

Today's News

State Digest

Congressional
luncheons in your area
page four

National Digest

Commentary:
Team Spirit
page three

Feature Section

1997
Union Offensive
page five

Council News

Message from the
President
page two

Alabama

Vol. XII, No. 4

April 1997

Family-owned businesses: hold on to your wallets

A leading reason why more than one-third of family-owned businesses are sold or liquidated by inheritors is the federal estate tax.

The estate tax acts as a delayed secondary tax. The tax kicks in at 37 percent on the first \$600,000 and rises to confiscate 55 percent of assets above \$3 million. These steep rates make the tax a powerful disincentive to save, invest and grow businesses beyond the estate tax threshold.

The estate tax penalizes the success of entrepreneurs and affixes an arbitrary limit on assets and savings. Small and medium-size business owners are particularly impacted because many have enormous assets tied up in facilities, equipment and capital. Regardless of profitability, these assets can easily push estate values into the upper brackets of the estate tax.

The estate tax must be repealed. Reducing the estate tax, while marginally helpful, would not remove the major impediments that prevent business owners from transferring a family-owned business to legitimate heirs. This is especially true for capital-intensive, family-owned, small manufacturing businesses.

The government collects just 1 percent of its revenue from the estate tax, while devoting an inordinate amount of time and resources to ensure compliance.

The IRS's best and brightest lawyers audit estates, and nearly all top-dollar estates end up before a judge. The lawyers on both sides are the real winners, while too many family members see their life-long work put on the auction block.

Status

A hearing on the tax was held February 25 in the Senate Agriculture Committee. Jack Kemp testified in support of repeal. The BCA is currently working with Alabama lawmakers to secure co-sponsors and passage of estate tax repeal in the 105th Congress. President Clinton's FY 1998 budget proposes a narrow expansion of estate tax payment extensions for closely held businesses.

What you can do to help

Sen. Shelby, Sen. Sessions, Rep. Bachus, Rep. Callahan and Rep. Riley are cosponsors of the Family Heritage Preservation Act, which repeals the estate tax. Contact your senators and representatives and let them know that you support repealing the estate tax and support the Family Heritage Preservation Act.

For more information about the estate tax or any other federal issue, contact Riley Sikes at 334/240-8759.



**Alabama's
success
is our
business**



"Partnerships for Employment" your source for workers and tax credits

A consortium of Alabama governmental agencies have grouped together to provide businesses with a new source of employees in what has become a very tight labor market. The program, "Partnerships for Employment," combines the efforts of the Departments of Human Resources, Industrial Relations,

Education (Adult Education), Economic and Community Affairs (through JTPA) and Industrial Development Training. In its attempts to move people from welfare to work, these agencies will take persons who have been recipients of public assistance programs, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and train them to meet the needs of Alabama employers.

With the assistance of the local DHR office, JTPA staff and the

State Employment Service, employers select potential candidates from those public assistance recipients who most closely match their requirements for experience and education. Employees who are hired qualify the employer for up to 50 percent reimbursement of their salary during their off the job training period. In addition, their instructor's pay is reimbursed at 100 percent. Also, the employer is eligible for State and Federal tax credits for employing these persons. Since many of these people have little or no work experience, the state also provides basic life skills and good work habits training to aid in making these new employees a vital and productive part of the workforce.

If you are looking for a new source of potential employees, want a tax break or just need more information, please contact Emalyn Clark of the Alabama Industrial Development Training Office at 334-242-4158, ext. 403, or contact your local county office of the Department of Human Resources.

