupying a 600-square-feet office space in Pepper Place, they moved to a 4,000-square-feet space near Regions Field in downtown Birmingham before the most recent move into a facility with room to grow. The current 43,000-square-feet office and warehouse in Avondale, a revitalized and booming neighborhood and business district on the east side of Birmingham, is large enough to allow the

company to remain there for some time.

"We believe Birmingham fosters new businesses very well, and we especially love being here in the Avondale district. We regularly get together with our neighbors; it's very much a creative hub," he said.

John continues at the helm of the company as president and chief executive officer with six full-time employees. Their

products now feature all 50 states and can be found in hundreds of fine men's stores, outdoor specialty stores, golf shops and even children's boutiques throughout the country.

"We now say we can fit a gentleman from head to knee, we just don't do socks, shoes or pants," added John.

Back-To-School Shopping Season

This time of year is "go time," John said. With summer winding down and the back-to-school season quickly approaching, John says retailers and shoppers alike are ready for new apparel.

"It's non-stop between now and Christmas, but the biggest reason we are busy right now is in preparation for the Backto-School Sales Tax Holiday," he said.

Set for Friday, July 19, through midnight Sunday, July 21, Alabama's 14th annual Sales Tax Holiday gives

shoppers the opportunity to purchase certain school supplies, computers, books and clothing free of the state's 4% sales and use tax. More than 300 individual cities and

counties will also waive their local taxes, meaning shoppers in some areas can save as much as 10% on their purchases.

The timing of the holiday, which is held annually during the third weekend in July, is meant to help all families save money in preparation for school start dates that begin in early August.

Clothing and accessories must cost \$100 or less per item to quality for the tax exemption, including pants, shorts, shirts, belts, hats and shoes. Books must be \$30 or less per book;

school supplies must cost \$50 or less per item; and electronics, like computers, tablets and printers qualify if they're priced at \$750 or less.

The Experience of Shopping

While online sales make up nearly 30 percent of State Traditions' sales, the largest portion of their business comes from retail stores who carry their product lines.



The Avondale warehouse that houses State Traditions includes a showroom with some of its signature products displayed. Those products include polos, T-shirts, shorts, hats, belts, koozies, keychains, stickers, cuff links, flasks, money clips and ties. Visit statetraditions.com

"We believe that, in order to be successful in today's retail climate, you have to have both a retail location and a website. Both drive traffic to each other," said John.

John says online shoppers expect a sizing chart, a good description and real reviews. He says their brand ensures sizing and quality remain the same, even as they launch new and different lines.

"You have to be reliable and not change it up too much. When people come back, they'll know what they're getting," he said. "Even so, it is hard to replace the in-person shopping experience."

The State Traditions team plans to continue blazing a new trail in apparel inspired by a connection. They believe their core mission – spreading hometown pride, cherished memories and favorite pastimes – especially resonates in today's consumer landscape.

"Today's shoppers make decisions based on how it makes them feel, and we think our products make people feel good," he added.



NO SALES TAX ON:



