

How Women Can Take Business Higher, p. 8

FREE



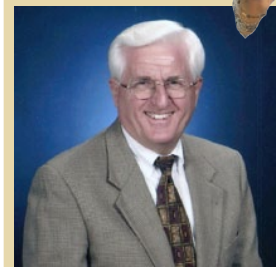
In Search of Fig Leaves, p. 6

The Valley Weekly

Friday
March 18, 2022
Vol. 8, No. 28
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!

Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mr. Charles Vedane

"If you are silent about your pain, they will kill you and say you enjoyed it." - Zora Neale Hurston

Deltas to Present 'Crimson & Cream' Conversations

The Huntsville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Incorporated is committed to social action, including advocating for best education policy, and getting to know our elected officials through open forums.

Faced with the COVID19 Pandemic, a general hesitancy to attend in-person City Council and School Board meetings emerged. In an effort to keep the connection, our Social Action sub-committee on Elected Officials Accountability created a series called "Crimson and Cream Conversations" to provide a virtual platform for elected officials to communicate with constituents. The virtual series has featured conversations with local City Council members, County Commission members, and Board of Education members throughout 2021 and 2022.

Please join us Monday, March 28, 2022, at 7:00 PM for our latest installment of Crimson and Cream Con-

versations with Madison County Board of Education members Nathan Curry (Dist. 1) and Angie Bates (Dist. 2).

Register to attend via ZOOM - www.dsthuntsville.org/events. Registrants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining

the meeting.

For more information, contact Ovetta Hobson, president, at president@dsthuntsville.org.

The Huntsville Alumnae Chapter has a rich legacy of providing service throughout all of Madison County.

Beautification Board Accepting 2022 Entries

Huntsville's Beautification Board is now accepting nominations for the 2022 Huntsville Beautification Awards.

The deadline to submit the 2022 entry form and \$25 fee for each property nominated is April 1. Judging will take place after Memorial Day.

Due to COVID-19, the Beautification Board did not judge properties in 2020 and 2021.

City of Huntsville licensed commercial, business or government properties within the city limits. To qualify, the business must be at least 1 year old.

Properties that currently have an award must reapply each year.

Professional landscapers must complete an entry form for each property submitted; lists of properties will not be accepted. A copy of a 2022 business license is also required. Only one copy of the license per landscaper is needed. Mail the completed entry form and fee to Huntsville Beautification Board, P.O. Box 738, Huntsville, AL 35804. Make checks payable to the Huntsville Beautification Board.

Tap **HERE** for form or call (256) 527-0140.

Local School Kids Complete STEM Bootcamps at Drake State

Drake State Community and Technical College successfully hosted free STEM bootcamps for local school kids. On February 26, the 34 middle and high school bootcamp students walked away with new technical skills that could lead to science and engineering careers.

"I took a welding class at Bob Jones High School," said Welding Bootcamp high school student Cameron Cummings. "I really enjoyed welding. I want to go into computer engineering, so welding is like soldering on a bigger scale. That was one of the main reasons why I got into this."

The students participated in the Welding, Engineering Design, or Machine Tool Bootcamp. Drake State's multi-year grant from NASA's Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP) made these bootcamps possible.

This award supports minority-serving institutions working to increase the number of racially or ethnically underrepresented students, and female students in STEM occupations.

"All the designs that they would produce as an engineer one day would have to be machined," said Machine Tool Instructor Tyler Williams. "The bootcamp allowed students to experience how intricate parts are produced. Working with these young students allowed them to see themselves in a hands-on and highly skilled

career."

Drake State Community & Technical College offers flexible, affordable university-transfer and technical degrees, certificates, adult and continuing education, and customized skills training to fulfill the diverse workforce need of employers. In April 2021, Drake State began a year-long celebration of its 60th Anniversary including multiple campus events for students and the community. Visit www.drakestate.edu for more information.

The Valley Weekly

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Washington in One Minute



Here are the happenings in Washington, D.C., this week:

1. **ON THE FLOOR.** The House and Senate are in session this week. The House may take up a bill revoking Russia's most favored nation trade status and will also vote on a bill to outlaw mandatory arbitration clauses in employment, consumer, and business contracts (affecting approximately 60 million U.S. employees), and a bill to outlaw race-based hair discrimination.

