

# *Alabama* Retailer

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT  
*BIT and LISA GOODMAN*  
*Owners of Goodmans*

ECONOMIC  
STRENGTH  
*Retail Sales  
Rebound;  
Lead Alabama  
Recovery*

SHOP ALABAMA  
BACK-TO-SCHOOL  
SALES TAX HOLIDAY  
IS JULY 16-18  
*(Tear-Out Poster, Page 6)*

EMPLOYMENT LAW  
*Employer Rights  
Related to Lingering  
COVID-19 Issues*

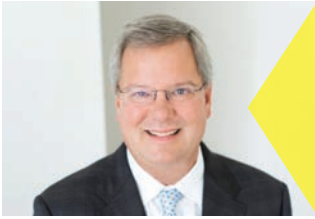
ENHANCING  
EXPERIENCE

*Jamie Pursell*

PROPRIETOR  
OF LEAF & PETAL



# From the President



**Together,  
Let's Finish  
2021 Strong**

You are resilient. You are innovative.

You are stronger than ever.

In the past 16 months, you've operated in a pandemic and through all the changing guidelines, laws and mandates that comes with a worldwide health emergency. Many of you also dealt with hurricanes, tornadoes and other natural disasters.

This month, the state of emergency ends (See Page 15) and with vaccine availability and more being vaccinated, blue skies return.

As always, you've led the economic recovery, providing goods and services Alabamians need in their daily lives (See Page 3).

You've brought people back to work and continue to hire. Last month, Alabama stopped participating in all federally funded pandemic unemployment compensation programs. Still, staffing businesses to handle demand presents challenges. If employees decline offers to work, an employee continues to receive benefits after returning to work or you suspect other unemployment fraud, report it at [labor.alabama.gov/Fraud/](http://labor.alabama.gov/Fraud/)

Our employment law partner answers some of your frequently asked questions related to employer rights on Page 14. Continue to call our employment law hotline.

The Alabama Legislature left town May 17, but one or more special sessions remain possible related to redistricting, prisons, gaming or distribution of COVID-19 relief funds. If business concerns arise, we'll be there to look out for your interests.

Back-to-school and holiday shopping are just around the corner. Let's finish 2021 strong

Rick Brown, Publisher and President

# Alabama Retailer

July 2021 Issue 2 Vol 21

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**BUD SKINNER\***  
Jubilee Seafood, Montgomery  
\*SEE PAGE 19

**JIMMY RAY SMITH**  
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## Retail Sales Lead Alabama's Economic Recovery

Consumer spending, mostly through retail sales, led Alabama's economic recovery in 2020 and will likely continue to gain steam this summer.

Even though Alabama sales declined in March and April 2020, our state ended last year with an overall taxed sales growth rate of 7.13%.

Retailers and other businesses collected more than \$3 billion in sales taxes from Alabamians in 2020, almost \$203 million more than they did in 2019.

Every month since May 2020 has seen healthy growth over the same month in the previous year, based on the Alabama Revenue Department abstracts. Eight of those months saw double digit growth.



In November and December 2020 alone, Alabamians spent 11.6% more than they did during the same period in 2019. December's sales numbers beat every other December ever in Alabama.

Taxed sales growth went off the charts in March 2021 compared to March 2020, which was the month most stores were required to shut their doors due to the coronavirus. Both in-person sales in Alabama and online sales at stores without a presence here were up an unprecedented 42.3% in March 2021. Regular collections were up 38.16% and Alabama's simplified sellers use tax was up almost 72%. ■

MAKING IT PERSONAL

# You Name It, Goodmans in Florence will Monogram, Screen Print or Engrave It

FOR 23 YEARS, BIT AND LISA GOODMAN'S  
FAMILY BUSINESS HAS BEEN PERSONALIZING MERCHANDISE  
FOR THE SHOALS AND UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA COMMUNITIES

Story and Photos by Nancy King Dennis



*Goodmans, less than a mile from the University of North Alabama campus, is the place for your embroidery, screen-printing, appliqueing and engraving needs in Florence and the entire Shoals area. Bit and Lisa Goodman started the business in the garage of their home more than two decades ago.*

**H**igh school sweethearts Bit and Lisa Goodman have been married 41 years and business partners for 23.

"I don't remember life before him," said Lisa, who has lived in Florence since she was five. Her husband, Charles "Bit" Goodman is a full-fledged native.

In 1998, both were working at Tee Jays Manufacturing Co. when Florence's worldwide apparel plant began moving jobs out of the United States. At its height, the company founded in 1976 was the third largest employer in the Shoals area. The Florence plant closed completely by 2005.

Lisa left Tee Jays first. "She left her job and needed something to do," said Bit. An avid seamstress, Lisa began making children's clothing and having home parties to sell what she'd made.

### All 'About You'

She initially named her business "About You." "I got a little home embroidery machine and started personalizing," said Lisa. Bit kept working at Tee Jays but moonlighted at his wife's new venture.

"We figured everyone needs something sports related for their kids," Bit said. "We bought heat presses and related equipment and started doing uniforms out of the garage.

"One day, we just decided to open a storefront," said Bit, who continued to work his day job and work at the store at night. Six months later, "It got big enough. I just turned my notice in and quit too."

For a while, the business operated as Goodmans Sports, but eventually dropped the word sports from the name. Throughout, the business has been about personalization, said Lisa.