\$100 or less

per item of clothing (including diapers) or footwear



\$50 or less

per item for certain school supplies



\$750 or less

on single purchases of computers/computer equipment



\$30 or less

on any book. \$50 or less on textbooks

alabamaretail.org/alabamasalestaxholidays









FEATURED NEW MEMBER

JUANITA'S FASHIONS LLC

MUSCLE SHOALS

Founded 1973

OWNER

Barbara Jobe

PICTURED

Clara Corona and Barbara Jobe

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 3

LOCATION

708 E. 2nd St., Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

MEMBER SINCE

Jan. 1, 2019

301 LLC TUSCALOOSA

6 Bucks Inc. **BIRMINGHAM**

627 LLC HUNTSVILLE

629 I I C HUNTSVILLE

A. Everett Inc. **TUSCALOOSA**

Absolute Therapy LLC **AUBURN**

Action Boyd LLC DOTHAN

Advanced Spine & Therapy Services LLC SARALAND

AK Fitness LLC **FOLEY**

Alabama Eye Partners LLC BIRMINGHAM

Alabama Orthopaedic Clinic PC MOBILE

Alexander Jay LLC **GULF SHORES**

Allgood Dentistry PC DAPHNE

Alysbury Admin Services Inc. MONTGOMERY

American Diesel Inc. MOULTON

Andalusia Tire Co. Inc. **ANDALUSIA**

Angel Distributing Co. Inc. **BIRMINGHAM**

Arcadia Salon LLC **BIRMINGHAM**

Arley Coffee Shop LLC **ARLEY**

AU South College Hospitality Group LLC **AUBURN**

Au Tigertown Hospitality Group II LLC **OPELIKA**

Auto-Medics Inc. **GUNTERSVILLE**

Automotive Paint & Supply Inc. **ALBERTVILLE**

Baa's Subway 57016 Corp. MADISON

Back Forty Beer Co. LLC **GADSDEN**

Barfield Enterprises Inc. GRANT

Barnett Furniture Co. TRUSSVILLE

Battle Republic One LLC **HOMEWOOD**

BBR OB Inc. **ORANGE BEACH**

BC Tufts Investments LLC SARALAND

Bear Creek Market Inc. **VANDIVER**

Berco Inc. HARTSELLE

Bettis & Associates LLC **TUSCALOOSA**

Birmingham TKD Inc. HOOVER

Black Family Restaurants LLC ANNISTON

Bobby Burch Agency Inc. **MOULTON**

BWM LLC GUNTERSVILLE

Byars-Wright Inc. **JASPER**

C & L Tax Service LLC HARTSELLE

C. Steele Enterprises Inc. **GULF SHORES**

Cahaba Fitness Inc. **VESTAVIA HILLS**

CAVU16 LLC **FAIRHOPE**

Classic 13 Tattoo LLC **BIRMINGHAM**

Coloexpress LLC MADISON

Commercial Transport Co. Inc. **VESTAVIA HILLS**

Corretti Inc. **BIRMINGHAM**

Cothran's Bakery Boaz LLC RNA7

Cottrell's Hometown Pharmacy PC **BREWTON**

Country Queen Cafe LLC **FAIRHOPE**

Covington Pediatrics PC **ANDALUSIA**

Cozy Brown's Kitchen LLC WHISTI FR

Crimson Coconut LLC **TUSCALOOSA**

Crossroads Veterinary Hospital LLC MOODY

Crow Veterinary Clinic LLC MOULTON

Danmark Communications LLC

ROGERSVILLE

Develop Montgomery LLC MONTGOMERY

Dodge City Hardware LLC HANCEVILLE

Donald Hartley SILAS

Dothan Ice Cream Co. LLC **DOTHAN**

DRS Service Corp. **BIRMINGHAM**

Duke Corp. of America **OPELIKA**

Duke's Clothing LLC TUSCALOOSA

Dyer Hospitality LLC JASPER

E And Z Inc. **GORDO**

El Jalisco Mexican Grill Inc of Alabama LLC EUFAULA

Eleven, Eleven Clothiers LLC MOUNTAIN BROOK

Elsanor Feed & Tack LLC ROBERTSDALE

EN LLC Chelsea

Eric Wilson Law LLC
TUSCALOOSA

Eternal Networks LLC MONTGOMERY

Eufaula Country Outdoors LLC EUFAULA

Events @ Haven LLC BIRMINGHAM

Farm Bowl & Juice Co. Tuscaloosa LLC TUSCALOOSA

Fields Companies Inc. **TUSCALOOSA**

Fresh Starts LLC MADISON

Full Armor Foods LLC
MONTGOMERY

Giles Underwood and Wilson LLC SUMMERDALE

GJB Auburn LLC AUBURN

Gnh Inc.

Golden Dragon LLC MOBILE

Gourmade Kitchen LLC TUSCALOOSA

Grand Gulf Corp.
MOBILE

Green's Tire & Service Center Inc. CITRONELLE

H & S Foods LLC MONTGOMERY

Hal and Em LLC MOUNTAIN BROOK

Halls Mill-Landco Venture LLC MOBILE

Hans LLC OPELIKA

He Reigns Inc. LLC **ELBA**

Hester, Thomas & Associates LLC MOBILE

Hickory Flats Inc. **HUNTSVILLE**

Hobbs Jewelers Inc.

ATHENS

Ichiban Florence LLC FLORENCE

In Focus Inc.

Infinity Bicycles DM Inc.
MOBILE

Infinity Bicycles MB Inc.

MOBILE
Infinity Bicycles-O.B. Inc.

ORANGE BEACH

Insure Beacon LLC HOOVER

Izumi Inc.

J & S Hunter LLC JASPER

J & T Hall LLC MADISON

Jade Flames Inc.

