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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Irons and Rep. Curtis Secure Funding for Shoals Chamber of Commerce & Area Students

Shoals, Alabama – The Shoals Chamber of Commerce has received \$5,000 to assist with transporting local students to the upcoming *Shoals Career Days – Focus on Your Future!* events. The funds were secured by Rep. Tammy Irons-Florence (D) and Rep. Mike Curtis - Greenhill (D) from a Community Development Fund that makes available funds for educational and other community development purposes. According to Chip Flournoy, president of Listerhill TMC and Vice Chair of the Chamber's Education and Workforce Development, the Chamber's education and workforce development programs include a variety of career development activities for students, educators and businesses. The two career fairs these funds will assist are for all Shoals area eleventh and eighth graders to meet face to face with local employers and find out about the jobs they offer and the educational pathways to reach those career goals.

Due to Alabama's proration, resulting in a 17% cut back in public school budgets, most schools have eliminated field trip transportation funding for the past two years. This grant will allow schools to bring their students to the area-wide events. Approximately 1,100 eleventh graders and 1,800 eighth graders are invited. The High School Career Fair is scheduled for March 19 at CrossPoint Church of Christ and the Middle School Career Fair will be April 30 at Florence Middle School.

The events also include Job Skills Seminars for the eleventh graders, led by business volunteers, discussing topics such as job search, interview skills, resume writing, dressing appropriately for the workplace. The eighth grade career fair includes the Reality Check program,



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provided by the Alabama Extension System, helping student understand how their efforts in school relate to the types of jobs and careers they can attain and the financial outcomes of those choices. They move through a simulated “month” of bill paying at booths staffed by business and community volunteers. At each booth (auto, home, insurance, super-store, childcare, etc.) they make decisions about what to purchase – the new Hummer or the used compact; the efficiency apartment or the luxury condo. They are also given a fictitious family situation and must secure child care. Most soon realize that life as an adult has significant financial responsibility and their career choice and income make a big impact on their quality of life.

The funds will enable the Chamber to “host all the schools who want to come to this event. It is a great opportunity for these students to speak directly to the businesses who may some day be their employers.” said Pam Doyle, president of Superior Print Solutions and Chair of the Shoals Chamber of Commerce.

Presenting sponsor for the event is Northwest-Shoals Community College. Other sponsors include Listerhill Credit Union and Bigbee Steel Buildings. For more information about the upcoming career fairs, contact the Shoals Chamber of Commerce, (256) 764-4661, stephs@shoalschamber.com.

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