

# JACKSON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



*“To develop and maintain an economic climate, which creates and retains jobs and enhances the quality of life for all citizens of Jackson/Madison County and West Tennessee.”*

## CONTACT

Ashley Anthony  
Communications Coordinator  
731.423.2200  
[aanthony@jacksontn.com](mailto:aanthony@jacksontn.com)  
[www.jacksontn.com](http://www.jacksontn.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Business professionals honored at Leadership Jackson event**

JACKSON, TN – Thirty-one local business professionals graduated from the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce 2010 Leadership Jackson class on Dec. 16 at the Carl Grant Events Center at Union University.

Leadership Jackson, the Chamber’s adult leadership program, gives business professionals employed with companies that are Chamber members the opportunity to better understand the community and the challenges it faces. The three-month program gives class members the chance to visit community landmarks, meet with area leaders and participate in weekly sessions about various topics including education, healthcare and government.

“This year’s class was a dynamic group of individuals who bonded quickly and were eager to learn and experience new things while learning more about the community in which they live,” said Judy Renshaw, the Chamber’s vice president of business and community services.

Demetry Allen, an accounting coordinator with H&M Company, Inc. in Jackson, said she feels honored to have been nominated and selected to be in the 2010 Leadership Jackson class.

“Leadership Jackson has tended the flame of innovation, inclusion and progress by preparing and providing Jackson’s current future leaders for a world of new challenges and opportunities,” Allen said. “I am amazed at the quality of people that this organization attracts, and I feel a common bond with all who came before me and all who will follow.”

Four class members received a jewel award for their commitment and growth during the program – Celia Allen of Maddox Insurance, Ameera Graves of Lane College, Anna Page of Regions Bank and Christopher Rawdon of BancorpSouth.

Dennis Dix, a sales and marketing director with Madison Haywood Developmental Services, received the class’ highest honor – the diamond award, for surpassing the homework and meeting requirements with Leadership Jackson. Doug Wilcoxson of Union University was the featured speaker at the event after being selected by fellow class members to be their class spokesperson at the graduation.

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Since Leadership Jackson was established in 1979, more than 900 people have graduated from the program. Leadership Jackson is one of 105 adult leadership programs in Tennessee.

“The Jackson Chamber felt it was very important to be intentional about developing future leaders for our community,” Renshaw said. “Leadership Jackson is the third oldest leadership development program in the state of Tennessee. Memphis and Nashville started their leadership development programs in 1978, one year earlier.”

The 2010 Leadership Jackson class was chaired by Greg Parsons, First Bank vice president of commercial lending in Jackson, and co-chaired by Beverly Absher, an associate professor of educational leadership at Union University and chair of the school’s department of continuing studies. Next year, Absher will chair the 2011 Leadership Jackson class.

During the graduation on Thursday, Ty Cowles of Jackson Energy Authority and a member of the 2010 Leadership Jackson class, was selected to be co-chair of the 2011 class. The nomination process for the 2011 class will begin in June.

Past alumni of Leadership Jackson were also recognized at the program. Lisa Latham of TLM Associates, Inc. was presented with the Emerging Leader Award while Lisa Webb took home the Community Observance of Personal Excellence (COPE) Award. Steve Raper of Jackson Energy Authority was honored with the Harbert Alexander Servant Leadership Award.

Renshaw said she hopes the 2010 class and past alumni of Leadership Jackson continue to give back to the community.

“My hope is that they will continue to see the potential for our community and get involved in an area that they can make a positive difference, an area that feeds a passion ... that the more they accomplish, the more they are fulfilled,” Renshaw said. “Jackson will be the recipient of those accomplishments, and it will enhance the quality of life for all of our citizens.”

For more information about Leadership Jackson, visit [www.leadershipjackson.com](http://www.leadershipjackson.com) or call the Chamber at 731-423-2200.

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## About the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce:

The Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1905 – seven years prior to the United States Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber consists of a diverse and talented staff, an executive committee, dedicated volunteers, and more than 1,350 business members – all committed to growing the economy and quality of life for everyone in Madison County and the region. Governed by a board of directors, The Chamber is a nonprofit that concentrates its efforts on economic development, which consists of marketing the area to potential employers, developing and enhancing minority and new business partnerships, workforce development, job creation, and the overall promotion of Jackson-Madison County as a great place to work, live, play and do business.

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