

OUR VIEW

Boards need more equality

In this week's issue, we reported on the lack of women on the boards of Alabama public companies.

Our story was based on a report from the Women's Economic Development Council that said less than 8 percent of the board members at Alabama's publicly traded companies are women.

Those statistics are ultimately not good for the image of Alabama. The percentage of women who serve on boards and in the upper levels of the executive suites at Alabama's public companies sends a bad message.

Alabama has worked hard to dispel the stereotypes of a "good ole boy network" and the state's troubling past when it comes to diversity.

Our public companies – being some of the most prominent symbols of our state in the business world – should be shining examples of our state's commitment to equality.

The fact that 43 percent of Alabama's public companies have boards of directors with no women does just the opposite.

What's even more troubling is the lack of progress toward gender equality in the boardroom and the executive suites over the past decade.

The percentage of seats on boards of directors at Alabama public companies increased from just less than 6 percent to just less than 8 percent between 2001 and 2010.

No one expects such a drastic change to occur overnight, but the report clearly shows that the state's public companies aren't making much headway. That's unacceptable.

Clearly, public companies need to select the best possible individuals for their board and executive positions – and no one is suggesting that they should turn down an ideal candidate in the name of diversity.

But it also stands to reason that there are a lot of women candidates out there who would make ideal board members or executives at these public companies.

It's past time to give them a chance.

FROM THE
BBJ ARCHIVES



20 years ago



Suburbs

Shelby and St. Clair continued to rank among the state's fastest growing counties, according to the 2010 Census. That's good news for those tax bases, but ideally, the region's growth would spread in all directions.

Let

HealthSouth CEO Grinney 'stunned' b

I was stunned the *Birmingham* gave front-page coverage to a con has caused more harm and embarrassment than anyone in recent memory. A notable exception of his good friend

Giving this disgraced individual was a slap in the face to the 2 employees of HealthSouth who have less to distance themselves from fraudulent and criminal behavior. A slap in the face to the countless Alabama investors who lost significant portions of their life savings because they believed in the delusional version of reality. What he thinks or has to say is "news"? Really?

I had come to expect a higher standard from *BBJ*. Sadly, I was misguided. What advice from Bernie Madoff?

Jay Grinney
HealthSouth CEO

Northern Beltline comes to JeffCo