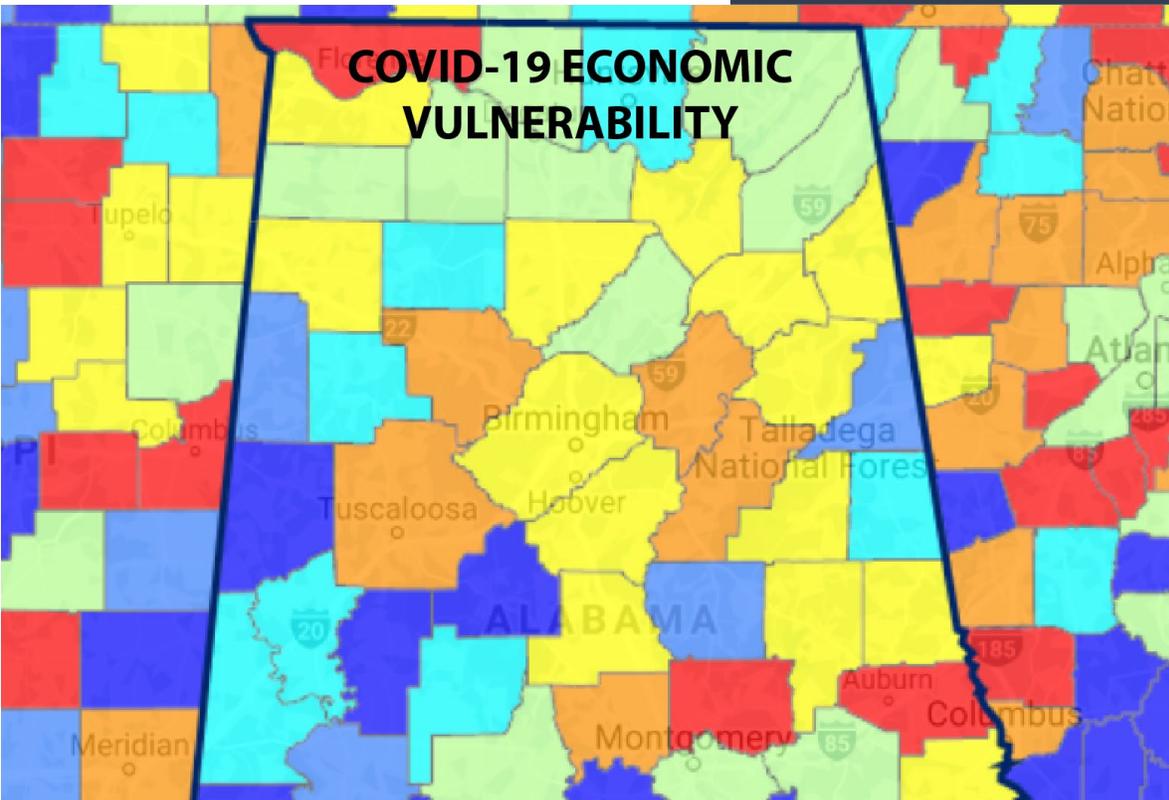


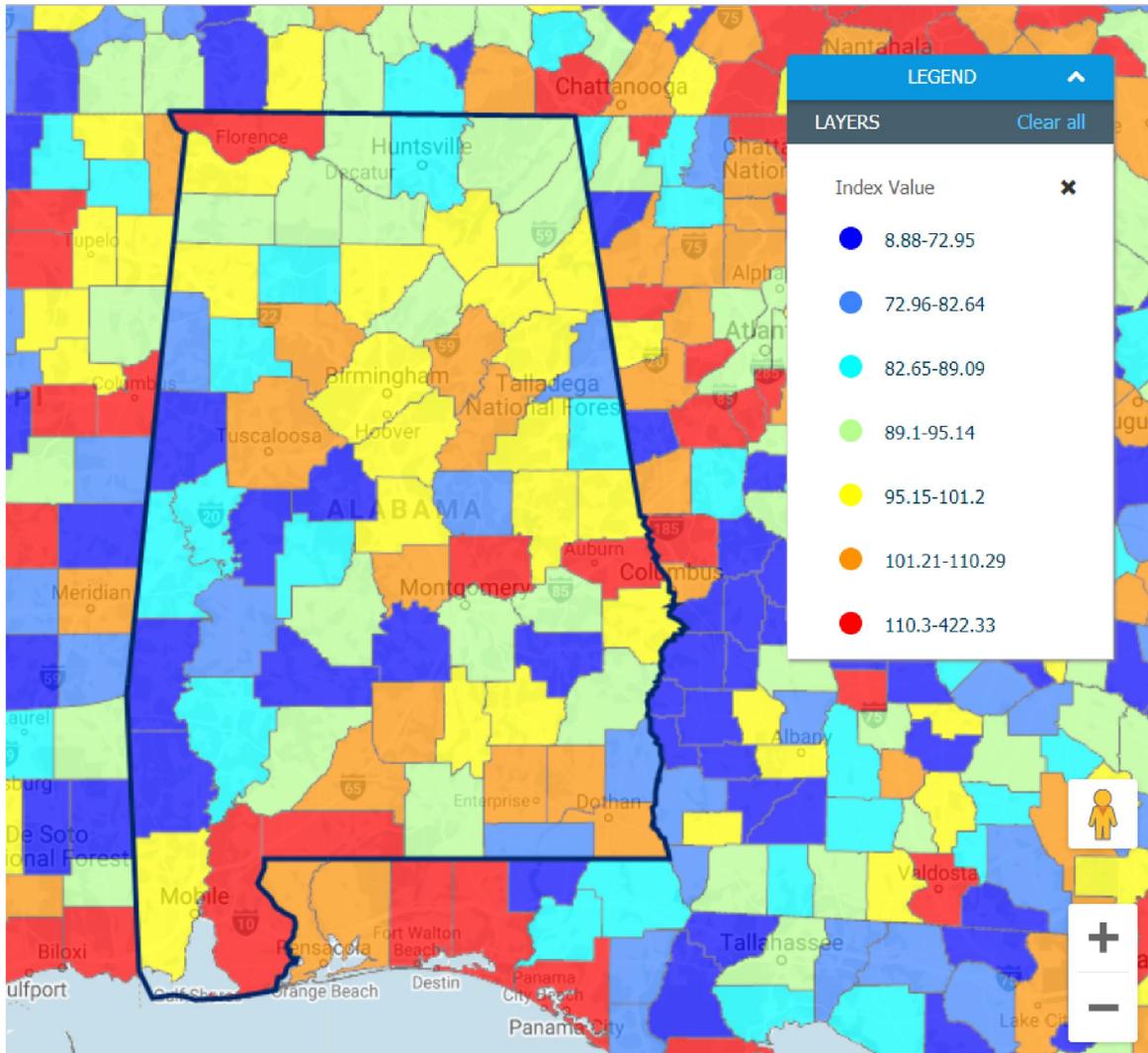
2020 Alabama State Economic Report



GOVERNMENT & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

2020 Alabama State Economic Report
Prepared for the Economic Development Administration:
Atlanta Regional Office
January 2021

COVID-19 INDUSTRIAL IMPACT BY COUNTY



ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY INDEX FOR ALABAMA

The Economic Vulnerability Index looks at each county's mix of industries and provides an estimate of expected job losses in the area. 100 represents the normally expected job loss, while a 50 represents a loss of possibly half the expected jobs and 200 represents a loss of possibly twice the expected jobs. Data is provided by Chmura Economics and Analytics and JobsEQ. Overall, Alabama fares well, with only a few counties expected to see greater-than-expected job loss due to COVID-19.



INTRODUCTION

The Government and Economic Development Institute (GEDI) at Auburn University, part of University Outreach, leads Auburn's EDA University Center along with its partner, the Office of External Engagement and Support-Vice President of Research and Economic Development. Auburn's University Center approach is to apply a cross-disciplinary team that will more effectively benefit Alabama's innovation, entrepreneurship, and community development across the state.

This report was prepared for the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Atlanta Regional office. Special thanks to GEDI's Jon Gross for his contributions to this report throughout the year.

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About this Report:

The content and analysis included in this report provides a high-level analysis of the State of Alabama's performance against national statistics. Included in the analysis, is a narrative covering the state's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The report provides a holistic rather than a comprehensive overview of the events occurring during the period of January 2020 through early December 2020.

Information included in this report has been consolidated from various news media reports, economic forecasts and other state and private sources. The sequence of this report follows the guidelines outlined in EDA's "Guidelines for University Center Annual State Economic Reports." The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Economic Development Administration, nor Auburn University.

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1. Statistical Snapshot of Alabama

Metric	Alabama	National
Population -2019 ¹	4,903,185	328,239,523
Population Change since 2010	2.6%	6.3%
Per Capita Income -2019	\$44,145	\$56524
State per Capita Income % vs National	78.1%	100%
Unemployment Rate – October 2020 (Not Seasonally Adjusted) ²	5.8%	6.9%
Educational Attainment, population 25 or older with High School Diploma or more (2014-2018)	85.8%	87.7%
Percentage of Workforce in Durable Goods Producing—October 2020	8% ³	5% ⁴
Percentage of Workforce in Non-Durable Production—October 2020	3%	3%

Employment by Industry⁵

BEA Major Sectors	2019 Earnings (\$000)	Average Earnings per Job	Rank	2019 Jobs	Percent Distribution in State	Percent Distribution in U.S
Total by place of work	\$141,192,676	\$51,610	47	2,735,740	100.00%	100.00%
Wage and Salary	\$102,465,082	\$48,169	41	2,127,180	77.80%	76.80%
Proprietors	\$14,345,479	\$23,573	48	608,560	22.20%	23.20%
Farm	\$464,584	\$13,429	34	34,596	1.30%	0.90%
Nonfarm	\$13,880,895	\$24,184	47	573,964	21.00%	22.40%
Farm	\$595,173	\$14,244	39	41,785	1.50%	1.30%
Nonfarm	\$140,597,503	\$52,190	47	2,693,955	98.50%	98.70%
Private	\$112,465,727	\$49,223	46	2,284,834	83.50%	86.60%
Forestry, fishing, etc.	\$676,844	\$40,984	14	16,515	0.60%	0.50%

¹ [U.S. Census 2018 Population Estimates](#)

² [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

³ [Bureau of Labor Statistics State and Area Employment, Hours, and Earnings](#)

⁴ [Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Economic Statistics Table b1a](#)

⁵ [StatsAmerica, Alabama's Workforce](#)

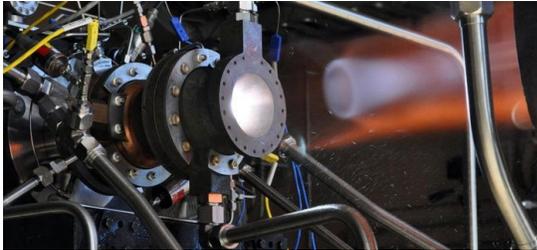
BEA Major Sectors	2019 Earnings (\$000)	Average Earnings per Job	Rank	2019 Jobs	Percent Distribution in State	Percent Distribution in U.S
Mining	\$1,028,542	\$110,608	10	9,299	0.30%	0.60%
Utilities	\$2,180,317	\$159,461	23	13,673	0.50%	0.30%
Construction	\$8,808,490	\$57,374	44	153,527	5.60%	5.50%
Manufacturing	\$19,950,453	\$71,317	40	279,742	10.20%	6.70%
Wholesale	\$6,442,358	\$77,637	38	82,980	3.00%	3.20%
Retail	\$8,978,378	\$31,667	43	283,529	10.40%	9.40%
Trans. and warehousing	\$5,508,511	\$61,174	13	90,046	3.30%	4.50%
Information	\$1,780,601	\$63,301	41	28,129	1.00%	1.70%
Finance and Insurance	\$7,404,814	\$62,329	34	118,803	4.30%	5.40%
Real Estate and rental and leasing	\$1,946,481	\$17,004	50	114,475	4.20%	4.80%
Professional, technical services	\$12,477,359	\$78,311	22	159,330	5.80%	7.20%
Management of enterprises, companies	\$1,978,475	\$100,927	36	19,603	0.70%	1.40%
Administrative and waste services	\$5,417,252	\$28,547	50	189,764	6.90%	6.20%
Educational services	\$1,189,450	\$28,443	47	41,819	1.50%	2.40%
Health care, social assistance	\$15,883,337	\$61,468	24	258,399	9.40%	11.30%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	\$652,474	\$15,153	49	43,059	1.60%	2.40%
Accommodation and food services	\$4,415,011	\$21,663	51	203,808	7.40%	7.50%
Other services, exc. public admin.	\$5,746,580	\$32,224	49	178,334	6.50%	5.80%
Gov. and gov. enterprise	\$28,131,776	\$68,762	37	409,121	15.00%	12.10%

2. Alabama's Targeted Industry Strategy

The Alabama Department of Commerce's economic development plan—Accelerate Alabama 2.0—focuses on seven industry sectors and six foundational business targets on which to focus recruitment, development, and workforce training.

