

# **GATEWAY** INITIATIVE 2023-2027



Workforce Development & Recruitment

•

Pro-Business Advocacy & Legislative Action Entrepreneurship & Existing Business Assistance

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS



Penny Groux Director of Corporate Affairs Perdido Beach Resort



Chad Watkins, PLA, ASLA Owner WAS Design

"I am proud to say that we have been extremely successful to date in meeting the goals of the program. However, our job has just begun. As our area grows, we have increasingly difficult issues to tackle and that takes resources. We need your business involved and invested to keep Gateway staff members working every day on the critical issues that affect our businesses."

— Penny Groux

The first five years of the *Gateway* Workforce Development Initiative has set an amazing pace toward success and will show no signs of slowing down for the next five years. They will be focusing on what south Baldwin businesses need the most; an ample supply of trained and ready workforce!

The successes of the *Gateway Initiative* are a result of listening to the needs of business, as well as having experts on the ground finding solutions and responding with quick implementation of those solutions, while strategically developing long range plans for more permanent solutions.

The *Gateway* Oversight Council recognized early that bringing the two Chambers of Commerce together, who are just seven miles apart and struggling with the same workforce issues, just made sense. While the two organizations remain separate with their normal programs, events and purpose, coming together around workforce not only proved to be doable, but highly successful and most importantly, beneficial for business.

From its inception the *Gateway Initiative* rapidly evolved into a powerhouse of resources for local businesses. The leadership of the *Gateway Initiative* has been focused on key factors for success; **1. Continuing to be business driven, 2. Collaborating with multiple partners who bring a value add to the table, 3. Being transparent with business investments and, 4. Continuous communication and conversation with investors.** The record of accomplishments within this Case Statement speaks for itself.

As investors looking toward the future, the simple fact is no one can see clearly what will be needed in the next five years. But we hold tight to the things we do know; business is going to grow; visitors are going to continue to come, and shortage of workforce is not going to end. We trust the *Gateway Initiative* to react nimbly to changes in the economy and provide business a clear path to continuous improvement and potential solutions.

We hope you will respond positively when the *Gateway Initiative* Team calls on you. Please join with us as we work together to build a less vulnerable path forward for our Coastal Communities. The Cities, County and the State of Alabama need the businesses of south Baldwin to not only survive in these unfamiliar times, they also need us to thrive!

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAMBER LEADERSHIP



Donna Watts, IOM, AACE President & CEO South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

Nearly five years ago we started with "Why ......"



Greg Alexander, IOM President & CEO Coastal Alabama Business Chamber

South Baldwin County has a proud history and has long been known as the "Gateway to the Gulf." From what was once a stretch of two-lane road leading to a sleepy fishing village, our Tri-City area has grown to become the destination for more than 6.5 million visitors each year. Those visitors leave behind an economic impact of \$4.6 billion and create thousands of jobs. The increased tourism, coupled with our growing business and industry (that also employ thousands of people throughout South Baldwin County) has brought about significant workforce challenges.

Prior to 2018, as *Gateway* was being developed, members of our business community were concerned about the future stability of our region and our ability to retain, recruit and train a sustainable workforce. At the time, unemployment was at an all-time low, at 3.9% in the County, and the top priority of the *Gateway Initiative* was to address the challenge of having an adequate supply of workforce to continue to serve those 6.5 million visitors as well as meet the employment needs of our other business and industry. Furthermore, stakeholders were adamant to provide ongoing advocacy and support for small businesses – the bedrock of the community.

There are specific reasons "why" we created the *Gateway Initiative* and the biggest reason; It's our Mission and Passion. It's our mission and passion to help families, to grow businesses and industry in order to strengthen our communities within South Baldwin County. Along with investors and community partners, we are forging a brighter tomorrow and bringing about positive change through career pathing, apprenticeships, training and more. It is our goal to improve one life at a time while building community-wide economic prosperity. It is our *duty* to provide business and industry of South Baldwin County with what they need today, tomorrow and beyond. Over the next five years, we will be creating and executing solutions for employee housing, transportation challenges, shortages of available childcare; all while offering educational opportunities.

