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April 2008

## Downtown Details

The Latest News about Downtown Mobile

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Dear Carol,



This is the time of year when we never consider living anywhere else! The weather could not be better and festivals abound. The spring version of **Arts Alive!** expanded to three days and featured all our favorites -- local artists, hands on activities, live music and the best people watching this side of Times Square. The focus of last weekend's festival was food as Volunteer Mobile's Shrimp Cook Off took over Bienville Square.

Both events brought thousands of folks downtown to eat, shop or simply soak in the tapestry that is the heart of our city. But the opportunity to experience the best of downtown is just beginning. The **Market in the Square** and **Brown Bag in Bienville** are perfect opportunities to spend time in our signature parks and reconnect with nature and each other.

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### Development Buzz

**Join our mailing list!**



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fencing, but when it signals new construction and major renovations, we keep our complaining to a minimum. These days Fort Conde Village is a major construction site as developer Larry Posner continues the redevelopment of the city's oldest neighborhood. He is now tackling The Spear-Barter and Hall-Ford Houses for use as an office building and bed and breakfast. If you haven't strolled down the charming streets of the Village lately, you'll be amazed at how much things have changed.

In other development news:

- **The Bar Pilots Association**, the oldest business in Mobile, has started construction on a new office building in DeTonti Square. The 2400 square foot two-story, Charleston-style brick building will grace the corner of Jackson and St. Anthony Streets. The Bar Pilots have been housed at the State Docks and are looking forward to moving to downtown proper by the end of the year.
- **Buck's Pizza** is opening a downtown restaurant at the corner of Dauphin and Claiborne Streets. Owner Andy King has two other Buck's in the area, but this will be the first dine-in operation for the pizza entrepreneur. King says the emphasis is on "fresh," with all produce locally purchased and dough made daily from scratch, but the best news for folks living downtown and in surrounding neighborhoods is that Buck's is open seven days a week and will deliver in the evening. Look for this newest entry in the downtown dining scene to be open early June.
- **RBC** has opened its downtown banking offices in the Riverview Office tower on Royal Street. The full service branch with an ATM is on the first floor (formerly the Senior Bowl offices), with private, business and commercial banking and executive offices on the 3rd and 11th floors.
- Downtown will soon be home to another financial institution as **Coastal Bank and Trust** moves into 31,000 square feet on the first floor of the Athelston Club at 1 St. Francis Street.
- Major work is continuing on **210 Dauphin Street**, next to the Crescent Theatre project. It may look as if the building is being demolished, but in fact the developer is replacing a structurally unsound wall.
- The **Carriage Works** condominiums at 709 Dauphin

Street are nearing completion and a model unit should be ready to view in the next couple of weeks.

- The major facelift continues at **159 and 161 Dauphin Street**. The buildings overlooking Bienville Square, each of which contain about 3300 square feet, will be perfect locations for retail and office space in a few months.
- **International Shipholding** is the latest recipient of the "2008 Governor's Trade Excellence Award." The award was presented to ISH by Governor Bob Riley for serving as an outstanding example of an Alabama business which has achieved extraordinary results in international sales and contributed to Alabama's increased ability to compete in a global market

[Find Out More](#)

## Retail Happenings

Shopping and Dining News

For almost all of Mobile's 300 year history, the primary retail center for the region was downtown. Up until 30 years ago, you could walk down and around Dauphin Street and buy just about anything the average family might need, from cars to appliances to the latest



fashions. And while it has never been entirely true that retailers abandoned downtown, there's no denying that the variety we once boasted has diminished.

The cycle, however, is now on the upswing. As shoppers are looking for a more "authentic" experience, downtowns across the country are seeing renewed interest in the urban shopping options. This is happening in Mobile as well, and each month we'll highlight what's new, both in terms of grand openings and special events.

- **Parkside Home and Garden** at Conti and Conception Streets is now in it's "soft opening" phase, which means you're able to shop there before the whole world finds this gem of a home accessories store. The grand opening date has not been set, but don't wait to check out the great furniture, gifts, candles, antiques and garden decor.
- **Bienville Books** at 109 Dauphin Street will be hosting two book signings in early May. Scotty Kirkland and Carol Ellis will sign copies of their book,

Historic Photos of Mobile on Friday, May 9th at 5:00 p.m. This coffee table book contains collections of photos from 1895 - 1979. Shellie Rushing Tomlinson, host of the radio show, "All Things Southern," will sign copies of her book, Suck Your Stomach in and Put Some Color On: What Southern Mamas Tell Their Daughters that the Rest of Y'all Should Know Too, on Saturday, May 10th at 2:00 p.m.

