

JOE ARTHUR SUMNERS, Ph.D.

Director

Economic & Community Development Institute

Joe A. Sumners was appointed as Director of the Economic & Community Development Institute, a partnership of Auburn University and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, on May 1, 2006. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Sumners served as Director of the Economic Development Institute for four years and as Associate Director of EDI for two years. Before working at EDI, he served as Training and Research Coordinator for Auburn University's Center for Governmental Services. He also served on the political science faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He has also worked as a county environmentalist and a high school teacher and coach.

In 1995, he helped plan and organize the state's first-ever Symposium on the Alabama Constitution and Mock Constitutional Convention. He is author of Governing Alabama: The People's Choice, an issues book on Alabama state and local government used in Alabama high schools. He wrote a chapter, "Missing: Local Democracy," in the book, A Century of Controversy: Constitutional Reform in Alabama (University of Alabama Press, 2002). He wrote a chapter (with William and Lane Sauser), "Leadership Challenges in Local Government: Economic Development, Financial Management and Ethical Leadership," in the book Leadership Challenges for Management: Succeeding in Today's Competitive Environment (M.E. Sharpe and Company, 2005). He is the author (with Larry Lee) of Beyond the Interstate: The Crisis in Rural Alabama (January 2003) and Crossroads and Connections: Strategies for Rural Alabama (October 2004). His journal articles have appeared in *The American Political Science Review* and *Evaluation and Program Planning*.

Dr. Sumners has conducted over 150 workshops and courses for Alabama county and municipal officials over the last 10 years. He has over 15 years of experience in providing technical assistance to Alabama cities and counties. He has directed strategic planning projects in the Alabama cities of Northport, Sylacauga, Brewton, Gadsden, Uniontown, Eufaula, and Valley. He directed a strategic planning project for Pickens County and helped Shelby County develop its economic development plan. He has provided strategic planning and facilitation assistance to many statewide associations and organizations in Alabama.

He serves as Executive Director of the I-85 Corridor Alliance, a regional partnership of communities, educational institutions, and businesses located near Interstate 85 from the Georgia state line to Montgomery.

Dr. Sumners is serving as a technical advisor to Governor Bob Riley's Black Belt Action Commission. He serves on the Alabama Development Office (ADO) Community and Rural Development Advisory Board. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE). He is a member of the International Economic Development Council, the Southern Growth Policies Board, the Southern Economic Development Council, the Economic Development Association of Alabama, and the Society for the Advancement of Management. He is past-Chairman of East Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform and is an Auburn Dixie Youth baseball coach.

He is a native of Harpersville, Alabama. He received his BS and MA degrees from Auburn University and his Ph.D. from the University of Georgia. He is married to Lynn Sumners and has two children, Lacey Updegraff (age 23) and Tucker Sumners (age 10).