

BUSINESS ADVOCATE

The 2021 Alabama Small Business of Year Awards were held on December 3rd in conjunction with the BCA and CCAA Annual Meeting and Partnership Event.

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ALABAMA'S TOP SMALL BUSINESSES FOR 2021

THE BCA IS ALABAMA'S STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, LEARN MORE AT [BCATODAY.ORG](https://bcatoday.org)

RECOGNIZING THE 2021 ALABAMA SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

The Partnership of the Business Council of Alabama (BCA) and Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama (CCAA) have officially unveiled the 2021 Small Business of the Year Award winners, representing a wide range of sectors across all corners of the Yellowhammer State.

The Small Business of the Year Awards annually recognize Alabama's preeminent small businesses and the widespread positive impacts they have on their local communities.

Nominations for the 2021 Small Business of the Year Awards were submitted by local chambers of commerce across the state. Finalists were then reviewed by a panel of out-of-state judges in areas including community involvement, chamber participation, business success, and overall deservedness.

"Small businesses drive job creation, sustain livelihoods, and are the glue that hold communities together in every corner of our state," said Paige Hutto, president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama.

"The Partnership is excited to once again highlight the resiliency, excellence, and heart exemplified by small businesses every day. During a uniquely challenging year in 2021, job creators and local chamber members have once again stepped up to support their communities in remarkable ways," she added.



Award announcements and presentations were made when this year's 45 finalists assembled at a ceremony held in conjunction with The Partnership's recent annual meeting at the Harbert Center in downtown Birmingham.

The ceremony was made possible by the generosity of the following sponsors: Alabama Power, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, Regions Financial Corporation, Alabama State Port Authority, HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, Great Southern Wood Preserving, Maynard Cooper Gale, Protective Life, Volkert, Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce, Huntsville Utilities, Lightfoot Franklin White, LLC, McWane, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, The Shelby County Chamber of Commerce, and Spire Energy.

Small businesses make up 99.4% of businesses in the state and give back to their locales year-round. The 2021 Small Business of the Year Awards ceremony came less than a week after the annual Small Business Saturday was held nationwide.

"Occasions like Small Business Saturday and today's award ceremony might only come one day each year, but Alabama's exemplary small businesses act as economic engines and community cornerstones every single day of the year," commented Robin Stone, interim executive director of the Business Council of Alabama. "BCA is proud to recognize and honor some of our state's best small businesses for the work they do creating good-paying jobs and helping hardworking families thrive."

There were four award categories with a respective gold, silver and bronze winner in each category: Emerging Small Business for those in business for less than five years; 1-10 Employees; 11-50 Employees; and 51-100 Employees.

EMERGING BUSINESS WINNER

WHEELHOUSE-OPP

When life-long friends Merrill Culverhouse and Jon Gibson opened a downtown restaurant in their tiny south Alabama hometown of Opp they did more than provide another dining option for citizens.

Since opening in December 2019, Wheelhouse-Opp and the team of Gibson, Culverhouse, and his wife, Susan, have embraced their hometown. They have created a destination restaurant focusing on "coastal comfort cuisine" while becoming firmly entrenched



in the civic fabric of their community. Each week the restaurant welcomes the Rotary Club of Opp. Additionally, they provide fundraising opportunities, special events for the community, and donate countless gift cards and meals.

Hometown pride and the belief that all things are possible runs deep in the team that created this year's Emerging Small Business of the Year.

The other businesses recognized in this category were **The Shoppes at Coldwater** in Tusculmbia, winning the Silver Award, and **Frozen Rooster** in Leeds, taking home the Bronze Award. The remaining finalists were Acclinate, Birmingham; Backstreet BBQ, Clanton; Galore and Moore, Calera; Farmers Insurance - Philip Hall Agency, Gadsden; Hunters Run Bar and Grill, Monroeville; McClendon Bridals, Sylacauga; Mo'Bay Beignet, Auburn; Tankr, Tuscaloosa; and The Southern Refinery, Prattville.

1-10 EMPLOYEE BUSINESS WINNER

TVW ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES, INC.

In 1996, Kent Lawrence and his wife, Mammie, purchased TVW Electrical Supplies, a regional distributor of electrical supplies in the Morgan County area that supplies lighting products, controls, and power



distribution products for a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial customers.