Goodmans serves the embroidery, screen printing, appliqueing and engraving needs in Florence and the entire Shoals area. "We sell anything engraved or monogrammed," said Lisa, listing specifically jewelry, wallets, Bible covers, purses and totes.

### Family Affair

It is a true family business with four of the eight employees being related. Lisa is chief creative director; Bit heads up screen printing; their daughter, Brittany Thompson, helps

Lisa with design work and even Lisa's Mom, Linda Jenkins, who came on board when Tee Jays shut down, works there. Originally, "she helped us with uniforms," said Lisa. Before the pandemic, Linda was working at the store one or two days a week. In the past year, she's continued to work from home, Lisa said.

Goodmans' workload is split between embroidery and screen printing. Screen printing can involve more volume, but the embroidery work is wide-ranging, from logos for other

businesses to personalization for gifts, so the work evens out, said Lisa.

With their current location, 1116 N. Pine St., less than a mile from the University of North Alabama, "UNA keeps us hopping," she said.

"Back-to-school time and through football season," is especially busy, said Bit. "From July through the end of the year, we usually aren't able to come up for air," Lisa added. In late summer and early fall, they also sell backpacks and lunchboxes, but Alabama's back-to-school sales tax holiday isn't much of a draw, because the business isn't open on Saturdays or Sundays. On the Friday of the tax holiday, which will be July 16 this year, Goodmans clothing that is less than \$100 plus book bags and lunchboxes that cost \$50 or less are tax free. "We may get a mother

whose kid is going to UNA for the first time or a student who doesn't have a T-shirt," said Lisa.

### In Store or Online

Even before the pandemic, the Goodmans served their customers both in store and online. "A lot of our online is local," Lisa said in a 2019 interview, "because we have \$3.50 flat-rate shipping, they'd just as soon as order online and have it shipped. We also have an option of ordering online and picking it up."

That foresight paid off during the past year. "We really added a lot to the website and were able to ship our retail items," said Lisa.

Customers also have been loyal. "We have a customer base that's just second to none," said Lisa, adding many are customers for life. "They come in when they are in high school, then college, then I help them with their wedding and their babies," she adds. ■



*"We keep coming up with different designs so people have to buy another one," said Bit Goodman, who with his wife, Lisa, owns Goodmans, a personalization business at 1116 N. Pine St. in Florence. Visit 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday or at [shopgoodmans.com](http://shopgoodmans.com).*

SHOP EARLY AND SAVE

JULY 16-18, 2021  
3 DAYS ONLY!



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](http://alabamaretail.org/alabamasalestaxholidays)

ALABAMARETAIL  
ASSOCIATION



\*4% state sales tax waived statewide; cities and counties can opt into the tax holiday, for savings up to 10% on covered items

# The Lingerie Shoppe Marks 75 Years

Story and Photo by Nancy King Dennis

"Without fail," the gowns and other delicates in the window are changed out weekly at The Lingerie Shoppe on busy Montevallo Road in Mountain Brook.

MEMBER  
SINCE  
1995

"We have customers who come in looking for merchandise they saw in the window," even weeks later, said owner Brenda Meadows.

The shop, celebrating its 75th year, also trusts in word of mouth as a marketing tool.

"We count on satisfied customers to share their favorable experiences in the store and their satisfaction with the products they buy here," said Brenda, who has owned and operated the business for 33 years.

That doesn't mean Brenda and her team of five others rely strictly on window customers and referrals. They market daily on Facebook and Instagram, and Brenda's daughter, Julie, the store's inventory and social media specialist, frequently uses TikTok to promote the latest and greatest at The Lingerie Shoppe.

"It has been my pleasure to open the doors each day and greet the many loyal and new customers who come to shop," said Brenda, who works a six-day week.

Some of the newest customers have found the store through – [thelingeriesshoppemtb.com](http://thelingeriesshoppemtb.com) – which launched in April. "We still encourage in-store shopping, but we know online shopping is a fact in retail," said Brenda.

"Soft and comfortable," are the descriptive words she uses for her store's undergarment and sleepwear for all three generations of customers, both women and men.

Throughout the pandemic, sales of bras, especially comfortable bras, have exploded, Brenda said. Demand for loungewear also expanded. "Presentable, comfort clothes are the most requested styles," she said. ■

"We have a relationship  
with our customers."

– BRENDA

Visit [thelingeriesshoppemtb.com](http://thelingeriesshoppemtb.com)

See more of this story  
at [alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org)



CUSTOMER CENTRIC

# Bagel Bakery Evolves to Serve Customers Who Want to Dine In, Get It to Go or Order Online

RALPH AND JENNIFER YARBROUGH HAVE GROWN  
CRESTLINE BAGEL CO. TO THREE STORES THAT SERVE AS GATHERING  
PLACES WHILE ALSO OFFERING ONLINE/APP ORDERING AND DELIVERY

Story by Nancy King Dennis. Photos by Brandon Robbins.



*"We have so many friends that we met as customers," said Ralph Yarbrough, president of Crestline Bagel Co., which he owns with his wife, Jennifer, "the visionary." Getting to know customers as friends has been "great for the family," he adds.*

A bagel shop has existed at 66-B Church St. in Mountain Brook since 1996.

Even early in their relationship, Ralph and Jennifer Yarbrough loved to eat there.

"We saw a sign in the window when we were eating breakfast one morning on a weekend," said Ralph. "By Monday morning, she was the assistant manager."