Targeted Business Sectors

Aerospace and Aviation



Alabama has a strong national and international presence in the aerospace and aviation industry. Aerospace manufacturing accounts for approximately 13,200 jobs in the state and Alabama ranks in the top five states for aerospace engineers. Over 300 aerospace companies from more than 30 different countries have a presence in Alabama, including Boeing, Lockheed Martin,

GE Aviation, Raytheon, and GKN Aerospace. Airbus produces the A320 passenger jets at its Mobile facility. A new partnership with Boeing in the Wiregrass region is ensuring a skilled aerospace workforce for years to come.

In addition to a second production line for the A220 series and its Mobile facility, Mobile also celebrated its inaugural flights from its new downtown airport, an infrastructure investment that will capitalize on Mobile's existing road/water/rail transportation hubs.

Agricultural Products and Food Production

Around 39,000 farms on 8.3 million acres of in the state yield a bounty of agriculture products. Alabama ranks second among the states in freshwater fish production, third in poultry production, third in peanut production, and in the Top 10 for cotton production. Total agricultural cash receipts reached almost \$5.8 billion in 2018. The real workhorse here is Alabama's 40,000-strong agriculture workforce, whose hard work supported nearly \$500 million worth of exports in 2019, including \$262 million in food products.

Automotive

Targeted growth in this critical sector of Alabama's economy has turned the state into an important production hub for the industry. Together, assembly plants operated by Mercedes, Honda and Hyundai have propelled Alabama to a Top 5 ranking among the states for the production of cars and light trucks. In 2019, Alabama automakers combined to produce around 1 million cars and light trucks. Employment in Alabama's automotive manufacturing sector now exceeds 40,000, surging from just a few thousand in the days before Mercedes. Around 26,000 of these jobs are in Alabama's growing automotive supplier network, which now counts 150 major companies.



Both employment and production will receive a massive boost when the Mazda Toyota Manufacturing USA partnership opens a joint venture assembly plant in Alabama. Construction began 2019, and the Huntsville facility will employ up to 4,000 workers after production launches in 2021. Annual production capacity will be up to 300,000 vehicles. When the project was announced in January 2018, the investment in the facility was set for \$1.6 billion, but Mazda Toyota Manufacturing revealed plans in August 2020 for an additional \$830 million in investment.

Bioscience

Alabama is home to 780 bioscience companies, and the industry has an annual economic impact estimated at \$7.3 billion, as well as a track record for breakthrough discoveries. Birmingham-based Southern Research, for instance, has discovered seven FDA-approved drugs used in cancer treatment, and has made important advances in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, polio, and mosquito-borne viruses.

2020 has highlighted the role Alabama universities and research institutions have to play in preparedness for future pandemics. From the early stages of the pandemic researchers at the University of Alabama in Huntsville were using their supercomputer to identify possible treatments using existing drugs, while UAB was one of 70 sites chosen as a trial site for Remdesivir-which researchers at UAB also helped develop.

Chemicals

Chemicals rank as Alabama's second largest export category, with overseas shipments approaching \$2.3 billion in 2019. Chemicals produced in Alabama include caustic soda, oxidants, light stabilizers, emissions catalysts, phenol, acetone, and a variety of specialty chemicals

The Alabama Gulf Coast Chemical Corridor, known as MAST, is home to a cluster of companies, stretching 60 miles through the Mobile Area. MAST is home to 25 chemical manufacturers and a total of 27 facilities that collectively employ approximately 3,300 and have an annual economic impact of \$1.9 billion. Chemical operations there include chlor-alkali production, resins and synthetic rubbers, specialty chemicals, synthetic fibers and filaments, coatings and adhesives, and refinery operations.

Forestry Products

Forestry's scope is massive in Alabama, with the total value of industry shipments exceeding \$12.4 billion in 2018, according to the American Forest & Paper Association. Alabama employment in forestry and logging, wood products, and pulp and paper totaled 36,000 that year, with annual payroll income topping \$2.1 billion. The state is home to over 100 manufacturing facilities including sawmills, paper mills and other sites.



Metal and Advanced Materials

As of September 2020, over 43,000 Alabama residents are employed in the primary and fabricated metal manufacturing industry, an indication of the sector's scale. Key players continue to invest in

Alabama. In August 2020, ArcelorMittal announced a \$500 million investment to add an electric arc furnace steelmaking facility at its AM/NS Calvert mill near Mobile. In October 2020, U.S. Steel announced that it had successfully started its own EAF at its Fairfield Works operation near Birmingham.

Foundational Business Targets

Corporate Operations

Alabama has consistently ranked among the top states for doing business, and companies both domestic and international take advantage of our favorable business climate to house either their corporate headquarters or their U.S. corporate headquarters. In July, ALDI U.S. announced plans for a new regional headquarters and distribution center in Loxley, Alabama. HealNow, an online payment platform for pharmacies, announced its move from New York City to Birmingham in early December.⁶

Cyber Security

Alabama has 7 PhD-granting universities in the state, and this provides ample opportunity for research into the most pressing security problems of the day. The state's modern manufacturing base includes aviation, automotive, defense, finance, healthcare, intelligence, and power industries, providing abundant possibilities for partnerships in critical infrastructure protection, cloud security, big data, and others.

Data Centers

Alabama's concentration of highly-educated workers and a strong business climate has contributed the continued growth of Alabama as a data-center hub. In addition to Google's \$600 million data center in Jackson County, Facebook is building a \$750 million center in Huntsville and Atlanta-based DC BLOX is developing a data center operation in Birmingham with an estimated investment of \$785 million.

Distribution and Logistics

The Port of Mobile, Huntsville International Airport, and Mobile's new downtown airport are the centerpieces of Alabama's central role in shipping and distribution. Railways and major interstates crisscross the state, and major companies such as Amazon and Carvana have either just recently opened distribution centers or have announced plans to do so in 2020.

Information Technology, Research and Development

Combined with Alabama's focus on cyber security, the institutions and corporations that call Alabama home perform world-class research in cutting-edge disciplines in medicine, aerospace engineering, new materials, genetics, new production methods, and more. There are 5,000 jobs dedicated to research and development in the state, and Alabama is a top-5 state for aerospace engineers. As of November 2019, UAB had received a record \$600-plus million in research funding for the year⁷.

⁶ [Another health tech company moving its headquarters to Birmingham](#)

⁷ [UAB breaks record with \\$600 million in research funding](#)

3. Alabama's Economic Condition

Economic Development News for 2020

January

National Cement investing \$250 million in Ragland plant⁸

A long-time Ragland plant is getting what local leaders say is St. Clair County's biggest capital investment in more than 20 years. The National Cement Co. of Alabama announced plans to pump more than \$250 million into building a new kiln at its Ragland production plant.

William Thornton, al.com

Northern Beltline to resume construction after \$30 million approved in Senate funding bills⁹

Construction on the Northern Beltline project is set to resume after a three-year hiatus. \$30 million in funding was provided in a package of spending bills that passed the Senate on Thursday.

Howard Koplowitz, al.com

Honda produced more than 350,000 vehicles last year in Alabama¹⁰

Honda Manufacturing of Alabama reports that its Lincoln factory produced 351,708 vehicles and V-6 engines 2019. That's according to preliminary numbers released by the company. The plant also produced its 5 millionth vehicle since production began at the plant in 1961. The facility became the first automobile plant in Alabama to reach that mark

William Thornton, al.com

Alabama unveils new plan to thrive in global work revolution¹¹

Alabama economic development leaders rolled out a plan Tuesday to keep the state competitive in a new global manufacturing revolution. They unveiled RTP 2, a new plan to focus future training at the Alabama Robotics Technology Park on automation, robotics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, data analytics, and 3D printing.

Lee Roop, al.com

Alabama in top 10 of U-Haul's top growth states of 2019¹²

Alabama is one of the top population growth states, according to a recent data crunch from U-Haul. After evaluating moving trucks entering versus leaving states, Alabama ranked 6th in 2019 after ranking 42nd in 2018. The top three growth states were Florida, Texas, and North Carolina.

Stephanie Rebman, bizjournals.com

⁸ [National Cement investing \\$250 million in Ragland plant](#)

⁹ [Northern Beltline to resume construction after \\$30 million approved in Senate funding bills](#)

¹⁰ [Honda produced more than 350,000 vehicles last year in Alabama](#)

¹¹ [Alabama unveils new plan to thrive in global work revolution](#)

¹² [Alabama in top 10 of U-Haul's top growth states of 2019](#)

Airbus plans to add 275 jobs this year ahead of tariff deadline¹³

European-based aircraft manufacturing giant Airbus will add 275 new jobs this year to its Mobile plant as the company continues to ramp up production of its popular single-aisle A320 family of planes. The company will begin hiring the additional workers this year to reach a production rate of seven A320-family aircraft per month by the beginning of 2021. The growth is in addition to the 600 new jobs the company added in 2019 for increased A320-family and new A220-family production. The company reached the 1,000-employee mark in Mobile in December and anticipates having around 1,300 employees by the end of 2020. Airbus also announced it will invest another \$40 million through the construction of an additional support hangar on its property at the Brookley Aeroplex south of downtown Mobile.

John Sharp, al.com

Lawrence County lands 2 industrial plants¹⁴

Two companies new to Lawrence County, including a Tier-1 automotive supplier, will bring in about 78 jobs and locate plants in the Mallard Fox West Industrial Park in Trinity, the county's Industrial Development Board announced Thursday.

Michael Wetzel, Decatur Daily

Chinese auto supplier CCI chooses Alabama¹⁵

CCI Manufacturing USA Corp., a Tier 1 auto supplier, has announced it will invest \$21.5 million to construct an advance production facility in Lawrence County. The facility will be located in Mallard Fox West Industrial Complex in Trinity and will have rail access. CCI will produce automotive fluids such as brake fluid and engine coolant. Once construction is completed the company is expected to employ about 28 people at the site.

Erica Joiner West, Business Alabama

\$2.7 million in improvements underway for Etowah County mega-site¹⁶

More than 1,000 acres of land off Interstate 59 in Etowah County are being prepared for a \$2.7 million project to speed development. The slate of improvements for Little Canoe Creek Mega-Site include grading, natural gas lines, and a new railroad crossing to create a pad-ready, rail-served site that can accommodate a large industry.

William Thornton, al.com

¹³ [Airbus plans to add 275 jobs this year ahead of tariff deadline](#)

¹⁴ [Lawrence lands 2 industrial plants](#)

¹⁵ [Chinese auto supplier CCI chooses Alabama](#)

¹⁶ [\\$2.7 million in improvements underway for Etowah County mega-site](#)

Medical Industries of the Americas to revive Alabama latex plant with growth project¹⁷

Medical Industries of the Americas plans to re-launch latex production at a shuttered factory in Barbour County as part of a plan to expand the site into a comprehensive manufacturing complex for medical commodities, Alabama officials announced today. MI Americas said the investment in the Alabama production complex may eventually reach \$50 million as it expands product lines. Products it will manufacture at the 105,000-square-foot, 15-acre site in the Eufaula Industrial Park include latex gloves for use in a variety of fields, including the medical and agricultural industries, as well as other healthcare items like hot/cold packs and non-allergenic natural latex condoms.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Winklemann Flowform Technology expands Auburn, Alabama operations¹⁸

Winklemann Flowform Technology LP is expanding its operations at Auburn Industrial Park in Auburn, Alabama. The \$2.2 million project is expected to create 12 new jobs over the next two years.

Staff Writer, Area Development News

New innovation and technology park coming to Opelika¹⁹

A new innovation and technology park is coming to Opelika. Officials made the announcement on the 21st. The park aims to attract, generate, and retain companies that are focused on innovative technology.

Oliva Gunn, wsfa.com

February

Shipt founder lands \$30 million in funding for new venture²⁰

Shipt founder Bill Smith is off to a good start with his new venture Landing. The company announced Thursday it has raised \$30 million in new funding. Bloomberg is reporting Alan Patricof's Greycroft led a \$20 million Series A round, which includes Maveron, started by Starbucks Corp.'s former Chairman Howard Schultz and Dan Levitan. For an annual fee, member of Landing can access fully-furnished apartments that are move-in ready.