Cosponsors of the Estate Tax bill



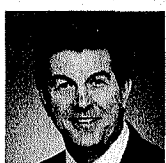
Sen. Shelby



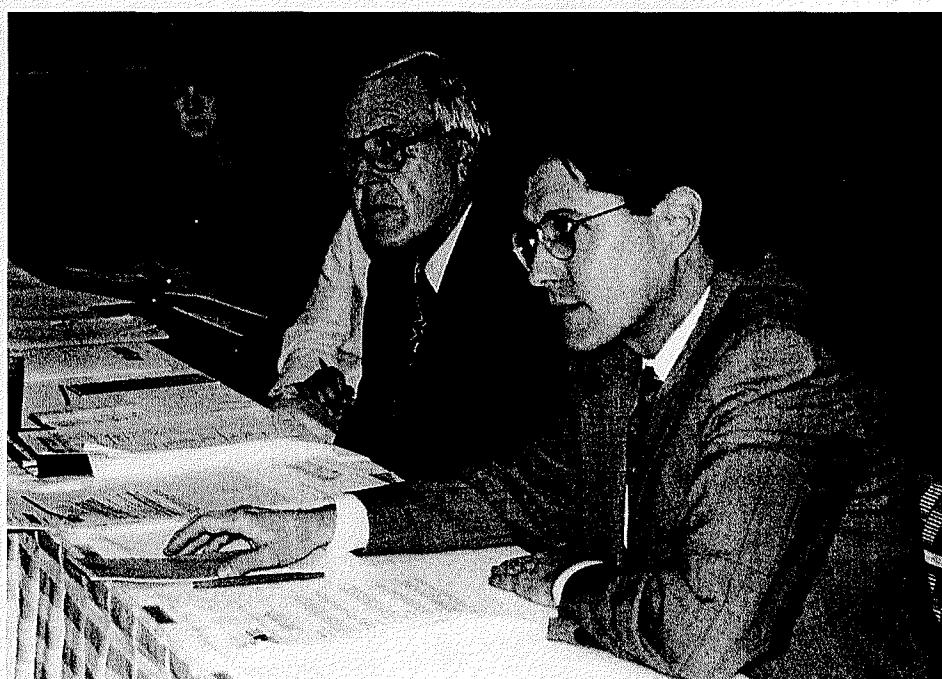
Sen. Sessions



Rep. Bachus



Rep. Riley



BCA Federal Affairs Committee Chair Charlie Story and Vice Chair Ken Tucker and members discuss S5, the Product Liability Reform Act of 1997. For more about Product Liability see page three.

Message from the President

BCA members are encouraged to contact legislators

An advertising campaign by the Alabama Trial Lawyers Association is an embarrassment to the organization and to the State.

That's a direct quote from a recent Alabama newspaper editorial that concluded with, "The Trial Lawyers' latest salvo was no effort at reason. It was smoke sent up by an interested party, one that profits handsomely from the status quo."

The ads in question are malicious and misleading attacks on a number of the members of the Alabama House of Representatives who supported tort reform. It's the same old bag of political dirty tricks the trial lawyers have reached into one too many times. You would think they learned their lesson with last year's skunk ad in the Supreme Court race.

The business community cannot afford to remain silent in the face of these vicious and unwarranted attacks. We have no choice but to set the record straight and we will.

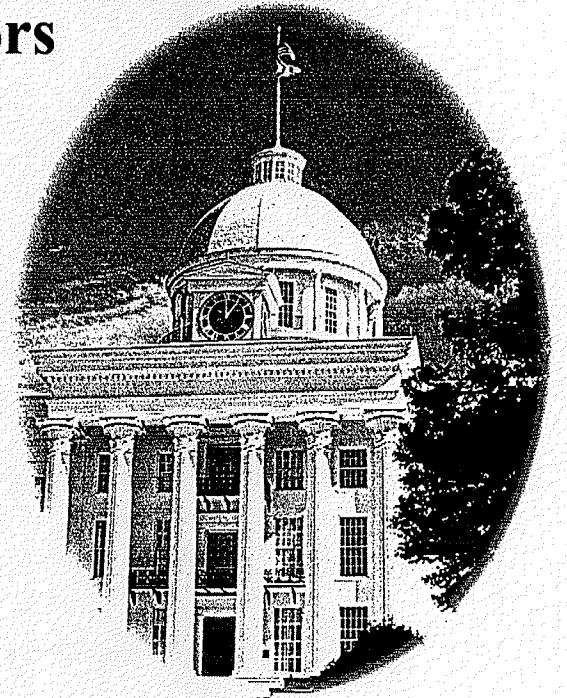
In the meantime, we need your help. Listed at right are the House members who were attacked by name in the trial lawyers' ads. Take one minute, right now, to write a note to the Speaker and your local House members to thank them for their strong backbone and for their support to help end lawsuit abuse in Alabama.

Please respond today.

The House members have heard from the trial lawyers. The question is will they hear from you?

