

JOE ARTHUR SUMNERS, PH.D.

Director

Economic & Community Development Institute

Auburn University & Alabama Cooperative Extension System

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 June 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. In addition, he has 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 health inspector 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 wrote a chapter, "Strategies for Small Town Success," in the book *Building the Local Economy: Cases in Economic Development* (Carl Vinson Institute of Government, 2008). He is the author (with Amelia Stehouwer) of a chapter, "Building Community in Smalltown," in a book to be published by the Kettering Foundation in 2008. 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. He is an experienced consultant with over 15 years experience 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 and Alabama Rural Action Commission. He is also a member of the "Rural Alabama's Committee of 100", an advisory council to The Center for Rural Alabama (a division of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries). 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), currently serving as president. 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. Dr. Sumners 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 26) and Tucker Sumners (age 12), and one granddaughter, Ella Clare Updegraff (5 months old).