William Thornton, al.com

Forbes puts Opportunity Alabama among best²¹

Forbes has named a Birmingham-based nonprofit, Opportunity Alabama, as the best opportunity zone community organization for rural communities. In December, Opportunity Alabama (OPAL) was named in the Forbes OZ 20 list. The list recognized 10 Opportunity Zone Funds and 10 Opportunity Zone community organizations that show how OZ policy can be used as a powerful tool to promote responsible capitalism. - *Anna Beahm*

¹⁷ [Medical Industries of the Americas to revive Alabama latex plant with growth project](#)

¹⁸ [WFT expands Auburn, Alabama Operations](#)

¹⁹ [Innovation and technology park coming to Opelika](#)

²⁰ [Shipt founder lands \\$30 million in funding for new venture](#)

²¹ [Forbes puts Opportunity Alabama among best](#)

Blue Origin officially opens Alabama rocket engine factory²²

On Monday, February 17th, Blue Origin opened its sprawling factory in Huntsville, which will allow the spaceflight company to accelerate production of its heavy-lift BE-4 rocket engine and create hundreds of jobs. Blue Origin will test its Alabama-made engines at Marshall Space Flight Center's historic test stand 4670, where the Saturn V moon rocket's engines were tested. Blue Origin is upgrading and refurbishing the test stand.



Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Airbus boosts stake in new jet it will build in Alabama²³



Airbus now owns a lot more of the jet it used to share with Bombardier. Local production goals are unchanged according to Kristi Tucker, director of communications for Airbus Americas. Bombardier divested itself of the A220 program, with Airbus' stake jumping from 50 to 75 percent and the Canadian government holding the remainder.

Lawrence Specker, al.com

Montgomery earns two Smart 50 awards for innovation²⁴

Montgomery received awards from US Ignite and Smart Cities Connect in the Urban Infrastructure and Digital Transformation categories. The Urban Infrastructure award was for a collaboration with Alabama Power to upgrade more than 22,000 streetlights to energy-efficient LED systems, anticipating approximately \$600,000 in savings over the next five years while providing brighter, safer streets. The Digital transformation award is for the Montgomery Police Department's use of STAR Watch, a new police-community technology initiative built around a real-time crime center using camera feeds across the city.

Michael Tomberlin, Alabama Newscenter

Baldwin County to enter workforce development partnership with Airbus²⁵

Airbus and the Baldwin County Commission are entering into a partnership that will provide new opportunities for students. Airbus is offering new technical programs to meet the needs of a growing workforce through its Flight Works Alabama program—designed to be a hub for students to explore

²² [Blue Origin officially opens Alabama rocket engine facility](#)

²³ [Airbus boosts stake in new jet it will build in Alabama](#)

²⁴ [Montgomery earns two Smart 50 awards for innovation](#)

²⁵ [Baldwin County to enter workforce development partnership with Airbus](#)

opportunities in the aerospace industry. Interested students will be able to apply for FlightPath9, the first training program, in 11th grade.

Hal Scheurich, Fox10 News

Alabama's exports down again in 2019, but autos up²⁶

Alabama's exports totaled \$20.7 billion in 2019—down 3% from \$21.3 billion in 2018—thanks to global trade tensions. Auto parts and aerospace products (+5%) are growing as shares of total exports.

William Thornton, al.com

\$500 million coal mine announced for Tuscaloosa County²⁷

Warrior Met Coal plans to develop a new \$500 million underground coal mining facility in northern Tuscaloosa County over the next five years, creating 350 new jobs. Construction is scheduled to start March 1st with operation projected to begin during the second quarter of 2025.



William Thornton, al.com

Alabama film industry set for blockbuster year after record 2019²⁸

The Alabama Film Office reported that the 20 approved film and TV productions that qualified for state incentives in 2019 spent nearly \$72 million while in Alabama, up from \$63.5 million in 2018. In addition, rebates approved to offset production costs totaled just under the ceiling of \$20 million. Since October 1st, 2019, more than a dozen entertainment productions have qualified for tax rebates to film in Alabama, according to Kathy Faulk at the AFO.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

GE Appliances completes \$125 million Decatur expansion²⁹

GE Appliances has completed a \$125 million expansion of its Decatur refrigeration plant, which added 255 jobs there. The facility now employs 1,300 people following the expansion, first announced in June 2018. The Decatur plant is the largest employer at a single location in Morgan County.

William Thornton, al.com

²⁶ [Alabama's exports down again in 2019, but autos up](#)

²⁷ [\\$500 million coal mine announced for Tuscaloosa County](#)

²⁸ [Alabama film industry set for blockbuster year after record 2019](#)

²⁹ [GE Appliances completes \\$125 million Decatur expansion](#)

New education initiative backed by Apple launches in Birmingham³⁰

Apple CEO Tim Cook has announced his company's support of Ed Farm – a major new education and workforce initiative that was launched today in Birmingham. The new initiative, which will focus on innovative learning strategies, will represent a partnership between Apple, TechAlabama, Birmingham City Schools, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and several other organizations.

Tyler Patchen, bizjournals.com

March

Alabama gets high marks in economic development ranking³¹

Alabama moved into the top 10 in two categories ranking its economic development efforts in 2019, a first for the state. Site Selection magazine's annual Governor's Cups analysis ranked Alabama sixth among the states in projects per capita and ninth in the number of economic development "qualified" projects meeting the magazine's analysis.

William Thornton, al.com

Endeavor expands support for growth-stage entrepreneurs in Birmingham³²

Endeavor, a global entrepreneurship nonprofit, is expanding in Birmingham, announcing plans to select and support more growth-stage founder and a new program called ScaleUp Birmingham to accelerate the path to Endeavor for the city's fastest-growing startups.

Staff writer, AlabamaNewsCenter

Auburn University study proves viability of blockchain as a common platform for supply chains³³

Communication is much easier when you speak the same language. But for manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers around the globe, the digital "language" of product data varies from company to company — causing error and inefficiency to the tune of \$181 billion, according to an Auburn University study.

Auburn researchers have a simple idea: Let's all use a common language and a common platform throughout the supply chain for communicating product information. It is not a simple solution, though, since each stakeholder has a different vocabulary and methodology — maybe one uses the term "carton," another says "case" and both use different metrics for counting the contents of those containers. The Chain Integration Project, or CHIP, initiative at Auburn's RFID Lab is working to implement standards across supply chains and has concluded its proof-of-concept phase, which used blockchain technology to enable data sharing between supply chain partners in a common language and on a common platform.

Charles Martin, AlabamaNewsCenter

³⁰ [New education initiative backed by Apple launches in Birmingham](#)

³¹ [Alabama gets high marks in economic development ranking](#)

³² [Endeavor expands support for growth-stage entrepreneurs in Birmingham](#)

³³ [Auburn University study proves viability of blockchain as a common platform for supply chains](#)

EDA announces \$5M investment, 60 new jobs at Seoyan E-Hwa³⁴

Dallas County Economic Development Authority (EDA) announced an upcoming expansion at Seoyan E-Hwa Interior Systems at the Selma-Dallas County Public Library. Located at Craig Industrial park, they are a Tier 1 Hyundai supplier that manufactures several kinds of plastic interior parts.

Brannon Cahela, Selma Times Journal

Unemployment doubles, factories idle: How hard will coronavirus hit Alabama's economy?³⁵

Alabama's industry and economy are beginning to show signs of unraveling due to the coronavirus. As of March 19th, the Alabama Department of Labor had seen 6,062 claims for unemployment benefits in three days. It had received 5,819 for the entire month of February. Amazon and other delivery businesses have been among the few bright spots, with new employee fulfillment centers and new hires to address the growing demand for at-home delivery.

William Thornton, al.com

How 4 innovative Alabama companies are responding to the COVID-19 outbreak³⁶

Winners of Alabama Launchpad are stepping up to help the people of Alabama as we struggle to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak. INFCR, a software platform, allows sports teams to deliver content across social platforms. IMMEDIATE provides early access to earned but not yet paid wages, Wyndy is a babysitting app that is a favorite among Birmingham parents, and VantorLux has developed ultraviolet-C LED lights that disinfect the air and greatly reduce airborne pathogens including viruses like COVID-19.

Taylor Babington, Bham Now

Shoals company, individuals step up to make masks, gowns³⁷

From individuals to internationally-known clothing designer/manufacturer Alabama Chanin, Shoals residents are stepping up to fill the gap in providing hard-to-find masks and gowns for local healthcare workers. Jess Turner, studio coordinator for Alabama Chanin, said a hospital system in Alabama contacted the clothing designer about helping them with masks and gowns. "We have shifted our priorities to be able to meet the demands that a lot of medical providers are having right now in terms of masks and gowns," Turner said. She projects Alabama Chanin can make 2,500 to 3,000 masks per week.

Russ Corey, Times Daily

³⁴ [EDA announces \\$5M investment, 60 new jobs at Seoyan E-Hwa](#)

³⁵ [Unemployment doubles, factories idle: How hard will coronavirus hit Alabama's economy?](#)

³⁶ [How 4 innovative Alabama companies are responding to the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

³⁷ [Shoals company, individuals step up to make masks, gowns](#)

Coronavirus outbreak shining an even brighter light on internet disparities in rural Alabama³⁸

Representative Aderholt, long a champion for broadband expansion in Alabama, discusses the workplace and educational disparities faced by residents of rural Alabama (and other states) in the current situation where online classes and remote work are becoming a norm for many.

Representative Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Opinion Contributor for The Hill

Port of Mobile: “Everything except containers is going up”³⁹

The Port Authority announced that it had begun widespread screening measures for personnel, starting with temperature screening for everyone entering the main docks complex and the Truck Control Center. Jimmy Lyons, President and CEO of the Alabama Port Authority, says that the impact on shipping operations has been less dramatic than a casual observer might expect, and he thinks it will fade away sooner.

Lawrence Specker, al.com

Workers and Places Most Likely to Be Affected by a COVID-19 Recession – 2020 Study⁴⁰

According to a survey of economists conducted by the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business at the beginning of March, more than half of participants expect a major recession due to COVID-19. Leisure and hospitality workers are likely to be hit hardest, and more than 1.42 million jobs could be lost in just the 100 largest U.S. cities.

Stephanie Horan, CEPF, smartasset.com

Friends launch Local Distancing to support Birmingham businesses⁴¹

Three friends in Birmingham developed a pay-it-forward online platform called Local Distancing, to allow customers to help their favorite Birmingham-area businesses to pay their staff, cover expenses, and survive the pandemic. Customers can purchase gift certificates from a wide range of restaurants, breweries, retailers, and other local businesses, as well as find links to GoFundMe accounts for displaced workers.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

BLOX, based in Bessemer, is developing mobile ICUs to combat COVID-19⁴²

BLOX, a Bessemer-based company and Alabama Launchpad winner, has designed a 16-bed Mobile Isolation Care Unit ward. Once a site is ready, a completed MICU can be quickly deployed to an area in need. BLOX uses the Design Manufacture Construct method to create modular buildings that can be assembled on-site.

Nathan Watson, bhamnow.com

³⁸ [Coronavirus outbreak shining an even brighter light on internet disparities in rural Alabama](#)

³⁹ [Port of Mobile: “Everything except containers is going up”](#)

⁴⁰ [Workers and Places Most Likely to Be Affected by a COVID-19 Recession – 2020 Study](#)

⁴¹ [Friends launch Local Distancing to support Birmingham businesses](#)

⁴² [BLOX, based in Bessemer, is developing mobile ICUs to combat COVID-19](#)

April

Huntsville Toyota plant to start making face shields⁴³

The Huntsville plant is part of a company-wide shutdown of manufacturing facilities, but the plant—which employs over 1,300 people, will begin producing 7,500 face shields for local hospitals as part of the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The plant will also donate 160 pairs of safety glasses and make a \$25,000 donation to the United Way of Madison County.

Paul Gattis, al.com

University of Alabama program helps small businesses affected by COVID-19⁴⁴

The Alabama Small Business Development Center Network is providing direct assistance to small businesses in Alabama in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. In collaboration with partners across Alabama, the SBDC capital access team is working to help small businesses apply for the Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, which enables affected firms to apply for up to \$2 million.



University of Alabama

UA analysts say Alabama economy could be back on its feet by year’s end⁴⁵

Sam Addy and Ahmad Ijaz have released an analysis of the state and national outlook during the response to COVID-19. Nationally, analyses estimate that U.S. economic output could plummet 24 percent through June compared to last year and that unemployment could rise as high as nine percent. According to Addy and Ajaz, second-quarter Alabama GDP will most likely decline by 3 to 4 percent, with employment falling much faster. Depending on the strength of national efforts, Alabama could face an \$11 billion to \$15 billion impact.

William Thornton, al.com

Governor Ivey announces the launch of ‘ALtogether Alabama’⁴⁶

The online resource will serve as a hub of information for the state’s response to the coronavirus crisis.

