



Alabama Small Business Commission
2015 Annual Report to the Governor
December 31, 2015

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1. Letter from the Chair

The Honorable Robert Bentley
Governor of the State of Alabama
State Capitol
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Governor Bentley:

On behalf of the Alabama Small Business Commission (“SBC”), enclosed please find the 2015 summary report on the activities, recommendations, and accomplishments of the Commission.

This year the Commission and Advisory Committee members assembled from around the state to debate issues, consider new opportunities, and formulate strategies to promote small business success. The Commission delivered legislative recommendations and supported executive branch initiatives designed specifically to benefit the small businesses community. With strong support from SBC members, the Legislature acted on numerous legislative priorities. We feel confident that other small business owners will recognize the benefits of these policies.

The Commission also worked closely with other state entities to promote small business within the state. For example, based on support and active participation from SBC members, the Alabama Public Service Commission ordered two new initiatives which benefit existing small business power customers with free energy audits, opportunities for reimbursement of deposits for electric service, and special rates for expanding into previously unoccupied commercial spaces.

The SBC made tremendous progress in developing the state small business website, Atlas Alabama. With your ongoing support, we are confident that we will implement the nation’s first comprehensive, single source of state information regarding the start-up and management of small businesses. Historically, there has been no single place to go, anywhere in the state, to navigate the regulatory framework of state government for small businesses. Atlas Alabama will provide complete and authoritative information on the regulations and requirements for starting and maintaining a business in Alabama, and also provide helpful information on counseling resources, capital access, news, and information.

We are also gratified that, upon seeing the value and contributions of this Commission, you decided to codify the Alabama Small Business Commission as an ongoing entity, established by law. This expanded role will afford members the opportunity to focus continually on the changing needs of the small business owner in Alabama, as opposed to simply issuing a one time, fixed set of recommendations with a limited shelf life.

We are honored to serve on this Commission, and we appreciate the confidence and trust you have placed in our efforts. As you know, SBC members serve on the Commission at no cost to the taxpayer. Thank you for your consideration of the recommendations we have made throughout this year, and also for the actions you have taken in response, to promote small business development and success in our State.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Elebash

Rosemary Elebash

Chair

2. MEMBERS OF THE ALBAMA SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

Beau Holmes, *Owner, Quantum Logistics, LLC*

Curtis Richardson, *President, C & J Electrical Service, LLC*

Donna Kerr, *Owner, Robbie's of Fayette*

Dwight Gamble, *President & CEO, HND First Bank*

Edward Wayne Bassett, *Partner, Beck's Turf*

Hunter McShan, *President, McShan Lumber Company*

Jason Wisener, *Owner, Pro-Fab Machine*

Jay Love, *Owner, Subway franchises*

Jeannie Courington, *Owner, Sebastian's Restaurant*

Jheovanny Gomez, *Co-Owner, Jalapenos Restaurant*

John L. Mitchell, Jr., *Principal, Mitchell Nissan*

Joseph Ogelsby, *Owner, Monroe Scrap Material, Inc.*

Keith Kelley, *Agent, Harris McKay Realty/Century 21*

Krista Conlin, *Principal, KC Projects, LLC*

Lance Self, *President and CEO, Zero RPM*

Lee R. Henderson, *Owner, Which Wich sandwich franchises*

Les Letlow, *Principal, The Letlow Company, LLC*

Lisa Patterson, CPA, *Principal, Patterson-Prince & Associates*

Lynne G. Frakes, *COO, Cable Television of East Alabama; President, RM Greene, Inc.*

Mickey Crew, *President, Crew Distributing Company; President, Petroleum Convenience Marketers Association*

