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MADISON

## Sims will lead chamber in 2010

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The Madison the City Chamber of Commerce should continue to lead the way into 2010 for local businesses, officials say.

"It's been a very good year this year, and people look to us as a guide to see where we're going," outgoing president John Anthony told a packed house at the annual awards banquet last week.

In passing the gavel to new president Donna Sims of BankPlus, Anthony, of Mix 98.7 FM radio, said after 22 years the chamber is still going strong advocating for the city.

"I encourage all of you to be cheerleaders for the city of Madison," he said.

Sims said the chamber board of directors is already planning "a dynamic year" in 2010 for chamber members. She asked the crowd to help

the chamber in the coming months to lobby the Mississippi Department of Health for approval to build a St. Dominic's Hospital here.

"We need your help. Madison must come together with one voice to say we need quality health care," she said.

Locating a hospital at the intersection of Reunion Parkway and Parkway east will bring economic development, jobs and a level of comfort to residents who want quick access to quality health care, she said.

Part of what gives Madison its identity is the dedication of its volunteers, Anthony said as the chamber recognized individuals and businesses that contribute to the quality of life by giving their time and energy.

Honored as the winner of the Peggy Wilks Award given to those that make a difference in the city was the Madison Lions Club. Alderman Mike

Hudgins said the club "epitomizes volunteerism" and can be considered "the backbone of the community."

For 11 years, the club has rendered extraordinary service to the city through its projects. "Whenever there is a need you are there," Hudgins said, in reading remarks from Mayor Mary Hawkins Butler, who was unable to attend the banquet because of illness.

"The Lions Club of Madison is so dear to the heart of the mayor," Hudgins said.

Named as the Bish Carson Volunteer of the Year was James Wilkerson of Market Place Real Estate.

"We can't thank you enough for what you do," chamber director Rosie Vassallo said about Wilkerson. "He's a great steward for the city."