Jordan Highsmith, CBS42

⁴³ [Huntsville Toyota plant to start making face shields](#)

⁴⁴ [University of Alabama program helps small businesses affected by COVID-19](#)

⁴⁵ [UA analysts say Alabama economy could be back on its feet by year’s end](#)

⁴⁶ [Governor Ivey announces the launch of ‘ALtogether Alabama’](#)

Alabama economy could be among least affected by coronavirus: Moody's⁴⁷

Moody's looked at six metrics: exposure to COVID-19, demographics, trade and travel disruptions, tourism, finance, and commodities. Alabama was among other states like West Virginia, Missouri, Mississippi, and Tennessee as among the least exposed. There are still worries that some of Alabama's key industries—auto manufacturers and suppliers, retail, and global shipping could be most impacted by the pandemic.

William Thornton, al.com

Airbus pauses airplane production in Alabama and Germany due to COVID-19⁴⁸

Airbus SE is pausing production at its Alabama factory and at two German sites to adjust to a demand slowdown and supply issues related to the coronavirus pandemic. The company said in a statement Monday that it halted production at its German plants in Bremen and State for parts of April, while activity at the Mobile facility where the A220 and A320 aircraft are made will stop at least through April 29th.

Charlotte Ryan, Bloomberg

Bronze Valley and gener8tor launch emergency response program⁴⁹

Bronze Valley, a venture investment platform focusing on underrepresented founders and gener8tor, a business accelerator program, partnered to provide small businesses, startups, freelancers, and nonprofits in Alabama with access to a free, weeklong webinar series designed to help identify and leverage critical resources for weathering the ongoing pandemic.

Mark Kelly, Alabama Newscenter

Alabama Launchpad lands \$580K grant⁵⁰

Governor Ivey has awarded a \$580,000 grant to the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama for its Alabama Launchpad competition. The grant will support the Launchpad, a startup pitch competition and active funder of early-stage companies in the state. Several previous Launchpad recipients are providing innovative and effective solutions for Alabama businesses struggling through the current pandemic.

Tyler Patchen, Birmingham Business Journal

AlabamaWorks! Releases business survey to identify COVID-19 impact⁵¹

The Alabama COVID-19 Workforce Response Survey is designed to help the state fully understand the impact of this pandemic on the state's workforce as well as provide a clear path forward for businesses, industry, and state government.

Staff writer, AlabamaWorks

⁴⁷ [Alabama economy could be among least affected by coronavirus: Moody's](#)

⁴⁸ [Airbus pauses airplane production in Alabama and Germany due to COVID-19](#)

⁴⁹ [Bronze Valley and gener8tor launch emergency response program](#)

⁵⁰ [Alabama Launchpad lands \\$580K grant](#)

⁵¹ [AlabamaWorks! releases business survey to identify COVID-19 impact](#)

Emergency task force looks at reopening Alabama’s economy, plan presented by April 17⁵²

A statewide business committee is looking at when and how Alabama’s economy might reopen.

Leada Gore, al.com

Top 10 COVID-19 takeaways for corporate site selection⁵³

John Boyd, founder of corporate site selection firm The Boyd Company, Inc., shares his top 10 COVID-19 takeaways. His top three are that overextended and risky supply chains are no longer tolerable, remote working will accelerate greatly and have a significant impact on the commercial real estate industry, and that the weakened economy will put a premium on cost efficiencies in the site selection process. Read more in his article.

John Boyd for Business Facilities

Alabama companies pivot to produce supplies for health care workers⁵⁴

Alabama’s industries are coming together to support health care workers fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Boeing in Huntsville and Mercedes-Benz in Tuscaloosa County are among the state’s biggest employers that are deploying resources to produce face masks and face shields for hospitals and first responders.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

University of Alabama helping fabricate protection for health care workers⁵⁵

The University of Alabama community has come together to help provide 3-D printed personal protective equipment for health care workers locally and in the region. Two groups across three colleges on campus are producing face shield for health care professionals at University Medical Center, DCH Health System in Tuscaloosa, and UAB Hospital.

Adam Jones, University of Alabama

Montgomery new home to F-35⁵⁶

The Secretary of the Air Force officially selected the 187th Fighter Wing at Dannelly Field in Montgomery as the Air National Guard’s 6th operational location for the F-35s.

Staff writer, Alabama News Network

Protective clothing manufacturer Kappler expanding in Alabama⁵⁷

North Alabama protective clothing manufacturer Kappler, Inc., is seeing a surge in business from the pandemic and is expanding in Guntersville. A new “technology and training center” will cover 49,000

⁵² [Emergency task force looks at reopening Alabama’s economy, plan presented by April 17](#)

⁵³ [Top 10 COVID-19 takeaways for corporate site selection](#)

⁵⁴ [Alabama companies pivot to produce supplies for health care workers](#)

⁵⁵ [University of Alabama helping fabricate protection for health care workers](#)

⁵⁶ [Montgomery new home to F-35](#)

⁵⁷ [Protective clothing manufacturer Kappler expanding in Alabama](#)

square feet with the first phase of 20,000 square feet completed this year. The expansion and new equipment will mean 60 new jobs over two to three years.

William Thornton, al.com

Alabama airports get \$54 million in coronavirus grants⁵⁸

Alabama airports are expecting tens of millions of dollars in operating losses because of the virtual elimination of passenger traffic, which is also affecting revenue at hotel airports as well as parking revenue. The \$54 million in federal grants-part of the CARES Act passed last month by Congress-will help offset those losses. These grant funds are part of the \$10 billion included in the act for airports nationwide. (photo: alabama-airpots.jpg)

Paul Gattis, al.com

Harbert Management Corp. launches small business fund with nearly \$1.1 million in funding⁵⁹

One of Birmingham's largest private companies is launching a small business fund for those economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Harbert Management Corp. is committing nearly \$1.1 million through its newly created Harbert Employees Reaching Out (HERO) Small Business Relief Fund (HSBRF), and applications will be taken beginning April 20. HMC's goal is that grants provided by the fund will enable qualifying local small businesses to continue their operations and service to the greater Birmingham community.

Angela Coker, Birmingham Business Journal

Mobile company's face shields shipped to multiple states⁶⁰



Only three weeks after shifting to producing face shields for healthcare workers, Mobile printing company Calagaz Printing says it has already shipped more than 120,000 to buyers in 16 states. The company began producing face shields in March after most of its business evaporated when the coronavirus shuttered restaurants-their main customers. The production shift allowed owner Joe Calagaz to keep his 17 employees on payroll and continue to bring in revenue.

William Thornton, al.com

Airbus teams with USA to produce protective face masks⁶¹

Airbus production and engineering teams in Mobile are teaming up with the University of South Alabama to produce personal protective equipment for medical groups in the Mobile area. A team with the aircraft manufacturing giant is making masks and bands for medical personnel at USA Health including University Hospital, Children & Women's Hospital, Mitchell Cancer Institute, and the

⁵⁸ [Alabama airports get \\$54 million in coronavirus grants](#)

⁵⁹ [Harbert Management Corp. launches small business fund with nearly \\$1.1 million in funding](#)

⁶⁰ [Mobile company's face shields shipped to multiple states](#)

⁶¹ [Airbus teams with USA to produce protective face masks](#)

Physician's Group. Approximately 500 masks, which are reusable and washable, will be produced over the next three weeks along with 75 tension release bands per day.

John Sharp, al.com

Airbus remains committed to A220 production schedule in Alabama⁶²

Airbus SE is sticking with production plans for its newest jet, the A220 narrow-body, in Alabama even as it has put the brakes on output in Canada as the coronavirus decreases demand across the European plane maker's lineup of aircraft. A plan to accelerate output toward 10 a month from the current four at the main A220 plant in Mirabel, Quebec, will be postponed until mid-2021, an Airbus spokeswoman said. A goal to build four a month by the middle of the decade in Mobile, where a new assembly line has just started, remains unchanged, she said.



Charlotte Ryan, Bloomberg

More than 500 face shields provided to growing list of facilities and organizations the Black Belt region⁶³

As the world responds to the COVID-19 pandemic with closures and temporary changes in operation, the University of West Alabama's Black Belt Museum is using what would be downtime to pool resources and address the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) for front line healthcare workers in the region. Since delivering their first batch to Livingston Fire & Rescue, Black Belt Museum staff members have produced and delivered more than 600 face shields in less than one month to facilities in Clarke, Greene, Marengo, Sumter, and Wilcox counties in Alabama and Lauderdale county in Mississippi. Practicing social distancing, staff members have even transitioned to full-scale production at their home workshops where they can manufacture the simple yet effective prints in batches throughout the day to continue meeting requests.

University of West Alabama

What will manufacturing's new normal be after COVID-19?⁶⁴

History teaches us that short-term measures taken in response to global crises lead to changes that last for decades. What most of us consider normal has already fundamentally shifted. Manufacturers who understand and act on this new normal will have ample opportunities for growth. The COVID-19 pandemic hit manufacturers in an unexpected and unprecedented way. For the first time in modern manufacturing history, demand, supply and workforce availability are affected globally at the same time. Some of the long-term trends we're likely to see include: the revival of automated domestic

⁶² [Airbus remains committed to A220 production schedule in Alabama](#)

⁶³ [More than 600 face shields provided to growing list of facilities and organizations in Black Belt region](#)

⁶⁴ [What will manufacturing's new normal be after COVID-19?](#)

manufacturing, the decoupling of supply chains, data infrastructure as a strategic asset, digitization as a competitive advantage, and the growth of remote work, collaboration, and the ‘virtual shift’.

Artem Kroupenev, Industry Week

Renovated Delphi building now part of the new South Limestone Industrial Park⁶⁵

A former Delphi auto parts plant building that was vacant for more than 10 years now houses agriculture, construction and manufacturing operations and is part of a new industrial park being developed off U.S. 31.

Marian Accardi, Decatur Daily

After shift to face masks, Cullman’s HomTex makes long-term PPE plans⁶⁶

In less than a month, HomTex Inc., a manufacturer of bed linens and other items, has shifted its focus from traditional products to making cotton face masks for businesses and individuals coping with the threat of coronavirus. Today, the family owned company plans a major investment at its facilities in Cullman County to manufacture another product in high demand – the pleated, 3-ply surgical masks used in hospitals and nursing homes.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Birmingham’s Sanitizit puts the clean back into shopping carts during the COVID-19 pandemic⁶⁷

Two Birmingham businessmen have found a solution to easy sanitation of shopping carts during the current pandemic. They developed an easy-to-use, convenient, self-contained cleaning machine that sprays nontoxic sanitizing solution onto shopping carts to kill germs and harmful bacteria.

Carla Davis, Alabama Newscenter

Alabama automakers resuming production⁶⁸

Production resumed at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Tuscaloosa on April 27th, while Hyundai prepares to restart the first week of May.

William Thornton, al.com

\$2 million, 10-employee chemical facility to be built in Prattville after land sale⁶⁹

Autumn Tree LLC will build a \$2 million facility in the city's south industrial park, said Mayor Bill Gillespie Jr. The Prattville City Council approved the sale of the land to the company in a special called meeting Tuesday night. The tract of about 15 acres was sold for \$17,500 per acre. The company will employ about 10 people. Autumn Tree mixes chemicals and other substances used in industry and agriculture. The Prattville facility will supply chemicals to the International Paper paper mill in town.

Marty Roney, Montgomery Advertiser

⁶⁵ [Renovated Delphi building now part of new South Limestone Industrial Park](#)

⁶⁶ [After shift to face masks, Cullman’s HomTex makes long-term PPE plans](#)

⁶⁷ [Birmingham’s Sanitizit puts the clean back into shopping carts during COVID-19 pandemic](#)

⁶⁸ [Alabama automakers resuming production](#)

⁶⁹ [\\$2 million, 10-employee chemical facility to be built in Prattville after land sale](#)

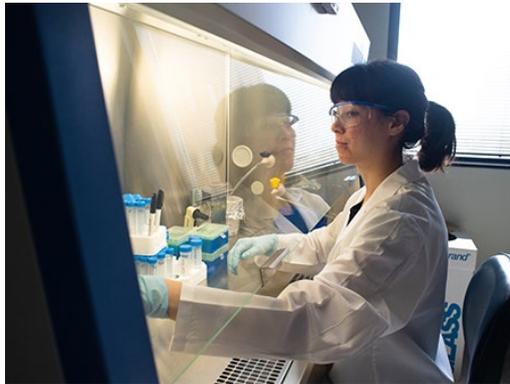
New investment across Alabama topped \$7 billion in 2019⁷⁰

Governor Ivey announced that economic development activity across Alabama last year generated \$7.1 billion in pledged capital investment and 13,454 job commitments, providing a potential spark for economic revival once the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic ease.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

May

Alabama researchers energize efforts to aid search for COVID-19 therapies⁷¹



Alabama's bioscience researchers and organizations, such as Birmingham-based TriAltus Bioscience LLC, have mobilized to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to advance urgent work that could lead to new treatments and vaccines.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Airbus is in 'gravest crisis,' but coronavirus won't kill operations in Mobile⁷²

Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury is calling the coronavirus pandemic the "gravest crisis for the aerospace industry, forewarning the European plane maker's plan to "right-size" its entire business operation.