The Senate is expected to approve Shalanda Young's nomination to be the director of the White House Office of Management and Budget.

2. **THE WHITE HOUSE.**

Last Friday, President Biden

signed a four-day extension (thru March 15) of the current stopgap measure keeping the federal government open, while Congress enrolls and sends to the White House the 2,741-page, \$1.5 trillion FY2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act, approved by the House and Senate last week, which includes \$13.6 billion in aid to Ukraine (Democratic leaders were forced to jettison \$15.6 billion in additional Covid relief from the bill after opposition to its "pay-for" obtained from raiding city and county Covid funds). After a phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky on Friday, the President on Saturday approved an additional \$200 million in arms and equipment for Ukraine.

3. **FEDERAL RESERVE**

MEETING. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee will meet and is expected to raise interest rates by a quarter percentage point, which has been announced by the Fed to be the first in a series of interest rate increases this year.

In related news, last Thursday the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the Consumer Price Index rose by 7.9% through February, the fastest pace of annual inflation in 40 years. As of March 13, 2022, the average national price for a gallon of regular gas was \$4.325 (for more gas price data, go here: <https://gas-prices.aaa.com>)

4. **CALIFORNIA WAIVER.** Last Wednesday, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reversed a Trump-era decision to revoke California's authority to set tailpipe emission standards more stringent than those established by the EPA under the Clean Air Act, as amended (known as the "California waiver"), which will restore California's role in setting

more stringent emission and fuel efficiency standards that, in practice, are used by automakers as the de facto national standard.

5. **TSA EXTENDS MASK RULE.** Last Thursday, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced that it was extending its mask requirement in airplanes, trains, buses, and transit hubs - set to expire on March 18 - for one (1) month through April 18, 2022. TSA said the extra month will give the U.S. Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention time to develop new, more targeted policies that will consider the number of cases of Covid nationally and in local communities, and the risk of new variants.

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**The Valley Weekly
Ad Rates Single Issue**

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Eighth Page	2.5x5 inches	\$100
Sixteenth Page	2.5x2.5	\$50
Classified	1 col.x1 inch (4 col. in. minimum=\$24)	\$50/Flat Fee
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Drake Offering Scholarships for Automotive Careers

The Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association (AAMA) and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has announced the availability of 30 scholarships for Alabama residents who want to pursue a technical education certificate or associate degree in programs related to the automotive manufacturing industry at institutions like Drake State Community and Technical College. Individual

prospective and current students can be awarded a \$1,800 scholarship. Students with at least a 2.5 GPA can learn more and apply directly at with at least a 2.5 GPA can learn more information and apply directly dreamitdoitalabama.com/aama/. The deadline to apply is March 31.

Recipients may use the funds for the summer or fall 2022 semester tuition, books, and fees associated with the


approved program of study. Students can begin registering for summer classes today at Drake State.

Scholarship Requirements

A full submission for the scholarship requires: completed application; resume; a 500-word essay on why the student wants to work in Alabama's automotive industry; one signed reference letter; an unofficial college or high school transcript; and a headshot photo.

THE VALLEY WEEKLY

VALLEY DEATHS



NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW - Huntsville, AL 35816 - (256) 539-8189

Funeral service for MR. TIMOTHY E. MCCAULLEY (b. 1965) will be Saturday, March 19, at 1 p.m. at the Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for MRS. MILLIE TOWNSEND FORD (b. 1935) was held Sunday, March 13, at Saint Mark Baptist Church (6475 Moores Mill Road ~ Huntsville, Ala.) with Elder Jeremiah Chester officiating.

Funeral service for MR. DERRICK D. ALLISON (b. 1975) was held Saturday, March 12, at Little Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Jerry Crutcher officiating.

Funeral service for MR. DAVID FINLEY (b. 1929) was held Tuesday, March 8, at the Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue - Huntsville, AL 35810 - (256) 534-8481

Funeral service for DEACON FRANK LANGFORD, SR., will be 1 p.m., Sunday, March 20, at Big Shiloh P.B. Church (133 Maple St., Madison) with Pastor Jeffery Jefferson officiating.

Funeral service for MRS. BEULAH MAE TOLBERT (b. 1951) will be 12 p.m., Saturday, March 19, with Pastor Will McDole officiating.

Funeral service for MRS. MARY ELLEN COOPER (b. 1925) will be held Thursday, March 17, at the Royal Chapel of Memories with Pastor Douglas Simons officiating.