In the six months Jennifer worked at the bagel shop, she "developed this vision for what the restaurant could be, but she didn't really share that with me until she left and went onto something else," said Ralph.

Both worked in medical sales for several years and continued to frequent the franchise location of the national chain bagel bakery. Jennifer began to share her idea with Ralph for selling authentic New York style bagels in an artisan bakery. "She explained what she wanted to create," he said. "Once we talked about it, I was 100% on board."

It took five years though for the owner to agree to sell his business to the couple.

## Vision Realized

In 2007, Jennifer's vision was realized as Crestline Bagel Co. In the 14 years since, the now independent bakery has added two other locations, one in Cahaba Heights and a third in downtown Birmingham.

Crestline Bagel makes 15 varieties of bagels and an equal number of hand-mixed cream cheeses. It also makes muffins, pastries, seasonal breads and desserts from natural and whole ingredients. The bagels are made at the original Mountain Brook store. Each store bakes its own muffins, sweet rolls, bagel bites and cookies each morning.

In the spring of 2019, the Yarbroughs opened a store and created a central kitchen at the Innovation Depot in the heart of Birmingham. There they hand mix their cream cheeses, make pimento cheese, chicken salad and tuna salad, slice meats and cheeses, bake brownies and chocolate chip cookies, make granola and even make dog treats. The urban setting caters mostly to a lunch crowd. Crestline Bagel's salads, soups and hot-pressed sandwiches are popular there.

All three stores offer coffees, teas, lattes and smoothies.

In February of 2018, Crestline Bagel became one of two restaurants that flank Leaf & Petal, a large garden center in the Cahaba Heights area.

"Crestline Bagel was always meant to be a gathering place," said Ralph. The 4117 Crosshaven Drive location with its outdoor seating surrounded by whatever is growing outside Leaf & Petal "is probably even more of a meeting place because of the space and the setting," he said.

## Time to Pivot

"When COVID hit, all of a sudden, we couldn't be a gathering place anymore," said Ralph. Customers started calling the stores, which prior to March 2020 didn't take orders over the phone. "We felt like being on the phone kept us from really interacting with the people that were in our store," said Ralph. That changed quickly.



*Enjoy bagels and more at the three Crestline Bagel Co. locations: 66-B Church St. in Mountain Brook, 4117 Crosshaven Drive in Vestavia Hills and 1500 1st Ave. N. in Birmingham. Check hours and days of operation at [crestlinebagel.com](http://crestlinebagel.com)*

"We started having pickups in front of the store on the sidewalk," said Ralph.

Jennifer developed an online ordering system on the company's website. By December of 2020, the business had its own app, which thousands have downloaded. "The online ordering and ordering through the app will stay" after the pandemic is long gone, said Ralph, as will using delivery services. "People want their food delivered now," he said.

Those conveniences "make us a better company, because we're more responsive now to what people need."

Customers came back to all three locations once they were open for inside dining, and "we do about the same amount of business or even more, but not near as many people hang around to eat," said Ralph. While the stores have returned to no call-in orders, customers have embraced online and app ordering, and, some days, the stores' bakery cases sell out just from online orders, Ralph said.

## Family Business

The Yarbroughs' two sons have grown with the business. Fourteen-year-old Houston earlier this year went to the chief operating officer (not his parents) and asked for a one-day-a-week job, which he secured after training in doing dishes, cleaning the dining room and running the cash register. "They're both very interested in being part of the business as they get older," Ralph said of Houston and Yates, who is 11.

"When you live with your business partner, you try to have time at home where we don't bring up work," said Ralph, but "I think it's good for your kids to see you working hard for a reason." ■

# Enhancing Experience

By Nancy King Dennis

AN INTERVIEW WITH

## Jamie Pursell, Proprietor of Leaf & Petal

Photo By Brandon Robbins

*Jamie Pursell at his expansive Cahaba Heights garden center, which includes a gift shop, greenhouse, outdoor nursery and is flanked by two restaurants, owned by friends.*

**L**eaf & Petal is just a miracle," proprietor Jamie Pursell said. "I don't even know how it works. It has grown into something so much bigger than me."

Jamie made those remarks in 2019 after being named the Gold Alabama Retailer of the Year for his sales category.

He and his 52-person staff operate three Leaf & Petal garden centers in Mountain Brook Village, Cahaba Heights and at the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham, plus a Deal Depot discount store on Summit Boulevard. The centers sell indoor/outdoor plants, containers, birdbaths, windchimes, statuary and garden décor, as well as local arts and wares, gourmet foods, furniture, home décor and more.

"We are so blessed to have wonderful employees working for us," said Jamie. "We are so blessed to have loyal, wonderful customers who come to see us season after season."

"Leaf & Petal is actually older than I am," said Jamie, who is 42. The business began in 1974. "It was part of a larger regional franchise that went from North Carolina down to Alabama. My family bought the business in 2005," he said, adding at that time the only location was at 2817 Cahaba Road in Mountain Brook Village. The Pursell family added a Summit location and the gift shop at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in 2007.

## THE ESSENTIALS

**Founded**  
1974

**Number of Employees**  
52

**Mentor**  
My dad, Taylor Pursell. He has always had such great advice to share from all his business experience, especially when it comes to dealing with people.

