

THE BUSINESS ADVOCATE

Volume 9 | Issue 5

A publication of the Business Council of Alabama

Paving the Way to Alabama's Future

The No. 1 policy issue for the Business Council of Alabama from the just-ended 2018 legislative session is investing in our roads and bridges and supporting candidates in the June primaries and the November general election who believe in promoting Alabama's infrastructure development.

The BCA supports research and recommending solutions to address infrastructure needs. The BCA and the Alliance for Alabama's Infrastructure strongly support plans to identify

statewide road and bridge needs and provide adequate and stable funding to address them.

2018 BCA Chairman Perry Hand, chairman of Volkert Inc. in Mobile, has made it clear that the BCA's political arm, ProgressPAC, will support candidates who will join us in promoting economic success for owners, stockholders, employees, and their families.

"At the session's end, our sights turn to the June primary

1: The BCA board of directors at the annual meeting in December elected BCA officers for 2018. They are from left, Rey Almodovar, chief executive officer Intuitive Research and Technology Corp. in Huntsville, secretary; Perry Hand, chairman of Volkert Inc. in Mobile, BCA 2018 chairman; BCA treasurer Charles Nailen Jr., president/owner of BBG Special Foods Inc./Taco Bell in Dothan, reelected; Mike Kemp, president and CEO of Kemp Management Solutions in Birmingham, first-vice chairman; and BCA secretary Denson Henry, vice president of Henry Brick Co. in Selma, elected second-vice chairman. Not pictured is Fournier J. “Boots” Gale, general counsel, Regions Financial Corp., who was re-elected BCA general counsel.

2: 2018 BCA Chairman Perry Hand, chairman of Volkert Inc., in Mobile, is chairman of a leading engineering firm and has had a distinguished career in politics and business. He was elected to the state Senate in 1983, reelected, and has served as secretary of state and as state Highway Director, now the Department of Transportation. He became president, CEO, and chairman of the board of Volkert in 2011 and serving now as chairman is guiding a strategic succession plan for Volkert into the next generation of growth and leadership.



elections, and through ProgressPAC, we support candidates for statewide office and legislative races who will support a pro-business climate for Alabama,” BCA President and CEO William J. Canary stated. “We vow to oppose those who will not further the business community’s goals.”

During the session, SB 100 that Governor Kay Ivey signed into law, will allow capitalization of the Alabama Transportation Infrastructure Bank. The new law sponsored by Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, authorizes the appropriation and pledge of certain gas tax revenues, license and registration fees, diesel fuel tax revenues, and motor carrier tax revenues, to the bank.

Alabama’s fuel tax has not changed since 1992. Since then, costs associated with road construction and upkeep have more than doubled – the nickel gas tax back in 1992 doesn’t buy what it used to. We have the sixth-lowest gasoline tax in the country but that means we aren’t adequately funding transportation needs at the state, county, and city levels.

The Alliance for Alabama’s Infrastructure is in its third year working to reach the goal of renewed infrastructure investment and continues to work to highlight Alabama’s needs.



That means preparing for the 2019 session that begins in March with work and research that will be completed by the Infrastructure Task Force that consists of public and private-sector participants.

During the 2018 session, the experienced BCA Advocacy Team worked with legislative caucuses and individual Democrats and Republicans to promote Alabama’s pro-business agenda.

Priority legislation during the 2018 session

that began Jan. 9 and concluded March 29 included education/workforce development, environment and energy, health, judicial and legal reform, labor and employment, small business, and tax and fiscal policy.

This agenda included successful passage of the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Act sponsored by Sen. Clay Scofield, R-Guntersville, and Rep. Donnie Chesteen, R-Geneva, to create a broadband accessibility grant program to be administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

This will greatly enhance accessibility to high-speed Internet service for about one-quarter of Alabama's population, mainly in rural areas, and will be an important tool in creating economic development opportunities for rural Alabama.

We worked with Rep. Rod Scott, D-Fairfield, who successfully sponsored legislation that ended a decade-long debate over how to account for individual income tax credits for certain taxes paid to other states. Rep. Scott also successfully updated the Simplified Sellers Use Tax program first passed in 2015 allowing online sellers to lock in an 8 percent sales tax rate.