Funeral service for MRS. ADDIE J. HUMPHREY (b. 1949) was held Tuesday, March 15, at the Taylor's Chapel Church (3100 Stringfield Rd NW, Huntsville, Ala.) with Pastor Theodis Acklin officiating.

Funeral service for MR. DAVID CARLTON HARDIN (b. 1933) was held Monday, March 14, at the Royal Chapel of Memories with Dr. Maurice Childress officiating.

Graveside service for MR. IRA MILTON KING (b. 1959) was held Friday, March 11, in the Meadowlawn Garden of Peace (450 Mount Lebanon Road, Toney, Ala.) with Minister Wilma T. Booker officiating.

SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

2505 University Drive NW - Huntsville, AL 35816 - (256) 539-9693

Funeral service for MR. TOMMY JEFF WILLIAMS, SR., (b. 1970) will be noon Saturday, March 19, at Sherwood Baptist Church, 6600 Old Madison Pike, Huntsville, Ala.

THE VALLEY WEEKLY

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

March 16

Madison County Commission Meeting
7th Floor
Madison County Courthouse
100 Northside Square
Huntsville, Ala.
10 a.m.-11 a.m.

March 17

St. Patrick's Day \$5 After 5 with Diana Lucas
Huntsville Museum of Art
5-8 p.m.

March 18-20

Arnez J
Stand Up Live Huntsville
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

March 23

"Cartooning"
After School Classes
(Wednesdays Thru April 27)
Huntsville Museum of Art
\$85-\$100 - 4-5:30 p.m.

March 26

Kenny G
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.

April 8

Earthquake
Stand Up Live Huntsville
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

April 29

Investiture for Daniel K. Wims
12th President of Alabama
A&M University
T.M. Elmore Building
10 a.m.



THE VALLEY WEEKLY

CHAMPION GAME PLAN

PRESTON BROWN

"WORRY DOESN'T WORK"

Matthew 6:26 says, *Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*
In the sermon on the mount, Jesus deals with worry from a different perspective. He says, "Look at the birds." God is always trying to get us to look at something other than ourselves. Remember, he told Abraham to "come out of your tent and look up at the sky and count the stars," if indeed you can count them. And He is saying to all of us, *look at something other than your current circumstance.* God is saying, *I am greater than all of these things that we tend to worry about.*
Jesus goes on to say, "Can any of you add anything to your life by worrying?" You see, we can work on our problem and we can work on our situation, but we don't need to worry about it, because worry doesn't work.
So let us all remember, God wants us to consider Him as the solution to any problem that you have. In other words, instead of praying to God about how big your problem is, we need to pray about how big our God is, and that He is very capable of handling any problem that we may have ... Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters.
Make sure that you purchase a copy of my book, "A CHAMPION GAME PLAN FOR LIFE" at amazon.com.



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Get Assistance: Call 211

SMALL BUSINESSES

[disastercustomerservice@](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov)

sba.gov

(800) 659-2955

COVID-19-RELATED UNEMPLOYMENT

Alabama Department of Labor

(866) 234-5382

labor.alabama.gov

MADISON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

(256) 539-3711

LATEST COVID-19 INFORMATION

Alabama Department of Public Health

www.alabamapublichealth.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov

TAKEOUT/ DELIVERY RESTAURANTS

<https://hsvchamber.org/restaurant-deliveries-take-out-food-service-providers/>

Huntsville Urges 'Staycations'

Staying home for spring break? If so, the City provides a variety of recreational offerings and natural settings to keep you and your family entertained all week long.

Whether you're a child, teen, young adult or senior citizen, Huntsville has options for all ages, skillsets and abilities. Here are a few ideas to put on your calendar:

March 15-17

Spring Break Fun at Hays Nature Preserve
Spend some of your spring break enjoying nature at Hays Nature Preserve! Take part in a free nature activity while supplies last from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. March 15-17, at the pavilion on the natural playground at Hays Nature Preserve, 7161 U.S. 431, Owens Cross Roads. Kids of all ages are welcome and must be accompanied by an adult.

