

# THE BUSINESS ADVOCATE

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## An Opportunity for Progress

*The Business Council of Alabama's 2018 Governmental Affairs Conference focused on making the most out of transitional periods.*

It featured Q&As with members of Alabama's congressional delegation and state legislative leaders, informative speeches by Governor Kay Ivey and the Israeli consul to the Southeast and Puerto Rico, release of a new education report, and an inspiring keynote address by adventurer, author, and motivational

speaker Alison Levine, who has conquered the highest mountains on each continent, including Mount Everest.

The annual BCA conference at the Marriott Grand Hotel and Spa at Point Clear was attended by BCA members, elected officials, and honored guests.

The conference kicked off with a networking reception designed to give attendees the opportunity to meet and mingle with candidates running for election this year.

**COVER:** Jim Page, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama and chairman of the Alliance for Alabama's Infrastructure, addresses Business Council of Alabama Governmental Affairs Conference attendees. The AAI is a grassroots advocacy coalition focused on fixing Alabama's infrastructure crisis by identifying financially-responsible investments, reforms and long-term solutions for Alabama's transportation infrastructure and communicating this message to policy makers and the public.

**1:** Moore Hallmark, left, executive director of the Southeast region of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, presents U.S. Chamber Spirit of Enterprise Awards to three members of Alabama's congressional delegation for their support of U.S. Chamber issues, at the BCA's annual conference in Point Clear. Recipients were, from left, U.S. Reps. Gary Palmer, R-Hoover, Mike Rogers, R-Saks, and Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope. At right is BCA 2018 Chairman Perry Hand, chairman of Volkert Inc. in Mobile.



The reception was hosted by the Alliance for Alabama's Infrastructure, a grassroots advocacy coalition focused on fixing Alabama's infrastructure crisis and making our roads safer, generating economic growth, and improving the quality of life for all Alabamians.

BCA Chairman Perry Hand, chairman of Volkert Inc., presided over the board of directors meeting and unveiled the BCA's 2018 book, *The Future is Now*. This publication is a 355-page historical record of the BCA's substantial work during the last year of the 2014-18 legislative quadrennium. Prepared by the BCA staff and published by the BCA Press, the book includes state and federal legislative agendas, the BCA's legislative advocacy,

a written and photographic record of BCA events and activities, press releases, state and federal blogs, published Business Advocates and op-eds.

Saturday started with a panel discussion with Alabama's state legislative leaders: Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, Alabama House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, R-Huntsville, and House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels, D-Huntsville.

BCA Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Fred Blackwell led the discussion that covered topics such as early childhood education, Medicaid expansion, workforce development, and the need to increase investment in Alabama's roads and bridges.

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Lior Haiat, Israel’s Consul General to Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Puerto Rico, spoke of Israel’s ties to Alabama and the United States. The U.S. – Israeli relationship is critical to the world’s stability making Consul General Haiat’s job and the services his office provides so critical.

The final feature of the breakfast program was a congressional forum sponsored by Electric Cities of Alabama, a coalition of municipally owned electric utilities. Alabama’s electric cities span the state serving approximately 1 million customers in 36 cities.

This year’s congressional forum was hosted by Moore Hallmark, executive director of the Southeast region of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and featured U.S. Reps. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, Gary Palmer, R-Hoover, and Mike Rogers, R-Saks.

Following the discussion, Hallmark presented the three with the U.S. Chamber Spirit of Enterprise Awards for their support of Chamber issues. The BCA is the exclusive affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Alabama.

The second part of the morning’s program was the Feature Presentations, presented by Austal USA.

First up, Dr. Joe Morton, chairman and



**2:** BCA Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Fred Blackwell of Fred Blackwell Roofing in Smiths Station, right, led a panel discussion with Alabama legislative leaders.

From left are House Speaker Mac McCutcheon, R-Huntsville, House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels, D-Huntsville, and Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston. They previewed business-related issues expected in the 2019 legislative session, which begins in March.

**3:** Gov. Kay Ivey talked about preparing students for the 21st Century workforce and Alabama’s infrastructure needs.

**4:** The annual BCA Governmental Affairs Conference included a breakfast meeting followed by the general session that featured release of the Business Education Alliance of Alabama’s fifth annual report, a dynamic presentation of shipbuilding capabilities by BCA member AUSTAL USA in Mobile, and a keynote speech by adventuress and author Alison Levine, who twice climbed Mount Everest, climbed the tallest peaks on each continent, and skied across Antarctica.

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Previous issues available  
at [bcatoday.org](http://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](mailto:elaine@bcatoday.org). For more information, visit [bcatoday.org](http://bcatoday.org).*



president of the Business Education Alliance of Alabama, released the BEA's fifth "white paper" report, Leadership Matters: A Blueprint for Reinventing Schools for Student Success.

Prepared by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, the 2018 BEA report examines the crucial role leadership plays in shaping educational outcomes and showcases six examples of where leadership makes a difference and where data indicate students are achieving higher levels of success.

The white paper builds on four previously released BEA reports: the 2014 BEA research report, Obstacles Into Opportunities: A 90% High School Graduation Rate in Alabama by 2020 Provides the Educated Workforce That is Key to Expanding Our Economy, the 2015 BEA report, Teachers Matter: Rethinking How Public Education Recruits, Rewards, and Retains Great Educators, the 2016 report, Exceeding Expectations: Keys to Alabama's Student Success," and the 2017 report, Student Achievement Matters.

Next, Craig Perciavalle, Austal President of USA Operations, presented a video of the Mobile-based shipbuilder's U.S. Navy warship

production and the 4,000 Alabama-jobs the company provides.

Governor Ivey then took the stage and reiterated her support for education, workforce development, and Alabama infrastructure efforts, which are being led by the Alabama Alliance for Infrastructure. "We remain committed to infrastructure in our state," Governor Ivey said.

Then, keynote speaker Alison Levine, adventuress and author of *On The Edge, Leadership Lessons from Mount Everest and Other Extreme Environments*, awed the audience with her experience of two trips climbing Mount Everest and skiing across Antarctica. She said in business as in extreme sports, preparation and the ability to adapt to uncontrollable conditions can be the difference between success and failure.

The conference ended with the traditional interfaith service featuring Tom Benz, founder of Bridge of Faith International Children's Fund that supports Ukrainian adoption efforts, and BCA board member Fred Blackwell, a certified trainer and chair of the BCA's Governmental Affairs Committee. **TBADV**