The Crewe of Regents is now patrolling the District on a Segway, a high-tech personal transportation device that allows both speed and better visibility. Atopt the Segway, Regents travel with the openness and accessibility of foot patrols, but with the speed of a motorized vehicle. Regents cover the 75-block Business Improvement District by foot, bicycle, Kombi truck and now Segway.

The Segway, which glides along the streets and sidewalks noiselessly, was a big hit with BayFest visitors and even helped apprehend a suspect who tried to flee before police arrived on the scene of an altercation. Currently, the Alliance is the only organization routinely using this device downtown.

THE PUBLIC SPACE ACTION PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN

By Rhonda Davis
It has always been the goal of Main Street Mobile, Inc, to create a downtown where people can live, work, and play in a vibrant area. In 2001 the organization’s Board of Directors entered into a contract with the renowned New York-based company, Project for Public Spaces. This group was given the task of assessing downtown and creating a public space plan that could be used as a blueprint for planning, programming, and revitalizing downtown. Hundreds of people participated in public meetings, focus group meetings, one-on-one meetings, and on-street surveys. Considerable research; hours of observations on how we use our downtown; and many, many thoughtful conversations with community, cultural and governmental leaders were held.

In January 2003 Project for Public Spaces introduced the Public Space Action Plan for Downtown Mobile. The plan is a prioritized guide to catalyze projects throughout downtown. The projects range from making changes to streets and sidewalks; to revitalizing parks, plazas and squares; to establishing guidelines and a review process for how the ground floors of new buildings are designed and built.

Four years later, here is a brief review of the goals and recommendations of the Public Space Action Plan and a check list of actions to see what has been accomplished.

The Goals of the Public Space Action Plan
• Activate downtown public spaces by developing strategies for attracting people to them on a regular basis.
• Strengthen the perception that downtown is safe and full of positive energy.
• Make the downtown a pedestrian friendly environment.
• Leverage all new development so that it positively impacts the surrounding public spaces.
• Streamline city bureaucracy and regulation around enabling and encouraging the private sector to make improvements.

Overall Recommendations
Improve the ground floor retail continuity throughout the downtown
Develop a program for filling vacant buildings and storefronts
Support and strengthen existing retailers
Sidewalk cafés have been encouraged throughout downtown. The establishment of an experimental outdoor café was created at Spot of Tea with moveable tables and chairs on both sides of Dauphin Street. The café was a huge success. Outside dining has become so popular in downtown that Heroes Sports Bar and Grill has built a new outdoor deck on the Jackson Street side of their restaurant. Movable tables and chairs have been added to Cathedral Square so people can enjoy a brown-bag lunch or take-out from local restaurants during the week and for picnics on the weekend. Other popular outdoor dining spots include Courtyard’s Café, Busaba’s, Downtowners and Wintzell’s Oyster House.

Almost all of our restaurants now have added two to three outdoor bistro tables for their customers.

The Mobile Transit Authority has added colorful umbrellas and benches at all modal stops. This has helped people identify the stops and has made waiting for the modal more comfortable. The free modal circulator now runs six day per week around downtown.

LoDa Dining & Shopping Guide has continued to be printed by Main Street Mobile and distributed to downtown hotels, restaurants, museums and retailers for use by visitors and locals alike.

Use frequent and regular events and arts-related activities to jump-start the revitalization of the downtown and the use of existing public spaces.

The Government Street Market opened in the spring of 2003 in the parking lot of Government Street Presbyterian Church. The market was so successful that it has expanded to a spring and fall market. Now established, the market has transformed into Market on the Square and is held in Cathedral Square on Saturday mornings and has opened in Bienville Square for a Noon market on Wednesdays during market season.

Alabama Contemporary Dance Company moved into their new home at 9 South Joachim Street across the street from the Saenger Theatre.

Formation of the Conti Street Initiative Task Force, a group committed to improving Conti Street and promoting the arts organizations and events in downtown.

continued on page 3

REGENTS TRAVEL INTO THE FUTURE

REGENTS AND STEWARDS

Fall is a busy time for the BID’s Regents and Stewards, what with the extra pedestrian traffic cooler weather brings and the crowds of BayFest and Arts Alive! But they’ve kept pace with the season and are keeping the District friendly and clean.

As the chart indicates, the vehicle assist service continues to be very popular with folks in the District...now averaging more than one assist per day. Fortunately the addition of the Segway is helping the Regents answer these and other calls for help more quickly. The Regents and Stewards both continue to work closely with the Police, alerting them of anything unusual as they make their way up and down the streets of the District.