Thursday, March 17

Animal Pelt Station with Q&A from Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Alabama 4H
10:30 a.m. – Raccoon story time and craft
***Self-led scavenger hunt sheets will also be available to use as you explore Hays Nature Preserve. Please email katheleen.theriault@huntsvilleal.gov for more info.*

Greenways & Trails

Are hiking, biking or just enjoying the great outdoors more your style? Then don't forget about the City's trails and greenways. With multiple options throughout the City, you can take a solo or family stroll, meet up with friends or walk

your dog along one of many river trails, pedestrian/bike complete streets, paved pathways and hiking trails in Huntsville. Click **HERE** to check out the selection.

Parks & Playgrounds

There are more than 65 parks featuring over 3,000 acres within the City. These parks range anywhere from small green space to large multi-use areas that provide a full range of activities and equipment. Most of these parks are handicap accessible.

Find a park to play, walk, enjoy a picnic, or get some exercise on our website.

Adopt a Friend

If you've been thinking about adding a new member to your family, now's the perfect time to do it. Through March 19, Huntsville Animal Services (HAS) is slashing adoption fees for some dogs as part of its "Dog Gone Lucky" promotion, with some adult pooches available for \$10 or \$35 and puppies and kittens for \$50.

Not ready to adopt? Stop by HAS to play with or walk a dog during the City shelter's hours of operation. Sleepover and fostering programs are also available if you're looking for a short-term commitment with a long-term impact.

Located at 4950 Triana Blvd. in Huntsville, the shelter is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Call 256-883-3782, visit HuntsvilleAL.gov/Animal or check them out on Facebook to learn more. - HuntsvilleAL.gov

PowerShot

"You are the one that you are looking for."

Audre Lorde.



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APRIL 15

drakestate.edu/jazz

"To me, we are the most beautiful creatures in the whole world. Black people. And I mean that in every sense."

– Nina Simone



Bravo! NYC Mayor Eric Adams on Kyrie Irving

I really thought that I was the biggest principled fan of Brooklyn Nets star Kyrie Irving. His slick ball-handling, trademark fadeaway jump shot, and uncanny knack for finding teammates as well as himself in scoring positions make this \$19 million a year player sheer “eye candy” for us basketball junkies.

No wonder his parents named him “Kyrie,” Latin for “Lord, have mercy”!

However, perhaps the only bigger principled fan of Kyrie than me is New York City’s Mayor Eric Adams: an Irving fan but with moral principles to guide him.

While the city’s vaccine mandate lifted on March 7 included most indoor spaces such as the Nets’ Barclay Center and the self-proclaimed “world’s most famous arena,” Madison Square Garden, its private-sector mandate requires all who work in the city to be vaccinated. And Irving refuses.



By refusing to allow Irving to play in New York City, Adams offers us a prime example of how we should handle celebrities: celebrate their process, but don’t coronate their person.

Adams: “Listen, I want Kyrie on the court. I would do anything to get that (NBA championship) ring. . . . (But) It would send the wrong message just to have an exception for one player when we’re telling countless number of New York City employees, ‘If you don’t follow the rules, you won’t be able to be employed.’”

Again, What is the Problem?

Too often, we want to relax standards and make exceptions for celebrities - those who we deem as exceptionally talented persons. But Adams’ statement mirrored the Bible’s Leviticus 19:15, “Don’t pervert justice. Don’t show favoritism to either the poor or the great. Judge on the basis of what is right.”

In my earlier column, “Presenting Tom Brady and Barry Bonds the 2020 GWA Awards,*” I stated that because they allegedly cheated while achieving greatness, both Brady and Bonds are prime candidates for *Greatness With Asterisks Awards, and thereby should be excluded from their respective Halls of Fame.

Both Adams and I (and hopefully you, too) wish for Kyrie to avoid that GWA label!

Let’s celebrate Irving’s body of hard work and his freedom to choose to vax or not, but let’s not then “coronate” this person by making him an exception and potentially endanger many New Yorkers’ lives.



Rosetta James Items Displayed at HBC

Special items and memorabilia from the life and works of the late voter rights advocate and Huntsville volunteer Rosetta James are currently on display for many of her friends and supporters to view.

James was born in 1925 in Akron, Ala. She worked with children, the elderly, and the incarcerated as a lay minister to female jail inmates. She was a member of First Missionary Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., and she received over 50 honors, awards, and commendations from organizations and agencies, including Alabama A&M University, the NAACP and Greater Huntsville Chapter of 100 Black Men of America (2017). A “Rosetta James Room” was named in her honor at First Missionary Baptist Church (Huntsville, Ala.) and the Huntsville Bible College.