Monique Henley, *Owner, H&S Management & Holding Co.*

Paul Hutcheson, *Owner, Hutcheson Construction*

Peter "Greg" Gregerson, Jr., *Owner, Gregerson's Foods*

Rep. Barry Moore, *Legislator; Owner, Barry Moore Industries*

Richard S. Cybulsky, M.D., *OBGYN, Premier Women's Care*

Ronald Stephen Donaldson, *Partner, J & R Feed Service*

Rosemary Elebash, *NFIB, Alabama State Director*

Sen. Paul Sanford, *Owner, Little Paul's Barbecue*

Stacia Robinson Principal, *Benechoice Companies*

William T. Youngblood, *Owner, Youngblood Real Estate (Pinebrook Shopping Center)*

MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE ALABAMA SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

Fitzgerald Washington, *Commissioner, Department of Labor*

George Buchanan, *Executive Vice President, Regions Financial Corp.*

Greg Barker, *Senior Vice President, Alabama Power*

Greg Canfield, *Secretary, Department of Commerce*

Jeremy Arthur, *President and CEO, Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama*

Jerry Mitchell, *President and CEO, North Alabama African American Chamber of Commerce*

Jim Byard, *Director, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs*

Jim Searcy, *Executive Director, Economic Development Association of Alabama*

Julie Magee, *Commissioner, Department of Revenue*

Ken Smith, *Executive Director, Alabama League of Municipalities*

Mark Heinrich, *Chancellor, Alabama Community College System*

Sonny Brasfield, *Executive Director, Association of County Commissions of Alabama*

3. Background and Purpose

When Governor Bentley assumed office, Alabama was still early in the recovery process from the “Great Recession,” with high unemployment, rising underemployment, frequent business closings around the state, and decreasing tax revenues to fund basic education and government functions.

In speeches around the state, Governor Bentley frequently notes that small businesses are the backbone of the Alabama economy. In support of that belief, Governor Robert Bentley decided to establish the Alabama Small Business Commission by Executive Order 47 in 2014.

The purpose of the Alabama Small Business Commission is to promote small business development in the state through legislative and executive policy recommendations, promote small business access to resources and information, and enhance the state’s communications with the small business community.

The Alabama Small Business Commission serves as an advisory body to the Governor and related entities by:

- Formulating policy recommendations
- Evaluating issues critical to the economic growth and expansion of existing small / independent businesses and their interests
- Exploring best practices and areas of reform
- Assessing current procedures required for establishing a start-up business and discussing ways to help start-up businesses thrive in the Alabama economy
- Communicating key issues and small business concerns
- Encouraging innovation in the state’s many regulatory relationships with small business
- Encourage new and existing business to expand and grow
- Develop recommendations focused on executive branch practices, legislative priorities, and other rules and regulations affecting small businesses

Current Small Business Environment

Based upon our comparative research among other states, Alabama finds itself with a relatively positive environment for starting and operating small businesses. Numerous national rankings and surveys of business “friendliness” consider Alabama’s tax environment, ease of hiring new employees, legal system, and other key factors as conducive for small business success.

Several key facts highlight the current small business environment in Alabama:

- Small businesses are leading the jobs recovery in Alabama, with small businesses responsible for over half of all news jobs in recent years.

- Alabama has approximately 400,000 registered small businesses, and around 100,000 of those have at least one employee (as tracked by Alabama Department of Revenue tax withholding).
- Approximately half of all private sector employees in Alabama work for small businesses
- Alabama has experienced approximately 9,000 new business start-ups in each of the last several years, as the economy has recovered from recession lows.

Additional Background Information

While legislative successes are often measured in terms of bills passed and failed, small businesses understand that many of the regulations affecting business activity are managed by the executive branch agencies, through policies and management. Licensing, permitting, and tax collection are all functions of the executive branch and its agencies, which the Governor manages directly. These entities interact with small businesses on a regular basis, and thus it is important to ensure that processes and procedures that guide those interactions work smoothly and consistently for small business customers.