John Sharp, al.com

Business policy changes to result from the COVID-19 crisis⁷³

After Y2K, companies discovered that many business processes within the corporate environment did not actually have to be connected to the headquarters or even supported in the same country, and this set in motion a tidal wave of outsourcing and offshoring of activities, as well as a new normal for how companies conduct business. A question on everyone's mind is how COVID-19 in 2020 may, like Y2K, stimulate a new way of working.

Matt Jackson, Senior Managing Director, JLL in Area Development

⁷⁰ [New investment across Alabama topped \\$7 billion in 2019](#)

⁷¹ [Alabama researchers energize efforts to aid search for COVID-19 therapies](#)

⁷² [Airbus is in 'gravest crisis,' but coronavirus won't kill operations in Mobile](#)

⁷³ [Business policy changes to result from the COVID-19 crisis](#)

BAMA task force targets PPE production for COVID-19 crisis and beyond⁷⁴

Alabama Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield says the state's business community has stepped up during the COVID-19 pandemic by shifting output to produce badly needed personal protective equipment and medical gear for health care workers and ordinary citizens.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Mobile plastics company 'blessed to be very busy' as epidemic drives demand⁷⁵

Something has come between us since the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic. Usually it's Plexiglas. A lot of the time it's Lexan. Either way, any retail transaction nowadays seems to involve a newly erected shield between customer and cashier. Behind the scenes, an awful lot of that material is coming through a low-key Mobile company that has seen demand for sheet plastics explode since the outbreak began.

Lawrence Specker, al.com

Alabama PPE-maker Eastern Technologies ramps up in COVID-19 battle⁷⁶

A company in Alabama's Wiregrass region is helping to fight the COVID-19 pandemic across the U.S. and in hard-hit regions around the world.

Dawn Azok, MadeInAlabama

Will the corporate footprint shrink due to COVID-19?⁷⁷

Corporate real estate professionals said the use of remote work and virtual meetings will last beyond the immediate coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, according to a recent CoreNet Global survey. A growing number also indicated that the overall corporate footprint will likely shrink as a result.

Staff writer, Business Facilities

UAH set school record in research expenditures in 2019⁷⁸

The University of Alabama in Huntsville set a school record in research funding in 2019, bringing in \$109.7 million in research and development expenditures, the school announced Thursday.

Paul Gattis, al.com

⁷⁴ [BAMA task force targets PPE production for COVID-19 crisis and beyond](#)

⁷⁵ [Mobile plastics company 'blessed to be very busy' as epidemic drives demand](#)

⁷⁶ [Alabama PPE-maker Eastern Technologies ramps up in COVID-19 battle](#)

⁷⁷ [Will the corporate footprint shrink due to COVID-19?](#)

⁷⁸ [UAH set school record in research expenditures in 2019](#)

Honda and Toyota reopen their Alabama plants with COVID-19 protection measures⁷⁹

Honda Manufacturing of Alabama reopened its auto plant in Lincoln Monday, the same day Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama started back its engine plant in Huntsville. Both plants had been closed since late March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers are returning to sanitized workspaces and learning new ways to operate with social distancing and additional personal protective equipment. The reopening of the Honda and Toyota Alabama plants is part of a resuming of all North America operations for the two automakers.



Michael Tomberlin, Alabama Newscenter

Evonik opens advanced biomaterials facility in Birmingham with expansion⁸⁰

Evonik announced today that it has successfully commissioned an advanced biomaterials facility in Birmingham that will support global demand for the use of its RESOMER-brand bioresorbable polymers with implantable medical devices and parenteral drug products. The expansion will also allow Germany-based Evonik to provide contract manufacturing services to customers seeking to outsource production of their own proprietary biomaterials.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Survey shows coronavirus impact on Alabama businesses⁸¹

A recent survey of Alabama businesses shows a fuller picture of how coronavirus has affected the state's economy. Taken late last month by the Alabama Workforce Council, the Alabama COVID-19 Workforce Response Survey details how businesses are navigating the pandemic. In it, 1,794 businesses reported how the coronavirus outbreak affects everything from market demand to financial impact and hiring practices. Survey respondents are mostly small businesses, with 68% of them employing one to 25 workers. The novel coronavirus has left many Alabama businesses affected. A large majority of respondents, 82%, expect the coronavirus to impact them negatively. Meanwhile, only 46.3% of businesses felt at least somewhat equipped to handle the pandemic.

Will Whatley, Alabama Daily News

India to buy 21 helicopters manufactured in Alabama⁸²

The Indian Navy will be purchasing 21 helicopters to be built in Troy at the Lockheed-owned Sikorsky manufacturing facility, according to government contract information released Thursday. In addition,

⁷⁹ [Honda and Toyota reopen their Alabama plants with COVID-19 protection measures](#)

⁸⁰ [Evonik opens advanced biomaterials facility in Birmingham with expansion](#)

⁸¹ [Survey shows coronavirus impact on Alabama businesses](#)

⁸² [India to buy 21 helicopters manufactured in Alabama](#)

the U.S. Navy will purchase three of the MH-60R Seahawk helicopters. Work is expected to be complete by September 2024. The deal reportedly totals \$2.6 billion, according to Naval News.

William Thornton, al.com

How Mazda Toyota is benefitting from the coronavirus⁸³

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing the giant development in Huntsville, also had a giant problem. It needed 4,000 employees at the \$1.6 billion facility under construction to produce vehicles for the two Japanese automakers who had come together for one of the largest economic projects in state history. But it was searching for those 4,000 employees at a time when few were searching for jobs. Then came the novel coronavirus pandemic and a soaring unemployment rate and, suddenly, Mazda Toyota had a robust labor pool.

Paul Gattis, al.com

Airbus launches A220 production on new Alabama assembly line⁸⁴

Airbus said today that it has officially launched production of A220 aircraft at its newly-constructed Final Assembly Line hangar at its Alabama manufacturing facility. Airbus also said its workforce in Mobile has begun production of the first U.S.-built A220 for U.S. airline company JetBlue.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Britain's BT Group adds Alabama's Adtran as fiber supplier to limit reliance on Huawei⁸⁵



as a strategic partner.

Britain's biggest landline network has brought on an Alabama company as a new supplier to help cut its reliance on China's Huawei Technologies Co. and ramp up construction of a nationwide fiber-optic system. BT Group Plc's infrastructure unit Openreach signed a long-term contract to bring in Huntsville's Adtran Inc. alongside Huawei and Finland's Nokia Oyj

Thomas Seal, Bloomberg (from Alabama News Center)

New Cold Storage Warehouse and Cargo Facility on Track for 2021 Opening at the Port of Mobile⁸⁶

The Port of Mobile's newest refrigerated cargo facility is on track for an early 2021 opening at one of the nation's fastest growing container ports. MTC Logistics (MTC) is investing approximately \$61 million at the Port of Mobile. - *Refrigerated and Frozen Food News*

⁸³ [How Mazda Toyota is benefitting from the coronavirus](#)

⁸⁴ [Airbus launches A220 production on new Alabama assembly line](#)

⁸⁵ [Britain's BT Group adds Alabama's Adtran as fiber supplier to limit reliance on Huawei](#)

⁸⁶ [New Cold Storage Warehouse and Cargo Facility on Track for 2021 Opening at the Port of Mobile](#)

Alabama automakers adopt COVID-19 safety measures as production ramps up⁸⁷

Alabama automakers have been ramping up production following the COVID-19 outbreak, with strict new protocols in place to prevent the spread of the virus. Toyota, Honda, Hyundai and Mercedes-Benz all are implementing similar measures as employees return to work, including temperature checks, staggered shifts, frequent sanitizing and additional protective gear.

Dawn Azok, MadeInAlabama

Surveys show how businesses in Alabama, nationally are adjusting to COVID-19⁸⁸

A pair of surveys are showing the new reality for businesses - retail and otherwise - as Alabama begins to emerge from the coronavirus lockdown measures. Alabama Works recently released a survey of businesses conducted in late April before Gov. Kay Ivey's Stay at Home order expired and certain retailers were allowed to open. The Alabama survey showed the effect of the lockdown on business owners struggling to survive with little revenue coming in. Alabama Works surveyed 1,794 business owners across Alabama, with most responses coming from Etowah, Jefferson, Baldwin, Lee, Madison and Montgomery counties.

William Thornton, al.com

Southern Company turns to Alabama manufacturer for face masks⁸⁹

With government guidelines recommending people use protective face masks and practice safe social distancing during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Southern Company has turned to local businesses to supply its needs and protect public health while also helping support the economy.

Will Sahlie, Alabama Newscenter

June



Feds inject \$142 million into Auburn biotech to speed vaccine delivery⁹⁰

Two top federal biological research agencies announced an agreement investing \$142 million in SiO2, an Auburn biotech firm, to speed production of vials and syringes. The company specializes in engineered materials used in the storage and delivery of advanced pharmaceuticals, including vaccines. The investment will allow the company to add 200 workers, doubling its current workforce. Most of the current employees live in Lee County.

Chris McFadyen, Business Alabama

⁸⁷ [Alabama automakers adopt COVID-19 safety measures as production ramps up](#)

⁸⁸ [Surveys show how businesses in Alabama, nationally are adjusting to COVID-19](#)

⁸⁹ [Southern Company turns to Alabama manufacturer for face masks](#)

⁹⁰ [Feds inject \\$142 into Auburn biotech to speed vaccine delivery](#)

Cullman’s JELCO adds new dimension with healthcare PPE production⁹¹

JELCO, a Cullman manufacturer that typically produces fall-protection gear for utility workers, is expanding its workforce and adding equipment as it ventures into a new product line—personal protective equipment for healthcare workers. The company has invested more than \$100,000 to install new sewing machines and an automated fabric-cutting machine to speed up production. The staff has grown from a handful of workers to 25, and new hiring can be sustained.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Davidson Technologies awarded \$20.7 million increase for missile defense contract⁹²

Huntsville-based Davidson Technologies was recently awarded a \$20.7 million increase to a multi-year contract for the Missile Defense Agency at Redstone Arsenal.

Leada Gore, al.com

State funds put into brining “Best and Brightest” to Decatur, Marengo County⁹³

Alabama lawmakers recently approved funding for a pilot scholarship program to get recent college graduates with degrees in science, technology, engineering and math subjects to live in the city of Decatur and the Demopolis.

Mary Sell, AL Daily News

Port of Mobile signs final agreement for \$365M dredging projects⁹⁴

The Alabama State Port Authority signed a final agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to move forward with a project to widen and deepen the channel for the Port of Mobile. The \$365 million project will begin by the end of 2020, is scheduled for completion in late 2024 or early 2025 and will deepen the port’s 45-foot navigation channel to 50 feet.

Staff, The Maritime Executive

Austal USA gets \$50 million to steel itself for the future⁹⁵

The money is part of \$187 million under the Defense Production Act Title III, “to help sustain and strengthen essential domestic industrial base capabilities and defense-critical workforce in shipbuilding, aircraft manufacturing, and clothing and textiles.

Lawrence Specker, al.com

⁹¹ [Cullman’s JELCO adds new dimension with healthcare PPE production](#)

⁹² [Davidson Technologies awarded \\$20.7 million increase for missile defense contract](#)

⁹³ [State funds put into bringing “Best and Brightest” to Decatur, Marengo County](#)

⁹⁴ [Port of Mobile signs final agreement for \\$365M dredging projects](#)

⁹⁵ [Austal USA gets \\$50 million to steel itself for the future](#)

Alabama Launchpad funding fuels growth plans for tech startup MOXIE⁹⁶

MOXIE earned a \$100,000 seed-stage award in Launchpad's recent 2020 Cycle 2 contest. MOXIE's cofounder and CEO says they will use the Launchpad funding to recruit talent to fill roles critical to the startup's growth plans. They are currently hiring for five new positions, with more hires expected as the IoT startup's presence grows.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Glove plant finally ready to keep promise⁹⁷

COVID-19 put the re-opening of the former Ameritex plant in Eufaula on hold, but Medical Industries of the Americas is showing signs of delivering on its promise of getting gloves and other items rolling off its manufacturing operation very soon.