- In observation of Jazz Appreciation Month, the **Royal Scam** at 72 S. Royal Street has been hosting some wonderful local talent. Coming up on Saturday, April 26th is Sharon Moore and Counterpoint. Show starts at 9:00 p.m. and there is no cover.
- **Olensky Brothers** has been supplying downtown businesses with all their office needs for years, but now the Royal Street retailer has expanded into convenience store items. Stop by for snacks, drinks, even beer and wine.
- **The Bienville Club** has several public events scheduled including a *Cinco de Mayo Buffet Lunch and Happy Hour* on Monday, May 5th, *Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre*, "Murder at the Music Hall," Saturday, May 10th, 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m., *Armed Forces Day Lunch*, Friday, May 16th, 11:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., *Women's Wine Tour*, Tuesday, May 20th, 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.
- The **Battle House and Renaissance Riverview Hotels** are planning special brunches for Mother's Day on May 11th. Chef Charles Mereday and his staff are preparing a Northern Italian culinary spread for the Battle House's Trellis Room while the Harbor Room at the Riverview will be featuring the finest Gulf Coast cuisine. Call 251-338-5493 for reservations at the Battle House and 251-415-3092 at the Riverview.

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## Regions Bank Donates Bikes

All of us have traveled through downtown by car or on foot, but have you ever glided along our city streets on two wheels? Until three weeks ago, the staff of the Alliance was not in that number, but now, thanks to Regions Bank, our ability to move about the downtown grid has been



greatly enhanced.

Our two trademark Regions green bikes allow us to zip around even to the farther edges of downtown quickly and without having to move our cars. We save gas, reduce congestion, preserve parking for downtown visitors, get much needed exercise and re-live our childhoods all at the same time. Now, aren't you green with envy?

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## New Plan for Old Mobile Work Continues

Even though the initial public input meetings to develop a master plan for downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods are over, there is still a chance to let the planners know what you think. By clicking on the link at the end of this article you can download a survey, complete it and mail to Barbara Drummond, City of Mobile, P.O. Box 1827, Mobile, AL 36633.



Financial support for the plan has also been encouraging. To date almost \$50,000 has been raised toward our goal of \$100,000. If you'd like to join in this important endeavor, please contact Elizabeth Sanders at 251-434-8498 or [esanders@downtownmobile.org](mailto:esanders@downtownmobile.org).

Many thanks to those who have already made donations or pledges:

### Platinum Investors

- Alabama Power Foundation
- Hearin-Chandler Foundation

### Gold Investors

- A.S. Mitchell Foundation
- Ben May Charitable Trust

### Silver Investors

- Christ Church Cathedral
- Church Street East Historic District
- Committee for the Restoration of Historic Monroe Park
- Gulf Coast Multiple Listing Service
- Keep Mobile Moving
- MLK, Jr. Avenue Redevelopment Corp.
- Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors

Bureau

- Oakleigh Garden District Society
- Sybil H. Smith Charitable Trust

#### **Friends of Planning**

- 219 Restaurant
- AT&T
- DeTonti Square Neighborhood Association
- Hummingbird Ideas
- Mobile Bay Transportation Company
- Spot of Tea

**For the New Plan Survey**

## **GreenCoast Conference Attracts Hundreds**



On April 9th and 10th hundreds of Gulf Coast builders, developers, architects, city planners and interested citizens came together to gather all the latest information on "Green Building" trends. The Green Coast Conference, organized by Smart Coast, brought in

national experts on everything from sustainable landscaping to the public health issues related to urban sprawl.

The sessions were enlightening and often thought-provoking, and many of the participants came away feeling they had a new responsibility to make changes in their lives and their communities. Following are a few ideas we thought you might find interesting:

- Indoor air quality is one of the top five public health risks
- Sustainability matters to the entire community because environmental responsibility = social accountability = financial stability (the inverse is also true)
- The measure of a community is not what it does when times are good, but what it does when they're bad
- Ethics is the order in which we prioritize our values
- Children who walk to school learn better, behave better and are healthier
- As a community, shouldn't we consider life cycle

costs?