Today, *Gateway* has multiple meanings and produces real results in many areas; a "Gateway to a Career", the "Gateway to Local Legislators", a "Gateway to Innovation", the "Gateway to Service Excellence", the "Gateway to Professional Development", the "Gateway to Sustainable Economic Growth," and so much more. The *Gateway Initiative* was developed to meet the needs of our business and industry and we are proud of the progress we have made thus far. But, we must push forward for the real fact that many challenges remain. With the impending development of the Workforce Training Campus and the prospect of expanded programming to more businesses and industry throughout South Baldwin, now is our opportunity to capitalize on this momentum. We hope that you will join us!

#### GATEWAY INITIATIVE CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jim Bibbv The Wharf

H.C. (Harry) Cecil Ala. Technology Network

Tom Debell **Riviera** Utilities

**Dr. Josh Duplantis** Coastal Alabama Community College

Matt Fetner **Bryant Bank** 

John Fitzgerald Saunders Yachtworks

**Beth Gendler** Gulf Shores & Orange **Beach Tourism** 

Lane Gilbert Wharf Restaurant Group

**Charlene Haber** Wolf Bay Lodge

**Brian Harsany** Cosmo's Restaurant Group

**Kristin Helmich** OWA

**Tom Knighten Tanger Outlets** 

**Tim Lower RE/MAX** Paradise

**Tony Marzullo** Spectrum Resorts

**Dec McClelland Edward Jones** 

Sted McCollough McCollough Architecture Vision Fox Business

**Bob McDowell Edward Jones** 

**Christina McInnis Woerner Companies** 

**Dr. Craig Pouncy** Coastal Alabama **Community College** 

**Dr. Margaret Roley** So. Baldwin Regional Medical Center

**Mike Steward** 

**Clark Stewart** WHEP Radio

Dr. Ken Styron Columbia Southern University

**Bryan Wolfe** Vulcan, Inc.

## GATEWAY INITIATIVE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

Gateway is guided by a group of leaders in the business community, the Gateway Oversight Council, composed of four Gateway Investors from each chamber, each Board of Director Chairperson, and both chamber Presidents/ CEOs. The council convenes guarterly to review program accomplishments and realign programming where necessary, and represent a diverse set of industries in south Baldwin County. Members rotate annually. 2022 Members include:

Chad Watkins, WAS Design, SBCC Board Chair

- Mike Steward, Vision Fox, CABC Board Chairman
- Beth Gendler, Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism
- Jim Bibby, The Wharf
- Penny Groux, Perdido Beach Resort
- Matt Grant, Grant Wealth Management
- · Dec McClelland, Edward Jones Investments

# SOUTH BALDWIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chad Watkins, Chairman WAS Design, Landscape Vacation Rentals Architects

Sted McCollough, **Chair-Elect** McCollough Architecture

Kristin Hellmich, Treasurer OWA

Charlene Haber, **Immediate Past Chair** Wolf Bay Restaurants

Jim Bibby The Wharf

John Brett Brett Robinson Jennie Campbell

Stewart Lodges at Steelwood

H.C. (Harry) Cecil Alabama Technology Network

**Dr. Josh Duplantis** Coastal Alabama **Community College** 

**Charlie Ebert** City of Foley

**Bridget Felder** Alabama Credit Union

**Beth Gendler** Gulf Shores/Orange **Beach Tourism** 

**Penny Groux** Perdido Beach Resort

**Dewane Hayes** Sweat Tire - Foley, Orange Beach

Mark Ingram Baldwin EMC

**Renee James Insurance Specialist**  **Brandon Johnson** Trustmark Bank

**Steve Kirkpatrick** Town of Elberta

**Tom Knighten** Tanger Outlets

**Tim Lower RE/MAX** Paradise

**Braswell McMeans Collins** Aerospace

Matt Pugh **Cosmos Restaurant** Group

**Dr. Margaret Roley** So. Baldwin Regional Medical Center

**Clark Stewart** WHEP Radio

Alex Sweeney South State Bank

Christina Weaver Farmers Ins., The Weaver Agency

Christina Woerner **McInnis** Woerner Companies

**Bryan Wolfe** Vulcan, Inc.

# COASTAL AL BUSINESS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Executive Committee** Jim Bibby, **Gateway Initiative** Representative The Wharf