**Smart Move**  
Taking the risk and spending the money to build the big new store in Cahaba Heights.

**Learning Moment**  
Our close partner, The Friends of the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, had to cancel their largest annual fundraiser, The Birmingham Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale, because of the pandemic. Because many of the plants had already been grown, they generously offered to just give them to us. Instead, we decided to sell their plants at our Deal Depot location and give 100% of the proceeds back to the Gardens. We were able to generate about \$25,000, salvaging a portion of the sale. Strong relationships became especially important during the pandemic, and I learned that challenges provide opportunities to serve one another and make connections stronger.

**Jamie Pursell is the proprietor of Leaf & Petal, a 47-year-old business that the Pursell family bought 16 years ago and have expanded to three garden centers and one discount store.**

**"Challenges provide opportunities to serve one another and make connections stronger"**

- JAMIE

Jamie learned much about business from his dad, Taylor Pursell. "I once asked him how to respond if a customer returns a dead plant, and it is the customer's fault it died. He asked me how many dollars' worth of dead plants I thought customers tried to seek refunds or replacements for each year. I gave him my answer, he laughed, and said the number is 'immaterial.' He emphasized the lifetime value of a loyal customer and how unwise it is to ever risk losing one over a trivial matter, such as a dead plant."

## Garden Synergy

In 2013, while Jamie was traveling with his wife in London, he was inspired to create a new garden center development in Alabama with a restaurant component like those common in the United Kingdom and Europe.

*Continued on page 12*

**Wisdom Shared**  
Do everything within reason to retain the wonderful people that make your company run. The main reason Leaf & Petal has been able to continue to grow after so many years in business is that it has an amazing core team of veteran employees at each location. Having lots of veteran employees lends itself to maintaining a strong culture and the ability to improve and execute the company's systems well.

See more  
of this story at  
[alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org)



"We toured several garden centers over there," he said. "We really enjoyed the experience of having food, coffee, tea amongst the flowers at these garden centers.

"While I wanted to have a food component, I didn't want to have to learn a whole new business," Jamie said. "Networking through friends and some relationships I already had, I partnered with a couple of other businesses in town that were looking to expand as well, and now we have a restaurant neighbor on either side of our newest garden center," which opened in 2018. The businesses share a lot with 101 parking spaces. "Just having the additional space and additional parking has really allowed our business to grow."

Ralph and Jennifer Yarbrough's Crestline Bagel and Becky Satterfield's El ZunZún are the book-end restaurants on the Leaf & Petal campus in the Cahaba Heights neighborhood of Vestavia Hills.

We "wanted to create a situation where his customers and our customers had an increased experience," said

Ralph. "We wanted the Crestline Bagel customers to have a beautiful place to sit in our outdoor dining or in Leaf & Petal's greenhouse. Jamie wanted his customers, when they're shopping, to be able to come over and get a cup of coffee or get something to eat. While you shop for plants and flowers, your kids or your spouse can have lunch or breakfast."

Jamie said, "The integration with the restaurants really makes the location in Cahaba Heights special." The shared space has worked well for all three businesses. "It's working better than we could have hoped for," he said.

## Community Space

While the Mountain Brook and Birmingham stores have small footprints, the Cahaba Heights location is massive and includes a 3,500-square-foot gift shop and 4,000-square-foot greenhouse that was designed to double as an event space.

Besides meetings, the space also lends itself to social gatherings. There's even been a few proposals and four or five intimate weddings amid the flowers and plants in the

greenhouse. Going forward though, Jamie says he's out of the wedding business.

"Our greenhouse has been a popular venue during the pandemic, because it is so large and open with excellent airflow--much like being outdoors," he said. "The event venue has been booked pretty much normally since the fall of 2020."

## Increased Demand

Other than the Botanical Gardens location, which was required to close for 90 days, from mid-March to June

2020, Leaf & Petal's business increased during the pandemic.

By the first of April 2020, customers, who wanted to get outside and garden, swarmed to the other stores. "We couldn't source enough edible plants to fill the demand," said Jamie. "It seemed like everyone, my wife included, decided that they wanted to try growing more herbs, vegetables, and/or fruit while at home.

"Unfortunately, the supply

is still having a hard time catching up with demand in the edibles category," he added.

Being able to spread the Botanical Gardens employees among the open stores in those early months, helped fill in gaps left by employees who separated because of age, health concerns and other reasons, said Jamie. The dedicated Botanical Gardens team members "ended up being essential in having enough employees to make the stores run during the increased demand for plants and garden goods we saw in the spring of 2020," he said.

## Sharing Knowledge

Besides his employees and customers, Jamie credits the Birmingham Chapter of Entrepreneurs Organization for much of the growth and success of Leaf & Petal. "They know my business, inside and out," he said of the small group of local entrepreneurs who bounce ideas and challenges off each other. "They've helped me go through challenging times."