This past month the Regents tackled a new project: taking inventory of every garbage can in the public right-of-way in the District. Our office receives regular complaints from pedestrians who must walk past many unsightly and smelly garbage cans as they go to lunch or head to meetings. This inventory will help us develop a plan to make our sidewalks a place for people instead of garbage cans.

CREWE OF STEWARDS - OCTOBER 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trash Pick up</th>
<th>Landscaping</th>
<th>Debris Removal</th>
<th>Graffiti/Sticker Removal</th>
<th>Pressure Washing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>359 bags</td>
<td>9 sites</td>
<td>23 truck loads</td>
<td>2 sites</td>
<td>15 sites</td>
</tr>
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</table>

CREWE OF REGENTS - OCTOBER 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meet &amp; Greet</th>
<th>Merchant VIsits</th>
<th>Patron Assist</th>
<th>Vehicle Assist</th>
<th>Garbage Can Inventory</th>
<th>Police Referrals</th>
<th>Homeless Assist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11,584</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>72 Sites</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54 encounters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAFF
Elizabeth Sanders, Executive Director
Angela Eberhardt, Office Manager
Carol Hunter, Communications Manager
Evelyn Marshall, Administrative Assistant

DOWNTOWN MOBILE ALLIANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Lee Moncrief, Wachovia Bank**
Vice President
Dee Gambill, AmSouth Bank**
Secretary
Bruce McGowin, Hand Arendall LLC**
Treasurer
Joseph Marenio, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce*

Russ Adams, Bienville Books**
Jim Barnes, Jim Barnes Enterprises, Inc.*
Ann Bedsole, White Smith Land Company**
Ron Blount, Retirement Systems of Alabama
Howard Bronson, Press-Register*
Tilmom Brown, The JTB Group LLC**
Juan Chastang, Mobile County Commission*
David Constantine, Lyons, Pipes & Cook*
Sam Covert, Alabama Power*
Richard Dorman, Cunningham Bounds Crowder Brown & Breedlove LLC*
The Very Reverend Michael Farmer, Archdiocese of Mobile**

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Eleanor Kulin, Gulf Coast Exploreum**
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Brian Metcalfe, Metcalfe & Company, Inc.*
Bill Monahan, Grand Central*
Ruby Moore, Spot of Tea*
Fabian Olemsky, Olenksy Brothers Office & School Supply**
Carlos Parkman, Centre for the Living Arts**
John Peebles, Peebles & Cameron*
Wade Perry, Johnstone, Adams, Bailey, Gordon & Harris**
Larry Sims, Retired Attorney*
Cooper Thurbler, Lyons, Pipes & Cock*
Joseph Toole, Retirement Systems of Alabama*
Steve Walker, Pelican Development**

Ex Officio
Sam Jones, Mayor of Mobile
William Carroll, Mobile City Council
Devereaux Bemis, Mobile Historic Development Commission
Leon Maisel, Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau

* DMDMC Board Member
** Main Street Mobile, Inc. Board Member

DIRECTOR’S LETTER

By Elizabeth Sanders

A CONFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Two great trends in the demographic make-up of our country are combining with advances in technology and worldwide environmental and political issues to paint a rosy picture for downtowns across America and ours is poised to blossom as a result. Careful nurturing by our elected leaders and wise investments by our business leaders and land development specialists will enable Mobile to enjoy this time of optimism for our urban core.

So what are these demographic trends? The first is the gigantic Baby Boom generation which is now moving into a time of parenting freedom; good health; and ample leisure time. There are 76 million of them aged 42 to 60 and they are moving around and open to the downtown lifestyle. The second is the Echo Boom or Generation Y group. There are 83 million of them aged seven to 25. Combine that with the Generation X group, of which there are 62 million aged 26 to 41, and you have 49% of the US population. Both of these latter two groups are highly disposed to urban living, provided certain attributes prevail.

First let’s talk about the Baby Boomers. This group has set trends throughout its 50 – odd year history. They have largely opted for a suburban lifestyle and will predominantly continue to do so. They are however enjoying the fact that their children are off and on their own. Many are finding that the large four or five bedroom house is too much to clean; too costly to heat and cool; and too much effort to maintain and they are opting in large numbers for something smaller and more maintenance free. Many are enjoying the equity they have in their houses while maintaining a place of residence where they still have primary business and social connections. This group is healthier at its age than any previous group at the same age. This good health and greater affluence, combined with the technology that allows them to be connected wherever they are enables them to travel more. What is good for people like this? A condo downtown that you can pick up and leave with no worries.

[Continued on page 7]
The creation of Arts Alive!, an outdoor arts celebration centering on Conti Street and Cathedral Square. The event has been so successful that it is held twice a year—spring and fall.