Jai Ganesh LLC

Jamana LLC
MOBILE

James Phillips LOCKHART

JD Balance LLC

AUBURN

Jene Enterprises Inc.

Jjni Corp. **HUNTSVILLE**

John Hand Club LLC BIRMINGHAM

Johnson OK Tire Inc.

Jones Brothers LLC PRATTVILLE

JPAN Farms Inc. **NORTHPORT**

K&P Pharmacy LLC CULLMAN

Kathy's Tax Service LLC GILBERTOWN

Kelli Cook

Ken Chapman & Associates Inc.
TUSCALOOSA

Kerry Hall Ventures Inc. NORTHPORT

Kimberly Harpring MOBILE

La Cabanita Mexican Restaurant LLC SPRINGVILLE

Lampada's LLC TUSCALOOSA

Lester And Donaldson Veterinary Hospital, P.A. ENTERPRISE

Lisa Lang

Lisa's Bbq Inc. FAYETTE

Locos Brands LLC MONTGOMERY

Loosa Brews LLC
TUSCALOOSA

Loring & Co. Inc. **HUNTSVILLE**

Love Health Happiness LLC GREENVILLE

Lumpkin Enterprises LLC MOBILE

M&J's Personal Selections LLC ELBERTA

Madison Taproom Inc. MADISON

Maggie Meyers Inc. HUNTSVILLE

Marc Scott

Mark's Joint LLC HOMEWOOD

McCrory Enterprises LLC
DAPHNE

Melissa Stewart

Mi Mexico LLC
THOMASVILLE

M-Line Enterprises Inc.
CRANE HILL

Mob Semmes LLC **SEMMES**

Moe's Original Bar B Que Daphne LLC DAPHNE

Moe's Original BBQ Downtown LLC MOBILE

Moe's Original BBQ of Foley V FOLEY



Founded 2012 in Daleville. Moved to Enterprise in May 2017.

OWNER

Turgul Erturk

PICTURED

Jessie King, server, and Gina Wallace, manager

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 12

LOCATION

101 S. Main St., Enterprise, AL 36330

MEMBER SINCE April 1, 2019

FEATURED NEW MEMBER

PASHA LLC, DBA CAFÉ ROMA

FNTFRPRISE

Moe's Original BBQ of Wemo LLC MOBILE

MVW Nutritionals Inc. HUNTSVILLE

Neha & Falak Investment Inc. BAY MINETTE

Nixon's LLC **MOBILE**

Nybgrey LLC, D/B/A New York Butcher Shoppe HOOVER

Our New Baby Inc., A Close Corporation DOTHAN



FEATURED NEW MEMBER

THE PRATTVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PRATTVILLE

Founded 1973

PRESIDENT

Patty VanderWal

PICTURED

From left: Serena Minton, Patty VanderWal, Kristi Pieper and Anne Sanford

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 6

LOCATION

131 N. Court St., Prattville, AL 36067

MEMBER SINCE

Jan. 1, 2019

Owens Cross Roads Animal Clinic PC OWENS CROSS ROADS

Panna Hospitality LLC TUSCALOOSA

Pelham & Pelham Inc.

Pelham Trma Inc.
PELHAM

Pell City Premiere Cinema LLC PELL CITY

Pierce Ledyard PC MOBILE

R & D Electronics Inc. **BROWNSBORO**

Rainbow Crown Inc. **HOOVER**

River Region
Auto and Service Inc.
MONTGOMERY

River Region Veterinary Services PC PRATTVILLE

Roberts Cuisine LLC **BIRMINGHAM**

Rocket City Craft Beer V MADISON

Sam's Bar-B-Q Inc., A Close Corporation MONTGOMERY

Sand Spirit LLC TUSCALOOSA

Scrubs 4 All LLC HOOVER

Senn Properties LLC MONTGOMERY

Shea Davis Boutique Inc. **BIRMINGHAM**

Shiv Beltline LLC **DECATUR**

Shiv Decatur LLC DECATUR

Shree Mahesh Hospitality LLC MOBILE

Shree Shayona Inc. **LEEDS**

Shreem Enterprises Inc.