Chad Leonard, Past Chair Honours Golf

Mike Steward, Chairman Vision Fox Business Advisors

Brandi Ingram, Member-at-Large Perdido Beach Resort

Members: Gary Ellis Gulf State Park

Scott Fuller Gulf Shores International Airport

**Joe Garris** City of Gulf Shores

**Beth Gendler** Gulf Shores & Orange **Beach Tourism** 

Hunter Harrelson **Beachball Properties** 

Andrew Hart RE/MAX Gulf Shores Re/Max Paradise - Chuck Norwood

**Kristin Hellmich** OWA

State Farm Frances Holk-Jones Ins. Co.

Jerry Johnson City of Orange Beach

Chad Leonard Honours Golf

Mark Jones Yellow Hammer IT

**Tim Lower** Miles McDaniel

**Riviera Utilities Bob McDowell** 

Frances Holk - Jones Edward Jones-Bob McDowell

> **Brenton McWilliams** The Law Offices of Brenton C. **McWilliams**

Jenifer Parnell

Flora-Bama Lounge, Package & Oyster Bar

**Reggie Pulliam** Coastal Alabama Insurance and Financial Services

**Kimberly Ray** Vacasa Alabama, LLC

**Tom Steber** Fort Morgan Marina

# GATEWAY INITIATIVE BY THE NUMBERS BUSINESS DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

The *Gateway Initiative* has been guided by a set of strategic objectives and outcomes called our Accountability Plan. These measurements are based upon our original Case Statement, which was developed by South Baldwin Chamber leadership with guidance from Funding Solutions in 2017. The Accountability Plan's purpose is to track and communicate Gateway's success. It is revised bi-annually by the internal team and then approved by the Oversight Council which is comprised of four investor representatives from each chamber. Below is a sample of the accomplishments of the *Gateway Initiative* since 2018:

6

Community partners working in collaboration on the development of the South Baldwin Training Campus

43

Start-up entrepreneurs or existing businesses provided services or solutions

# 154

10

Partners in leadership, customer service and supervisory development training courses

Active

Apprenticeship

credentialing

opportunities and two

more in development

Job/career fairs conducted annually in collaboration with Baldwin County Schools, Career Centers and SAWDC

**Regional partners** 

involved in advocacy

efforts to support

regional training and

workforce

Local employees who have completed or are currently enrolled in Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship programs

134

Industry Cluster Consortiums formed to better understand local workforce and educational needs as well as increase advocacy efforts

Chambers in the Baldwin County Chamber Coalition who engage in relevant probusiness advocacy efforts, including legislative communications, and community education opportunities

# 53

Local companies participating in Apprenticeship programs Gateway's contract with TransfrVR provided provided training to students and others alike at the South Baldwin Literacy Council

Bi-annually publish the results of the industry salary survey to better report current industry wage and benefit trends in our region



Administered, analyzed and distributed the Baldwin County Chamber Coalition's 2022 Legislative Agenda for local elected officials

# **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & RECRUITMENT**

### **Gateway Training Academy**

A major objective of the *Gateway Initiative* is to continually search out professional development training opportunities for our investor businesses and organizations. **The Gateway Training Academy** brings world-class training and process improvement opportunities to small and large businesses, and across a variety of industry sectors. Through partnerships with Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT), Alabama Technology Network (ATN), Columbia Southern - Supervisory Microcredential program, and Auburn's Technical Assistance Center (ATAC), *Gateway* is aiming to improve the workforce in South Baldwin County for the betterment of the whole community, locals and visitors alike.