The creation of the LoDa Artwalk. This is a monthly open house for downtown art galleries, retailers and businesses.

The restoration of the historic Saenger Theatre, 6 South Joachim Street, was completed in 2004. The Saenger Theatre is a 1,900-seat theater that hosts concerts, plays and is the performance home to the Mobile Symphony.

The opening of:

- Space 301, an 8,000 square foot exhibition space featuring contemporary art shows, 301 Conti Street.
- Mobile Arts Council Inc. moved to 316 Dauphin Street, across from Cathedral Square in August 2005. The new space includes the Skinny Gallery that features art by local, emerging and regional artists and also serves as an information outlet for arts in our community.
- Chesser Gallery, 306 Dauphin Street, opened in 2004 and features local and emerging artists.
- Of Dauph, 5 North Jackson Street a new contemporary art gallery located just steps off Dauphin Street.
- Greater Mobile Arts Awards Ceremony presented by the Mobile Arts Council in Cathedral Square every September.
- WoofStock a new animal-oriented celebration in Cathedral Square held in October.

Institute traffic-calming measures throughout downtown

A raised cross-walk was installed on Dauphin Street connecting Spot of Tea to Cathedral Square as a way to slow traffic and also to encourage pedestrian movement.

A four-way stop sign with a blinking light was installed at the intersection of Dauphin Street and Warren Street, in front of Wintzell’s Oyster House.

Conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets. Phase one begins in early November and includes the streets surrounding the RSA Battle House Hotel and Tower. The streets included in phase one are Royal Street from Government Street to Congress Street and Dauphin Street and St. Francis Street from Royal Street to Water Street. On-street parking will be preserved along many of these arteries.

Establish pedestrian-friendly gateways at key entry points

The design work has been completed for two new gateway parks into the downtown area. Construction will begin in 2007. These parks are located at Broad Street and Springhill Avenue and Broad Street and Dauphin Street. The new gateways will help define the western entrance into downtown and will feature fresh plantings and statuary celebrating our history.

Establish guidelines and zoning codes to direct all future development

The City of Mobile adopted the 2003 International Building Code.

The City Ordinance regarding sidewalk materials has been amended within historic districts. Now the Architectural Review Board has the ability to make recommendations to the City Engineer on exceptions to sidewalk materials used within a historic district. This gives historic districts the opportunity to have sidewalks that reflect their date of establishment. For example, brick sidewalks may be used in DeTonti Square to create a more authentic and aesthetically pleasing sidewalks.

Urban Development created an Overlay District in 2006 that includes all historic districts. The Overlay District allows exemptions within historic districts for regular setback regulations.

A change in zoning was passed for properties within the B-4 zoning district (which encompasses most of downtown) that allows residential development by right. The exception to this change concerns buildings in the core area for which Planning Commission approval is still required for ground floor residential development.

The Mobile Historic Development Commission can now write a letter requesting exemption from the flood plain rules for historic buildings located within the flood plain.

The Mobile Historic Development Commission has certified Tax Credit Projects for Tilmon Brown’s development of St. Emanuel Place and Tom Townsend’s mixed use development at 459 Dauphin Street.

A Part I Certification to Jack Zeaman for a project at St. Michael Street and Washington Avenue has been issued by the Mobile Historic Development Commission.

The creation of the GO Zone by the Federal Government. This legislation provides tax incentives for businesses and developments and targets 20 counties in Alabama and includes the downtown area. The State of Alabama has a fund of $2.1 billion to be used for GO Zone tax exempt bond financing.

Federal historic tax credits have increased from 20% to 26% until 2009 in the Katrina impact zone.

Non-historic tax credits for buildings built after 1936 have increased from 10% to 13% until 2009.

Create as many incentives as possible to attract diverse artists and young entrepreneurs

The opening of new galleries and the increase of art related events downtown has given young artists venues to show and sell their works. The LoDa ArtWalk, held monthly, is a perfect example of a new arts inspired activity that has increased artists’ exposure and engages the public on a regular basis.

The diverse programming of Arts Alive! has given new performance opportunities to performing and visual artists that they did not have before.

Other Positive Effects

The most significant step forward has been the formation of the Business Improvement District. This step was a result of two years of intense work that has brought together property owners who pay an assessment that is being used to help improve downtown. The formation of the BID, managed by the Downtown Mobile District Management Corporation, has given property owners within the District the ability to manage programs of their interest.

Currently the DMDMC is providing a clean and safe program that includes teams known as the Crewe of Stewards and Crewe of Regents. These teams help with everything from sidewalk cleaning, trash pick-up and tourist information assistance to after-hour escorts for downtown workers to changing flat tires for stranded motorists in the District. They are changing the appearance of downtown everyday and are helping to keep our community safe and beautiful.

