



### FEATURE

#### Meet AGP's New Chair, Gerhard Graf

Gerhard Graf has long been involved with the AlabamaGermany Partnership. And now his years of dedication to business development between his native land and his adopted state have been recognized as he assumes the chairmanship of the organization.



Gerhard was born and raised in the Frankfurt, Germany area, where he worked at a private bank and traded stock on the Frankfurt Exchange while obtaining his Bankfachwirt degree.

After moving to the United States he lived in Texas, New York, Arkansas, Tennessee, and then in Alabama. He held positions with international manufacturing companies ranging from International Cost Accounting Manager to Controller, Division Controller and CFO. Gerhard has been in the Financial Services Industry and has successfully lead organizations to top performance.

Thanks to Gerhard for his leadership of the AGP for the coming year.

Gerhard lives in Alabaster, AL with his wife Shandra and his daughter Elli.

### NEWS

#### Mercedes, BMW Vie for US Luxury Car Crown



In a first, two German manufacturers - Mercedes-Benz and BMW - are dealing for the honor of being the top luxury brand sold in the United States. With the champion of the past 11 years, Toyota's Lexus, hobbled by the fallout from Japan's March 11 earthquake-tsunami-nuclear meltdown disaster, the two Teutonic giants are going at it head-on to snatch the crown, a highly visible symbol of automotive supremacy.

The 2011 race is closing in a genuine side-by-side, wheel-to-wheel sprint to the finish. Right now, BMW holds a slight lead, but US sales for Mercedes surged in November, climbing more than 40 percent. Sales of BMWs rose only seven percent, leaving it clinging to a slender lead of only 1,500 units for the year. The bragging rights the crown brings can help in future sales.

"The marketing guys love it. You can use it in advertising. So that makes it worth pursuing," said Joe Phillippi, an independent industry analyst.

Publicly, both are playing down their battle.

"We're not going to chase the title with incentives," Mercedes Benz USA new chief executive Steve Cannon told reporters during a luncheon in Detroit. Cannon also noted Mercedes has completely overhauled its product line in the US in 2011.

Ian Robertson, BMW board member for sales and marketing, said the company is pleased with its position.

Lexus, like many Japanese carmakers, was hurt when Japan's massive earthquake forced parts makers to shut down for weeks, disrupting the supply chain of the Japanese auto industry.

But Phillippi said the country's triple disaster wasn't the only reason for the Lexus decline. Both Mercedes and BMW have invested heavily in new vehicles designed to fit into more market niches, he said. Lexus has not kept pace. And the rise of Audi also has cut into Lexus's market share, he said.

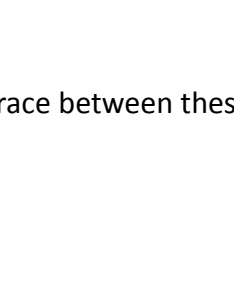
"In any case, it's definitely very exciting that the race between these two is coming right down to the wire."

*Excerpted from Yahoo News - [Webview](#)*

### FEATURE

#### Danke Schön! to Bruce Jones

The AlabamaGermany Partnership is very grateful to J. Bruce Jones for his ten years of service to Alabama as Honorary Consul for the Federal Republic of Germany. Bruce was AGP's second Honorary Consul replacing Dr. Sven Peter Mannsfeld, Chairman of Degussa AG in Mobile.



Bruce began his 37-year career with Alabama Power Company in 1967 while an electrical engineering student at the University of Alabama. From November of 1997 to January 2000, he was a member of the five-person management board of Bewag (Berlin Electric) directly responsible for the electrical network and customer service functions for 2.1 million customers in Berlin.

Lesser known tidbits to many about Bruce Jones:

- He attended the U.S. Naval Academy (1964-1966)
- He has an MBA from Samford University (1978)
- He received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Faulkner University in 1999.
- Rotary International named him a "Paul Harris Fellow" in 1989
- He is a graduate of Leadership Mobile and Leadership Alabama
- He is a registered "Professional Engineer"
- He is a "Licensed Homebuilder" in Alabama

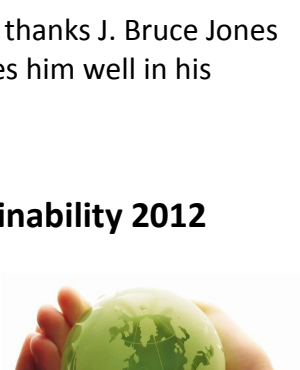
After retiring from Alabama Power Company in January of 2004, Bruce remains very active in civic activities serving as a member of the Alabama School of Math and Science Foundation Board as well as the Dauphin Island Property Owners' Association Board.

The AGP Board of Directors congratulates and thanks J. Bruce Jones for his many years of service to AGP and wishes him well in his

### NEWS

#### Germany's Part in the UN Year of Sustainability 2012

In connection with the UN designation of 2012 as the International Year of Sustainability for All, the results of interdisciplinary research on issues related to climate change, sustainable development biodiversity loss or global food security will be featured in an effort to disseminate information to potential stakeholders.