Speaker Jimmy Clark
Rep. Steve Flowers
Rep. Allen Layson
Rep. Tony Petelos
Rep. J. E. Turner
Rep. Seth Hammett
Rep. Mark Gaines
Rep. Edward Maull
Rep. Chris Pringle
Rep. Pete Turnham
Rep. Gerald Allen
Rep. Victor Gaston
Rep. Frank McDaniel
Rep. Howard Sanderford
Rep. Lesley Vance
Rep. Locy Baker
Rep. Mac Gipson
Rep. Bob McKee
Rep. Allen Sanderson
Rep. Jack Venable
Rep. Jim Carns
Rep. Jim Haney
Rep. Steve McMillan
Rep. Riley Seibenhener
Rep. Jimmy Warren
Rep. Joe Carothers
Rep. Mike Hill
Rep. Warren Minnifield
Rep. Larry Sims
Rep. Frank White
Rep. Tommy Carter
Rep. Tom Hogan
Rep. Garreth Moore
Rep. Curtis Smith
Rep. Gerald Willis
Rep. Sam Collins

Rep. Perry O. Hooper, Jr.
Rep. Charles Newton
Rep. Lewis Spratt
Rep. Greg Wren
Rep. Johnny Curry
Rep. Ronald Johnson
Rep. Nelson Papucci
Rep. Nelson Starkey
Rep. Mike Dean
Rep. Lee Jorgenson
Rep. Arthur Payne
Rep. Dave Thomas
Rep. Bill Dukes
Rep. Richard Laird
Rep. Walter Penry
Rep. Jim Townsend



Business Council of Alabama

Executive Committee

John C. Adams Russell Corporation	John Goodrum Goodrum-Knowles Architect/Engineering
Dick Anderson Huron Valley Steel Corporation	Ted M. Henry Henry Brick Company, Inc.
Winton M. Blount III Winton Blount III & Associates	D. Paul Jones Compass Bank
William E. Bullock, Jr. W.J. Bullock, Inc.	Keith King David Volkert & Associates
William S. Cawood Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Inc.	Robert W. Lee Vulcan, Inc.
Ab Conner Conner Bros. Construction Co., Inc.	Timothy Lewis T.A. Lewis & Associates
David Duke Rankin Insurance	C. Charles Nallen, Jr. BBG Specialty Foods, Inc./Taco Bell
Lewis Ford Fitts Fitts Industries, Inc.	Robert D. Powers Eufaula Agency
John M. Gaffney AmSouth Bank, NA	Van L. Richey American Cast Iron Pipe Co.
Fournier J. Gale, III Maynard, Cooper & Gale	J. Stanley Macklin Regions Financial Corp.

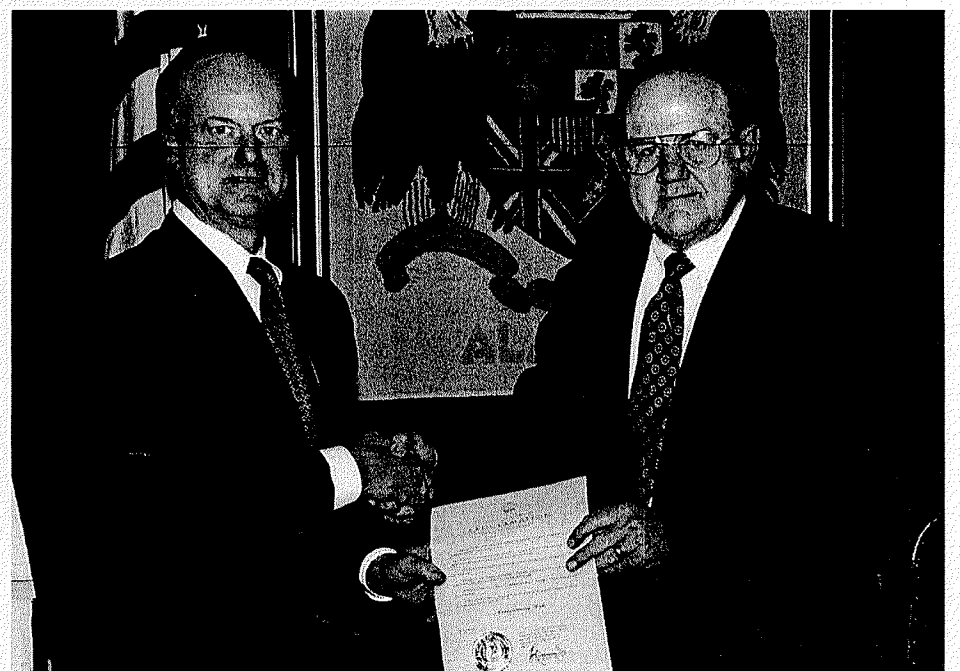
Officers

Van L. Richey, Chairman
D. Paul Jones, First Vice Chairman
Ab Conner, Second Vice Chairman
Robert W. Lee, Immediate Past Chairman
John M. Gaffney, Treasurer
Fournier J. Gale III, General Counsel
Bill O'Connor, President