The opening of the new cruise ship terminal, Alabama Cruise Terminal, at the southern point of Mobile Landing.

The Oakleigh Venture Revolving Fund is constructing four new townhouses along Dauphin Street.

The Mobile Historic Development Commission through its Revolving Fund sold the Franklin Fire House on St. Joseph Street along with an adjacent vacant lot to Ann Bedsole that is now under development as a mixed use office and residential complex.

The Residential Market Potential Study has been completed by Zimmerman/Volk Associates and was presented on November 9.

The Retail Market Analysis and Recruitment Strategy is now in the development stage. The results are expected spring 2007.

And the Little Things That Count

Downtown has responded to the idea of planting flowers. Many property and business owners have added window boxes or planters outside their doorways and have filled them with flowers and foliage. A stroll down the street is now more colorful than before.

The city’s Parks Department has continued to hang and maintain colorful hanging baskets throughout the downtown area, adding a wonderful punch of color to downtown.

Through fund raising efforts of Main Street Mobile, new and additional holiday décor was installed in
Bienville Square and Cathedral Square. This effort brightened the holiday season and raised the bar for downtown property owners.

Pet waste disposal bag dispensers have been installed in Cathedral Square, Bienville Square and Spanish Plaza to help pet owners keep our parks free of pet waste.

More trash cans have been installed throughout the downtown area to help with trash disposal.

Mobile Area Water and Sewer System has repainted all the fire hydrants in the BID.

Keep Mobile Beautiful is introducing a new campaign to curb the amount of cigarette butts thrown on the sidewalks and streets.

**The Stumbling Blocks**

The recession that began around 2000 and continued until 2002-03 had a negative effect on downtown as well as the city overall. Downtown services provided by both city and county government were scaled back due to a flattening of the tax income stream. Additionally many downtown businesses closed during this time.

The devastating fire at 208 Dauphin Street caused the closing of Derry’s Ole Time Café. Derry’s was a popular downtown restaurant that featured one of the first outdoor street-side cafes. The hot music venue “Monsoons” was forced to move to another location.

Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 caused damage in the downtown area. This slowed some construction projects and damaged many historic buildings within the core. Hurricane Katrina also caused extensive damage to Cooper Riverside Park. The damage caused the park to close for an extended period of time. Annual events and programs traditionally held in the park had to be canceled and public access limited. The park is still not up to its pre-Katrina standards.

Political leadership that is more focused on nurturing suburban sprawl than rebuilding the city’s top economic engine.

There seems to be no planning effort to make Water Street a more pedestrian friendly street.

The proposed new I-10 bridge that will rise above the southern side of downtown Mobile has the potential to adversely impact the Cruise Terminal, the proposed Maritime Center and key downtown businesses.

**On the Drawing Board**

The opening of the new 35-story RSA Tower will change not only the landscape of downtown, but the population. New businesses and their employees will bring a new and exciting level of energy to downtown Mobile.

Construction on the new Federal Courthouse located on St. Louis Street is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2007. The Moshe Safdie designed courthouse will make a dramatic statement on St. Louis Street and will include major public art commissions and an urban park.

**In Conclusion**

Although many things have been accomplished in the past four years, there are still major issues and areas of work to be addressed. The concept of converting a few blocks of Conti Street into an open air market that would be open every day was disappointingly shelved because of a lack of coordinating personnel. The addition of street performers and vendors in the parks came to a halt because of the many city regulations and issues that could not be worked through. The Sidewalk Rehabilitation Program that enabled downtown to have new sidewalks, lights and trees ended in 2002.

Creating a more pedestrian friendly downtown is still a major challenge. Government Street has seen no changes in calming traffic or pedestrian-oriented management. Water Street is still a roadway and the median a parking lot during Mardi Gras and Bayfest.