#### **Training Outcomes:**

- Facilitate leadership, customer service and supervisory development training to 100 individuals, annually
- Collaborate with Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism, Coastal Alabama Community College (CACC), Gulf Regional Early Childhood Services (GRECS), Auburn Technical Assistance Center, University of South Alabama (USA) and Tri-City Leadership on the development of the South Baldwin Workforce Training Campus
- Collaborate with TransfrVR to develop additional VR training opportunities to support training for south Baldwin businesses
- Regular meetings and advocacy efforts with/for regional training and workforce partners (i.e., ATN, SAWDC, CACC, AIDT, SBLC)

#### **Gateway Training Programs & Partner Organizations:**

- Gateway to Great Customer Service
- Auburn's Organizational Management Course Series
- AIDT Leadership Training
- Alabama Ready to Work Soft Skills Training

# Apprenticeships

Employers in Baldwin County are discovering a new type of employee. They create your future workforce, lift up your community, and help grow your business. We call them an apprentice. Apprenticeships are an industrydriven, high quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential. *Gateway* is a registered apprenticeship sponsor.

#### **Apprentice Program Outcomes:**

- Determine Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship options and career pathways in local business roles or connect employers with industry expert sponsors (e.g., CACC or AOA)
- Continued partnership with educational institutions and local business leaders to create and promote apprenticeship credentialing opportunities
- Sponsor 50 Apprentices in key industry clusters in Baldwin County (including marketing, set-up, administration, and tracking of apprentice progress)





### **Recruiting and Hiring**

Gateway Initiative is continuously working to identify opportunities to recruit new workforce in order to better meet the needs of businesses looking to hire motivated, trained and skilled workers.

#### **Programs:**

- Gateway Career Connection
- Job Fairs
- Local annual hiring and career events such as: Worlds of Opportunity (WOO), SAWDC Virtual Hiring Events, Youth Apprentice Signing Day, Gulf Shores High School Career and Job Fair
- Apprenticeships as a recruiting and retention tool

#### **Outcomes:**

- Explore timeline and work plan for developing a recruiting, hiring, and job-sharing platform for local businesses and workforce
- Co-host job/career fairs in collaboration with Baldwin County Schools and Career Centers
- Promote local job opportunities for Baldwin County's youth, support and participate in events listed above, and promotion of preapprenticeship and apprenticeship programs
- Continue to foster relationships with local educational institutions and employers in order to influence curriculum opportunities that align with local business needs (including regular meetings with career coaches and guidance counselors and promoting career tech opportunities to students and caregivers)





#### **Career Technical Education**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are the foundation of the workforce. CTE programs prepare individuals for a wide range of careers that reflect the contemporary workplace. CTE adds to our K-12 students' education and success. As we strive to prepare every south Alabama student to be college and career ready, CTE provides our greatest collective opportunities for creating a skilled, knowledgeable, and productive future workforce.

#### **Programs:**

- Baldwin County Career Tech Programs 23 programs administered through 11 Baldwin County schools, striving to prepare students for the transition to postsecondary learning and workforce opportunities
- Gulf Shores City Schools Academies
- Orange Beach City Schools Acadamies

#### **Outcomes:**

- Links Baldwin County businesses to job prospects who are technically proficient and career ready
- Establish (and continue to facilitate) employer advisory committees by career cluster to advise as to what they determine as necessary skills and credentials of value for job prospects
- Advocate within the Baldwin County school system, the Gulf Shores school system, Baldwin County private schools, and Coastal Alabama Community College for the development of training programs that meet employer needs and require completion of credentials of value
- Advocate for as many dual enrollment courses as possible for career technical programs where college credit is granted for high school coursework

# **PRO-BUSINESS ADVOCACY & LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

#### **Baldwin County Chamber Coalition**

In 2018, *Gateway* facilitated the gathering of all five Chambers of Commerce in Baldwin County to collaborate on a county-wide business legislative agenda. For the first time in more than ten years, the executives and governmental affairs committee members from each Chamber gathered to develop the Baldwin County Chamber Coalition. Each year, the Coalition aims to support business by educating employers and their employees regarding important legislative issues. In addition we connect directly with our local elected officials about issues that matter to our business members in Baldwin County. We effectively represent 3,500 members and 74,000 employees in combined membership.