MEMBER & COMMITTEE NEWS

Alabama Machine, Inc., Jasper
Alabama Poultry Supply, Inc., Cullman
Automated Accounting Systems, Jasper
Benson Belt Maintenance, Inc., Jasper
Bowers Plumbing Co., Inc., Toney
Brown Paper Converting Machine Works, Inc., Alexander City
Brown's Grocery, Jasper
Butler-Kennamer, Scottsboro
C & J Machine & Welding, Mobile
C-Text, Inc.: R. D. C-L. L. C, Fayette
Chichester, Birmingham and Assoc.
Choice Fabricators, Inc., Attalla
Church Pews, Grove Hill
Clark Embroidery, Inc., Jasper
Cock of the Walk, Mobile
Computer Support System, Inc., Decatur
Country Gas of Madison County, Inc., Owens Cross Roads
Creative Leasing, Tuscaloosa
Crystal Ice Company, Mobile
Davis Machine & Welding of Opelika, Inc., Opelika
F. C. F. Enterprises, Inc., Hanceville
Feldmerier/Alabama Equipment, Inc., Montgomery
Franklin Homes, Inc., Russellville
Franklin Resources Group, Montgomery
Golden Bird Enterprises, LLC, Birmingham
Gulf Coast Enterprises, Citronelle
Gunter Body Shop & Wrecker Service, Inc., Jasper
Harmon Arch Millwork & Design Co., Inc., Oneonta
Hulsey Heating & Cooling, Inc., Northport
J. Smith Lanier & Co., Huntsville
Jackson, Ahrens & Schoenfeld Ins. Group, Mobile
Jones Fence Enterprises, Inc., Trinity
Kans, Inc., Rainbow City
Kenworth of Dothan, Dothan
Koul Apparel Industries, Inc., Auburn

Lake Forest Property Owners Association, Daphne
Le Croy Heating-Cooling, Inc., Birmingham
M. G. Waid Industries, Inc., Double Springs
Maddox Enterprises, Inc., Jasper
Magic Gas Company, Inc., Springville
Magna Manufacturing, Inc., Fort Walton Beach, FL
Mays Distributing Co., Inc., Union Springs
McMillan & Associates, Decatur
Milan & Company Construction, Inc., Alton
Minshaw Electrical Contractors, Inc., Mobile
Modified Rubber Industries, Inc., Birmingham
Montgomery Technology, Inc., Greenville
National Butane, Inc., Evergreen
New South Apparel, LLC, Brewton
Novus Utility Services, Inc., Birmingham
Packaging Machinery, Inc., Montgomery
Pash, Inc., Birmingham
Pearson Financial Services, Huntsville
Quintard Mall, Ltd., Birmingham
Regal Employment, Hartselle
Rhone-Poulenc Rorer, Chattanooga, TN
Rogers & Willard, Inc., Mobile
RPM Sales & Manufacturing, Inc., Moulton
S & S Tile, Mobile
S & S Underground, Inc., Birmingham
Safety Coatings, Inc., Foley
Seven-Up Bottling Co. of Jasper, Inc., Jasper
Speedy Oil Change, Inc., Tuscaloosa
Tal Carpenter Plumbing Co., Montgomery
Tec-Masters, Inc., Huntsville
The Fudgey Nut, Huntsville
Thursby Golf Course, Inc., Graysville
Travel-Rite Inn, LLC, Jasper
Tucker Manufacturing Co., Inc., Montgomery
Ultraliner, Oxford
Walker Drilling Services, Inc., Jasper
West Alabama Sand & Gravel, Inc., Fayette
Wilko Ind., Inc.-Kossow Ind., Inc., Prichard
Wilson Machine & Welding, Inc., Cordova



Gov. Fob James presents Van Richey, chairman of the Business Council of Alabama, a proclamation honoring Alabama's more than 7,000 manufacturers during the week of March 10 - 14. The proclamation serves as formal recognition of the important role manufacturing plays in the state's economy.