It is also important for executive agencies to enable small business development by encouraging growth and success rather than undermining it with the proverbial red tape: onerous rules and regulations, lack of transparency, accountability, and customer service. It is imperative that small business owners and agency personnel constantly evaluate policies and procedures to ensure that the costs of regulation and compliance do not exceed the benefit of the intended purpose.

Finally, Small Business Commission members are often leaders in their local business communities, and are able to provide “two-way traffic” for information and communications to the Governor. Members already do an excellent job of communicating with local media, Chambers of Commerce, and other business networks to share updates and accomplishments. They also use these networks to gather feedback and provide input on policies and regulations affecting small businesses at SBC meetings. These diverse, statewide informal networks will continue to provide valuable perspectives on what small businesses are experiencing around the state, and on an ongoing basis.

4. Organization and Approach

The Alabama Small Business Commission was planned and conceived by Governor Bentley as a body made up of direct owners and managers of small businesses from around the state. Currently the Commission has 30 members, and is the first known entity of its kind in the United States. Commission appointments are for two years with a two-year reappointment option.

The Governor determined that for the purposes of selecting a membership for this Commission, a small business would be defined as a private company headquartered in Alabama with at least one full time employee and fewer than 50 employees. Other governmental entities, particularly at the federal level, use numbers as high as 500 employees to define a small business. In Alabama, more than 99% of all private companies have fewer than 500 employees, so that common metric was not considered a useful, distinguishing characteristic.

Governor Bentley also recognized that the Commission, consisting of full-time business owners, would need the support and subject matter expertise of government and other affiliated organizations in order to navigate the government and policy world. For this reason, Governor Bentley also organized the Advisory Committee, which consists of executive agency heads, economic development leaders, and other corporate and association representatives, totaling 12 members. These individuals provide background information and technical assistance, and serve as a material resource to the SBC. They provide guidance on current practices and proposed recommendations, as well as information and data needed to bolster decision-making by the SBC members. The Advisory Committee members attend all meetings and serve as a tremendous resource to the SBC. The Committee does not vote on SBC business, but does provide valuable input on matters relating to state government practices, existing policies and procedures, and local government relationships.

The Commission and Advisory Committee met quarterly in person or by teleconference, and will meet in smaller subcommittees on an as needed basis. All meetings are posted through the Secretary of State's office on Open Meetings. The majority of meetings have been held in Montgomery for ease of access and as a central location geographically; however, other sites have and will be used for special programs, tours, and site visits intended to educate members on small business opportunities, challenges, and special topics.

This year, the SBC also realized a significant organizational change in terms of establishing its existence in law. Up until this point, the SBC existed by Governor Bentley's Executive Order 47, which means it had staying power as an executive entity as long as he remained in office. Future Governors would be free to cease or continue the SBC at their pleasure. Based upon the initial successes of the SBC, and the widespread belief that the SBC would present significant value to the small business community and state government going forward, the Governor decided to work with the Legislature to codify the SBC permanently in legislation. In the 2015 regular session, the Governor signed into law Act No. 15-0450, thus permanently establishing the Alabama Small Business Commission and Advisory Committee.

In terms of executive branch organization, the new law determined that the SBC would have an organizational link with the Department of Commerce, as a natural function of economic and business development, and would report findings and communicate recommendations directly to the Governor.

While in practice, this organization did not change the goals or function of the SBC, it did secure the Commission's future as an executive branch entity and a vital contributor to small business development and policy in Alabama. This legislation is discussed in more detail in the Recommendations section below.

Atlas Alabama

In the fall of 2014, the Bentley Administration launched Atlas Alabama (www.atlasalabama.gov), a new website dedicated to serving the small business community. The launch was accompanied by a statewide marketing campaign for Atlas Alabama, with commercials and advertisements on TV, radio, internet, and print.



Charting the course to small business success

While the SBC received very positive feedback on the initial roll-out, Alabama citizens demonstrated strong demand for more valuable information on state resources and requirements for starting and running a business. Based on this demand, the Governor, his staff, and the SBC began to brainstorm new and innovative concepts for improving Alabama's online capabilities which focus on the small business community.

