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April 2007

## Downtown Update

The Latest News about Downtown Mobile

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Dear Carol,

We received a great deal of feedback about our first Downtown Update and are incorporating some of your ideas into this and future issues. As hard as we try, we can't know everything happening downtown, so help be our eyes and ears and let us know about events or news stories that we should include!

### Happy Trails to You

*New trails feature downtown Mobile*



Whether you're into history or fitness or simply enjoy being outside in the Spring, you'll want to come downtown to experience three newly designated trails. The longest of the trails is the **Underground Railroad Bicycle Route** that begins in downtown Mobile and travels

2,100 miles northward to Ontario, Canada. The trail was developed by Adventure Cycling Association in conjunction with the Center for Minority Health at the University of Pittsburgh. The Cycling Association says, "the Route honors the bravery of those that fled bondage and those that provided shelter." The trail begins at the site of the former slave market at the corner of Royal and St. Louis Streets and then heads north to Africatown and points beyond. For more information contact [www.adventurecycling.org](http://www.adventurecycling.org).

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Preservationists and Mobile city officials are working together to install historical markers along the new **Black Heritage Trail**. The 11-site trail is designed to make the city's black history more visible for both residents and visitors.

Downtown sites include Caldwell School - Congress & Broad Streets, Johnson and Allen Mortuary - 600 Chestnut Street, St. Martin De Porres Hospital - 735 South Washington Avenue, and Roger Williams Drug Store - 600 Dauphin Street. City Councilman William Carroll and Mayor Sam Jones have committed \$30,000 to pay for the historical markers, which cost around \$3000 each.

The Battle of Mobile Bay is celebrated in the new **Civil War Trail**, unveiled last month as a joint project of the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Museum of Mobile, which serves as the Trail starting point. The 14 sites along the 90-mile trail document the Battle of the Bay and the Overland Campaign and stretch from Ft. Morgan and Ft. Gaines on the Gulf of Mexico to north Mobile County. Each stop along the way offers a look into the military movements and way of life on and around Mobile Bay during the Civil War. For more information go to [www.battleofmobilebay.org](http://www.battleofmobilebay.org).

[Find Out More](#)

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**New Businesses Show Diversity**

New retail and restaurant additions to the downtown scene are nothing if not diverse. From a new tattoo parlor to a store featuring vintage wedding gowns, we have it all!

**Victorian Lace** is now open at 254 Government Street and, as the name suggests, is filled with acres of vintage lace, silk and satin. Owner Naomi Mauer has been collecting antique wedding dresses for years and now sees a wider market for the timeless gowns. Mauer, who also owns My Victorian Bed and Breakfast on Church Street, is open by appointment through mid-May, and plans a grand opening with

the publication of *Gulf Coast Bride*, in which she is featured.  
251-432-8420

Downtown diners have a couple of new options to add to an already wide variety of eating establishments. **Samurai J Downtown** at 167 Dauphin Street is offering fresh sushi and Asian classics such as sesame chicken for lunch and dinner. 433-7644. **The Blind Mule** is now open at 57 North Claiborne, one block north of the Temple. It offers daily specials along with classic Gulf Coast fare such as red beans and rice and jambalaya. The Blind Mule is open for lunch and dinner. 694-6853.

For the younger, or more adventurous among us, a new tattoo parlor is now open at 205 Dauphin Street. Early customers describe the **Demented Needle** as more of a tattoo "spa" than parlor, with its new equipment and well-lit displays. Currently there are two tattoo artists and one piercer on staff. The artists gladly tattoo "stock" images, but specialize in custom work. 432-3264

[Find Out More....](#)

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### Downtown Community Scores Big in Chili Cook-Off

Every year in March many of the best cooks in Mobile gather in Bienville Square to earn bragging rights as having the best chili in town and, of course, to raise money for the American Cancer Society! Many downtown businesses competed in the record breaking event (102 teams competing, 14,000 participants, \$203,000 raised), and a few made it to the winners' circle.

- **Hargrove and Associates** finished second in the Meat and Beans category
- **Pro Legal** took second place honors in the Wild Game category, with **Austal** taking third place.
- In the All Meat category, the **Mobile Bar Pilots** took second place.

Congratulations to all the winners thanks to the American Cancer Society for creating an event that brings so many families downtown!

[Find out more....](#)

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## Doing Well by Doing Good

*Downtown Businesses Recognized for Good Works*



Downtown businesses are setting a new standard for corporate good works and they're gaining recognition for their efforts. As part of the christening ceremonies for its new ferry, **Austal USA** held a fund raiser for the Ronald McDonald House of Mobile. The Australia-based shipyard may be the new kid on the waterfront, but it has been growing significantly in recent months and wanted to share its success with a local charity. The event raised \$150,000 for the Ronald McDonald House, which provides a home away from home for the families of hospitalized children.

**Jim Barnes Enterprises** was recently honored by the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities for their commitment to providing jobs to people with disabilities. Jim Barnes, owner of several Mobile McDonald's restaurants, also has been a driving force for downtown revitalization for many years.