The other six business owners in Jamie's "Forum," "learn as a team," he said. "I can't imagine doing business without them." ■



*The Cahaba Heights location of Leaf & Petal has a 4,000-square-foot greenhouse that doubles as an event space. For more about Leaf & Petal, visit [leafnpetal.com](http://leafnpetal.com)*

# Member News

## CAMPBELL HARDWARE CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY



MEMBER  
SINCE  
1995

**Campbell Hardware & Sporting Goods** in Robertsdales marked its 75th year in business this year. Leonard Campbell and William L. Wingo founded the store in 1946. William's son and current owner, John Nelson Wingo Sr., took over in 1974. The family owned and operated business offers a large selection of hardware items, firearms, ammunition, fishing gear, hunting apparel and accessories. The city of Robertsdales declared April 23 as Campbell Hardware Day. The business also celebrated with 75 days of giveaways. Nelson's daughter Ashley Wingo Kucera, in photo with her dad and Robertsdales Mayor Charles Murphy, serves as office manager and oversees sporting goods. *Visit @CampbellHardwareandSportingGoods on Facebook*

## CLOTHIER MOBLEY & SONS MARKS 50 YEARS IN TUSCALOOSA



MEMBER  
SINCE  
1994

**Mobley & Sons** opened in 1971 as the Varsity Shop in the Downtown Plaza of Tuscaloosa. From the beginning, Chris Mobley, left in photo, has been at the helm of West Alabama's premier luxury clothing store, which he founded with his father CD Mobley and brother Reggie Mobley. In 1985, Chris moved his store to The Tuscaloosa Galleria and rebranded it as Mobley & Sons. Chris' son, Christopher, joined the family business in 2017 as a buyer. In 2019, Mobley & Sons opened a second Tuscaloosa store named Christopher Mobley on University Boulevard. An anniversary celebration is planned for the fall. *Visit [mobleyandsons.com](http://mobleyandsons.com)*

## HUNTSVILLE-BASED TERRAMÉ OPENS MADISON LOCATION



MEMBER  
SINCE  
2003

**Terramé Day Spa and Salon** opened its third location Feb. 1 in Madison. The Terramé Salon, Day Spa & Blow Dry Bar at 8151 Madison Blvd. is housed in a two-story, 16,660 square-foot space, making it Alabama's largest freestanding hair salon and day spa, excluding hotel and resort spas. The ground floor consists of a 25-station salon; an eight-seat blow dry bar; a six-seat barbering station; and a large retail space. Upstairs is the day spa with massage, facial, manicure/pedicure, waxing and professional make-up services. It also has a 256-water jet hydrotherapy tub. The Terramé owners are Mike and Charla Johnson along with Mike's brothers, Jeff and Charles. *Visit [terrame.com](http://terrame.com)*

## CHILDREN'S SHOES/CLOTHING STORES MOVE TO NEW HOMEWOOD LOCATION

**Sikes Children's Shoes and Jack & Jill Shop** moved May 3 to a new store at 2719 19th Place S. in downtown Homewood. The side-by-side businesses had been at 2918 18th St. S. in Homewood since 1954. On May 21, the Homewood Chamber of Commerce cut the ribbon at the jointly held businesses under one roof. Laura McKee Player, who at age 16 began working in 1991 as a shoe fitter at Sikes Children's Shoes, has owned both Sikes Children's Shoes and the Jack n' Jill Shop since 2014. Customers can now walk freely between the shoe store and children's clothing store and purchase from both with one sales receipt. As they have for decades, babies continue to get a photo taken with their first pair of shoes. *Visit [sikesshoes.com](http://sikesshoes.com)*



MEMBER  
SINCE  
1995

# COVID-19 Conundrums Continue Related to Employer Rights

By Richard I. Lehr and Whitney R. Brown, Esq.

**W**ith COVID-19 vaccinations available to all age 12 or older who want the vaccine, we wanted to provide you with an update on employer rights when dealing with COVID issues.

## **May I require employees to become vaccinated?**

Yes, that is an employer's right. Two exceptions to evaluate are if the employee cannot take the vaccine for medical reasons or if the employee objects to taking the vaccine due to a sincerely held religious belief. If either applies, you should reasonably accommodate, such as requiring the employee to continue to wear a mask at work. For more, see <https://tinyurl.com/2abs4yn8>.

## **May I require those who aren't vaccinated to wear a mask, but not those who are vaccinated?**

Yes, you may do this. We suggest you evaluate how this may be perceived by customers and employees, but it is your right to do that.

## **May we require new hires to show proof of vaccination?**

Yes. Ideally, you'd provide notice that proof of vaccination will be a condition of employment, unless exception is required by law, in job advertisements.

## **May I continue to permit some to work from home but require others to return to work?**

Yes. Whether work from home is permitted is solely up to the employer, except where the request to work from home is a request to accommodate a disability-related limitation.

Telecommuting can be a reasonable accommodation in some circumstances. Even in cases where telecommuting might be a reasonable accommodation, an employer has the right to both verify the medical necessity of the request and to select alternative accommodations that address the restrictions and the employer's needs better, even if

they're not the accommodations the employee prefers. You should review accommodation issues with your employment counsel.

## **May I require that certain job classifications become vaccinated but not others?**


Yes. For example, you may decide that only employees with direct customer contact must take the vaccine.

## **May I refuse to provide employer sponsored COVID sick pay for an employee who is unvaccinated and absent due to quarantine or COVID?**

Yes. You may treat those absences as any other medical absence and provide preferred leaves to vaccinated employees. An employer that is seeking tax credits by extending Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) or Emergency FMLA (EFMLA) Leave may not deny those based on vaccination status.