Coming... National Small Business Week, June 2-6

NATIONAL DIGEST

TEAM SPIRIT

by Dr. Richard L. Leshner
President
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

WASHINGTON - As every athletic coach knows, team spirit is the most crucial element in the competition for championship honors. Athletes with outstanding natural gifts can be more burden than asset if they do not participate and contribute as members of the team.

Modern business managers are acutely aware of this fundamental fact of life. To the extent possible, they try to forge a cooperative workplace culture in which employees work together to solve problems, increase productivity and improve quality. This means abandoning the old top-down mentality in which the boss issues orders and subordinates snap to attention, but then even the military knows that management technique is obsolete.

To be competitive in the modern world, any organization be it a private business, government agency, nonprofit group, sports team or military unit must field a cohesive team that takes full advantage of the physical and mental capacities of each member.

Unfortunately, federal law actually prohibits the creation of joint management-labor teams by private business unless they are provided for in collective bargaining contracts. The 1935 National Labor Relations Act explicitly prohibits such arrangements lest some companies seek to establish labor-management teams as *sham* unions to avert union organizing. In 1992, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that a system of teams or committees established by a company as a vehicle for employee participation is analogous to a company-dominated union under the 1935 law.

Within the context of its time, the 1935 prohibition against company labor committees made sense, but its current use to outlaw teamwork is obsolete and counterproductive. Today, even company-created unions are fiercely independent, and

few employees believe any kind of union is necessary to defend their interests.

Last year, both houses of Congress enacted identical versions of **The Teamwork for Employees And Management Act** (the TEAM Act), which would permit formation of joint management-labor teams, but it encountered a predictable firestorm of criticism and resistance from organized labor. At the behest of the labor unions, President Clinton vetoed the bill.

Though the legislation expressly excludes unionized companies from coverage, the unions still regard any form of cooperation between management and labor as a threat. The attitude of the labor unions like the ban against joint labor-management committees is a relic of another era, and a most unfortunate one. It is undermining the best efforts of our best corporations to become not only more competitive in the world marketplace, but also more humane and progressive in terms of dealing with employees and their needs. This unconscionable prohibition actually forbids managers and employees from sitting down together to discuss safety and quality of life issues.

The 105th Congress will revive the **TEAM Act** early in this legislative session and attempt once again to bring our nation's labor laws into the modern age. There will probably be amendments to the legislation designed to mollify union concerns and hence improve the prospect of President Clinton's signing it into law. There can be no question the president understands what is at stake. As he said in his 1996 State of the Union Message: When companies and workers work as a team they do better and so does America.

The **TEAM Act** deserves the wholehearted support of all citizens who care about our country's competitive position in the world marketplace and who understand that employers and employees must work together as a team to assure a better future. 2/17/97

105th Alabama
Congressional Delegation

U.S. Senators

Richard Shelby, R-Tuscaloosa
110 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202/224-5744
Fax: 202/224-3416

Jeff Sessions, R-Mobile
495 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202/224-4124
Fax: 202/224-3149

U.S. Representatives

Sonny Callahan, R-Mobile
2418 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-4931
Fax: 202/225-0562

Bud Cramer, D-Huntsville
2416 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-4801
Fax: 202/225-4392

Terry Everett, R-Enterprise
208 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-2901
Fax: 202/225-8913

Spencer Bachus, R-Birmingham
442 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-4921
Fax: 202/225-2082

Bob Riley, R-Ashland
510 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-3261
Fax: 202/225-9020

Earl Hilliard, D-Birmingham
1314 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-2665
Fax: 202/226-0772

Robert Aderholt, R-Haleyville
1007 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-4876
Fax: 202/225-1604

Product liability reform on Senate floor after
Easter recess

The Senate Commerce Committee began hearings this month on S5, the Product Liability Reform Act of 1997.

The products only bill limits punitive damage awards to two times compensatory damages or \$250,000, whichever is greater. It caps punitive damage awards for companies with fewer than 26 workers to \$250,000 and abolishes joint liability for non-economic damages such as pain and suffering. The bill preserves claimants' rights to full compensation for real losses, including lost wages and medical expenses.

Both the Senate and House Republican leadership named the product liability reform one of the top 10 items on their agenda for the 105th Congressional session.