#### **Research and Legislative Action**

*Gateway* is dedicated to pro-business advocacy efforts that span many areas: we dove in head first to address business needs during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Hurricane Sally relief efforts; we actively coordinate with schools and colleges to ensure curriculum aligns with hiring needs; and we've drafted numerous communications to State and Federal congressional delegates expressing our support or dissatisfaction with proposed legislation (e.g., the single-use plastic ban, infrastructure funding, and apprenticeship wage reimbursement laws). We also facilitate survey efforts to better understand industry needs related to employee housing, workforce training, salary and benefits offerings, and more. We are continually looking for ways to ensure business owners can achieve their fullest potential.

#### **Committee Participation**

One specific way *Gateway* advocates for local business across the State is through committee and council participation. For example:

- Governor's Technical Education Advisory Committee for Hospitality & Tourism
- Business Council of Alabama
- Advisory Board Member Alabama Education Alliance
- Advisory Board Member Alabama Department of Education for Business & IT
- Governor's Think Tank on Education & Training Innovation

#### **Outcomes:**

- Facilitate meetings with industry cluster consortiums to better understand local workforce and educational needs as well as increase advocacy efforts on a variety of other regional topics
- Publish the results of the 2023 and 2025 bi-annual industry salary survey to better report current industry wage and benefit trends in our region
- Participate in local, regional, and state-wide Advisory Committees in order to advocate for South Baldwin businesses
- Play a lead role in facilitating local communication and info sharing forums for members and investors to include participation from local leaders and representatives during critical times
- Engage Baldwin County Chamber Coalition in relevant pro-business advocacy efforts, including legislative communications, and community education opportunities and the yearly Legislative Agenda.

# JRSHIP & EXISTING BUSINESS ASSIST

A major tenet of the Gateway Initiative is to promote entrepreneurship and provide assistance to existing business, always using an economic development lens. The Gateway Team facilitates services to entrepreneurs and existing business owners through Gateway programs and in coordination with community partners.

#### Start-up Coaching

Gateway has a broad network of subject matter experts in a variety of industries to assist in starting nd successfully growing a business

#### SCORE

The South Alabama Chapter of Senior Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) has partnered with Gateway to offer small businesses free mentor training in our area.

#### **Business Acceleration**

The Gateway Team has designed a formal process and program to learn about your operation and recommend strategies for growth.

#### Continous Improvement

The Alabama Technology Network (ATN) Continuous Improvement Team's primary focus is maximizing efficiency and product quality through process improvement.

#### Training Partners

Gateway training and educational partners offer a wide variety of business solutions through educational opportunities.











COASTAL ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE



#### Entrepreneurship & Small Business Outcomes:

- Gateway Initiative Story Videos and Written Features on local business to help promote and grow their business
- Continue to provide engagement services and solutions or provide referral services to start-up entrepreneurs or existing businesses
- Continue to partner with existing local SCORE representatives to recruit SCORE mentors in order to aid local entrepreneurs







# 2023-2027 Campaign Goal and Budget

# \$2.5 million

five-year campaign goal

# \$500,000

#### per year

### Chairman's Circle: \$20,000 +

- South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber membership included with your *Gateway Initiative* investment
- · Consultation and communication on the Gateway Training Academy
- VIP invitations to Leadership Series and investor only events
- Recognition on all Gateway Initiative materials
- · Preferred access to grant consultations and submissions
- Direct access to *Gateway* Leadership on key issues impacting your business
- Free listings on the *Gateway* Career Connection Job Board website and access to Job Fairs
- Networking opportunities with our other Gateway Initiative investors
- VIP access to select chamber of commerce events for South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber

## CEO Council: \$15,000 - \$19,999

- South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber membership included with your *Gateway Initiative* investment
- Consultation and communication on the Gateway Training Academy
- VIP invitations to Leadership Series and investor only events
- Recognition on all Gateway Initiative materials
- · Preferred access to grant consultations and submissions
- Direct access to *Gateway* Leadership on key issues impacting your business
- Free listings on the *Gateway* Career Connection Job Board website and access to Job Fairs
- Networking opportunities with our other Gateway Initiative investors