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### MAJOR PROJECTS RECENTLY RENOVATED, CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR PLANNED FOR 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSA Battle House Hotel and Office Tower</td>
<td>Dauphin and Water Streets</td>
<td>$162,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview Plaza Hotel</td>
<td>64 South Royal Street</td>
<td>$70,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Martino Kuyldendall Law Offices</td>
<td>51 St. Joseph Street</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Emanuel Place</td>
<td>Dauphin and St. Emanuel Streets</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedsole Complex</td>
<td>6 &amp; 8 St. Joseph Street</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck Building Lofts</td>
<td>455 St. Louis Street</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mattress Factory Lofts</td>
<td>412-416 Dauphin Street</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarkson Townhouses</td>
<td>500 Block of Dauphin Street</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette Plaza Hotel</td>
<td>301 Government Street</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202 Project</td>
<td>202 Government Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOI Media Group</td>
<td>601 Government Street</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Public Library Renovation &amp; Expansion</td>
<td>704 Government Street</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hampton Inn</td>
<td>Royal and Conti Streets</td>
<td>15,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Theatre</td>
<td>208 Dauphin Street</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for the Living Arts</td>
<td>301 Conti Street</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeTonti Square Apartments</td>
<td>258 N. Claiborne Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>459 Dauphin Street</td>
<td>459 Dauphin Street</td>
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<td>Burns, Cunningham, Mackey</td>
<td>50 St. Emanuel Street</td>
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<td>662 St. Louis Street</td>
<td>662 St. Louis Street</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conti Street Apartments</td>
<td>459 Conti Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyons Pipes Cook expansion</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis Lofts</td>
<td>308 St. Louis Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Optical</td>
<td>St. Emanuel Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parkade Home and Garden</td>
<td>Conti and St. Emanuel Streets</td>
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<td>Restaurant Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veet’s expansion</td>
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<td>The Royal Scam</td>
<td>South Royal Street</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>282,200,000</strong></td>
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Conventioneers and visitors still have the challenge of crossing Water Street to get back and forth from the Arthur Outlaw Convention Center to our hotels and museums. City officials have taken few measures in transportation planning to make downtown a walkable community.

The issue of getting visitors from the Alabama Cruise Terminal to the central business district has only been aided by the change in the modal route that has helped move tourists into downtown. Now cruise visitors can jump on a modal and ride to Royal Street to visit the Ft. Conde Visitors’ Center, Museum of Mobile, Gulf Coast Exploreum, Conde Charlotte House and Dauphin Street.

On the positive side, the Public Space Action Plan for Downtown Mobile has worked to give Main Street Mobile, and now the Downtown Mobile Alliance, an articulated vision of what downtown can become. The plan has been a powerful tool used to engage the communities. It has shown people that something as simple as planting a few flowers can change perception. The Public Space Action Plan has been used in both short-term goal setting and long-term strategic planning with results being experienced everyday. With just four years of focused work under our belt, the changes in downtown are being seen.

The Public Space Action Plan has proved that master plans do work and are an important part of the revitalization process.

The Public Space Action Plan has been a call to action. Everyone is invited to share in this creative and active plan for downtown. To download a copy of the Public Space Master Plan for Downtown Mobile, please visit www.mainstreetmobile.org or www.down-townmobile.org.
The Downtown Redevelopment Authority approved at its October meeting the application of the DMDMC’s “Downtown Mobile GO Zone Pooled Projects Initiative.” Recognizing that many of the projects proposed for Downtown Mobile over the next year would be too small to take advantage of the GO Zone Tax Exempt Bond Financing feature, the DMDMC initiated the creation of a pooled application. Owners of approximately $45 million in project value expressed interest in the pooled application. The Authority and the Governor had previously approved a $6.5 million allocation for Lafayette Plaza, LLC for their hotel renovation.

The Commerce Building has a wonderful and rich history. Originally built in the 1930s as a pharmaceutical warehouse, the building was transformed in 1958 by the regionally acclaimed firm of Dumas Millner of Jackson, Mississippi. Following the redesign and construction, the first tenant, Cooper T/Smith Stedwedoring moved in. They occupy office space in the building to this day. In 1971 Julius Marx Inc., Realtors bought the Commerce Building. Julian Marx is still part owner of the building and his company, located on the 6th floor, serves as the management company for the Commerce Building.

The Commerce Building sits on the corner of Royal Street and St. Louis Street, in the northeast sector of downtown. In 2002, the building underwent a $500,000 renovation that included painting the exterior of the building; tinting the windows; remodeling the front porch and lobby; and upgrading the entrances to the building. One of the most beautiful features of the remodeling project was the addition of 19 palm trees around the perimeter of the building and the creation of wonderful raised planters across the front entrance. The building, with its classic symmetric design, is going through changes once again. A major modernization is currently underway with a $400,000 state-of-the-art elevator system being installed.

“When the construction of the RSA Tower was announced we knew we needed to look at the building to make sure we could remain competitive in the marketplace. Plus we have an obligation to our tenants to change the atmosphere of the building with upgrades. The owners agreed that we should do what we best was for the building. Cooper also gave us complete cooperation and support,” explained Marx.

When asked what sets the Commerce Building apart from other buildings downtown Marx made a list. “We are close to the Alabama State Docks and the maritime industry. Parking for the building is a plus. We have 240 parking spaces that we manage and we are next door to the Automobile Hotel. Tenants have an owner who manages the building which means we respond to tenants needs as quickly and as best as we can.”