Many state-level executive agencies provide vital services to Alabama's small businesses, and yet, the state currently lacks the capability to provide a single, comprehensive, and authoritative guide to small business services and development.

The Governor noted that other states have been making significant progress in this area, and so he determined that Alabama should be a proactive leader in providing valuable small business resources to its citizens. As a result, with the support of the SBC, Governor Bentley issued Executive Order 3 in 2015, which directed all relevant cabinet members to assemble and participate in discussions around how to use Atlas Alabama to promote small business development.

Using the Atlas Alabama website as a starting point, the goal is to simplify and streamline the process for obtaining basic, comprehensive information related to the full life cycle of a business: launching, growing, managing, and even exiting a business. As conceived, this website will include information, checklists, and helpful links to state agency websites so that entrepreneurs can follow the steps required to launch or manage an existing business. Also, when needed, the aspiring entrepreneurs can get business support and assistance through agency personnel and affiliated partners, so that they can be confident that they are satisfying all state-level requirements.

The state has many valuable business resources and talented professionals focused on small business development, and Atlas Alabama presents a tremendous opportunity to market those capabilities to the citizenry in a more focused, integrated fashion.

Atlas Alabama will help typical “customers” answer basic questions as completely and easily as possible, such as:

- “What all do I need to do to start a business?”
- “Where do I go to get financing?”
- “What information do you have that can help make my business more successful?”

In order to address these and other questions, Atlas Alabama is already in the process of developing content and links to all relevant state agency websites. Furthermore, users have the opportunity to recommend future functionality and services on the site, by offering feedback and completing a survey. The goal is to make Atlas Alabama as helpful and informative for small business users as possible, and continually update the services to meet the evolving needs of small businesses in Alabama.

Atlas Alabama has also developed an active social media presence, with up-to-date information on small business news and events on Facebook, Twitter, and a YouTube channel. Blog posts and spotlights on Alabama small business owners will add additional value to users in the coming year.

5. Legislative and Executive Initiatives

Legislative Action

One of the goals of the SBC is to originate, advocate, and support policies that will positively impact small businesses in Alabama, in terms of encouraging new business creation and promoting the growth and success of existing businesses, through legislative and executive action. In 2015, the SBC actively developed, informed, and supported numerous legislative items designed to benefit small businesses in the state. Taken together, the following legislative items represent what the SBC considers to be significant legislative accomplishments for its first full year of operation.

SBC members voted to recommend the following bills for the 2015 legislative session, which are summarized below:

- 1. HB 19 by Rep. Jack Williams (Birmingham)
SB 46 by Sen. Clyde Chambliss (Prattville)**
Revised unemployment compensation formula for calculating weekly benefits for part-time worker. Previously, a worker would lose unemployment benefits if the worker earned more than \$15 a week. Under the new law, workers can earn up to one-third of the weekly benefit amount without losing the unemployment benefits. The new law helps small business owners by encouraging more people to look for work and thus increasing the pool of potential labor, reducing the number of people receiving unemployment benefits, and making it less likely the Legislature will have to raise taxes to increase funding for the state Unemployment Trust Fund.
Final Action - Act No. 15-0157
- 2. HB 215 by Rep. Becky Nordgren (Gadsden)
SB 9 by Sen. Paul Sanford (Huntsville)**
State income tax deduction for contributions to a Health Savings Account
Final Action
Senate Bill 9 passed Finance and Taxation Education Committee 13-0
HB 215 received a hearing in Ways and Means Education Committee.
The bills will be pre-filed for the 2016 Legislative Session by existing sponsors
- 3. HB 232 by Rep. Jack Williams (Birmingham)
SB 74 by Sen. Greg Albritton (Range)**
Doubling the amount from \$3,000 to \$6,000 for claims that can be taken to small claims court without an attorney. The rate had not changed since 1996.
Final Action – Act No. 15-0224
- 4. SB 130 by Sen. Paul Sanford (Huntsville)
Rep. Jack Williams (Birmingham)**
Allow lodging tax to be collected on the One Spot System tax collection system

Establish a statewide uniform due date for collection of taxes on the One Spot System. Currently, municipalities and counties could establish different due dates for the collection of taxes and still use the One Spot System.