Kyle Mooty, Dothan Eagle

Regions announces \$12 million racial equity, empowerment investments⁹⁸

Regions Bank and the Regions Foundation announced \$12 million in programs and investments it says are aimed at advancing racial equality, inclusivity, and economic advancement. The package includes \$1 million to the National Urban League and \$2 million in deposits in minority-owned banks and investments in community development financial institutions. The money will focus on three areas—minority business development, increasing minority homeownership, and increasing web accessibility to underserved communities.

William Thornton, al.com

July

Auburn biomedical firm announces \$163 million expansion, to hire 220⁹⁹

Auburn's SiO2 Materials Science today announced a \$163 million expansion in the next phase of the fight against coronavirus. The project is expected to create 220 jobs. Last month, SiO2, located in Auburn Technology Park West, landed a \$143 million federal contract to produce packaging, including vials, for storing the COVID-19 vaccine, when it is developed. The company currently employs more than 200 engineers, scientists and technicians, most of whom live in Lee County and are Auburn University graduates.

William Thornton, al.com

⁹⁶ [Alabama Launchpad funding fuels growth plans for tech startup MOXIE](#)

⁹⁷ [Glove plant finally ready to keep promise](#)

⁹⁸ [Regions announces \\$12 million racial equity, empowerment investments](#)

⁹⁹ [Auburn biomedical firm announces \\$163 million expansion, to hire 220](#)

Pinnacle Renewable Energy plans \$95 million wood pellet plant in Alabama¹⁰⁰

Governor Kay Ivey today announced that Alabama Pellets LLC, a subsidiary of Canada-based Pinnacle Renewable Energy Inc., plans to invest \$95 million to construct a wood pellet production facility in Demopolis.

The Alabama Pellets facility is expected to have an annual production volume of 360,000 metric tons and will start initial industrial wood pellet production by mid-2021. The company has set an initial target of hiring at least 45 workers.



Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Governor Kay Ivey announces creation of Alabama Innovation Commission¹⁰¹

Gov. Kay Ivey on Thursday announced the establishment of Alabama's first statewide commission on entrepreneurship and innovation. The Alabama Innovation Commission, known as Innovate Alabama, is a platform for innovators to engage policymakers, exchange ideas and identify policies that promote innovation. The commission will examine policies to increase entrepreneurship, spur innovation and enhance technology accelerators, in addition to addressing the challenges and red tape that startup companies often face. It also will produce and present a comprehensive innovation policy agenda to the Office of the Governor and the Alabama Legislature.

Bronze Valley and gener8tor bringing accelerator to Alabama¹⁰²

Nationally ranked startup accelerator gener8tor announced today a partnership with Bronze Valley to fuel the growth of business startups emerging from Birmingham, the state of Alabama and throughout the Southeast.

Through this partnership, gener8tor will launch the Bronze Valley Accelerator program – a free version of gener8tor's accelerator program that provides individualized mentorship and coaching for up to 15 startups each year. The Bronze Valley Accelerator is a free accelerator for early-stage technology startups with local roots. The program provides participants with intensive and individualized coaching and access to gener8tor's national network of mentors, potential customers, corporate partners and investors. The program is designed to help startups gain early customer traction on their product or idea and establish metrics that make them competitive applicants for full-time accelerators or seed investment.

Staff Writer, Alabama News Center

¹⁰⁰ [Pinnacle Renewable Energy plans \\$95 million wood pellet plant in Alabama](#)

¹⁰¹ [Gov. Kay Ivey announces creation of Alabama Innovation Commission](#)

¹⁰² [Bronze Valley and gener8tor bringing accelerator to Alabama](#)

ALDI plans regional HQ, distribution hub in Baldwin County, creating 200 jobs¹⁰³

ALDI U.S., the growing grocery retailer, announced plans today to construct a new regional headquarters and distribution center in Loxley, Alabama, to support the company's growing footprint along the Gulf Coast. The retailer purchased 160 acres in Loxley's industrial and warehousing district, north of Interstate 10's exit 44. The 564,000-square-foot facility will bring approximately \$100 million in capital investment and create 200 jobs in Baldwin County. Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2021.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

New Theodore plant to bring 74 jobs to Mobile area¹⁰⁴

Incoa Performance Minerals will invest \$110 million over the next five years in a new Mobile-area industrial plant expected to create 74 jobs. According to information released Tuesday by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the plant will process calcium carbonate. The substance has a wide range of uses in industry, including as a filler in paints and plastics, and in food and medicine, where it is a dietary supplement

providing calcium and an antacid.

Lawrence Specker, al.com

Report: Airports have \$5 billion economic impact on Alabama¹⁰⁵

Alabama's airports are estimated at a total spending output impact of \$5 billion in 2019 on the state's economy. In a recent report conducted by Keivan Deravi, of Economic Research Services Inc., it is estimated that approximately \$1.7 billion of this total economic impact is solely due to the aviation and aviation related activities.

Alabama's 76 airports employ approximately 69,200 direct and indirect jobs and have more than \$2.6 billion in additional payroll to the economy of the state.

Erica Joiner West, Business Alabama

Birmingham emerging as Southeast logistics hub with 500 new jobs on the way¹⁰⁶

According to a City of Birmingham news release, FedEx will invest nearly \$40 million in a project on Lakeshore Parkway that sits on the Birmingham-Bessemer boundary. The project will create nearly 300 jobs, approximately 200 of which will be in Birmingham. The Birmingham City Council on Tuesday, July 21, 2020 approved an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Bessemer to coordinate municipal services for the ground delivery distribution center. - *Pat Byington, Birmingham Now*

¹⁰³ [ALDI plans regional HQ, distribution hub in Baldwin County, creating 200 jobs](#)

¹⁰⁴ [New Theodore plant to bring 74 jobs to Mobile area](#)

¹⁰⁵ [Report: Airports have \\$5 billion economic Impact on Alabama](#)

¹⁰⁶ [Birmingham emerging as Southeast logistics hub with 500 new jobs on the way](#)

August

Airbus opens new education training center in Alabama¹⁰⁷

A new aerospace exhibition and education center is open in Mobile, giving teens and adults interested in aerospace careers a place to be inspired, educated and equipped with the knowledge they need to succeed. Flight Works Alabama is a cooperative effort between the Airbus Foundation, the State of Alabama and a group of educational partners and commercial sponsors. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said the facility is an investment in the future.



Dennis Washington, AlabamaNewsCenter

Governor Ivey allocates \$100 million for Alabama broadband connectivity for students¹⁰⁸

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has allocated \$100 million in federal coronavirus relief funding for a public-private partnership to increase internet access for K-12 students who this fall will use distance learning. Alabama Broadband Connectivity (ABC) for Students will provide vouchers for families of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, or based on other income criteria.

Staff writer, AlabamaNewsCenter

Dollar General opens cold storage facility in Montgomery, creating 65 jobs¹⁰⁹

Retailer Dollar General announced the opening of a 450,000-square-foot DG Fresh cold storage facility in Montgomery that will create 65 jobs and advance the company's growth plans through a \$26 million investment. The new DG Fresh facility, located at 6080 Mobile Highway, seeks to support approximately 1,500 stores through the company's Fresh initiative, which is a strategic multi-phased shift to self-distribution of frozen and refrigerated goods such as dairy, deli and frozen products.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

9-acre industrial facility to be built in Huntsville despite coronavirus economic concerns¹¹⁰

North Alabama officials on Wednesday broke ground on a sprawling new industrial building that will cover more than nine acres and signals more economic growth for the region despite the economic woes of the coronavirus pandemic. The facility -- which will be the largest speculative building in north Alabama -- will be developed by The Hollingsworth Companies at the SouthPoint Business Park at I-65 and I-565 in Huntsville. - *Paul Gattis, OANow*

¹⁰⁷ [Airbus opens new education center in Alabama](#)

¹⁰⁸ [Governor Ivey allocates \\$100 million for Alabama broadband connectivity for students](#)

¹⁰⁹ [Dollar General opens cold storage facility in Montgomery, creating 65 jobs](#)

¹¹⁰ [9-acre industrial facility to be built in Huntsville despite coronavirus economic concerns](#)

Steelmaker AM/NS Calvert to add electric arc furnace in \$500 million expansion¹¹¹

Steelmaker ArcelorMittal announced today that it plans to build an electric arc furnace steel making facility at its AM/NS Calvert mill as part of a \$500 million expansion project in Alabama. Construction is expected to take 24 months, and the new facility is anticipated to create 200 direct jobs and another 100 indirect jobs in the community. The project is expected to create 500 construction jobs.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Toyota Alabama installing 3.3-acre solar array in environmental push¹¹²

The Toyota engine plant in Huntsville is playing a key role in the automaker's new solar energy plan, as part of a \$9.3 million investment designed to cut the need for outside energy in its operations across three states.

Dawn Azok, MadeInAlabama

Honda supplier expands Alabama plant¹¹³

Honda supplier Unipres Alabama is investing \$6.3 million and will create 10 jobs with the latest expansion of its stamping plant in Steele in St. Clair County. The St. Clair County Economic Development Council announced the project, which follows a \$40 million expansion of the plant in 2018 that created 70 new jobs.

Staff Writer, Alabama Newscenter

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing to boost Alabama investment by \$830 million¹¹⁴

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing (MTM), the joint venture between automakers Mazda Motor Corp. and Toyota Motor Corp., plans to make an additional \$830 million investment in Alabama to incorporate new cutting-edge manufacturing technologies to its production lines and provide enhanced training to its workforce of up to 4,000 employees.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

FedEx Ground to build \$40 million logistics facility in Jefferson County¹¹⁵

FedEx Ground plans to build a \$40.6 million facility in Jefferson County that would create 285 full- and part-time jobs within three years of the project's completion, the Birmingham Business Alliance announced today.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

¹¹¹ [Steelmaker AM/NS Calvert to add electric arc furnace in \\$500 million expansion](#)

¹¹² [Toyota Alabama installing 3.3-acre solar array in environmental push](#)

¹¹³ [Honda supplier expands Alabama plant](#)

¹¹⁴ [Mazda Toyota Manufacturing to boost Alabama investment by \\$830 million](#)

¹¹⁵ [FedEx Ground to build \\$40 million logistics facility in Jefferson County](#)

\$7 million addition coming to Elmore technical center¹¹⁶

The sprawling campus of the Elmore County Technical Center is getting a \$7 million, 45,000-square-foot addition. Programs at the new building will teach students in an aviation program in conjunction with Auburn University, a plumbing and pipe fitting curriculum, HVAC training and other trade and building skills. Four years ago, there were 350 students from the county's four high schools taking classes at the center. Last year that enrollment more than doubled to about 800 students.

Marty Roney, Montgomery Advertiser

Bonnie Plants moves to Opelika¹¹⁷

Bonnie Plants Inc. has broken ground on a new corporate headquarters in Opelika, bringing 60 jobs to the community and investing \$7.9 million.

Erica Joiner West, Business Alabama

Geneva County targets manufacturers with new spec building¹¹⁸

Officials in rural Geneva County believe their job-creation efforts will receive a major boost from a new 45,000-square-foot speculative building that's ideal for a manufacturing operation. The spec building is being made possible through a funding partnership between the Wiregrass Electric Cooperative (WEC), the PowerSouth Energy Cooperative and the Geneva County Commission.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

JELD-WEN adds product line at Alabama facility, creating 40 jobs¹¹⁹

Charlotte, North Carolina-based JELD-WEN Inc., one of the world's largest door and window manufacturers, plans to expand production at its plant in Randolph County, creating up to 40 new jobs at the facility, officials announced today. The expansion at the Alabama facility stems from JELD-WEN's decision to move the assembly of patio doors from a number of Northern U.S. plants to Wedowee. The expansion will result in an estimated \$25 million in sales revenue for the facility.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

DURA Automotive Systems to produce EV battery trays at Alabama facility, creating 279 jobs¹²⁰

Michigan-based DURA Automotive Systems plans to invest \$59 million to open a manufacturing facility in Muscle Shoals that will produce battery trays for electric vehicles. The project, which includes critical support from the Shoals Economic Development Authority, will create 279 direct jobs and expands the potential for Alabama's auto industry to capitalize on the growing EV wave.

Press release, Governor's Office

¹¹⁶ [\\$7 million addition coming to Elmore technical center](#)

¹¹⁷ [Bonnie Plants moves to Opelika](#)

¹¹⁸ [Geneva County targets manufacturers with new spec building](#)

¹¹⁹ [JELD-WEN adds product line at Alabama facility, creating 40 jobs](#)

¹²⁰ [DURA Automotive Systems to produce EV battery trays at Alabama facility, creating 279 job](#)

Auburn auto supplier, slated to close, is acquired, 300 to be hired¹²¹

Wheel, performance tire and accessories company Wheel Pros today announced it has acquired the Borbet Manufacturing Facility in Auburn and plans to create 300 full-time jobs. The plant inked a nearly \$24 million expansion in March, only to announce the plant would be shuttered weeks later with the coming of the coronavirus pandemic. There were 250 people employed there at the time the aluminum wheel production facility opened in 2003 and had been owned by the Germany-based Borbet since 2008.