Recent development projects have also helped with the northeastern boundary of downtown. “The FBI Building gave strength to this end of downtown. The Press Register Building anchored the north. BankTrust’s move is a plus. The G M & O Building is very nice,” stated Marx. “Downtown feels better. There is more positive energy downtown,” Marx stated then teasingly added “even though there is still a fear of flooding,” alluding to the active hurricane seasons of the past few years.

“Downtown reminds me of my favorite television commercial from the 1950s, a Crest toothpaste ad. The ad was about a cowboy who bought a new hat, new chaps and a new shirt. Then a pretty girl came by and said ‘what you need to do is brush your teeth.’ This commercial is a great analogy for what ails downtown and the City of Mobile. We just need to brush our teeth,” explained Marx.

The Commerce Building, redesigned in 1958, is a wonderful example of symmetric design. Located at 118 North Royal Street, the building is in a perfect location to serve the maritime industry. Photo courtesy of Julian Marx.
WEAVING THE FABRIC OF DOWNTOWN MOBILE

Each issue of Downtown Alliance News will feature a brief profile on a downtown business, a non-profit organization and a resident. Look for this profile to discover more about our community and our neighbors.

FIRE HOUSE CAFÉ
Dauphin Street’s newest restaurant, Fire House Café, opened on October 5. Located at 153 Dauphin Street, the bright yellow and red café sits on the corner of Dauphin Street and St. Emanuel Street, across from Bienville Square. The owners, Elizabeth and John Carpenter, caught the entrepreneurial bug while working with the Downtown BID.

“We would have never opened a business downtown,” expressed Elizabeth, “we never came down here. When we started working for the BID a year ago and seeing all the positive things going on we knew we wanted to open a business downtown,” continued Elizabeth.

“We have always wanted a restaurant,” explained John, “and the good Lord put a place in our lap. The price was right and the location great,” emphasized John.

Fire House Café is filled with fire memorabilia. When you visit you can enjoy a collection of firemen’s helmets and tee-shirts posted around the walls from volunteer fire departments from around the region. When asked about the memorabilia, John grinned and explained that he has been a volunteer fireman with the St. Elmo–Irvington Volunteer Fire Department for 12 years. The tee-shirts commemorate the brotherhood felt by firefighters.

The Fire House Café is really a family affair. The Carpenter’s oldest son, T.J. did all of the carpentry work, their daughter Katie can be found running the register and son Adam cooking in the kitchen. When Elizabeth and John are not working as Regents at the BID, they are at the café.

The Fire House Café is quickly becoming a favorite lunch spot for the downtown workforce. The most popular item on the menu is the Conch fish sausages with peppers and onions. The chicken salad and bowtie pasta salad are most delicious too. All are recipes cultivated by Elizabeth and John. The menu items are very affordable and the service is quick. Soon the Fire House Café will be open for breakfast. And of course, discounts are given to all police officers and firefighters.

When asked about plans for the restaurant John explained that they are working with an architect to install the proper equipment to transform the restaurant into a smokehouse. Look for these improvements over the coming year.

MOBILE ARTS COUNCIL
The Junior League of Mobile, Inc. saw a need for an organization to help promote, facilitate and support the arts in our community. As a result, the Mobile Arts Council, Inc. was formed in 1955. 51 years later the organization is still working hard to raise awareness of the arts, support artists and art related activities, and advocate for a stronger arts community in Mobile.

This past year the organization moved their offices to 316 Dauphin Street, across from Cathedral Square, and opened the Skinny Gallery. The gallery features rotating exhibitions from emerging local and regional artists. The move to the new space has been a success. It has given the public better access to the Arts Council and the services it provides. Executive Director Bob Burnett feels the arts can unite communities in fundamental ways, drawing on the shared human experience. “At the heart of its mission, the Mobile Arts Council is about community development;” he explained. “Art brings people together in fun and meaningful ways. The arts, in all their diverse forms, make us aware of life’s challenges, triumphs and celebrations,” Burnett added.

One area that the Mobile Arts Council has made a significant impact is in education. Each year an Arts-in-Education directory for teachers is published and distributed by the organization. This is a tool that teachers use in their classrooms as a resource guide for the community. The Arts Council also facilitates grant programs that assist in financing arts related programs for children.

Another event that helps encourage our children to participate in the arts is the production of Arts Alive!, an outdoor celebration of the arts sponsored by the Mobile Arts Council. Arts Alive! is produced twice a year – spring and fall. The event is staged along Conti Street and Cathedral Square, touching all of our downtown art organizations: Saenger Theatre, Space 301, Mobile Arts Council, Alabama Contemporary Dance Company, Mobile Symphony and Mobile Opera. This event has made a significant impact on showcasing the visual and performing arts in Mobile.