- Increasing the density of a development decreases the amount of impervious surfaces, meaning more water is absorbed instead of flooding
- 50% of all illness is aggravated or caused by polluted indoor air
- An increase in density of developments allows for the preservation of places that should never be built upon

One last thing to consider, people who live in walkable communities are generally healthier and have better social networks than those who don't. Ask yourself this: can your neighborhood meet most of your daily needs within a five minute walk, or are you a mega-mileage mom? Click on the link below to see how walkable your neighborhood is.

[How walkable is your neighborhood?](#)

## Discover Dauphin Historic District

Take a Walk Back in Time

Several times a week during peak tourist seasons, visitors will walk into our office and ask about the historic sites in downtown. The Alliance has a wonderful brochure, the Dauphin Street Historic District Walking Tour, and armed with this guide they head off to discover the delights of our architectural past. As is the case in most cities, visitors to Mobile often experience more local history than locals themselves!



Each month we'll be featuring a stop on the walking tour so you'll be able to explore downtown's history without ever leaving your computer - but we think you'll find that the more you know about our past, the more you'll want to get out and walk back in time on your own.

### **Pollock & Bernheimer Building, 1904, 5 Dauphin Street**

This ornate building was designed by the architectural firm of Rudolph Benz and Sons. Rudolph Benz was a popular Mobile architect in the Victorian era. Many of his buildings remain today. The façade of this building consists of a glass and metal storefront with highly decorative pilasters. The building was originally six stories

tall. The top three stories were lost sometime between 1925 and 1955. The building underwent major renovation in 1985.

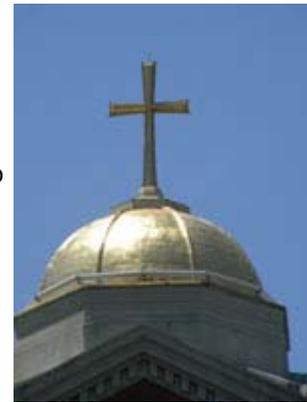
[Take a virtual tour](#)

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## Welcome Archbishop Thomas Rodi

As we welcome one of downtown's newest residents, Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi, we say goodbye to retiring Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb, who has served the area's Catholic community and downtown Mobile so well for so many years. Archbishop Lipscomb has long understood the value of downtown revitalization and was an early supporter of Main Street Mobile and the Business Improvement District.



Under Lipscomb's leadership the Cathedral underwent a multi-million dollar renovation and the Portier House was lovingly restored - not to mention the transformation of an entire block of underutilized buildings into one of downtown's greatest public spaces, Cathedral Square. With his love of history, we're certain the archbishop emeritus will continue to be involved in downtown's redevelopment and we hope Archbishop Rodi will be captivated as well. We welcome the Archbishop to the downtown family!

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## Downtown Mobile Alliance Growing



The early response of businesses and organizations to joining the Downtown Mobile Alliance has been very encouraging and promises to greatly advance our plans to continue downtown's revitalization. The Alliance is a membership organization whose primary role will

be marketing downtown to potential retailers, residents, professional offices and customers. The Alliance supports

the work of the Business Improvement District and Main Street Mobile in their efforts to transform downtown into the premiere urban center on the central Gulf Coast.

Many thanks to the following businesses that recognize the value of a vibrant city center, and for anyone who'd like to be part of the process, please contact Susan Daniels at 251-434-8498 or [sdaniels@downtownmobile.org](mailto:sdaniels@downtownmobile.org).

### **Leadership Circle**

- Regions Bank
- Hargrove & Associates
- Armbrecht Jackson LLP
- Alabama State Port Authority
- Gayfer Ventures LLC
- Alabama Power

### **Leadership Council**

- RBC Bank
- Dauphin Realty
- Ward Properties, Safe Archives/Safe Shredding

### **Business Advocate**

- Hand Arendall, LLC
- The Guarantee Title Company, LLC
- Richardson, Spear, Spear, Hamby & Owens
- Richard Murray & Company
- Cabaniss, Johnston, Gardner, Duman & O'Neal

### **Business Supporter**

- HM Companies, LLC
- Jordan Management
- Legal Imaging
- Paymaster
- Richardson, Spear, Spear Hamby & Owens, PC,
- The Bellwether Group
- Bay Bank
- Robert S. Edington Law Office
- Herndon Inge III, LLC
- McElhaney State Farm Insurance
- Cowart Hospitality Services, LLC
- Aloha Hospitality International
- Craftmaster Printers, Inc