### Leaders Forum: \$10,000 - \$14,999

- 50% discount on South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber membership included with your *Gateway Initiative* investment
- Consultation and communication on the Gateway Training Academy
- · VIP invitations to Leadership Series and investor only events
- Recognition on all Gateway Initiative materials
- · Preferred access to grant consultations and submissions
- Direct access to Gateway Leadership on key issues impacting your business
- Free listings on the *Gateway* Career Connection Job Board website and access to Job Fairs
- · Networking opportunities with our other Gateway Initiative investors



#### Strategic Partner: \$7,500 - \$9,999

- Recognition on the Gateway Initiative website based on investment level
- · Consultation and communication on the Gateway Training Academy
- · VIP invitations to Leadership Series and investor only events
- 30% discount on South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber membership included with your *Gateway Initiative* investment
- Direct access to *Gateway* Leadership on key issues impacting your business
- Free listings on the *Gateway* Career Connection Job Board website and access to Job Fairs
- Networking opportunities with our other Gateway Initiative investors

### Growth Leader: \$5,000 - \$7,499

- · Recognition on the Gateway Initiative website based on investment level
- Consultation and communication on the *Gateway* Training Academy
- · Leadership Series pre-meeting introduction and Q&A with the presenter
- VIP invitations to Leadership Series and investor only events
- 20% discount on South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber membership included with your *Gateway Initiative* investment
- Free listings on the *Gateway* Career Connection Job Board website and access to Job Fairs
- Networking opportunities with our other Gateway Initiative investors

## Investor Colleague: \$2,500 - \$4,999

- Consultation and communication on the *Gateway* Training Academy
- · Leadership Series pre-meeting introduction and Q&A with the presenter
- 10% discount on South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber membership included with your *Gateway Initiative* investment
- Recognition on the Gateway Initiative website based on investment level
- VIP invitations to Leadership Series and investor only events
- Free listings on the *Gateway* Career Connection Job Board website and access to Job Fairs
- Networking opportunities with our other Gateway Initiative investors

### Community Associate: \$1,500 - \$2,499

- Consultation and communication on the Gateway Training Academy
- · Recognition on the Gateway Initiative website based on investment level
- VIP invitations to Leadership Series and investor only events
- Free listings on the Gateway Career Connection Job Board website and access to Job Fairs
- Networking opportunities with our other Gateway Initiative investors



Investor logos are displayed at Leader's Forum-level investment and above. See all Gateway investors <u>HERE.</u>

Contact our team for more details about the benefits you receive when you invest in Gateway!

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ALABAMA RESTAURANT & HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION





UNIVERSITY

MADE IN ALABAMA



COASTAL ALABAMA















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Pictured Left to Right: Travis Valentine, Tyler Morgan, Ryan Moberly, Greg Alexander, Donna Watts, Ed Bushaw, Penny Hughey, Kaitlyn O'Neal, and Lori Pressley

#### Donna Watts

President/CEO South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce donna@mylocalchamber.com

**Greg Alexander** President/CEO Coastal Alabama Business Chamber greg@mygulfcoastchamber.com

#### Tyler Morgan

Director of Career & Business Development Gateway Initiative tyler@gatewayinitiative.com

**Ed Bushaw** Vice President of Workforce Development Gateway Initiative ed@gatewayinitiative.com **Lori Pressley** Director of Communications South Baldwin Chamber of

Commerce lori@southbaldwinchamber.com

#### Penny Hughey

Vice President of Education + Programs Coastal Alabama Business Chamber penny@mygulfcoastchamber.com

#### **Travis Valentine**

Vice President of Investor Relations South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce travis@southbaldwinchamber.com

#### **Ryan Moberly**

Director of Communications Coastal Alabama Business Chamber ryan@mygulfcoastchamber.com