Slick Lifestyles LLC TUSCALOOSA

Smith's Doughnuts Inc. TUSCALOOSA

Sneak & Dawdle LLC OPELIKA

Spanns Hardware and Equipment Inc.
WINFIELD

Stacie Givens

Station 31 Kitchen LLC CHELSEA

Steve Gaskins SHEFFIELD

Steve Lane's Reals LLC

Stitchy Fish LLC HOOVER

Story Vet Service Inc.

Superior Rv & Repair LLC GUNTERSVILLE

Taste Of Asia Inc.

OPELIKA

The Army Aviation
Museum Foundation Inc.
FORT RUCKER

The Atchison Firm PC MOBILE

The Hoangs Cleaner LLC MOBILE

The Spa LLC TUSCALOOSA

The Thirsty Donkey LLC BIRMINGHAM

The White Rabbit LLC **THEODORE**

Therapy South -Opelika LLC OPELIKA

Tidwell Group Inc.

Tienda El Torito LLC DOTHAN

Tire Outlet Inc. PINSON

Toll Gate Cafe LLC HAMILTON

Transform SR Holdings LLC HOFFMAN ESTATES

Trypi LLC **SCOTTSBORO**

Tuscaloosa Cheesesteak LLC TUSCALOOSA Tuscaloosa Pretzel Ventures LLC CENTREVILLE

Tuscaloosa Smoothie LLC CENTREVILLE

Tuscaloosa Super Duty Service LLC COTTONDALE

Vadtal LLC HOMEWOOD Village Earnest LLC

BIRMINGHAM
Walker 360 Inc.

MONTGOMERY
Waltate LLC
HARTSELLE

Watson Enterprises Inc.

We Service Autos Inc. TUSCALOOSA

We-Tote-Em Quick Stop Inc. BLOUNTSVILLE

Wharf Restaurant Group LLC ORANGE BEACH

Wilhagan's of Tuscaloosa LLC TUSCALOOSA

Williams Financial Group LLC MOBILE

Williams, Potthoff, Williams & Smith LLC EUFAULA

Wiregrass Fitness LLC DOTHAN

Wiregrass Pool & Spa Inc. ENTERPRISE

Wright's Furniture Inc.

ARAB

Yinzers LLC **DAPHNE**

MOBILE

YMCA Of South Alabama Inc.

Zaxby's River Region Payroll LLC MONTGOMERY

Got An Employment Law Question? Use the Employment Law Resource Center

Did you know Alabama Retail Association members have access to free telephone or e-mail consultation with a team of the state's top labor law attorneys?



If you need more comprehensive assistance than an answer to a question in a telephone or e-mail consultation, the lawyers will discuss how to proceed with you; otherwise, your calls and e-mails are handled without charge to you.

Your association partners with the Birmingham law firm of Lehr Middlebrooks Vreeland & Thompson, P.C., to provide the Employment Law Resource Center. You can find the center under Benefits & Services at alabamaretail.org.

Not sure whether you should terminate an employee? Want to double check whether a certain deduction from an employee's pay is legal? Through the center, you can ask such questions without charge.

FORMS AND VIDEOS TOO!

The center also includes samples of commonly used human resources forms and letters and employment law frequently asked questions. The FAQs are presented as video segments with members of the Lehr Middlebrooks Vreeland & Thompson staff. Topics covered include jury duty, pregnancy leave, workplace bullying and social media in the workplace.

🖒 Learn more at alabamaretail.org/employment-law/

Avoid Unnecessary Costs; Get Your Workplace Posters from ARA

With your Alabama Retail membership, you receive the workers' rights posters that are required by federal and state law to be posted in your workplace. These posters can cost as much as \$200 from other sources but are yours absolutely FREE from Alabama Retail!



Each Alabama Retail member initially receives one each of the state and federal posters. If you have more than one location and those locations are not part of the Alabama Retail member database, you may need additional posters. You can order additional posters at alabamaretail.org/posterorder

Despite what poster companies try to tell you, posters provided by Alabama Retail Association remain current. In late August 2016, all members were mailed a new updated 6-in-1 federal workers' rights poster and any members who have joined since then have been provided with an updated poster. The most recent edition is dated 2017, but it is the same as the 2016 version. State posters have not changed since 2013, although some are dated 2018 or 2019. If you have received free posters from the Alabama Retail Association, they are valid.

When the law changes, Alabama Retail prints and mails new posters to you.



"I call or email the Alabama Retail Association whenever I have any questions about putting up posters or other documents in our office. They are so accommodating and get back to me so quickly."