Final Action – Act No. 15-0052

5. SB 322 by Sen. Paul Sanford (Huntsville)

Rep. Anthony Daniels (Huntsville)

The legislation would require local taxing jurisdictions to notify the Dept. of Revenue 90 days in advance of implementing a tax change. In addition, if the Dept. of Revenue or local taxing jurisdiction gives an incorrect tax rate, the taxpayer would be held harmless. Currently, the notification is only 30 days and the taxpayer is held liable for filing an incorrect tax rate.

Final Action – Did not receive final passage on last day of session

SB322 will be pre-filed in the 2016 Legislative Session by Sen. Paul Sanford

Other Bills of Interest Affecting Small Businesses

1. HB 40 by Rep. Chris Pringle (Mobile)

Repeal obsolete laws/licenses in Alabama Code. Repealed more than 300 obsolete laws and licenses.

Final Action - Act No. 15-0070

2. HB 414 by Rep. Ken Johnson (Moulton)

Alabama Small Business Act Tax Credits-tax credit to any Alabama small business with 50 or fewer employees that creates new jobs and hires a new fulltime employee. The tax credit would be \$1,250 per qualified new employee. Wages must meet or exceed a total of \$40,000 annually.

Final Action – Defeated

3. HB 495 by Rep. Arnold Mooney (Birmingham)

Further specify Alabama's status as a right to work state. Prohibits a county, city or any political subdivision in this state from enacting or administering an ordinance, policy, rule or mandate requiring an employer to provide any employee or any class of employees with any employment benefit, including paid or unpaid leave, vacation, wage, or work schedule that is not required by state or federal law.

Final Action – Defeated

4. HB 554 by Rep. Alan Baker (Brewton)

Reorganizes the Alabama Department of Commerce and codifies the Alabama Small Business Commission and the Alabama Small Business Advisory Committee as permanent entities advising the Governor, with an organizational link to the Business Development Division.

Final Action – Act No. 15-0450

5. SB 109 by Sen. Arthur Orr (Decatur)

Apprenticeship Tax Credit Act of 2015. The bill would allow an income tax credit of \$1,000 for a maximum of four years for each apprentice employed for at least seven full months.

Final Action – Defeated

Bill will be pre-filed for 2016 Regular Session

6. SB 243 by Sen. Arthur Orr (Decatur)

Replace the current *Certificate of Good Standing* with a *Certificate of Compliance*. The *Certificate of Good Standing* only applies to Business Privilege Tax and does not provide an accurate representation of the business standing with the Dept. of Revenue. The *Certificate of Compliance* would ensure taxpayers are in compliance with most taxes when dealing with financial transactions.

Final Action – Act No. 15-0382

7. SB 269 by Sen. Bill Holtzclaw (Madison)

Veteran's Preference Employment Policy Act provides an employer may have a voluntary veteran's preference employment policy for hiring, promoting and retaining a veteran over another qualified applicant or employee.

Final Action – Act No. 15-0314

Executive Agency Action

Working with the Governor and his Cabinet, including several members of the Advisory Committee, the SBC successfully designed and proposed several initiatives in 2015 that were implemented by the executive branch, and did not require legislative action. The SBC considers these to be prime opportunities to impact small business success with direct executive action in a variety of ways: communications and public relations, agency protocols and policies, and specific programmatic opportunities. This year, the SBC pursued the following initiatives with the aid of the Governor and divisions of the executive branch:

"Small Business Saturday" Proclamation

- SBC worked with the Governor and his staff to promote "Small Business Saturday" in Alabama, which was Saturday November 28, 2015, the day after Black Friday.
- The Governor signed a proclamation recognizing this date as Small Business Saturday in Alabama in an effort to encourage Alabamians to support and patronize small / independent businesses.