### **New Businesses**

- Serda's Coffee Company
- Paradise Popcorn and Snacks
- Bacchus
- The Battle House Hotel

**Not-for-Profit**

- Christ Church Cathedral
- The Community Foundation of South Alabama
- University of South Alabama Foundation
- Waterfront Rescue Mission
- Mobile Symphony
- Gulf Coast Exploreum
- United Way of Southwest Alabama
- South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
- W. T. Neal Trust
- Drug Education Council, Inc.
- Wilmer Hall
- Historic Mobile Preservation Society
- Home Builders Association of Metro Mobile
- Mobile United/Leadership Mobile
- Mobile Opera, Inc.
- Mobile Carnival Museum
- National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico

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## Parking Working Group Makes Recommendations

One of downtown's thorniest problems could get even stickier before the end of the year as demand for parking begins to outstrip supply, especially in the central business district east of Bienville Square. As the RSA Tower continues to fill up and more tenants move into



available space in the former Regions Bank building, public parking spaces will become even more scarce. We could be

facing a deficit of 1500 spaces by the end of they year.

The Mayor's Parking Working Group is continuing its work to develop solutions and has suggested several recommendations, both long and short term:

- Implement on-street parking changes, including the creation of more on-street parking
- Update signage, street and curb markings
- Amend the city's current design standards for surface parking lots inside the Hank Aaron Loop under a new set of guidelines that are more urban than suburban in nature
- An amortized zoning requirement should be adopted to bring all nonconforming lots into compliance with the design standards once they are adopted
- The Alliance will develop, for City review, a draft ordinance based on successful ordinances from similar cities.
- The City should create a Public Parking Authority to provide for centralized planning, financing, construction and maintenance of new structured parking
- A parking enterprise fund should be established to retain all parking income to be used for the creation of parking in downtown
- The public sector should embrace the recommendations of the Working Group and agree to a new public/private partnership based on the defining principles contained in the Parking Memorandum of Understanding (to see the memorandum, please click the link at the end of this article)

The Working Group will be meeting again in a couple of weeks to fine tune the recommendations. If you'd like to participate in this meeting, email [chunter@downtownmobile.org](mailto:chunter@downtownmobile.org).

**[Parking Memorandum of Understanding](#)**

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## Downtown Doings

Some upcoming events in downtown Mobile



***Springtime in the Squares.*** The **Market on the Square** and **Brown Bag in Bienville** are back for the next several weeks. Each

Saturday morning through July 26th you'll be able to get the freshest local produce and handcrafted goods from 7:30 until 11:00 in Cathedral Square. Then pack or pick up lunch at one of our great restaurants and head to Bienville Square for live music each Wednesday from 11:30 to 1:30 through the end of May.

***Our Body: The Universe Within - Through May 11th, Gulf Coast Exploreum.*** This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the elegant design of the human body's form and function up-close in an artful, compelling and dignified environment. The inspirational human anatomy lesson is comprised of more than 11 actual human whole-body specimens and 75 anatomical displays that have been preserved through polymer impregnation. For more information please call 1(877)625-4FUN or visit the [www.exploreum.net](http://www.exploreum.net)

***We Remember - Through May 26th, Museum of Mobile*** This moving exhibition features seventy-five black and white photographs offering a glimpse into life during World War II. From the battlefield to the home front, this exhibit creates windows back to the people and events that shaped history and the modern world. For more information please call (251)208-7686 or visit [www.museumofmobile.com](http://www.museumofmobile.com)

***Southern Gothic Now, May 9 - July 6, Opening Reception May 9th from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. in conjunction with LODA ArtWalk, following panel discussion at 5:30 p.m.*** Tennessee Williams described Southern Gothic as a style that captured "an intuition, of an underlying dreadfulness in modern experience." **Southern Gothic Now** is an exhibition of contemporary art works that embody the characteristics associated with the subgenre of the Gothic writing style, unique to American literature. The work featured will use supernatural, ironic, or unusual events to engage the viewer. What makes Southern Gothic unique to American literature, and our region is its use of these tools not for the exclusive sake of horror-based entertainment or shock value, but rather to air social issues and reveal the cultural character of the region. The included art work will have clear roots in the identifiable literary tradition seen in the works of William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Harper Lee, and more contemporary examples such as Anne Rice and Donna Tartt. For more information visit [myspace.com/space301mobile](http://myspace.com/space301mobile).