With a philosophy of uncompromised integrity, support for community organizations and other small businesses, attention to detail, consistent customer service, unrelenting focus on the market, and a collaborative culture that encourages non-stop learning and the freedom to make mistakes, TVW Electrical Services shines as an example of an Alabama business doing good.

The other businesses recognized in this category were **Sawyer Solutions** of Pelham, earning the Silver Award, and **Ellis Counseling, LLC** of Prattville, winning the Bronze Award. The remaining finalists were Bama Pest Control, Mobile; The Blueroot Company, Birmingham; Donahoo Physical Therapy, Sylacauga; Monroe Drugs, Monroeville; Outdoor Addition, Bay Minette; River Rocks Landing, Gadsden; Seed Creative, Tuscaloosa; Stacey's Style Studio, LLC, Irondale; T. Fox SalonSpa, Hoover; and Tanology, Auburn.

11-50 EMPLOYEE BUSINESS WINNER

VIVIAN MORA STATE FARM AGENCY

Born out of personal resilience, faith and determination, the Vivian Mora State Farm Agency gives testimony to being open to

COVER AND LEFT PAGE

Wheelhouse-Opp has already become a destination restaurant focusing on "coastal comfort cuisine" while becoming firmly entrenched in the civic fabric of Covington County.

THIS PAGE

Left: TVW Electrical Services shines as an example of an Alabama business doing good in Decatur.

Right: Vivian Mora State Farm Agency is able to assist customers in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.

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The Prattville Chamber has been an active partner during the best moments in Frasier North America's history.

new opportunity when faced with challenge and adversity. Following the financial crisis of 2007-2008, Vivian and her husband reinvented, adjusted, and diversified their career opportunities.

Vivian had met a State Farm recruiter at a Birmingham Chamber of Commerce six months prior to the collapse of their business. One year later, she contacted the recruiter, and the journey of Vivian Mora State Farm Agency began.

Opening her first agency in 2009 in Hoover, Vivian Mora was the first of its kind to have an all-minority staff serving a mostly non-English speaking population. A native of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Vivian prides herself in attracting talent to best serve underserved populations within the community.

Not only is Vivian and her team passionate about supporting and providing benefit to their clients, but they are actively involved in the communities they serve.

Through their commitment to service, the office has achieved State Farm President's Club in Bank, Health and Life as the Top 50 out of 19,000 agents nationwide.

The other businesses recognized in this category were **Singin' River Brewery Co.** of Florence, taking home the Silver Award, and **Tug and Barge Solutions** of Daphne, earning the Bronze Award. The remaining finalists were Cox Pools Service Inc., Irondale; Hamilton's on Magnolia, Auburn; Harvey's on Noble, Sylacauga; Heritage House, Tuscaloosa; Marx Brothers, Inc., Birmingham; Montevallo Family Dentistry/Dr. Bobby Shunnarah, DMD, Montevallo; Silver Ships, Inc, Theodore; Super Bee Pharmacy, Rainbow City; Trustmark National Bank, Prattville; and Ziebach and Webb Timber Company, Peterman.



51-100 EMPLOYEE BUSINESS WINNER FRAS-LE NORTH AMERICA

Fras-le North America joined the Prattville business community with the purchase of its Autauga County facility in 2008. Since then, they have worked continuously to improve the location with respect to machinery, technology, work environment and many more innovative initiatives.

Fras-le also considers the Prattville Chamber part of their journey. From opening through expansion, the chamber has been an active partner during the best moments in the company's history.

Never one to rest on their laurels, Fras-le plans to invest \$6 million dollars in new equipment, infrastructure, and enhancements to their Prattville facility over the next three years focusing even more on environmentally friendly operations, bringing new jobs to the community, and improving the overall work conditions for their current and future employees.

The other businesses recognized in this category were **Jalapenos** of Tuscaloosa, winning the Silver Award, and **SPOC Automation** of Trussville, taking home the Bronze Award. The remaining finalists were Charles Dixon Industries, Inc., Pelham; Chick-fil-A Eastwood Village, Irondale; Osborn Foodservice, Gadsden; and The Hound, Auburn. **BA**

The Business Advocate is published by the Business Council of Alabama, a non-partisan, statewide business association representing the interests and concerns of nearly 1 million working Alabamians through its member companies and its partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama. For more information on the Business Council of Alabama please contact us at (800) 665-9647 or visit us online at bcatoday.org.