

The Nerve



A Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa

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This Week, March 27 Honda's Mark Morrison on Automaking and Business in Alabama



Despite so many difficult economic times in recent years, auto manufacturing in Alabama continues to thrive. This week, Rotarians will hear from Mark Morrison on how one company, Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, LLC (HMA), has done its part to bring jobs and prosperity to the state.

Morrison is Manager for Corporate Affairs and Communication for HMA. In his role, he supervises the Corporate Affairs and Communications team and directs internal and external communication strategies. He is the company spokesperson and is responsible for media relations, governmental relations, community relations and charitable giving. He joined Honda in April 2001.

Located in Lincoln, Alabama, Honda's \$2 billion vehicle and engine operation in Alabama employs 4,000 associates. The company produces the Odyssey minivan, Pilot sport utility vehicle, Ridgeline pickup truck and the V-6 engines that power them.

Prior to joining Honda, Morrison worked in corporate communications and marketing in Atlanta, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa. He is also a former newspaper reporter.

Morrison serves on the boards of directors of the Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind Foundation (AIDB) and the Marianna Greene Henry Equestrian Foundation at AIDB and the Talladega County Economic Development Authority.

Morrison received a journalism degree from the University of Alabama in 1986.



Last Week, March 20: Rob Henrikson, Former MetLife CEO



The great “financial meltdown” of 2008 destroyed many good companies. Met Life was not one of them. Under the leadership of Rob Henrikson and others, MetLife saw the trouble coming, and positioned itself to take advantage of a great opportunity. Last Tuesday Rotarians heard from Henrikson, former chairman of the board, president and chief executive officer of MetLife, on how they survived. **Rotarian James Leitner** introduced the speaker.

The key for Metlife, said Henrikson, was a long-term strategy focused on organic growth. Bold acquisitions were only one part of that overall strategy, and even then only when they made sense. Also key was transparency. “There is no way a company can be transparent with the outside world without being transparent with itself,” he said.

Talent, too, was indispensable, as was overall strength. All of these gave Metlife “more than one option” in difficult times, and even positioned it to make historic deals—a \$2 billion property in New York City sold for \$5 billion, for example, or the acquisition of ALICO. And amid all of the deals, Henrikson said, it was key to keep an eye on people and fundamentals. “There is always more at stake than the price,” Henrikson said.



Tuscaloosa Rotary Recognizes Lewis Carnes as Paul Harris Fellow

Last Tuesday Rotarian Lewis Carnes was recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow. The recognition is awarded to those Rotarians who contribute \$1,000 (or its multiples) to the Rotary Foundation. Among the important projects funded by those contributions is the Polio Plus project, which has nearly eradicated the disease around the globe. Our thanks to Lewis and to all Paul Harris Fellows for their generosity!



At the Head Table, March 20

Rotarian Stephen Bridgers is the Executive Director of the Literacy Council of West Alabama. Prior to joining the Literacy Council, Stephen served as an associate at Phelps, Jenkins, Gibson & Fowler Law Firm in Tuscaloosa where he focused on tax exempt bonds, state and federal tax issues, estate planning and general corporate cases. Stephen's wife Wellon works part time at the University in the Honors College. They have almost two year old twins, Fitz and Chloe. **Rotarian Joe Bedingfield** is a native of Dixons Mills, Alabama. Following graduation from the University of Alabama he spent 35 years in the insurance field both in Tampa and Fort Myers, Florida. He has been a Rotarian since 1973 and has 38 years perfect attendance. He and Katherine Ann have been in Tuscaloosa for over eight years. They have two children and four grandchildren. **Rotarian James Leitner** joined Rotary in 2006, served as treasurer for four years, chaired the Tornado relief committee, is a multiple Paul Harris fellow and is currently President Elect. James is President and CEO of Southland National Insurance Corporation. He is married to the former Allison Leigh Flemming and they have three children ranging in ages from 2 to 20. **Rotarian Rodney Landreth** is the CEO and Medical Director for Tuscaloosa, Pickens, Greene, and Hale Co. EyeCare. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from UAB and his Doctor of Optometry from UAB School of Optometry. He is Past President of the Reform Rotary Club. He has two sons. In his spare time, he enjoys the outdoors and spending time with his family.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

April 3

Tina Turley,
Theater
Tuscaloosa

April 10

Dr. John Fisher,
Alabama Poison
Control

April 17

Martin Uptain,
District Governor

“If there is any one particular in which I would have Rotary distinguished from other organizations, it is in the quality of character which results in the doing of things.”

— Paul Harris



AlaMiss District Conference in April

Tuscaloosa Rotarians are invited to the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama for the Alabama Mississippi MultiDistrict Annual Conference, April 20—22. Rotary International President Representative, Past Rotary International Director and Vice President, Tom Thorfinnson will be in attendance and there will be special appearances by Miss Alabama Courtney Porter and Miss Mississippi Mary Margaret Roark. For more information and registration visit www.rotary6860.org.

ABSENT? MAKING UP ATTENDANCE IS EASY...

- Visit with the Morning Rotary Club every Thursday at 7 AM at Indian Hills Country Club.
- Attend another club's meeting within two weeks before or after an absence.
- Participate in a Rotary event, such as a committee meeting, social function, Interact event, etc.
- Make up at E-club online: www.rotaryclubone.org.

REPORT ALL MAKEUPS TO CLUB SECRETARY NANCY JONES AT
nancysjones@bellsouth.net