



2021 PROGRAM OF WORK

Foundation and Purpose

The overall mission of Gulf United Metro Business Organization (GUMBO) is to foster better communication between area business leaders and government officials at the local, state and federal levels to enhance the growth and development of south Baldwin County and provide economic opportunity for our citizens.

Transportation Infrastructure

The continued development of transportation infrastructure is essential for the economic growth of south Baldwin County, the safety of our residents and visitors and the overall prosperity of our state. GUMBO will actively support the development of transportation infrastructure in Baldwin County through state, county and city governments to address our area's transportation needs.

GUMBO will continue to support area transportation projects in coordination with local mayors and other south Baldwin municipal officials, members of the Baldwin County Commission, local legislators and key state officials. GUMBO supports not just one project, but works to develop multiple transportation routes identified and approved by local leaders in coordination with the state Department of Transportation.

Specifically, GUMBO will work to:

- Continue work to extend the Baldwin Beach Express from I-10 to I-65 to provide direct access to our coastal communities.
- Coordinate with the City of Orange Beach to construct a third bridge across Wolf Bay to enhance economic development and provide an additional hurricane evacuation route.
- Facilitate conversations and explore options with state and local leaders to build additional north/south transportation routes to the beach.
- Support the City of Foley in their effort to require the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to assume the responsibility to perform maintenance on the Foley Beach Express.

- Support the Jack Edwards Airport Authority in their ongoing expansion as well as opportunities for commercial service to grow air travel to our communities.
- Work with all interested parties including the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to build a new bridge over Mobile Bay to enhance the movement of traffic related to tourism and the overall south Alabama economy.

Tourism Sustainability and Growth

Gulf Coast tourism is vital to south Alabama and plays a huge, positive role in Alabama’s overall economy. GUMBO is committed to working with local elected officials and key statewide government leaders to achieve continued growth and development of Alabama’s gulf coast tourism economy.

- Protect funding sources for the Alabama State Bureau of Tourism and Travel and continue to work with the Ivey Administration to ensure that appropriate resources are devoted to the promotion of Alabama as an attractive tourism destination.
- GUMBO will work to quantify tourism’s overall economic impact as a key driver supporting the overall economic prosperity of the region. The result will inform a working partnership that unites tourism, economic development and chamber of commerce efforts, optimizing the performance and impact, and amplifying the broader community messaging of all these partners to positively impact Baldwin County.

Health Care

GUMBO recognizes the unique and challenging circumstances that the Covid-19 pandemic presents to our stakeholders and the people of south Baldwin County and will work with all parties to combat this deadly disease while maintaining the economic vitality and growth of our region, state and nation.

- Work with the State of Alabama Department of Public Health and local officials at the county level to ensure the rapid and safe administration of the vaccine to prevent the continued spread of the corona virus.
- GUMBO will work with the Ivey Administration and local government officials at the county and municipal level to ensure that specific sectors of business, particularly small, local businesses, are not unfairly impacted by future executive orders limiting their operation.

Education

GUMBO supports development of schools and educational institutions in south Baldwin County at the highest standard, through the Baldwin County school system or new, local systems. GUMBO supports bold, new approaches to address educational challenges in Foley, Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

- Support legislation to create a statewide school start date that would take into account the economic impact of the tourism based economy throughout our state while also providing for the proper education of Alabama school aged children.
- Oppose legislation that would increase the population or institute additional financial requirements for the creation of new school systems.
- Support the growth and development of both public and private post-secondary educational institutions in south Baldwin County.
- Support youth and adult apprenticeship programs through the “Gateway Initiative” to enhance the opportunity for individuals to gain valuable job skills as they further their education at the local level.
- Support legislation to revise the state of Alabama Foundation Program to ensure a more equitable and appropriate distribution of education taxes and revenues back to “donor” counties in Alabama such as Baldwin.

Economic Development

GUMBO supports the continued growth, diversification, and development of the economy of Baldwin County and the State of Alabama thereby providing enhanced economic opportunity for our all our citizens.

- Protect key elements of the Alabama Tourism Economic Incentive legislation to ensure that large, tourism projects are included in our state’s overall economic development strategies.
- Work with local economic development and community leaders to ensure the continued viability of the Baldwin County economic development Megasite and support its proper use and development for our citizens.
- Support the renewal of the historic tax credit legislation to ensure continued growth and development of key areas throughout Baldwin County and the state as a whole.
- Work with local municipal and county government officials and members of the Baldwin County legislative delegation to ensure that legislation to restrict or repeal extraterritorial jurisdictions does not negatively impact local governments or their citizens.

Direct Political Action

GUMBO understands and is fully committed to active, direct participation in the political process through GUMBOPAC, the official political action committee of Gulf United Metro Business Organization (GUMBO).

- Host an annual Chairman's Dinner in support of GUMBOPAC in 2021 to ensure that GUMBO will have sufficient resources needed to participate in the political process actively and effectively.
- Support candidates for the Alabama legislature from Baldwin County who understand the importance of tourism to our local economy and who share our vision for the future growth and development of our community and state.
- Support candidates for the Baldwin County Commission who will work with other local elected officials and statewide office holders to improve transportation infrastructure and address other key issues that impact Baldwin County.
- Reach out to and support legislative leaders from across our state and other statewide elected officials who understand the importance of the tourism economy in Baldwin County and the positive impact it has on the state of Alabama.