Executive Order – Integrate Relevant State Agencies with Atlas Alabama

- In an effort to streamline access to State small business resources and requirements, the SBC recommended that the Governor sign an Executive Order encouraging all state agencies with direct interfaces with the small business community to participate on Atlas Alabama, with links to information, requirements, and services offered.
- Atlas Alabama is developing landing pages for each of the executive agencies which provide services or regulate small businesses in some way, so that business users will have a single point of access for all types of state-related business requirements and resources.

Response to Federal Government's Proposed Changes to Overtime Rules

- The SBC invited a noted authority on employment law to educate members and discuss perspectives on the federal government's proposed changes to overtime rules
- Several members and their respective organizations actively advocated positions to the U.S. Congress for the interests of small business owners in regard to the proposed changes to existing overtime rules.

Other Activities

Throughout the year, many SBC members actively participated in roundtable discussions with Alabama's U.S. Congressional delegation as a means of advancing new small business policy, providing feedback on existing rules and regulations, and sharing ideas for business development and employment growth. Alabama's U.S. Congressional delegation clearly recognized the significance and value of the Alabama Small Business Commission by choosing to meet with members and solicit their input on numerous issues.

The SBC also supported several new small business initiatives ordered by the Alabama Public Service Commission. During its October 6, 2015 meeting, the Alabama Public Service Commission unanimously approved two small business incentives aimed at strengthening and growing the Alabama economy by encouraging investments and creating jobs: the Community Redevelopment Incentive, or CRI, and the Economic Development Incentive (EDI).

Community Redevelopment Incentive (CRI).

- Under the Community Redevelopment Incentive program (CRI) – which begins November 2015 – small commercial customers in good standing with Alabama Power may be eligible for a one-time refund of the deposit they paid when establishing their business account. Up to 13,000 small businesses may qualify to receive money back.
- Average rebates are predicted to be about \$500, but some could top \$1,000.
- Additionally, small businesses may qualify for a free energy audit. Representatives from Alabama Power are available to visit small businesses and help them identify ways to use energy more efficiently.

- The CRI provides a one-year incentive for Alabama Power customers that establish a new account for an existing building that has been unoccupied for at least six months.

Economic Development Incentive (EDI)

- The EDI provides a two-year incentive for new or expanding customers meeting criteria related to additional incremental load. New or existing larger businesses that add one megawatt of energy may be eligible for a discount on their base rate of 10 percent for the first year and 5 percent for the second year.

6. Notes on Implementation and Results

Legislative successes are often defined by whether a piece of legislation passed or failed. The impact on small business often lies with the state's execution of a specific policy or procedure, or how tax incentives or regulatory burdens change over time. These policy changes ultimately affect small business profitability, hiring decisions, capital investments, and expansion plans. One factor that is often overlooked or underestimated is the impact on future generations of *potential* entrepreneurs. For example, does a policy or regulation encourage or discourage new business creation? Does it raise existing hurdles to new business formation or lower them?

Given the nature of legislation today, many detailed policy prescriptions may impact only subsets of the small business segment in the Alabama economy. A potential new law may be vitally important to a specific industry and then have no impact whatsoever on another industry. Furthermore, changes to the small business environment on a macro level may be felt years down the line, given the natural growth and impact of incentives and policy changes on businesses over time.

For these reasons, it is often difficult to link statewide metrics -- across the entire small business community -- with individual pieces of legislation. Nevertheless, the SBC endeavors to identify policy and program initiatives that will have far-reaching effects on small business statewide. This does not, however, mean that in total, many specific pieces of legislation will not have the cumulative effect of dramatically improving the business environment in which small businesses operate.