## **May an employer receive FFCRA tax credits if an employee needs to be absent due to a child's day care, school or camp temporarily closing for quarantine?**

An employer may opt to continue to receive federal tax credits for providing employees with EPSL and EFMLA leave, as you can read at [tinyurl.com/zfnd8vtf](https://tinyurl.com/zfnd8vtf). Continuing either of these programs is optional. Due to a lack of clarity in the EFMLA extension statute as well as the expansion of reasons for which EFMLA may be taken, we do not recommend that employers continue EFMLA. Under either program, a temporary or full closure/loss of childcare, school or scheduled summer camp/childcare that is caused by COVID-19 is a covered reason for the leave, and reimbursement. ■

 ***Richard Lehr and Whitney Brown are shareholders with Alabama Retail's labor and employment law partner, Lehr Middlebrooks Vreeland & Thompson PC. To contact them about COVID-related workplace issues or other HR matters, go to [alabamaretail.org/employment-law](https://alabamaretail.org/employment-law)***


# State of Emergency Related to COVID-19 Ends July 6; Liability Protections Continue; Businesses Can Remain Open Under Same Guidelines in Future Pandemics

Alabama's state of emergency related to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, expires July 6.

On Feb. 12, Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law COVID-19 liability protection for businesses, healthcare providers and other groups. Its provisions are retroactive to March 13, 2020, and they remain in effect until July 6, 2022.

"This does not mean that a COVID-related claim that is filed after July 6, 2022, will necessarily lose the protection afforded by the act," the Alabama Civil Justice Reform Committee, which championed the law, said in a statement. "If a claim arises prior to July 6, 2022, then it remains covered by the act's provisions. ... the act is intended to continue to afford protection for all COVID-related suits that arise prior to July 6, 2022, regardless of when filed."

The law provides civil immunity and protects against certain damages claimed by individuals who allege that they contracted or were exposed to COVID-19 due to an act or omission of a business or healthcare provider.

 [Learn more at alabamaretail.org/news/covid-19-civil-immunity/](https://alabamaretail.org/news/covid-19-civil-immunity/)

## INCOME-TAX-FREE BENEFITS

During the 2021 regular session of the Alabama Legislature, lawmakers adopted several pieces of legislation to avert income taxes on COVID-19 related benefits.

Businesses, individuals and nonprofits do not have to pay state income taxes on federal coronavirus relief benefits received in 2020 or 2021, under Act No. 2021-1. Paycheck



Protection Program loans and stimulus checks are included among those benefits.

Lawmakers later added an income tax exemption for federal Restaurant Revitalization Fund grants, which were part of the American Rescue Plan, under Act No. 2021-540.

 [See alabamaretail.org/news/income-tax-free-covid-relief-payments-benefits/](https://alabamaretail.org/news/income-tax-free-covid-relief-payments-benefits/)

## BUSINESS OPERATIONS IN A PANDEMIC

Starting July 1, businesses and places of worship can continue to operate in a pandemic, epidemic or bioterrorism event, as long as they comply with safety precautions issued by the governor, a state agency or a local government. The Alabama State House also can remain open to the public while the Legislature is in session during a declared emergency, under Act No. 2021-160.

 [alabamaretail.org/advocacy/action/state-issues/business-church-emergency-operations/](https://alabamaretail.org/advocacy/action/state-issues/business-church-emergency-operations/)

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## Read Summary of 2021 Alabama Legislature's Regular Session

Of the 1,053 bills introduced in the Alabama Legislature's 2021 regular session, almost 100 carried the most concern for retailers. Find a summary of what among those tracked bills became law and what did not at [alabamaretail.org/news/retail-report-2021-regular-session-summary/](https://alabamaretail.org/news/retail-report-2021-regular-session-summary/)

# Welcome New Members

## FEATURED NEW MEMBER

### GULF SHORES BEACH SUPPLY INC.

GULF SHORES

Founded Jan. 1, 2021

OWNER

**George O.  
Franklin IV**

PICTURED

**General Manager  
Lee Howell  
and Owner  
George Franklin**

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

**20**

LOCATION

**1527 Gulf Shores  
Parkway,  
Gulf Shores, AL  
36542**

MEMBER SINCE

**Feb. 16, 2021**



3D Dance LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

AACE Glass Lock  
and Key Inc.  
**ALBERTVILLE**

Ankisu LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Anniston Ear,  
Nose and Throat PC  
**ANNISTON**

Arva LLC  
**MOUNDVILLE**

Auhm Sai LLC  
**DOTHAN**

Baldwin Rentals Inc.  
**ROBERTSDALE**

Baldwin Tractor  
and Equipment Inc.  
**ROBERTSDALE**

Blue Vision Center LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Body Burn  
Fitness Corp.  
**TRINITY**

Body Works Salon  
and Boutique LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Bones Backstreet  
BBQ II LLC  
**JEMISON**

Bones Backstreet  
BBQ LLC  
**CLANTON**

Brick & Tin LLC  
**MOUNTAIN BROOK**

Brown's Garage,  
Body Shop &  
Wrecker Service Inc.  
**TUSCALOOSA**

BubbleT LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

C D Development  
Group LLC  
**FOLEY**

Cam Kasey BBQ Inc.  
**BERRY**

Carson-Kimberlin  
Supply Co. Inc.  
**FLORENCE**

Castaway Animal  
Clinic PC  
**ECLECTIC**

Central Six  
Development Council  
(Region 4) Inc.  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Central Wine LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Charles L. Adams  
**TROY**

Collins Grocery LLC  
**ALTOONA**

Community  
Resources LLC  
**SYLACAUGA**

Community  
Shelves LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Compassion  
Pet Care Inc.  
**NORTHPORT**