***Murder at the Carnival Museum, Friday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.*** Mystery Dinner series features "1863 Murder at the Mansion." \$55 includes tour of the museum, meal catered by The Pillars, wine bar and two hours of whodunit.

Reservations required. Call 251-479-3212 or visit [www.mobilemysterydinners.com](http://www.mobilemysterydinners.com).

***Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers***

*Tuesday, April 29, 6:45 p.m.* Willow Garden and other shorts by Jim Haverkamp. In 1740s Northern Ireland, a young man becomes ensnared in a deadly love triangle and must decide whether to follow his heart or his father's twisted advice. Shot in a striking film noir style, "Willow Garden" tells the backstory of one of America's strangest murder ballads. Short Circuit Opening Short: Moth to Light by Elizabeth Strickler. Through a dark and tense atmosphere twists the horrific coming of age of Muriel. Caught between the domestic world of her mother and a luring force in the garden, she contemplates what to do with the baby on whom her mother dotes and whose origins are unknown. This program is sponsored by the Mobile Arts Council and the Mobile Public Library. For more information please call 208-7097. Location: Ben May Main Library

***National Jazz Appreciation Month Jam Monday, April 28th, 6:30 p.m.*** MOJO (Mystic Order of the Jazz Obsessed) jam session. Gulf City Lodge. For more info visit [www.msnusers.com/MOJOMOBILE](http://www.msnusers.com/MOJOMOBILE)

***10th Annual Business Expo/Jobs Fair Friday, May 2, 9:00 am-2:00 PM*** - Free Admission for the general public, businesses may register for \$325 until March 31st and \$375 after March 31st. 100+ Businesses!!! For more info please call: South Alabama Regional Planning Commission 251.652.0585 or 251.433.6541 or visit [www.sarpc.org](http://www.sarpc.org).

***LoDa Artwalk and Fridays @ 5 May 9th, 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.*** Live music along Dauphin Street starts at 5:00, then stroll the Cathedral Square Arts District for exhibitions in downtown galleries and other venues beginning at 6:00. For more info call 251-208-7443.

**Saenger Theatre Events** [www.saengermobile.com](http://www.saengermobile.com) for more information

• ***Mobile Symphony Presents "Classical Fire"***

*Saturday, April 26, 2008 At 02:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.* Spanish Guitarist Pablo Sainz Villegas joins the Mobile Symphony Orchestra for Rodrigo's passionate Guitar Concerto, along with Pyotr Tchaikovsky's thrilling and masterful meditation on fate. Also, Kevin Puts, one of our talented Composers-in-Residence, lends his lyrical style to a brand new horn concerto!

• ***The Fab Four Sunday, May 18, 7:00 PM*** - Back for the third time!!!! Don't miss this wonderful show when it returns in '08. Tickets will be \$33 / \$23 / \$15 (plus service charge)

**Civic Center Events** [www.mobilecivicctr.com](http://www.mobilecivicctr.com) for more information

- **Disney's High School Musical: The Ice Tour** April 26-27, Saturday shows at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. Sunday shows at 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Get ready to rock the ice at Disney's High School Musical: The Ice Tour! The one and only live celebration of High School Musical and High School Musical 2 features the songs and dances from both smash hit movies and a cast of world-class skaters. The ultimate High School Musical Mega-Mix is here - Disney's High School Musical: The Ice Tour! Tickets can be purchased at the Mobile Civic Center Box Office (open Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and all Ticketmaster outlets. To charge by phone, call Ticketmaster at 251-434-0033 or purchase online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). For more information, call 251-208-7261 or visit [www.mobilecivicctr.com](http://www.mobilecivicctr.com).
- **Tony Bennett** May 13, 8:00 p.m. It's a night to remember with Tony Bennett as he performs an evening of timeless classics! Don't miss this rare chance to spend one night with a musical legend! Ticket prices are \$64 for balcony and accessible, \$84 for mezzanine, and \$124 for orchestra. Additional fees may apply. Tickets are on sale now. They can be purchased at the Mobile Civic Center Box Office and all Ticketmaster outlets. To charge by phone, call 251-434-0033 or purchase online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

**For a complete list of events**

The Downtown Mobile Alliance exists to support the development of downtown through marketing, advocacy and the management of BID services.

**Sincerely,**

Carol Hunter  
Downtown Mobile Alliance

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