Aside from the success of specific program and policy implementations, and their related measures, the SBC anticipates that the Governor and State of Alabama will ultimately see important improvement across several key statewide metrics, including:

- Increasing contribution from small businesses to State GDP
- Increases in the number of small businesses formed each year
- Increasing number of small business hires
- Decrease in small business "deaths" (closures, bankruptcies)

Advisory Committee participation has helped the SBC to access such information at the state level, and will continue to do so. The Labor Market Information division at the Department of Labor tracks many of these metrics and in even more detail by industry and geography.

One significant advantage of the SBC's new status as a permanent, codified entity is that members will have the opportunity to see the results of implemented policies over time, and still be in a position to draw conclusions and act upon the results. This should also place a renewed emphasis on the importance of establishing and monitoring metrics for success.

7. Preview of Areas of Interest for 2016

Several topics have generated considerable discussion with SBC members this year, and will likely emerge as key areas of interest for the coming year. While no specific action items or recommendations have been formed at this time, the SBC is likely to continue exploring legislative and executive actions to address these areas of opportunity. The topics include, but are not limited to:

- Apprenticeship programs
- Health Savings Accounts
- Hard and soft skills training programs for students and adults
- Entrepreneurship programs (for displaced workers and students)
- Rural development initiatives
- Veterans programs
- Atlas Alabama – implementing new online services and expanding partnerships with other governmental entities

8. Conclusion

As the SBC concludes its first full year of operation, members rightfully take pride in the legislative and executive branch accomplishments achieved this year. The SBC developed a series of recommendations and successfully contributed to the passage and signing into law of three out of five legislative priorities. We expect to see additional discussion, and possible legislative action, on the two bills which did not pass, in the 2016 Legislative Session.

The SBC looks forward to 2016 and the opportunity to address new small business priorities in Alabama. The preliminary topics of interest in Section 7 provide a glimpse of the types of issues members are actively discussing.

The SBC may organize subcommittees, based on interest, in order to focus on key opportunities and issues for the year. Small group structure will enable members with specific interests to focus more in depth on the details of relevant policy, implementation, and financial considerations.

The SBC anticipates developing the website Atlas Alabama with more advanced functionality, information, and services. We plan for the website to become the state's first comprehensive and authoritative site for Alabama small business resources and information, including rules, regulations, licensing, and permitting at the state level. With new functionality, information and services in place, Atlas Alabama will also launch the next phase of the marketing effort, and expand upon its print, radio, internet, and social media presence.

Furthermore, Atlas Alabama will make every effort to partner with federal and local governmental entities to provide increased access to their policies and regulations governing small business activities, in an attempt to provide even greater levels of service for Alabama's small businesses.

As Alabama continues to recover from the lows of the "Great Recession," the Alabama Small Business Commission is confident and committed to the fact that small businesses will lead the way, with economic growth and employment opportunities for the citizens of Alabama. The SBC members appreciate the opportunity to serve the Governor and citizens of Alabama in this worthy effort.

9. Appendix

During the course of the year, the SBC developed legislative recommendations and supported numerous executive branch initiatives. In some cases, these actions resulted in, or contributed to, formal actions by state government; others resulted in work product of note. For that reason, the SBC has assembled many such examples for your review and records.

In the attached Appendix, please find the documents listed below:

- Executive Order 47: Establishing the SBC
- HB 554: Codifying the SBC in legislation
- Copies of SBC recommended bills passed during the 2015 legislative session (three bills)
- Executive Order 3: Integration of Atlas Alabama with state agency websites
- Executive Proclamations issued by Governor Bentley: Small Business Saturday
- Public Service Commission orders benefitting small businesses, passed October 6, 2015
 - Docket U-5016
 - Docket U-5017
- Atlas Alabama promotional materials
- Atlas Alabama marketing spots (TV, radio, banner ads, etc.)