Complete Pipeline  
Services & Supply LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Cullman  
Sandwich Co. LLC  
**CULLMAN**

Dakota B. Clark  
DMD LLC  
**JACKSONVILLE**

Dale's BBQ LLC  
**BOAZ**

DAW Golf LLC  
**RUSSELLVILLE**

Dealer Options II LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Dealer Options LLC  
**HOOVER**

Deep Sleep Inc.  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Downtown Body  
Shop Inc.  
**ALEXANDER CITY**

DuffySubs Inc.  
**PIEDMONT**

E & H Bell Inc.  
**SEMMES**

Ellis Restaurants Inc.  
**MOBILE**

F S Mobile LLC  
**MOBILE**

Focus-MD 1019 LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Fresh Value  
Cottondale LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Fresh Value  
Gadsden LLC  
**GADSDEN**

Fresh Value  
Tuscaloosa LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Fuel House  
Nutrition LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Gamehendge III  
West LLC  
**MOBILE**

Gamehendge Inc.  
**MOBILE**

GID Capital LLC  
**ECLECTIC**

GRT Food Inc.  
**MONTGOMERY**

Gut Monroeville LLC  
**MONROEVILLE**

Hayes Funeral Home  
and Cremations LLC  
**ELBA**

Imperio LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

J & J Collision LLC  
**DOTHAN**

J L Bedsole Foundation  
**MOBILE**

J. D. Avlaki Inc.  
**VALLEY**

Jade Keeton  
**FLORENCE**

Jason Smith  
**HALEYVILLE**

Jim Bob's  
Restaurants Inc.  
**OPELIKA**

JSN Subhouse Inc.  
**PELL CITY**

K&B Express LLC  
**DAPHNE**

Kayden's Candy  
Factory LLC  
**ORANGE BEACH**  
Kayne Coatings LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Kimberly Financial  
Holdings Inc.  
**DECATUR**

LaFamilia Mexican  
Grill LLC  
**BUTLER**

Lit Cigar Lounge Inc.  
**MOBILE**

Lowery Enterprises LLC  
**DECATUR**

Luxury Nails & Day Spa  
LLC  
**PRATTVILLE**

Mae's Southern  
Cafe LLC  
**NORTHPORT**

Mainsail Asset  
Management LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Meters First LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Moe's Original BBQ  
Brock's Gap LLC  
**HOOVER**

Neighborhood  
Resources LLC  
**MIDLAND CITY**

Neighborhood  
Shelves LLC  
**ATHENS**

Neighbors-Leeds LLC  
**LEEDS**

Nini LLC  
**ATHENS**

NS FreshSub Inc  
**PELL CITY**

Oasis Spa & Salon LLC  
**ANDALUSIA**

Oskar's Enterprises Inc.  
**DADEVILLE**

OSO Early LLC  
**ORANGE BEACH**

Pampered Pets  
Boutique Inc.  
**OPELIKA**

Perry-Eiland-Wein Inc.  
**MONTGOMERY**

Pilar's China Grill LLC  
**TROY**

Pine Bar Cloverdale LLC  
**MONTGOMERY**

PP-Hospitality  
Group LLC  
**MOBILE**

Rickwood Stereo LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

River Region Depot LLC  
**MONTGOMERY**

Royal Seafood Inc.  
**SEMMES**

Rural Primary  
Care South Inc.  
**WARRIOR**

Sai Saina Inc.  
**MONTGOMERY**

Senin LLC  
**MOBILE**

Shankar Inc.  
**WETUMPKA**

Sharda 2014 Inc.  
**EUTAW**

Sixel Bottle &  
Growler House LLC  
**ENTERPRISE**

Sky Hospitality Inc.  
**THOMASVILLE**

Soham Partners LLC  
**MONROEVILLE**

South Baldwin  
Podiatry PC  
**FOLEY**

Star Hotels Inc.  
**THOMASVILLE**

Stephi's Artisan LLC  
**ORANGE BEACH**

Stepleton &  
Holcomb LLC  
**CROSSVILLE**

Storey Automotive LLC  
**HARTSELLE**



Strauss Wealth  
Advising Inc.  
**BIRMINGHAM**

TAG Auto Repair Inc.  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Tailgaters Inc.  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Taram Inc.  
**MORRIS**

Tavola LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Tennessee Valley OB/  
GYN Clinic PC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

The Mariner LLC  
**MOBILE**

The Mobile Bay Trading  
Co. LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

The Physician Billing  
Corp. LLC  
**GARDENDALE**

Thomas D. Sharp  
DMD PC  
**ANNISTON**

Three M Karts and  
Mowers Inc.  
**PELHAM**

Trussville Hardware LLC  
**TRUSSVILLE**

TW Orthodontics LLC  
**ENTERPRISE**

VP Real Estate LLC  
**ENTERPRISE**

WBL at  
Orange Beach Inc.  
**ORANGE BEACH**

Webster Fulfillment LLC  
**AUBURN**

Westco Foods Inc.  
**GORDO**

Zajac's Auto  
Collision Inc.  
**ALEXANDER CITY**

#### FEATURED NEW MEMBER

### TIPPING POINT LLC

**MONTGOMERY**

**Founded February  
2010**

**OWNERS**

**Christi &  
Mark Pierce  
(Pictured)**

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

**18**

**LOCATION**

**5015 Hampstead  
High St.,  
Montgomery, AL  
36116**

**MEMBER SINCE**

**Jan. 31, 2021**



# Socially Speaking

THE POSTS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED



**"It's easier to keep a customer happy, than to find new ones"**

- RAYMOND COHEN, COHEN ELECTRONICS & APPLIANCES INC.