Please contact Sen. Shelby and encourage his vote in favor of product liability reform and his opposition to any efforts to defeat, delay or filibuster the measure. Also contact Sen. Sessions applauding his cosponsorship of this important legislation.

Alabama's senators on TEAM Act

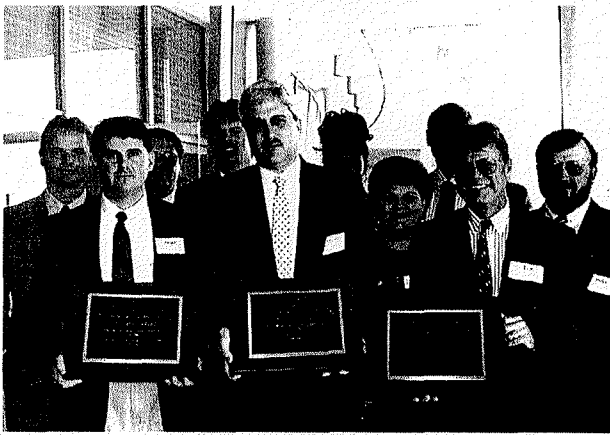
Laws designed to punish and discourage cooperation between employers and employees are ridiculous. Under current law, employees cannot be involved in workplace decisions unless they do it through a labor union. The Team Act will effectively change this dangerous trend and will potentially encourage greater productivity and increased economic growth. Everyone benefits when employers and employees work together.

Sen. Richard Shelby

The old top-down work place doesn't work anymore. When companies and workers work as a team, they do better. And, so does America.

Sen. Jeff Sessions

COUNCIL NEWS



The BCA held its annual Safety Awards luncheon March 20 at The Club in Birmingham. The featured keynote speaker was Stewart Farwell, the president and general manager of Rheem Manufacturing. Over 85 BCA members received awards for their outstanding achievements in safety regulations.

Recipients of the 1996 Chairmans Award

Manufacturing & Related
Russell Corporation, Double Knit
Service & Related
Instrument Technical Services, Inc.
Utilities & Related
Huntsville Utilities
Fleet

WestPoint Stevens, Inc. — Transportation

Congratulations to all of the 1996 Safety Awards recipients. We are looking forward to next year's safety awards presentation.

Each year the Environment and Energy Committee sponsors a special conference to bring business people from both public and private sectors together. This meeting is an opportunity to gain and share insight about the latest regulations and develop progressive solutions about environmental issues.

The 1997 BCA Environment & Energy Conference will be held June 1-3 at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear.

For more information please call Judith Kuczmarski at 334/240-8745 or 800/665-9647.



Rep. Spencer Bachus discussing business issues with BCA members at last year's congressional luncheon in Birmingham.

Friday, April 18

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce and the BCA are sponsoring a Congressional Luncheon with U.S. Representative Robert Aderholt.

12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m.

RSVP with the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce
205/734-0454

Monday, May 5

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and the BCA are sponsoring a Congressional Luncheon with Congressman Sonny Callahan.

Adams Mark Hotel

12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m.

RSVP with Shelly Mattingly
Mobile Chamber of Commerce
334/431-8612

Wednesday, May 28

Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce and the BCA are sponsoring a Congressional Luncheon with Congressman Earl Hilliard

Harbert Center

12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m.

RSVP with Kellie Swanger
Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce
205/323-5461

BCA RESOURCES

ALABAMA BUSINESS NETWORK

political information

INVEST IN TODAY'S MOST
VALUABLE COMMODITY:
INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CAROL HAAG
334/240-8753

Give us a prospect

One of the best ways BCA has of recruiting new members is through recommendations by current members. The stronger we are in membership, the stronger our voice is on the legislative level. Take a moment now and write the names of a couple of businesses in your area that we can invite to join.

Company

Contact Name

Telephone

Company

Contact Name

Telephone

Your Name

Your Company

Please return this card to BCA Membership Department
Attn. Elaine Fincannon
P.O. Box 76, Montgomery, Alabama 36101-0076.

Helping to make the voice of Alabama stronger



OSHA Standards to Know Now and in the Future and the Enforcement Process

User-friendly
resource in
understanding
and satisfying
the demands of
OSHA



Alabama Labor Law Survival Guides

Four handbooks
designed for
Alabama
employers



Employment Law Survival Guide

How to draft
your employee
handbook in
Alabama

LABOR WAGE POSTER

*Does your labor wage poster
have the new minimum
wage listed?*

In September, you will be
required to have the poster with
\$5.50 listed as the
minimum wage.