- KATIE SMITH. PLEASE REPLY

GULF COAST TRADITION

To Customers and Employees, This Regional Seafood Restaurant Feels Like Home

WOLF BAY RESTAURANT, BAR & BOUTIQUE, WHICH HAS BEEN SERVING THE GULF COAST FOR 46 YEARS, NOW HAS THREE LOCATIONS IN TWO STATES

Story by Nancy King Dennis. Photo by Melissa Johnson Warnke.



 ↑ harlie and Sandra Wrape served 27 dinners on a contract of the cont their first day of business. The year was 1973, and Ithey had just opened a restaurant in a former bait shop on the shores of Wolf Bay in the tiny Baldwin County community of Miflin.

"Business just blossomed from there," said the Wrapes' daughter and current owner and president, Charlene Haber.

Forty-six years later, Haber operates three Wolf Bay restaurants, two in Alabama and one in Florida.

"We are doing more than 3,000 dinners a day in our peak season" at the Foley, Orange Beach and Pensacola locations, said the owner, who politely, but firmly, asks to be called Char. "Everybody calls me Char. Nobody calls me Charlene."

Char's Navy Dad and nurse Mom lived in Pensacola when they decided to retire

and open a restaurant in Alabama. Last year, Char decided to return to the family hometown and open the third Wolf Bay Restaurant, Bar & Boutique in that Florida city.

"The Pensacola community has embraced us with open arms," said Char. "We have really enjoyed getting to know the military personnel who live nearby. Wolf Bay is committed to giving back and it has really warmed our hearts being able to support even more nonprofit organizations and schools."

Through Loss of Founders, Flood and Fire. Restaurant Endures

The road to success hasn't been easy for Char or the restaurant.

"My mother passed away in 1994, then Hurricane Ivan came in '04, which sunk us about six feet under water, then the fire destroyed us in 2008," said Char, whose father died in 2014.

The family business - previously known as Wolf Bay Lodge, though it has never offered lodging - expanded several times in its original location. After experiencing flood and fire in a four-year span, the business relocated and reopened in 2009 on Perdido Beach Boulevard in Orange Beach. In 2010, its original customer base rejoiced when Wolf Bay opened

a restaurant on Miflin Road in Foley. The Pensacola location opened Oct. 1, 2018.

Any hardships along the way don't show, said Orange Beach Councilman Jerry Johnson. Wolf Bay Restaurant is "a destination for our city's out-of-town quests from every region of the country. Their seafood is always fresh, the service is always exceptional, and the atmosphere is pure Coastal Alabama."



Some of the Wolf Bay team and supporters pose with Char after she received a 2018 Alabama Retailer of the Year award. From left Cindy Haber, Orange Beach Manager Dawn Davis, Char, Marketing Director Lindsay Schumacher, Watts, Orange Beach General Manager Regina Brown, retail designer Brandice Griffin and Travis Valentine with the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce. Photo by Jerry Johnson. Visit wolfbaylodge.com

A Team that **Interacts Like Family**

"I think the most valuable thing that my mother and father ever told me was ... get in there with your employees, work hard with them and they will always give you 200 percent," said Char. "I couldn't do any of this by myself. We are a team, and I have developed a family here," she said of employees. some of whom have been working for the restaurant since the 1970s.

There's Ma Belle, Miss Nadine, Karen, Jerry* and Al, who just retired last year after giving a two-year notice.

At Wolf Bay Restaurant, which is known for its fresh Gulf seafood prepared using community recipes handed down through the years, they peel, devein and butterfly every shrimp by hand. Even their salad dressings are made by hand.

"These people look out for me as well as I look out for them," said Char. "I want everyone to know how lucky we are for the staff we have. We just need more of them." Wolf Bay currently employs 350 at the height of the Gulf Coast tourist season.

The customers also consider Char and her team family.

Donna Watts, chief executive officer and president of the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce who frequents the Foley location, said, "I sometimes eat here three times a day. I know most of the staff. When I walk in, they all say, 'Hey, Miss Donna.' I love it. It feels like home, and I think that is why everybody comes here, because it feels like home." -

*Condolences to the family and friends of Jerry Keith, a loyal, 38-year Wolf Bay employee, who passed away since this interview.