As downtown Mobile changes there is one thing that we know: the state of the arts in downtown will continue to grow and evolve under the leadership of the Mobile Arts Council, Inc.

For more information on the Mobile Arts Council, Inc. visit their website at www.mobilearts.org.

A PIONEER IN DE TONTI SQUARE
It was the summer of 1976 when Rennie Brabner joined friends and bought an apartment building on Conception Street, his second DeTonti Square real estate project. As most people were leaving downtown, this pioneer was investing in and living in an area that could easily be mistaken for a quiet section of the French Quarter.

In 1986, Brabner and his wife began restoring a beautiful home at 303 North Conception Street. They moved in Christmas of 1987 and that has been their home ever since. They have raised their two children in the DeTonti Square house, a daughter now 25 years old and a son 21. When asked what it was like to raise children in an area that was not considered a suburban neighborhood, Brabner explained that it was wonderful. “The children attended Catholic schools and what we discovered was their classmates lived all over the city and in Baldwin County, so we weren’t going to experience the feel of living in a suburban neighborhood anyway.”

Brabner retold many stories that he and his family have shared with each other over the years. One story he recounts with amusement is when their children’s friends would come over to their house for the first time for birthday parties or sleepovers. The visiting children and their parents would always be a little apprehensive about coming to this part of downtown he explained. Once they came through the front door the children were enchanted by the large living and dining rooms and everything would be fine. “The children also thought it was neat to see ships coming up the river from the third floor window,” Brabner teased and winked.

“As the children grew, our home became the house where everyone came for BayFest and Mardi Gras. One year after a McGill-Toolen dance everyone came back here. We had 75 kids on our living room floor. Not everyone has the space for that to happen,” Brabner recalled with a smile. “I think our kids were served well by living here.” I would not want them raised in a cocoon, “Brabner stated with conviction.

When asked why he invested in DeTonti Square so long ago, Brabner explained that his parents always liked New Orleans and the feel of that area, DeTonti Square had that same feel and we liked that too. Over the years Brabner has seen many changes. “At one time we would have to look underneath our cars to see if a wino was sleeping before we could drive to work. Now, we see the BID people picking up cigarette butts off the sidewalks. DeTonti Square has gotten better every year, it has been...
303 North Conception Street has been the home of the Brabner family since Christmas 1987

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a continual progress,” Brabner said.

Brabner has always been involved in historic preservation. He has served on the Mobile Historic Development Commission since the early 1980’s and has been active in the DeTonti Square Neighborhood Association, serving as president for several terms. When asked what he thinks about downtown Brabner replied, “Love it! I wouldn’t like anywhere else. The next time I move will be to Pinecrest.”

For the past 12 months the Stewards of the Downtown Mobile Alliance have been focusing on the sidewalks within the boundaries of the BID. Every day they pick up trash, sweep cigarette butts, even steam clean on a regular basis. In fact, the sidewalks were so much cleaner that a new problem emerged: chewing gum. With other trash on our pedestrian walkways, no one noticed the thousands of dark spots staining our sidewalks. But with a cleaner environment, they stood out like black eyes all over downtown.

Enter the Gum Buster, a machine designed exclusively for removing the unsightly, sticky mess from streets and sidewalks. The Gum Buster uses pressurized water with a cleaning solution to dissolve the gum while a small wire brush at the end of the wand scrubs the area. The process is a slow one…our Stewards can cover only a few square feet an hour…but the end result is a place that feels more inviting, more cared for. And hopefully, folks who chew gum will be less inclined to drop it on a clean sidewalk.

We are given an opportunity with these trends. Walkability is what we were designed for 300 years ago. “Walkable Urbanity” is what nearly 55% of the market says it wants. We must be vigilant to provide that to our current customers and our future customers. We must provide them with a good investment; a secure feeling; and a superior neighborhood environment. This is where the BID comes in as so important. Without the daily and intensive attention to detail that the BID provides to the public environment, this trend might pass downtown by. Our time is nigh, let’s seize it.

For further reading:
www.rclco.com – “What Young Consumers Really Want”
The Experience Economy by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore
The Singularity is Near by Ray Kurzweil
Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization by Christopher Leinberger, The Brookings Institution

RESIDENTIAL STUDY AVAILABLE

The Residential Market Potential Study has been completed and was presented on November 9. If you would like to have a copy of the study, they are available at the DMDMC Office, 261 Dauphin Street.