**Page & Jones, Inc.** is a recipient of the Governor's Trade Excellence Awards for its efforts in promoting Alabama exports. Page & Jones, which handles international freight logistics, was recognized for its work with local and national chambers to get Alabama companies into work markets, co-sponsoring events and offering fee services and advice. Page & Jones, now led by Mike Lee, has been a fixture in downtown Mobile since 1892.

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## Downtown in the News

The regional and national media have been turning their lenses toward downtown Mobile in advance of the opening of the Battle House Hotel and RSA Battle House Tower next month. Last fall Mobile was featured on the front page of the Wall Street Journal and last month the New York Times featured the Port City on the front page of its travel section. You can see the entire article by clicking the link at the end

of this article.

The Urban Land Institute is one of the nation's most influential organizations providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities. Its monthly publication, *Urban Land*, features trends in housing and commercial development, as well as articles on successful community initiatives. Each issue contains a Regional Spotlight, with the Gulf Coast featured in February 2007. Because this publication hits the desks of developers and investors throughout the region and nation, the Downtown Mobile Alliance purchased a full page ad designed to bring business to downtown. There is also an effort to establish a ULI chapter in Alabama, which would make available a variety of resources to developers in the state. If you would like more information on joining ULI, contact Elizabeth Sanders at [esanders@downtownmobile.org](mailto:esanders@downtownmobile.org).

[Find out more....](#)

## Downtown Doings

### *Upcoming Events*



The chaos of Mardi Gras is a distant memory and the dog days of summer are still weeks away, so April and May are the perfect months to celebrate a wide variety of events in downtown Mobile. Many of the upcoming arts events will focus on environmental concerns as we celebrate Earth Day, April 21, 2007. Come down and join in on the fun.

#### **ARTS ALIVE! GOES GREEN**

An (mainly) outdoor art festival for the whole family. Features a wide variety of

displays and exhibitions, as well as performances and plenty of hands-on activities; concludes with concert by Joe Occhipinti's Big Band. Refreshments available. 2 - 9:30 PM. Cathedral Square Arts District (bounded by Claiborne, Dauphin, Joachim and Conti Streets) Free. Contact: 251-432-9796

**Faces of Mobile**, Portraits by Kate Seawell Monday, Apr 02, 2007 - Friday, Apr 27, 2007 30 portraits by Kate Seawell, as

well as LEAVES FALL (monotypes by Seawell) and WINNERS OF THE 2007 MARINE RESOURCES YOUTH ART CALENDAR CONTEST. Mobile Arts Council. Artist Reception April 13. [www.mobilearts.org/](http://www.mobilearts.org/)

**A Day in Pompeii** Friday, Jan 12, 2007 - Sunday, June 3, 2007 International blockbuster exhibit chronicling the day Mt. Vesuvius erupted. Experience the story of daily life in this vibrant cosmopolitan city and of the human tragedy of the volcano's victims. Gulf Coast Exploreum and Science Center. [www.exploreum.net/](http://www.exploreum.net/)

**GREEN SPACE: ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS IN CONTEMPORARY ART** curated by David McCann. Space 301 Off Centre (6 S. Joachim St.) Saturday April 21 through Sun, Jun 24. Wed - Sat, 10 - 5 PM; Sun, noon - 5 PM. Centre for the Living Arts members/free; nonmembers/ \$5. Contact: 251-208-5671/ [www.space301.com](http://www.space301.com)

**Captive Passage: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Making of the Americas** Monday, Jan 15, 2007 - Monday, Sept. 3, 2007 On display at the Museum of Mobile, a compilation of over 200 extraordinary objects and images from around the world tell the story of the slave trade from a maritime perspective. [www.museumofmobile.com/](http://www.museumofmobile.com/)

[Find out more....](#)

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### **Alabama Historic Commission Wants Your Input** *Survey will help determine preservation priorities*

The Alabama Historical Commission is in the process of updating the statewide comprehensive historic preservation plan for compliance with the National Park Service requirements. The plan provides general information on Alabama cultural resources and sets goals and priorities for the Commission's work with various state programs and organizations.

Please take a few minutes to complete the attached public survey which is being used to develop priorities for statewide preservation activities. Historic preservation is vital to the continued redevelopment of downtown Mobile and your opinion and comments will help focus attention on our needs and concerns.

[Take the survey...](#)

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### Realtors to Tour Downtown Residential Properties

Downtown Mobile is becoming the hottest real estate market in town and area Realtors will have an opportunity to see first-hand prominent downtown residential properties during an exclusive tour organized by the Downtown Mobile Alliance. On Thursday, May 17, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., seven properties representing approximately 80 residential units will be open.

Realtors will meet at a central location and board trolleys to tour the downtown properties in groups. They will end the tour with lunch in the park.

If you're interested in being one of the tour sponsors, or would like more information about the tour, please contact Carol Hunter at 434-8498 or [chunter@downtownmobile.org](mailto:chunter@downtownmobile.org)

The Downtown Mobile Alliance is a non-profit partnership between the Downtown Mobile District Management Corporation and Main Street Mobile, Inc., whose purpose is to create more exposure for downtown redevelopment efforts, both within the downtown community and throughout the city at large.

Sincerely,

Carol Hunter  
Downtown Mobile Alliance

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