Socially Speaking

"Alabama Retail Association's worker's comp coverage through Alabama Retail Comp is a huge asset for us. It is nice to have a company that allows us to be competitive" - ROB RENFROE, RENFROE'S MARKET



The Alabama Retail Association

has been promoting and protecting the interests of retailers in our state since 1943. ... Our members sell food, clothing, furniture and virtually everything else you need to get through your daily life. ... Our cover photo features ARA members. Rob and Robert Renfroe of Renfroe's Market a member since 1997. April 1 cover photo 1



You have heard us say this

before ... You won't find a ".com" on a Little League jersey. You see the name of a local retailer, a small business, or a community partner. #RetailOpensDoors of opportunity in every community in Alabama. ... #Share this post and show us your Little League photos in the comments!! #ShopLocal #SmallBiz #LocalRetail The Locker Room of Montgomery April 18 post 🚺

Small businesses don't always get the recognition they deserve. Comment to thank a #local retailer today! #MomPopBusinessOwnersDay #ShopAlabama #RetailOpensDoors #Repost from our friends at Chamber Tuscaloosa! March 29 posts of



We're starting something new ...

periodically, a member of our staff will raise a cup to (and from) a different Alabama Retail Association member or supporter. This week, ARA VP Alison Hosp is at BuzzCatz Coffee & Sweets in the city of Orange Beach! ... BuzzCatz Coffee & Sweets is a favorite for locals and tourists alike. It serves locally roasted coffee, breakfast, baked goods and made from scratch goodies all sure to satisfy even the most discriminating sweet tooth. #WeLoveOurMembers #ShopAlabama #ShopWhereYouBeach #RetailOpensDoors April 1 photo 👔

Get social with us! Talk to us about the photos, resources, retail updates and member news we share.







Stay informed at alabamaretail.org



A big thank you to Melissa Johnson Warnke with the Alabama Retail Association for speaking on the importance of supporting local retail businesses. From restaurants to retailers, these small businesses keep our local economy strong. Shared April

11 Headland Area Chamber of

Commerce post



RECENTLY TWEETED @ALABAMARETAIL

@AlabamaRetail supports legislation by @Clyde_Chambliss that allows police to intervene in shoplifting crimes inside a store and creates shoplifting charge for those who *knowingly intend* to take merchandise without paying for it or to alter a price tag. April 17 link to webpost, alabamaretail.org/news/alabama-shoplifting-crime/



Get better service and rates for your business from ARC



SAVE MONEY, AVOID HEADACHES WITH WORKERS' COMP COVERAGE FROM ARC

Even if you don't run a restaurant or a retail store, Alabama Retail Comp (ARC) may have your business covered. Sponsored by the Alabama Retail Association, we serve many types of businesses:

- Medical offices / veterinary clinics
- · Banks and credit unions
- · Engineering firms
- · Auto body and repair shops
- Hotels
- · Law firms















These companies and practices save money and hassle through our in-house underwriting, policy management and claims adjusting. Like them, your business can count on unmatched service from ARC. Calls are answered by real people here in Alabama – never by a call center or phone menu.

See if your business qualifies for coverage from ARC. Talk to your independent insurance agent or contact us today at (800) 239-5423 or quote@alabamaretail.org.





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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Alabama Retail: The Leading Voice and Resource for Retailers in Our State

MORE THAN 4,200 BUSINESSES ALREADY KNOW WHY #MEMBERSHIPMATTERS WITH THE ALABAMA RETAIL ASSOCIATION

Issue Engagement

"Alabama Retail is very engaged with our state leaders, keeps up with the bills and stays out in front of the issues, making sure that what is proposed lines up with what the retailers of Alabama need."

- JIMMY WRIGHT, WRIGHT'S MARKET

Network

"It is important to belong to an organization that promotes businesses, promotes my restaurant, promotes what we are doing here. The networking possibilities are endless. It increases business. It increases relationships."

- CHARLENE HABER, WOLF BAY RESTAURANT, BAR & BOUTIQUE

Value

"Being an association member, we have workers' comp. Other benefits – posters, emails, newsletters – keep me abreast of what is changing in the industry. That's very valuable to me."

- LINDA FLAHERTY, ONCE UPON A TIME

Accessibility

"We consider Alabama Retail to be local, like we are. We can pick up the phone and call when we have a question. Our people are our business. Alabama Retail would say the same. If there is an opportunity to serve, you are right there and able to get in touch."

- JAY WELBORN, B&W FOODS DBA PIGGLY WIGGLY

Visit us at alabamaretail.org