The BCA federal 5 in 1 combined
poster includes the new minimum
wage. This poster is available for
\$15 (tax included).

The 28" x 40" poster includes:

new minimum wage

**job safety & health
protection**

**OSHA equal employment
opportunity**

family and medical leave act of 1993

**employee polygraph
protection act**

To place an order please call:
334/240-8746

DSW 133129

STATE DIGEST

1997 Union Offensive

All legislation is subject to change. For weekly status on fast-moving issues monitor BCA's *Legislative Bulletin*.

Union Agenda

Pre-agency shop

Higher unemployment benefits

UC benefits during lock-out

Its impact

Non-union members to absorb cost of some union activities

Raises the maximum U.C. weekly benefit

Tilts negotiating balance in favor of labor

Who pays for it

Non-union workers

Alabama business

Alabama business

There has been an enormous amount of negative notoriety heaped on a select segment of Alabama trial lawyers following the last election cycle. It really was the culmination of several years of dwindling credibility ratings with the general public. Editorial writers, reporters and even business writers have tapped out literally thousands of articles and opinion pieces on the struggle between the trial lawyers and the business community. Often deafened by the high volume debate between business and trial lawyers is the noise of another approaching front...that of organized labor trying to revitalize its membership and power.

"Project 96" was AFL-CIO chief John Sweeny's \$35 million Congressional election effort. Sweeny kicked off this campaign to elect pro-union candidates to Congress, focusing on the crop of freshmen elected in 1994. Coupled with this effort was a wide ranging effort to enlist new members, coordinated by an increase number of field representatives based throughout the country.

The Southeast, once a stronghold of labor support, was targeted as a major part of "Project 96." Labor focused on semi-skilled and unskilled workers in an attempt to bolster its ranks. As

participation in labor unions have shrunk, the union heads have renewed their efforts to regain their political strength and momentum. The reason for this new-found drive is simple - membership is down across the country. According to *Expansion Management* magazine union membership has declined by almost 40 percent throughout the United States.

As membership slides, union political activity has increased. Organized labor clearly sees a much desired renewal of its political influence as the way to increase membership and return to a position of prominence on a local, state and federal level. To that end, labor has renewed its commitment to pushing a pro-labor agenda and electing pro-labor candidates. At the head of their legislative agenda is mandates for employee benefits.

Last August, union organizers traveled by bus from Alabama city to Alabama city. In addition to focusing on its sagging membership roles (from 17 million in 1970 to 10 million workers in 1995), the organizers were on a two-pronged mission: 1) Work feverishly for pro-labor candidates 2) lay the groundwork for a concerted legislative effort for pro-labor issues. While the portion of their effort aimed at the 1996 election

cycle is over, we are in the middle of their legislative push. And pushing they are.

Since the 1997 session of the Alabama legislature kicked off in early February, nearly seven significant pro-labor bills have been introduced in the Alabama Legislature. The bills range from efforts to force unionization to increase the weekly benefit for unemployment compensation. Also hot on their agenda this year are the so-called "lock-out bill" and the "pre-agency shop bill." The lock-out measure would essentially tilt the scales toward contract during labor negotiations by subsidizing lock-outs with unemployment benefits.

Granted, these measures are not new to Alabama. But the intensity of the effort is. As an example, Rep. Joe Ford (D-Gadsden) introduced the lock-out measure in the House of Representatives four times in only a matter of weeks. Considering it's the identical bill each time, it is clear that labor is pushing and pushing hard. The pre-agency shop bill is an attempt to open the door to attacking Alabama's longstanding Right to Work law. The bill would allow labor unions to charge workers who elected not to participate for representing them in arbitration cases - as they are currently required.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION GLOSSARY

U.C. Trust Fund State-administered, employer-funded account used to compensate the unemployed while they seek work.

U.C. Benefits Recipients receive approximately 54 percent of previous pay but not more than \$180 per week. The weekly benefit is equal to one-twenty-fourth of the employee's average quarterly income.

