

PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL

Vitale: If you truly believe, you can succeed

By Jane L. Wilson
OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

Author and motivational speaker Paul Vitale of Hot Springs spoke on the importance of maintaining a positive attitude as well as good people skills during the Greater Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce's 15th annual Small Business Expo breakfast Thursday at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

More than 350 people attended the breakfast sponsored by Simmons First National Bank, which was a kickoff for the day's activities.

Businesses thrive because of the types of skills people exhibited, Vitale said.

"I want to talk about something that I feel is very important and that is people. In business today, the one thing I have learned, especially in the economy that we're in and the service industry that we're in is that people come back to your business if they're treated well."

In business today, Vitale said, challenges arise not only from competitors and the environment of business itself, but from one's own self.

"We're in an environment today where we sit in this room and we're all here for one reason. We're here because we want to see Pine Bluff become a more successful community and we want to build relationships within this room. You have an expo and a great opportunity to do this," he said.

To illustrate the importance of believing in oneself, Vitale told a story about his travels on a national book tour several years ago. While promoting his book, he also took the opportunity to learn about people, visiting with them on the street and in homeless shelters.

He said that he spent time on a section of Nashville, Tenn., referred to as "music row." There he met a man on a corner

who was singing and using a blue bucket as an instrument while people sometimes tossed money in the bucket positioned between his legs.

Vitale said that when he asked the man why he had been singing on that same corner for such a long time with minimal recognition from passersby, the man said it was because he believed that one day he would finally become famous.

"I've been given a gift, Paul, and that is to sing. And one day, I'm going to make it and when I make it, I'm going to give back to all those who gave to me," the man told Vitale.

"This came from an individual who believed in himself. And he believed so much that he would sit on a street corner in Nashville, Tennessee and play a bucket," Vitale said. "I was fascinated by these individuals who had this dream that they wanted to chase and they had this vision that

they wanted to paint for all of these other people."

He added, "If you truly believe in something you can accomplish it. It's your choice. Every day we are given this choice to believe in what we want to believe in and have the attitude and have the state of mind that we choose to have."

When customers enter a particular business, Vitale added, the staff makes a conscious decision to show them what the company is about through the type of customer service given.

"We're only as good as we prepare ourselves to be."

Vitale is a graduate of Russellville and a 1995 graduate of the University of Central Arkansas at Conway with a degree in mass communications and journalism. He gives more than 125 presentations each year throughout the country.