Items from the Rosetta James Foundation are now on display at Huntsville Bible College, located at 906 Oakwood Avenue.

For additional information, contact Eloise McNealey, events coordinator at HBC, at (256) 469-7536.



A New Generation Of Service

MARCH 18 - Dana Elaine Owens aka Queen Latifah, is an American rapper, singer, songwriter, actress, and producer. Born in Newark, New Jersey, she signed with Tommy Boy Records in 1989 and released her debut album All Hail the Queen the same year, featuring the hit single “Ladies First.”
- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.com





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“Libraries never let us forget who we are, for their worth stands by the knowledge they keep and save for us.”

- Virginia Hamilton

THE VALLEY WEEKLY

2 **PREACH**

REV. MICHAEL RICE

In Search of Fig Leaves



Genesis 3:7;
Titus 3:4-5

The text speaks of man's first attempt at "covering" their own sins and sense of guilt. Upon the discovery of their nakedness and their first experience with shame, Adam and Eve searched for fig leaves to cover their nakedness. What is so sad about this attempt is mankind's *unrelenting* quest to employ this

unreliable and unrealistic remedy for sin. These fig leaves come in an array of designs motivated by the same desire to do as toddlers often claim, to "do it myself." This represents an *arrogant and assuming and audacious* ploy and plot to E-ase G-od O-out of the picture. Some use denominational fig leaves, others use religious fig leaves and yet others use their own form of morality that they reason is of better quality than that of others.

God did not accept Adam's fig leaves and He still doesn't accept them. Paul referred to them as *works of righteousness* in Titus 3:4-5 when he wrote, *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our*



pxbky.com/Marzena7

Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal

of the Holy Spirit. This "goodness" and "loving kindness" spoken of comes from the Perfect Heart of God.

The fig leaves come

from the putrid heart of man without the aid of the Holy Spirit. For that reason, the search should be over.

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Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Mr. Charles 'Chuck' Vedane

Mr. Charles "Chuck" Richard Vedane was born December 6, 1934, on a farm south of Lewis, Iowa, one of the three sons of the late Victor and the late Della Vedane. "Chuck" Vedane graduated from Menlo High School in May 1952 and set out operating a farm adjacent to his parents. By 1953, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and took basic training and anti-aircraft artillery radar operations training at Ft. Bliss, Tex. Following this intense training, Vedane was assigned to a base outside of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

From 1955-58, Vedane entered St. Louis University's Parks College of Aeronautical Technology, from which he graduated with a B.S. in aeronautics, and he secured an airframe and engine license and a private pilot's license.

Vedane's productive career includes extensive stints with the Army Ballistic Missile Command in Huntsville, Ala., where he was responsible for systems testing of Jupiter and Jupiter R&D ICBMs; Marshall Space Flight Center, where he tested Mercury Redstone 1 &

2 and the early Saturn 1 vehicles; Teledyne Brown Engineering, where he organized and managed a Space Operations Department that would eventually employ about 220 people, as well as served as technical director for Systems Integration with the responsibility for managing 330 people.

As a member of Trinity Methodist Church, Vedane in 1963 became involved in church and community affairs in response to the racial strife throughout the nation. He prepared a letter from Trinity's Sunday School Class to the newly elected Governor George C. Wallace informing him that the Governor's historic "stand in the schoolhouse door" at the University of Alabama did not meet their approval. This decision has led to more than 50 years of work within the interfaith religious community to promote better relations across religious, racial, and cultural differences.

Vedane also represented Trinity Methodist Church during the organization and formation of an interfaith cooperative known as the Interfaith Mission Service. The



mission of the cooperative is help the member congregations grow their capability and capacity to provide direct services and systemic change in the areas of social justice, racial and inter-religious relations.

Vedane, who ran for Huntsville mayor in 1976, was actively involved in a number of other volunteer efforts, as well. He was an organizer and founding member of the Huntsville Emergency Line Program (HELpline); the Huntsville Interfaith Volunteer Transportation Service (HIVTS), part of the Senior Center; Care Assurance System for the Aging (CASA); and AL IMPACT, a faith-based statewide social welfare and justice organization. He and his late wife Lucy are parents of three.