Business and organized labor have successfully completed negotiations on legislation originally proposed by labor that would have provided a straight \$20 increase in the maximum weekly unemployment compensation benefit level with no offset to the U.C. Trust Fund. An overview of the U.C. Trust Fund, the elements of the tentative agreement and the benefits appears below.

HOW THE U.C. FUND WORKS

A special tax on employers funds the U.C. Fund. The fund is composed of four levels, A through D. Level A being the lowest tax rate employers can pay. As the fund is depleted by the dispersal of benefits it automatically goes to a higher schedule when it falls to a certain level. Then all businesses pay a higher tax, regardless of their experience rating. The U.C. Fund level has been falling rapidly because employers have been at the lowest level of taxation for quite some time. Businesses should expect to move up to the higher tax levels to replenish the fund. The Department of Industrial Relations projects that employers will move into the schedule B tax rate in 1998 and schedule C in 1999. The key when considering increases in the weekly benefit level is balancing the increase against the impact to the fund. Business always tries to maintain the fiscal integrity of the fund to keep taxes as low as possible while still providing an appropriate level of benefits. This legislation is currently pending before the Alabama House and Senate.

ELEMENTS OF THE TENTATIVE COMPROMISE

- Increases maximum weekly benefit to \$190 per week.
- Raises minimum weekly level to qualify for benefits from \$22 to \$45 per week.
- Allows Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) to recover improper U.C. overpayments by garnishing state income tax refunds.

HOW BOTH SIDES BENEFIT

- Compromise provides an increase in benefit levels; minimizes the impact to the U.C. Trust Fund. Provides the DIR with an enforcement tool to recover overpayments.
- The U.C. Fund could save up to \$3 million in benefits by raising the employee minimum quarterly income qualifying requirements from the current \$516 average per quarter to \$1,080 average per quarter. This is a positive benefit to Alabama's small businesses.
- Provides the DIR with an enforcement tool which could allow it to recover and return to the trust fund an estimated \$10 million over the next five years.

IMPORTANT DATES AND CHAMBER NEWS



The Birmingham Area Chamber Business Fair was held at the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center on March 12 and 13. More than 20,000 area business and professional people attended this year's fair. "This is the largest chamber-sponsored trade show in North America," said Tom Cosby, Sr. Vice-President of the Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce. Among the 20,000 plus attendants, Chamber of Commerce representatives from Texas, Oklahoma, Kentucky and Georgia attended the fair.

BCA OnLine
<http://www.bcaonline.com>

don't forget.....
be sure to attend the Congressional Luncheon in your area
in the may issue.....
assessment of the 1997 Legislative Session

April 15
Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
 10:00 a.m.
 Auditorium, First Floor
 Business Center of Alabama

BCA Board of Directors Meeting
 10:00-12:00

BCA Officers Meeting
 Suffolk, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham
 12:00-1:30

Executive Committee
 Avon, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham
 1:30-3:00

PAC Board Meeting
 Riverchase A, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham
 3:00-5:00

BCA Board Meeting
 Riverchase A, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham
 5:30-7:00

PAC Reception/Fund-raiser
 Wynfrey C, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham

April 19
Earth Day

April 22
Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
 10:00 a.m.
 Auditorium, First Floor
 Business Center of Alabama

April 29
Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
 10:00 a.m.
 Auditorium, First Floor
 Business Center of Alabama

May 6
Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
 10:00 a.m.
 Chickasaw Room, Seventh Floor
 Business Center of Alabama

May 19
Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
 10:00 a.m.
 Auditorium, First Floor
 Business Center of Alabama

June 1st - 3rd
Environment & Energy Workshop
 Grand Hotel, Point Clear

June 2nd - 6th
National Small Business Week

June 11
Officers Meeting
 9:00 a.m.
 Room to be determined
 Business Center of Alabama

Executive Committee Meeting
 10:00 a.m.
 Room to be determined
 Business Center of Alabama

Board of Directors Luncheon
 Noon
 Room to be determined
 Business Center of Alabama

BCA Board of Directors Meeting
 1:30 p.m.
 Room to be determined
 Business Center of Alabama

Progress PAC Board Meeting
 3:30 p.m.
 Room to be determined
 Business Center of Alabama

see page four for a schedule of Congressional Luncheons

*****AUTOMATIC MIXED *****
 MS. RITA HARTMAN
 MONSANTO CHEMICAL CO., 64ND
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 SAINT LOUIS MO 63141-7843

Alabama
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