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If you would like to be added to the Downtown Alliance News mailing list, please call (251) 434-8498.
DECEMBER

Through December 15 – Breaking the Mold: Dressing Mobile with Ornamental Iron, Museum of Mobile
Through December 31 – Made in Birmingham, Space 301
Through the holidays – Santa vs. The Snowman!, IMAX Theater at the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center
December 2 – Richards DAR House Christmas Celebration, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
December 2 – 3 Doors Down & Friends Benefit Concert, 9:00 p.m., Mobile Convention Center
December 3 – Holiday Open House, Museum of Mobile
December 3 – Belly Dance Superstars, 7:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre
December 7 & 8 – A Christmas Carol presented by Playhouse in the Park, 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. on Dec. 7, 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. & 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 8, Saenger Theatre
December 8 & 9 – Holiday Open House, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m., Courtyard Candle Company
December 8 – LoDa ArtWalk, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., Cathedral Square Arts District
December 9 & 10 – The Nutcracker presented by Mobile Ballet, 2:30 p.m and 7:00 p.m. on Dec 9, 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 10, Mobile Civic Center Theatre
December 9 – George Jones concert, 7:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre
December 10 – Second Sunday at the Space – For the Young at Art, Noon, For the Art Smart, 2:00 p.m, Space 301
December 11 – Messiah Sing-In, 7:00 p.m., 1st Baptist Church of Mobile
December 16 – Mobile Christmas and Holiday Parade, 1:00 p.m., downtown
December 16 – Mistletoe’s Santa Pet Adoption, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Bienville Square
December 16 – Holiday Pops presented by the Mobile Symphony, 8:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre
December 17 – Rejoice, Beloved Christians a cantata by Buxtehude, 11:00 a.m., Government Street Presbyterian Church
December 17 – Saenger Christmas Film Series: A White Christmas, 3:00 p.m, Saenger Theatre
December 17 – Color at the Chesser, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m, William Chesser Gallery
December 20 – Saenger Christmas Film Series: National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation, 7:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre
December 21 – Art After Hours, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m, Lil’ Lunchbox Café in the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center
December 21 – Saenger Christmas Film Series: A White Christmas, 7:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre
December 22 – Saenger Christmas Film Series: National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation, 7:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre
December 22 – Gala Christmas Concert presented by Musica Sacra Choir & Chamber Orchestra, Melanie Zoghby Cummins and Mobile’s Singing Children’s Choir, 8:15 p.m., Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
December 23 – Fourth Saturday in the Square, 9:00 a.m. – Noon, Cathedral Square
December 24 – Candlelight Christmas Concert, 10:45 a.m., Government Street Presbyterian Church

JANUARY

January 12 through April 15 – Sense of Place II: Materials at Hand, Space 301
January 12 through June 3, 2007 – A Day In Pompeii, Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center
January 13 – Styx in Concert, 8:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre
January 14 – Legg Mason First Light Marathon and Half Marathon, 7:30 a.m., downtown
January 20 – Created in America presented by Mobile Symphony, 8:00 p.m., Saenger Theatre

Keep Mobile Beautiful is partnering with the Downtown Mobile Alliance to tackle the growing problem of cigarette litter. In many communities cigarette litter accounts for the greatest total number of items collected, often as much as 30 percent of all items. To help fight the problem, Mobile has been selected by Keep America Beautiful as one of several pilot cities in the United States to test the effectiveness of a new Cigarette Litter Prevention program.

The first phase involved a physical count of all the cigarette butts found on two blocks of Dauphin Street and was completed last month. Volunteers from Keep Mobile Beautiful covered every inch of the sidewalks on Dauphin Street between Jackson and Conception Streets and verified what national statistics indicate: Mobilians are careless with their cigarette butts.

Research shows that individuals who would never consider throwing an aluminum can, a piece of paper or an empty cup on the ground may be littering with cigarette butts. They may, in fact, be surprised to be called litterers. However, dropping butts, matches and packaging on the ground is littering, and because this litter is so lightweight, it easily washes into our waterways, trashing not only our street and sidewalks, but also our recreational rivers and bays.

Keep Mobile Beautiful will be installing several cigarette receptacles at transition points throughout downtown, most attached to trash cans along the sidewalks. We’re also encouraging business and property owners to provide attractive containers for their employees and customers. To see a sample of containers available, stop by the Downtown Mobile Alliance office at 261 Dauphin Street. Or if you’d like product information, call Bob Haskins with Keep Mobile Beautiful at 251-208-6026.

After the receptacles have been installed and downtown workers and visitors have been informed of the facts of cigarette litter, a final count of cigarette butts will be taken. Let’s prove to Keep America Beautiful that Mobilians are as clean as the citizens in any other city in the nation!