And Rep. Ken Johnson, R-Moulton, addressed concerns that if economic developers had to register as lobbyists, Alabama would be at a disadvantage due to public declarations of proposed development project partners, endangering the projects. His legislation clarifying that economic developers will not be classified as lobbyists will keep those projects confidential.

For years, the BCA and the Business Education Alliance have promoted continued investment in worthwhile education endeavors that show results, and which prepare Alabama students for a fruitful economic life after school.

BEA Chairman and CEO Joe Morton, Ph.D., worked with legislative budget leaders to ensure that important BEA-backed education initiatives will be well funded. The result is BEA initiatives will receive a combined record \$95.9 million from the 2018-19 Education Trust Fund.

At the federal level, 2018 was an important year for Alabama.

We learned that U.S. Sen. Richard C. Shelby, R-Tuscaloosa, would be the next chairman of the important and powerful

3: From left, Business Council of Alabama President and CEO William J. Canary, Altec Chairman and CEO Lee Styslinger III, National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) President and CEO Jay Timmons, and Alabama Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield, meet at BCA member Altec Inc. in Birmingham for the Alabama segment of the NAM's State of Manufacturing Tour.

4: Alabama House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, R-Huntsville and...

5: Senate Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, were two of the 12 legislators who spoke at BCA Tuesday Briefings during the 2018 regular legislative session. Governor Kay Ivey's chief of staff, Steve Pelham, also spoke at a Tuesday Briefing. Briefings are held during regular sessions for the BCA's Governmental Affairs Committee provide the opportunity for committee members and guests to get an in-depth look at the week's activities.



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Previous issues available at bcatoday.org.

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The Business Advocate is published by the Business Council of Alabama, Alabama's foremost voice for business. The BCA is a non-partisan statewide business association representing the interest and concerns of three-quarters of a million working Alabamians through its member companies, and is Alabama's exclusive representative to the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. For information on becoming a member of BCA, contact Elaine Fincannon, 334.240.8749, or elaine@bcatoday.org. For more information, visit bcatoday.org.



Senate Appropriations Committee following the spring 2018 retirement of Chairman Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss.

Sen. Shelby also was expected to chair the subcommittee that oversees funding for the Pentagon, a significant issue for Alabama's tremendous military support businesses.

Alabama and the business community are blessed to have the unparalleled leadership and integrity of Sen. Richard Shelby and the entire House congressional delegation whom we have always been able to rely upon to move Alabama in the right direction.

Alabama gained a new U.S. senator this year, Sen. Doug Jones, who won a special election and who took the oath of office in January to succeed U.S. Sen. Luther Strange. Sen. Jones is the 42nd person to serve as a U.S. senator in Alabama since statehood in 1819. We look forward to working with Sen. Jones as he joins the Alabama delegation.

Early in the year, Canary joined National Association of Manufacturers President and CEO Jay Timmons at BCA-member Altec Inc. in Birmingham for the Alabama segment of NAM's State of Manufacturing Tour.

Canary and Timmons along with Alabama Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield, Altec Chairman and CEO Lee Styslinger III, employees, and business and community leaders, discussed manufacturing's optimistic



future, the rewarding opportunities the industry offers, and the urgent need to build a modern U.S. manufacturing workforce.

Manufacturing is thriving in Alabama and providing highly technical and stable jobs. Manufacturing drives Alabama's growth and employs 13.3 percent of our workforce. The BCA is proud to partner with the NAM to ensure manufacturing job creation and opportunities are robust throughout Alabama.

Later during the session, BCA officers led by Chairman Hand, travelled to Washington, D.C., to visit all nine members of Alabama's congressional delegation and to deliver the BCA's 2018 Federal Agenda. We discussed issues that are vital to Alabama's business climate.

In conclusion, the BCA's 2018 agenda resulted in positive accomplishments for business and the 34-year-old organization remained true to its principles first adopted in 1985 and updated as the need arose.

Our member-created and -driven agenda is our guide for actions that promote business and help us meet the challenge of opposing injurious laws, regulations, and mandates has served the business community well and will continue to do so as Alabama readies herself to begin her third century with the outlook brighter than ever. **TBADV**