INFU began implementing the knowledge platform on September 1, 2011, compiling some two years of research conducted as part of its "Projekt Wissen" (Project Knowledge). The effort is also an attempt to use communication technologies to better inform the public as part of the new "Social Contract for a Great Transformation" - the title of the 2011 flagship report by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Federal Government on Global Change.

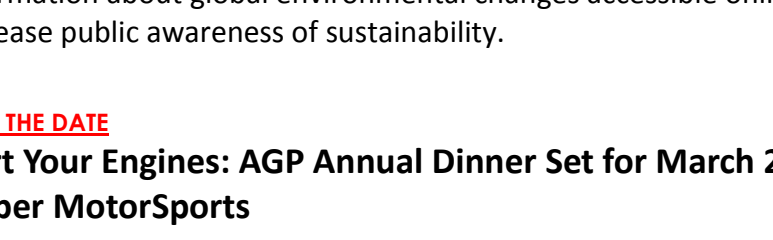
The knowledge resource is being developed in cooperation with the University of Lüneburg. Visitors to the online literature will be able to search for topics as well as access a scientific literature database and listing of expert contacts.

For more than 10 years, INFU has been contributing to communication research and teaching in the field of environmental sustainability, using interdisciplinary strategies to better communicate information. The institute conducts research with a focus on four areas: education, participation, political communication and environmental information. It aims to promote individual, institutional and collective skills in the future context of global environmental change and sustainable development.

Global changes are happening at breakneck speeds, threatening the relationship of humanity to its environment and natural resources. An innovative project at the University of Lüneburg seeks to make information about global environmental changes accessible online to increase public awareness of sustainability.

### SAVE THE DATE

#### Start Your Engines: AGP Annual Dinner Set for March 29 at Barber MotorSports



Mark your calendar to join The AGP for their annual dinner, March 29th at Barber MotorSports Park in Leeds, Alabama. Tickets for the evening, purchased by March 16th, will be \$150 (members)/ \$175 (non-members); \$170 (members)/\$195 (non-members) after March 16th. Sponsors are also being sought at this time for the event. To make your commitment today, contact [administrator@alabamagermany.org](mailto:administrator@alabamagermany.org)

\*All Sponsorships include recognition of level on all AGP promotional materials with company logo; recognition of sponsorship level on AGP website for 1 year; and invitations sent to over 1000 business contacts in Alabama and the South.

#### Exclusive Platinum Annual Dinner Partner\* \$10,000

- Platinum Level Recognition during opening speech at the Annual Dinner
- Preferred Seating at Annual Dinner including a table for ten (10) guests
- Your company marketing brochure may be placed on Annual Dinner tables
- Platinum Level listed with the company logo on slide show during the event

#### Gold Level Annual Dinner Sponsor\* \$ 3,500

Preferred Seating at Annual Dinner including a table for ten (10) guests

#### Silver Level Sponsor\* \$ 2,500

Preferred Seating at Annual Dinner including a table for five (5) guests

#### Bronze Level Sponsor\* \$ 1,500

Preferred Seating at Annual Dinner including a table for four (4) guests

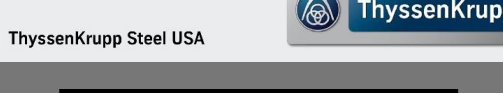
#### Reception Sponsor\* \$ 2,000

Recognition with company logo displayed at the Annual Dinner Reception including table for four (4) guests

#### Student and Volunteer Sponsor\* \$ 750

Two (2) tickets to the AGP Annual Dinner

#### Dankeschön to Our Sustaining & Patron Members



business solutions

#### Welcome New AGP Members

iSAM North America

#### Quote

Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death

Albert Einstein

*German born American Physicist*

#### AGP Member News Ticker

Latest News From BASF

Latest News from Mercedes

Latest News from Rodl Warren Averett

Latest News from Siemens

Latest News from ThyssenKrupp Stainless USA

Latest News from ThyssenKrupp Steel USA

*German companies: please send us your news link to administrator@alabamagermany.org*

#### Test Your Knowledge

From what tragedy was one of Goethe's most important works produced to bring him recognition before he went to Weimar in 1773?\*

Think you know the answer? Send it to [administrator@alabamagermany.org](mailto:administrator@alabamagermany.org)

#### Renew Your AGP Membership for 2012



Keep an eye out for your AGP Membership and sponsor renewal information.

Due to your loyal support, all membership and sponsorship levels will remain consistent for the coming year. For more information on 2012 Flag Sponsorship levels, click here.

#### AlabamaGermany Partnership Executive Committee

##### AGP Chairman

Gerhard Graf

*MetLife Financial Group of the South*

##### Vice Chair/Chair Elect

Bryan Winter

*Lewis, Smyth, & Winter, PC*

##### VP, Business Development

Mark Sheppard

*Alabama State Port Authority*

##### VP, Culture

Dr. Thomas Fox

*University of Alabama*

##### VP, Education

Dr. Anne-Katrin Gramberg

*Auburn University*

##### VP, Communications

Warren McCullars

*Alagasco*

##### VP, Membership

Lamar Smith

*Smith & Associates*

##### Secretary

Judy Benson

*Johnson Controls*

##### Treasurer

Jim Robertson

*Rodl Warren Averett LLC*

##### Immediate Past President

Arndt Siepmann

*City of Auburn*

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