William Thornton, al.com

September

Site consultants rank Alabama a top state in Area Development survey¹²²

Site selection professionals surveyed by national publication Area Development once again ranked Alabama among the top states for doing business, citing a range of factors that underpin a business-friendly environment. Alabama ranks No. 6 overall in the magazine's 2020 "Top States for Doing Business" analysis, continuing a long run in the annual survey's Top 10 that underscores the state's consistent, high-level emphasis on economic growth and job creation.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

BendPak expands in Mobile¹²³

Less than six months after opening a 100,000-square-foot distribution center in Mobile, BendPak has started construction on a 70,000-square-foot warehouse next door. The California-based firm, which makes vehicle lifts and automotive service equipment, bought the second property just 30 days after completing the first structure.

Nedra Bloom, Business Alabama

High-tech utility pole manufacturer to locate in Tallapoosa County¹²⁴

Dadeville Pole Co. plans to construct a new facility to manufacture and distribute power poles at the William Thweatt Industrial Park in Tallapoosa County, providing the rural region with an economic boost, according to the Lake Martin Area Economic Development Alliance. Dadeville Pole will initially create 12 direct jobs to operate the mill and dry kilns, as well as sustaining and promoting numerous indirect jobs with local wood suppliers and loggers.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

¹²¹ [Auburn auto supplier, slated to close, is acquired, 300 to be hired](#)

¹²² [Site consultants rank Alabama a top state in Area Development survey](#)

¹²³ [BendPak expands in Mobile](#)

¹²⁴ [High-tech utility pole manufacturer to locate in Tallapoosa County](#)

Coastal Growers plans \$87 million peanut shelling facility in Atmore¹²⁵

Coastal Growers LLC plans to build a peanut shelling plant in Atmore, bringing 100 or more jobs to the area and turning the Escambia County city into a hub for peanut shelling in southwest Alabama. The company — owned by a cooperative of farmers, most of them residing in Alabama — will build an \$87 million shelling and storage facility on more than 60 acres in the Atmore Industrial Park. Paul Turner, an attorney representing the company, said the average wage in the plant will be more than \$17 per hour for the 100-plus full-time workers. In addition, there will be temporary positions added during peak shelling times.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Denmark’s Mountain Top Industries selects Alabama for its first U.S. plant¹²⁶

Denmark-based Mountain Top Industries, which specializes in aluminum roll covers for pickup trucks, plans to open a 73,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Montgomery as the company expands into the U.S. market. They will invest \$13.3 million to open the state-of-the-art facility, located along Interstate 85 in Montgomery Industrial Park at 655 Industrial Park Boulevard. The site will support 90 full-time jobs with an annual payroll of nearly \$3.4 million.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Amazon opening facility in Daleville¹²⁷

A former Fred’s building on U.S. Hwy 84 near All-In Credit Union in Dale County will soon be home to one of Amazon’s newest Last Mile facilities supporting its distribution network. Mayor Jayme Stayton and Wiregrass Economic Development Executive Director Jonathan Tullos worked with Amazon over the past six months to bring the facility to Daleville.

Staff Reporter, The Dothan Eagle

Pipemaker Berg to expand Mobile plant with \$15 million upgrade¹²⁸

A Mobile pipe manufacturer that will produce pipe for the Keystone XL pipeline has announced a \$15 million expansion, with an executive saying Mobile “checks all the boxes.” The new spiral pipe facility began operation in 2009. According to information released Wednesday by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, Berg initially committed to hiring 100 people, but currently has about 200 permanent positions and 100 contract workers. - *Lawrence Specker, al.com*

¹²⁵ [Coastal Growers plans \\$87 million peanut shelling facility in Atmore](#)

¹²⁶ [Denmark’s Mountain Top Industries selects Alabama for its first U.S. plant](#)

¹²⁷ [Amazon opening facility in Daleville](#)

¹²⁸ [Pipemaker Berg to expand Mobile plant with \\$15 million upgrade](#)

Eight companies investing \$71 million in Huntsville Metro¹²⁹

New economic development projects will bring 510 new jobs and more than \$71 million in investment to Alabama's Huntsville metro area community, according to the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber. The eight companies undertaking the projects have expanded or located in the Huntsville metro area during 2020, but have not previously announced their growth plans.

Staff writer, Business Facilities

New Flyer of America to launch innovative workforce development program in Anniston¹³⁰

Long before COVID-19 hit, New Flyer of America, the largest bus manufacturer in the country, worked with local workforce councils to reconfigure its workforce development model. Anniston will be the spearhead in New Flyer's effort to do more for its employees. Their partnerships have resulted in an extremely comprehensive, industry-first, community-based organization partnership and workforce development program in Anniston. Since acquiring North American Bus Industries (NABI) in 2013, New Flyer of America has invested over \$50 million in the Anniston facility by upgrading equipment and processes; investing extensively in workforce development, apprenticeship programs and training; integrating technology to manufacture zero-emission buses; and establishing the Vehicle Innovation Center in 2017.

Opinion by Dwayne C. Sampson, writing in al.com

ArcelorMittal sells most U.S. assets, keeps steel mill near Mobile¹³¹

Steel giant ArcelorMittal is selling most of its assets in the United States in a \$1.4 billion deal -- but it's holding on to its massive AM/NS Calvert mill north of Mobile. ArcelorMittal and U.S.-based Cleveland-Cliffs announced the deal Monday morning. Cleveland-Cliffs is acquiring 19 facilities from ArcelorMittal.

In a separate announcement and presentation to investors, Cleveland-Cliffs said that the deal would make it "the largest flat-rolled steel producer in North America, with combined shipments of approximately 17 million net tons in 2019. The company will also be the largest iron ore pellet producer in North America, with 28 million long tons of annual capacity."

Lawrence Specker, al.com

October

Global Resources to invest \$9.5 million in Alabama medical manufacturing venture¹³²

Global Resources International announced plans today to invest \$9.5 million to open a medical manufacturing company in Dothan, creating 70 jobs and expanding local manufacturing capabilities. The company, Advanced Product Solutions, will anchor GRI's family of companies in the manufacturing of engineered fabrics, personal protective equipment and injection molded medical products in the United States. - *Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama*

¹²⁹ [Eight companies investing \\$71 million in Huntsville Metro](#)

¹³⁰ [New Flyer of America to launch innovative workforce development program in Anniston](#)

¹³¹ [ArcelorMittal sells most U.S. assets, keeps steel mill near Mobile](#)

¹³² [Global Resources to invest \\$9.5 million in Alabama medical manufacturing venture](#)

Reliance Worldwide expanding operations in Cullman¹³³

Reliance Worldwide is once again expanding its operations in Cullman. On Monday, the company broke ground on its latest project, a new 300,000-square-foot distribution facility off of Highway 69. The project, dubbed "Project York" by the city, is estimated to have a \$24 million economic impact and create 130 new jobs. The company has invested more than \$100,000 million in Cullman and now has four manufacturing facilities and several distribution sites.

Amy Henderson, Cullman Times

IDB of the City of Auburn, Auburn University partner to meet advanced manufacturing needs¹³⁴

Manufacturing has transitioned from a manual to a more advanced industry over the last 50 years. To better equip workers with the skills needed to flourish in today's manufacturing world, the Industrial Development Board (IDB) of the City of Auburn and Auburn University are partnering to provide resources for Auburn's workforce. The result of this partnership is the Auburn Advanced Manufacturing Training Center (AMTC). Located in the Auburn Industrial Park, the center provides space for training and machine prototyping, setup and development.

"AMTC is the result of three years of thoughtful listening and planning to provide solutions to the gap described by manufacturers in the precision five-axis machining, advanced measurement and industry 4.0 technology skill areas," said City of Auburn Economic Development Director Phillip Dunlap.

David Dorton, City of Auburn

\$53.5 million Mercedes-Benz expansion to add 373 jobs¹³⁵

A new storage and sequence facility for Mercedes-Benz parts in Vance will be completed by mid-2021. Construction on the New Vance Manufacturing Logistics Center, or Vance Ventures Project, is expected to begin this month. The project, taking shape on Will Walker Road, is expected to create 373 jobs.

William Thornton, al.com

**Toyota expansion bearing fruit in Huntsville: 150 jobs available**¹³⁶

The fruits of last year's announced expansion at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama in Huntsville are starting to be harvested. The engine building facility has announced it is actively recruiting to fill 150

¹³³ [Reliance Worldwide expanding operations in Cullman](#)

¹³⁴ [IDB of the City of Auburn, Auburn University partner to meet advanced manufacturing needs](#)

¹³⁵ [\\$53.5 million Mercedes-Benz expansion to add 373 jobs](#)

¹³⁶ [Toyota expansion bearing fruit in Huntsville: 150 jobs available](#)

new positions as part of its \$830 million expansion – the first hiring effort the plant has made public since that announcement in March 2019. Toyota said last year the expansion would ultimately create 450 new jobs.

Paul Gattis, al.com

Oxford auto supplier announces \$10 million expansion, to hire 35¹³⁷



Oxford's Bridgewater Interiors is beginning a \$10 million expansion that is expected to create 35 jobs. The auto supplier manufactures the seat systems for the Honda Pilot and Honda Passport, which are produced in Lincoln. Bridgewater Interiors opened in 2003 and currently employs more than 350 people. The project includes investment in machinery and equipment, and building expansion to add warehousing space.

William Thornton, al.com

Auto supplier IAC plans Alabama expansions creating over 180 jobs¹³⁸

International Automotive Components Group North America Inc. (IAC) plans to invest over \$55.9 million in expansion projects that will create 182 jobs at two Alabama facilities. IAC is committing \$34.3 million in new capital investment to expand its new manufacturing facility located in Tuscaloosa County. This facility will produce door panels and overhead systems for original equipment manufacturers. The project will create 119 jobs at the production site at 15911 Progress Drive in Cottondale. In addition, IAC plans to invest \$21.6 million at its manufacturing facility located at 318 Pappy Dunn Boulevard in the former Fort McClellan in Anniston, creating 63 jobs. The project builds on a milestone 2014 expansion that doubled the size of the Calhoun County facility, whose primary product is automotive interior components and systems.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

Motion Industries announces \$11.2 million Irondale facility, to hire 15¹³⁹

Motion Industries will consolidate two of its facilities into a new \$11.2 million complex, creating 15 new jobs, the company has announced. The plan will combine a fluid-power shop and a hose-and-rubber shop in Irondale and Birmingham into a 104,000-square-foot facility in Irondale and retain 13 jobs.

William Thornton, al.com

¹³⁷ [Oxford auto supplier announces \\$10 million expansion, to hire 35](#)

¹³⁸ [Auto supplier IAC plans Alabama expansion creating over 180 jobs](#)

¹³⁹ [Motion Industries announces \\$11.2 million Irondale facility, to hire 15](#)

Kimber Arms moving headquarters from New York to Troy, creating 366 Alabama jobs¹⁴⁰

Kimber Manufacturing is moving its corporate headquarters to Troy and will “aggressively hire” in all departments. The firearms manufacturer last week announced it is moving to a new facility it built last year on 80 acres with more than 225,000 square feet of space, with design engineering, product management and manufacturing space. The company, formerly based in Yonkers, N.Y., pledged two years ago to open a \$38 million production facility in Troy, creating 366 jobs over the next five years.

William Thornton, al.com

Boeing grant prepares Decatur students for in-demand STEM careers¹⁴¹

A \$50,000 grant from Boeing will help train Alabama students for jobs in the innovation economy. The global aerospace firm and longtime Alabama employer awarded the funding to the Decatur City Schools Foundation for initiatives involving elementary and high school students. Specifically, the grant will supply a composite lab and a 3D printer, and it also will expand a program in which students build their own electric cars.

Dawn Azok, MadeInAlabama

Kith Kitchens to open cabinet factory in Florence, creating 131 jobs¹⁴²

Kith Kitchens, an Alabama-based maker of high-quality cabinets, plans to invest \$11 million to open a new manufacturing facility in Florence that will create 131 full-time jobs. Kith Kitchens will purchase a 150,000-square-foot speculative building pad and 11.5 acres in the Florence-Lauderdale Industrial Park. The company plans to start construction soon with a goal of beginning operations next summer.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

November

Alabama business climate rates near top in “Site Selection” rankings¹⁴³

According to Site Selection Magazine’s 2020 analysis, Alabama moved up two spots to number seven for the state’s business climate.