**Raymond Cohen** has been a retailer for 64 years, and he's learned a thing or two. Love it when our Wednesday Wisdom comes from a pro! For more about Raymond and Cohens, go to <http://alretail.org/2LCV8CY> Feb. 17 photo and link [f](#) [i](#) [in](#)



**Where would small businesses be** without the moms who help keep them going? Happy Mother's Day! #ShopAlabama #FamilyBusiness #MothersDay May 9 video [f](#) [i](#) [in](#)



**Our celebration** of #SupermarketEmployeeDay continues with Lynn Caldwell, market manager for Renfroe's Market at the Eastchase store in Montgomery. He has worked for Renfroe's for 10 years. Thank you! #SupermarketHeroes #ShopAlabama Feb. 22 photo

[f](#) [i](#) [in](#)

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

[f](#) /Alabama Retail

[t](#) @AlabamaRetail

[i](#) @ShopAlabama

[in](#) /Alabama Retail Association

[h](#) Stay informed at [alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org)



**In the year since** the appearance of the novel coronavirus in Alabama, the state's retailers, restaurants and barber shops/salons have done what they have always done – served their customers, staffs and communities. Sales for 2020 grew 7% and 2021 is shaping up to bring similar growth. What a year it has been! #BetterTogether #KeepAlabamaOpen #ShopAlabama March 12 video [f](#) [i](#) [in](#)

**We are hiring all positions now, full time and part time. We are looking for Servers, Cooks and a Prep person. Please stop by and ask for an application if you are interested. Oh Happy Day! 😊**

ALABAMARETAIL ASSOCIATION

**Rich and Yeon Arnold**, owners of Big Oh's in Huntsville, like restauranteurs throughout Alabama, need workers to open fully and serve customers rediscovering eat-in dining. This and other Member News, can be found at <http://alretail.org/10vGmpV> #MemberMonday #DineAlabama #ShopAlabama April 19 graphic and link

[f](#) [i](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## RECENTLY TWEETED @ALABAMARETAIL

Congratulate the 2021 nominees for the Alabama Retailer of the Year! See the full list at [alretail.org/2PCsqzW](http://alretail.org/2PCsqzW) #ALRetailerOfTheYear #ShopAlabama March 29 photo with link to web post [t](#)

## AND THE NOMINEES ARE...





# *Restaurateur Extraordinaire*

LONGTIME ARC DIRECTOR REMEMBERED AS FRIEND, ADVISER

**L**ongtime Alabama Retail Comp trustee Bud Skinner died April 19 after a brief illness. He was 65.

"I learned a lot about business and life from Bud Skinner," said Rick Brown, ARC fund administrator and president of the Alabama Retail Association. "We are so grateful that he served and shared his wisdom with us."

Bud had served as an ARC trustee since 1997.

"He was a trusted adviser and good friend to Alabama Retail Comp and me for 24 years," said ARC Fund Manager Mark Young.

Bud founded Jubilee Seafood in Montgomery in 1984. A Mobile native, Bud named his business for the natural phenomenon that occurs some summers on Alabama's Mobile Bay. When the conditions are just right, oxygen-poor bottom waters force the fish and crustaceans in the waters' depths to swarm to the shallows or even come onto dry land. The locals shout "Jubilee" and everyone who knows what that means rushes with nets and buckets to scoop up the bounty of seafood awaiting easy capture.

Like the fish in the Mobile Bay, people swarmed to Jubilee Seafood in Montgomery, which became a gathering place for locals as well as city and state leaders in



IN MEMORIAM  
Joseph Boyd "Bud" Skinner  
1955 - 2021

Alabama's capital. Jubilee and Bud also provided catering for many weddings, parties and special events. Almost every ARC or ARA event featured at least some of Bud's fare, delivered personally by Bud.

"Bud's work ethic was unmatched, as was evident in the quality and deliciousness of the food he prepared," his obituary stated.

He also owned Bud's Bar & Grill just around the corner in the Old Cloverdale neighborhood of Montgomery. Bud's businesses had been a member of the Alabama Retail Association since 1993.

After his death, Bud's family learned of charitable giving and support Bud gave to neighborhood groups. They didn't know, because Bud told the recipients, "I don't want any credit for it." That was just the kind of way he was," nephew William Crum told *The Montgomery Advertiser*. The family created a foundation to continue Bud's charitable work and investment in the community.

**Memorial contributions may be made to the Bud Skinner Foundation at 2021 Fernway Drive, Montgomery, AL 36111. ■**

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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

MORE THAN 4,300 BUSINESSES ALREADY KNOW WHY  
#MEMBERSHIPMATTERS WITH THE ALABAMA RETAIL ASSOCIATION

Whether voicing the retail view when public policy is made, negotiating rates for benefits and services or communicating the retail story, the members of the Alabama Retail Association are better together.

## 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

## Advocacy

"Every businessman needs an advocate to keep them apprised of the issues. People don't realize the issues that businesses face daily. Alabama Retail is fighting for us."

- MIKE VINSON, ADAMS DRUGS

## 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

## 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

 Visit us at [alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org)