



VESTAVIA HILLS  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
A LIFE ABOVE

## Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce Selects Michelle Hawkins as Next President

*(Vestavia Hills, Alabama)* The Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce board of directors has selected Michelle Hawkins, a seasoned business entrepreneur, as the new president and chief executive officer of the organization. The announcement was made by Sandra Cleveland, a partner with BCR Wealth Strategies and 2022 chair of the chamber.

The Chason Group, an executive search firm specializing in chamber searches, was engaged by the business organization to lead the process.

Hawkins is replacing Karen Odle, who has successfully led the chamber through tremendous growth in both membership and programs over the past 19 years. Odle announced her retirement late last year.

“The search committee identified the qualities we were looking for in a new leader,” according to Cleveland. “Michelle is a perfect match. She has proven her ability to serve as a dynamic collaborator and communicator who understands the important role the chamber plays in our community. These were the type qualities we were looking for.”

Hawkins previously served as the owner/operator of Alabama Weddings Magazine based in Birmingham. She was the sole founder of the startup and produced a luxury style printed publication for 20 years.

After graduating from Brenau Women’s College (now Brenau University) in Gainesville, Georgia with a Bachelor of Art degree, Hawkins started her career as advertiser agency owner of PRO-Motion Marketing Group in Jasper, Alabama. She has also worked as a software design architect with Strategic Services, Inc. in Lawrenceville, Georgia and corporate interior designer with The Woodside Group, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia.

“The opportunity to bring my experiences as a successful small business owner to the chamber is very exciting,” Hawkins says. “The foundation that has been established over the years by Karen is solid. I



### **New Contact Information**

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(Note: Address changing August 1 when  
chamber moves into new building.)

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look forward to becoming a part of the team that can provide support to businesses of all sizes in the Vestavia Hills.”

“The committee took a great deal of time listening to our members and community leaders regarding the chamber and what they were looking for in terms of a new leader,” says John Henley, State Farm Insurance, and chair of the search committee. “We had the opportunity to interview several great professionals for the position. At the end of the day, the committee unanimously approved Michelle as the right person for the president’s role.”

Hawkins has demonstrated her commitment to local communities, businesses, education institutions, and non-profit organizations. She is a frequent participant in weekend 5K and 10K races in a continued effort to raise money for local charities; guest speaker at industry events and university classrooms; volunteering for event design work including the 100th Anniversary Gala for 106th Air Refueling Squadron; participated in ROAR for the Cure, Camp-Smile-A-Mile, St Jude Children's Research Hospital, The Foundry Ministries, and The Cavalier Rescue.

The chamber’s president is charged with leading the organization on a day-to-day basis; communicating with the membership; government relations/public policy; and building partnerships for economic, community and regional development. Other accountable duties include financial growth and management, talent development, and innovative strategic planning and implementation. The president reports to the executive board and board of directors through an annually elected chair.

The chamber is a membership organization that serves over 1,200 retail and service businesses, professionals, individuals, and retirees. The organization plays a key role in the community as a catalyst for economic growth, working with existing businesses in the area, creating partnerships with education entities, and striving for quality-of-life improvements for Vestavia Hills.

Members of the search committee, in addition to Cleveland and Henley, included Donnie Dobbins, 2023 chamber chair, First Horizon; Keri Bates, Rocky Ridge Drug Company; Doug Dean, Children’s of Alabama; Jeff Downes, City of Vestavia Hills; Linda Parker, Dream Vacations; and James Robinson, Spire Energy.