19 to Watch in 2019
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You probably have your own thoughts about who and what bears watching in the new year. To get the conversation started, I have prepared a list of 19 people and projects that in my opinion could have a major impact on Macon County in 2019.

1. **Dr. Jacqueline Brooks** – In the face of tremendous challenges, she and her colleagues have worked hard to sustain public school education including a stellar Career Tech program. More adults need to attend the free Career Tech classes to get certified for high paying jobs that are open in this region.

2. **Exit 38** - This could be the year we see a transformation at this site.

3. **Exit 22** – Already booming with business, more food retailers will open at this location this year.

4. **UBT** – Every new business at Exit 22 and Exit 38 is a new customer for the utility system and on the residential side, even more customers may be coming.

5. **MCEDA** – The board of this organization represents every community and institution in Macon County and when this board wins, we all benefit.

6. **Macon County Commission** – With high obesity rates and related health problems, the county commission is pursuing funds to provide walking trails at county recreation facilities.

7. **Town of Shorter** – Seeing big dividends from infrastructure investments and are set to welcome Popeyes and Burger King restaurants at Exit 22; other projects include construction of a new subdivision.

8. **Town of Notasulga** – With grants secured to pay for sewer improvements, sidewalk extensions and repairs, Notasulga officials have pledged to seek more grant funding for quality of life enhancements.

9. **Town of Franklin** – Expecting a new Town Hall in 2019 and possibly work on sewage lines.

10. **Tuskegee City Manager** – Bernard Houston has a list of priorities for 2019 and the Tuskegee economy is his #1 concern.

11. **Tuskegee Police Chief** – Marquez James has a policing style that includes more citizen engagement and also networking with state and federal organizations to get equipment at low cost or no cost. With less than a year on the job, signs suggest he will continue to be a productive leader in 2019.

12. **National Historic Locations** – Tuskegee University and the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site will continue to anchor their respective sectors e.g. education and tourism.
13. **Alabama Bicentennial** – Recognizing the 200th anniversary of statehood in 2019 has inspired numerous programs celebrating Alabama’s natural beauty, diverse populations and rich history.

14. **State Rep. Pebblin Warren** – Will propose gaming legislation during the 2019 legislative session along with Medicaid expansion, mandatory Kindergarten, funding for rural broadband and funding for teacher salaries that are competitive with surrounding states.

15. **Alabama Launchpad** – Tuskegee University students, Malachi Ards and Henry Moses created an app they named “Connect” and have entered this digital innovation in the Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad Competition.

16. **Ministerial Alliance** – This organization, comprised of a broad cross-section of clergy leaders, is responsible for the food pantry and it also originated the Harvest Festival concept, as a healthy alternative to Halloween. This year they plan to cultivate more partnerships involving businesses and organizations.

17. **Broadband & WiFi** – Couple of groups are taking a hard look at improving Internet connectivity. 2019 could be the year we see the fruits of their labor.

18. **Chamber of Commerce** – Officials will continue the effort to identify challenges that hurt local businesses, with a goal of recommending changes to appropriate entities that could improve the business climate.

19. **BELIEVE Campaign** – This community has a golden opportunity to ride the tail winds generated by the T-100 project into a new era of optimism and confidence. We have seen how powerful this energy is. Let’s harness it to propel future growth through shared visions, collaboration and investment. This is the basis of the BELIEVE Campaign, which will be launched by the Tuskegee Area Chamber of Commerce in 2019.