"Spotlight on Our Elders" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote volunteerism and activism in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at www.rosettajamesfoundation.org. Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to info@valley-weeklyllc.com.



AAMU 2022 Scholarship Tour Ends

From its actual start with the Saturday, February 26, scholarship breakfast for local students, Alabama A&M University's Scholarship Recognition and Promotional Tour awarded nearly \$16.3 million to 774 recipients at more than 100 of the state's high schools.

Leaving from Huntsville Monday, February 28,

AAMU President Daniel K. Wims and the team of staff, students and supporters began their scholarship distribution journey, visiting the host high schools and issuing scholarship support to students throughout the state, often witnessed by proud alumni, local officials and AAMU trustees. Within the course of the week, at least four trustees

(i.e., Trustees Kevin Ball, John Hackett, Jr., Tiffany Cole Johnson and Dwayne Watts), met at various designated sites to support the bus tour.

The tour concluded in Montgomery Friday morning, March 4, following an 8:30 a.m. scholarship visit to the hosting Sidney Lanier High School.

This Sunday's Lectionary

(Track 2 - Year C)



Sunday, March 20, 2022
Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9



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NAAACC Meetings

The North Alabama African American Chamber of Commerce (Huntsville) meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 12 noon.

The meeting location varies. Call (256) 564-7574.

How Huntsville Women Can Take Their Businesses to the Next Level

(BPT) - If you've launched a small business or dream of becoming a business owner, the task may seem daunting. The good news is, helpful resources - and funding sources - are available to support you as you plan, start and grow your business. Here are tips specifically for women and women of color business owners, that will help take business operations to the next level.

Build your brand image

To make an impression in today's digital landscape, it's crucial for your brand to be clearly defined and communicated. If branding is not your expertise, it's worth the investment to hire someone to bring their experience and market know-how to creating your brand and developing a strategy to communicate your brand effectively.

Knowing what your brand means and how your product or services fulfill your vision will help your business stand out from the competition.

Optimize social media

To generate positive word-of-mouth, offer exceptional services and rapid communication. It's also vital to take advantage of today's digital landscape by maximizing your social media presence. Create relevant content and positively engage with your audience on their favorite platforms to build brand awareness - and a loyal following.

Develop a social media strategy and content creation calendar focused on how your company engages with your customer base.

Embrace the digital transformation

If your small business hasn't yet mastered ways to accept digitized payments online or in-store, now's the time to get on board. According to data from the latest Visa Back to Business Study, more than two thirds (68%) of the female consumers surveyed said they anticipate shifting to being completely cashless within 10 years.



In the U.S., e-commerce has grown significantly in the last year and that trend is likely to continue in the future. Relatedly, 3 in 4 (76%) of women-owned businesses surveyed in the Visa Back to Business Study agreed accepting new forms of payment is fundamental to their business's growth.

To help your customers pay for goods and services using their computer or mobile device, Visa offers a variety of resources and digital tools.

Constantly pursue funding opportunities

Beyond discovering resources via the Small Business Administration at sba.gov, be on the lookout for ad hoc programs focusing on women and people of color to help you get needed funding. For example, visit websites like IFundWomen.com and BlackGirlVentures.org for information, tips and pitching opportunities.

Right now, Visa is part-

nering with Black Girl Ventures to help provide hyperlocal grants and mentorship, plus access to partners, products and marketing to help drive growth to minority-owned small businesses. If you live in Atlanta or Detroit you can sign up to participate in upcoming pitching opportunities here.

This partnership builds on Visa's commitment to support entrepreneurs in cities with the highest concentration of Black-owned businesses in the U.S. -

Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami and Washington, D.C.

"Through this partnership, Black Girl Ventures and Visa are able to assist entrepreneurs at a time when they need it the most and provide a megaphone to each of these community's most pressing needs," said Shelly Omilâdè Bell, founder and CEO, Black Girl Ventures.

For more information on how Visa is supporting Black women-owned businesses, visit the [She's Next Homepage](https://ShesNextHomepage.com). Or to learn more about the programs Visa has made available for small business owners to succeed, visit the [Visa Small Business Hub](https://VisaSmallBusinessHub.com).

This article is intended to provide general information and should not be considered legal, tax or financial advice. It's always a good idea to consult a legal, tax or financial advisor for specific information on how certain laws apply to you and about your individual financial situation.



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