Lowe’s building 1.2 million square-foot Bessemer distribution center¹⁴⁴

Lowe’s today confirmed it plans to build a 1.2 million square-foot bulk distribution center in Bessemer that should be operational by the fall of 2021. There is no word yet on how many jobs will be created.

William Thornton, al.com

¹⁴⁰ [Kimber Arms moving headquarters from New York to Troy, creating 366 Alabama jobs](#)

¹⁴¹ [Boeing grant prepares Decatur students for in-demand STEM careers](#)

¹⁴² [Kith Kitchens to open cabinet factory in Florence, creating 131 jobs](#)

¹⁴³ [Alabama business climate ranks near top in “Site Selection” rankings](#)

¹⁴⁴ [Lowe’s building 1.2 million square-foot Bessemer distribution center](#)

Amazon to open two new facilities in metro Birmingham¹⁴⁵

Amazon is building another major project in Bessemer and has also confirmed plans for its project at the former Century Plaza mall.

Hanno van der Bijl, Birmingham Business Journal

Redstone Arsenal employment to grow to 50,000 by 2025; \$30 billion annual economic impact¹⁴⁶

Fast-growing north Alabama celebrated the economic, technical and cultural impact of Redstone Arsenal Thursday, and it took the whole day to do it. The Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce's annual "Redstone Update" describes Redstone's impact on the area and the state: 78 government agencies and organizations on base; 44,000 employees likely growing to nearly 50,000 by 2025; 108,000 indirect jobs supported by Arsenal programs; almost \$30 billion in annual economic benefit to the area including \$9 billion in direct federal funding and more than \$21 billion spent by Arsenal contractors.

Lee Roop, al.com

Governor Ivey announces \$200 million small business grant program "Revive Plus"¹⁴⁷

Governor Kay Ivey on Wednesday announced Revive Plus, a \$200 million grant program to support small businesses, non-profits and faith-based organizations in Alabama that have been impacted by COVID-19. Revive Plus is the second wave of funding for these organizations with 50 or fewer employees and will award grants of up to \$20,000 for expenses they have incurred due to operational interruptions caused by the pandemic and related business closures.

Governor's Office

Auto supplier Mobis bringing 120 jobs to Birmingham area¹⁴⁸

Auto supplier Mobis Alabama LLC announced this week that it was expanding into the Birmingham metro area, with a \$15.8 million new facility that is expected to support 120 jobs within three years.

Dennis Pillion, al.com

Buffalo Rock to invest \$75 million in large Birmingham campus after \$39 million buy¹⁴⁹

Buffalo Rock Co. is expanding its presence in metro Birmingham with a large distribution campus off Lakeshore Parkway that will create about 50 new jobs.

Hanno van der Bijl, Birmingham Business Journal



¹⁴⁵ [Amazon to open two new facilities in metro Birmingham](#)

¹⁴⁶ [Redstone Arsenal employment to grow to 50,000 by 2025; \\$30 billion annual economic impact](#)

¹⁴⁷ [Governor Ivey Announces \\$200 million small business grant program "Revive Plus"](#)

¹⁴⁸ [Auto supplier Mobis bringing 120 jobs to Birmingham area](#)

¹⁴⁹ [Buffalo Rock to invest \\$75 million in large Birmingham campus after \\$39 million buy](#)

Golden Boy Foods announces \$13 million Troy expansion, to hire 67¹⁵⁰

Golden Boy Foods is expanding its peanut butter production in Troy as part of a \$13 million project that will create 67 full-time jobs. The food manufacturer plans to modify its existing operations and occupy a 170,000-square-foot building being built by the City of Troy's Industrial Development Board, which will be leased back to the company. Troy's IDB is investing \$12.5 million to purchase land and erect the building.

William Thornton, al.com

New state of the art pipe fabrication facility brings new jobs and nationwide distribution¹⁵¹

Progressive Pipe Fabricators, a division of Shambaugh & Son L.P., celebrated the grand opening of their new Trinity, Alabama facility with a ribbon-cutting event that attracted a number of high-profile attendees from the State of Alabama and the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA). Shambaugh is currently the largest MEP construction services contractor in Indiana and ranked the third largest specialty contractor in the United States. The new 82,000-square-foot fabrication facility, which has been under construction since January, will fabricate and deliver more than 20,000 individual sprinklers per week, and has the capacity to ship more than 1-million pounds of fabricated sprinkler pipe per week.

Staff Writer, The Moulton Advertiser

Mazda-Toyota Manufacturing to launch second wave of production hiring¹⁵²

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing, the joint-venture automotive plant between Mazda Motor Corp. and Toyota Motor Corp., plans to resume the hiring of production positions at its Huntsville assembly facility on Monday. MTM's assembly facility, now under construction, is expected to open next year. Ultimately, the plant will employ up to 4,000 workers.

Jerry Underwood, MadeInAlabama

December

Birmingham motorsports startup secures patent, seed funding¹⁵³

Local motorsports tech startup and Alabama Launchpad winner APEX Pro has been granted a patent on its technology and has also secured seed funding.

Tyler Patchen, Birmingham Business Journal

Airbus delivers 200th A320-family jetliner assembled in Alabama¹⁵⁴

Airbus announced Friday that it had delivered the 200th A320-family jetliner assembled in Mobile.

Lawrence Specker, al.com

¹⁵⁰ [Golden Boy Foods announces \\$13 million Troy expansion, to hire 67](#)

¹⁵¹ [New state-of-the-art pipe fabrication facility brings new jobs and nationwide distribution](#)

¹⁵² [Mazda Toyota Manufacturing to launch second wave of production hiring](#)

¹⁵³ [Birmingham motorsports startup secures patent, seed funding](#)

¹⁵⁴ [Airbus delivers 200th A320-family jetliner assembled in Alabama](#)

Alabama Business Closing Announcements¹⁵⁵

Closing or Layoff	Initial Report Date	Planned Starting Date	Company	City	Planned # of Affected Employees
Layoff	07/26/2020	10/31/2020	Commercial Vehicle Group, Inc.	Piedmont	49
Layoff	07/16/2020	09/11/2020	Nucor	Eufaula	309
Layoff	07/16/2020	08/10/2020	Technicolor	Huntsville	100
Layoff	07/16/2020	08/15/2020	BJCC	Birmingham	91
Layoff	07/16/2020	08/15/2020	Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex	Birmingham	91
Closure	06/15/2020	08/10/2020	Grede Casting	Columbiana	94
Closure	06/08/2020	06/19/2020	Greif, Inc.	Mobile	90
Closure	05/13/2020	05/06/2020	Weidplas North America, LLC	Auburn	96
Closure	05/06/2020	06/28/2020	GOODYEAR	Gadsden	592
Closure	04/22/2020	06/26/2020	BORBET ALABAMA, INC	Auburn	230
Layoff	05/01/2020	06/14/2020	U.S. Steel Tubular Products	Fairfield	633
Layoff	04/22/2020	04/22/2020	GESTAMP	McCalla	76
Closure	04/22/2020	04/22/2020	STAR AVIATION	Mobile	82
Layoff	04/17/2020	04/17/2020	STANDARD FURNITURE		95
Closure	04/17/2020	06/15/2020	MONARCH WINDOWS & DOORS	Anniston	64
Layoff	04/14/2020	03/20/2020	HOOTERS OF AMERICA, LLC		90
Layoff	04/14/2020	06/06/2020	CARBO CERMAICS INC	Eufaula	56
Closure	02/14/2020	04/12/2020	RCX LOGISTICS	Theodore	66
Layoff	02/11/2020	02/05/2020	GOODYEAR	Gadsden	105

¹⁵⁵ [Alabama Plant Closings/Layoffs, Made in Alabama](#)

Closing or Layoff	Initial Report Date	Planned Starting Date	Company	City	Planned # of Affected Employees
Layoff	02/06/2020	04/06/2020	WAITR AND BITE SQUAD	Statewide	491
Closure	02/03/2020	01/01/0001	VICTORIA'S SECRET	Decatur	18
Closure	01/31/2020	03/20/2020	FAURECIA	Tuscaloosa	166
Closure	01/24/2020	03/31/2020	FIS MANAGEMENT SERVICES, LLC	Northport	102
Closure	01/10/2020	03/08/2020	WHOLE FOODS	Hoover	68
Closure	1/10/2020	01/01/2020	CR GIBSON	Florence	46

As of November, 2020

4. Alabama SWOT

Strengths

Alabama's light and heavy manufacturing, driven in large part by the auto industry, but also aerospace and shipbuilding, proved resilient in the face of the pandemic. Our manufacturing also showed the ability to pivot to designing and delivering personal protective equipment and hospital supplies. Whether it was Huntsville's Toyota plant using [existing equipment to make face shields](#), Auburn engineers repurposing CPAP machines into emergency ventilators¹⁵⁶, or local printers [repurposing their equipment](#) to provide much-needed PPE while avoiding layoffs, Alabama companies big and small were able to rapidly provide much-needed support for health care workers while avoiding undue economic pain to their workers. And [many](#) of these [companies](#) have added these new manufacturing possibilities into future product pipelines. Alabama has also proven to be a leader in utilizing opportunity zones, particularly for [rural communities](#).

Weaknesses

Alabama's poor rural broadband has been a perennial problem, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only served to worsen the disparities between urban/rural and rich/poor. Accessing work, schooling, and healthcare from home only works if you have acceptable broadband.¹⁵⁷ Only 21% of Alabamians have access to all-fiber home internet, and this is frustrating workers, parents, business owners, and healthcare professionals as people don't have the resources to fully participate in a "live from home" reality.¹⁵⁸ The state is trying to move forward on broadband, with the state allocating \$100 million in CARES Act funding for K-12 students who need internet service for distance learning.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ [Auburn engineers repurpose CPAP machines into emergency ventilators](#)

¹⁵⁷ [Coronavirus outbreak shining an even brighter light on internet disparities in rural America](#)

¹⁵⁸ [High speed broadband internet emerges as a critical quality of life issue in Alabama](#)

¹⁵⁹ [Governor Ivey Allocates \\$100 million for Alabama broadband connectivity for students](#)

Opportunities

Alabama has an exceptional transportation and logistics infrastructure, and recent/current investments in that infrastructure are paying off and will continue to increase the state's profile nationally and internationally. The Port of Mobile will be [widening and deepening](#) its channel, increasing its shipping capacity. This is on top of previous investments increasing its storage capacity. Mobile's commercial airport swap will be fully underway within five years¹⁶⁰, providing companies with one-stop access to rail, air, ground, or sea shipping, while Huntsville International airport was recognized as America's top small airport¹⁶¹. It's no wonder that Alabama's airports have a [\\$5 billion annual impact](#) on the state economy. And Alabama is staying in front of the pack when it comes to our entrepreneurial ecosystem, with Governor Ivey announcing in July the establishment of the Alabama's first statewide [commission on entrepreneurship](#) and innovation. (Birmingham startup article from November 30th?)

Threats

Alabama isn't the only state dealing with closures of rural hospitals, but it has been a constant problem that has only exacerbated the effects of COVID-19 on our rural population, and will continue to do so in the face of future outbreaks and an aging rural population¹⁶². Earlier this year, Pickens County Medical Center became the seventh rural Alabama hospital to close in the last eight years.¹⁶³

While retail trade proved to be one of the more resilient sectors in Alabama's economy during the pandemic, hospitality and tourism suffered heavy job losses concentrated in the accommodation and food services sectors.¹⁶⁴ With the number of COVID-19 cases in late 2020 dwarfing the number from earlier this year, this significant sector of Alabama's economy may take a long time to recover.

5. Economic Resiliency

Prepared for the future

Alabama is building for the future-literally, as our ports are widened, our airports improved, and as a massive Federal undertaking transforms [Redstone Arsenal](#) into a regional hub for national agencies. In addition to almost 50,000 direct employees, construction and other industries will see over 100,000 jobs maintained or created, many for years to come.

Alabama, in partnership with a wide array of STEM-focused companies, is also preparing its workforce for continued high-dollar employment from high school on. Whether it's Apple and other tech companies partnering with [Birmingham schools](#) to provide tech education, or [aerospace](#) and [aviation](#) companies preparing the workforce of the future, Alabama will have one of the brightest and most future-ready workforces in the country.

¹⁶⁰ [Mobile airport swap may cost \\$400 million and take 5 years](#)

¹⁶¹ [Huntsville International voted nation's top small airport](#)

¹⁶² [Hospital closures in rural America mean longer drive times for patients needing care](#)

¹⁶³ [Another rural Alabama hospital is closing](#)

¹⁶⁴ [Alabama Business Economic Outlook Update, Third Quarter 2020](#)

Through the Alabama Online Global Program, the state is ensuring its future competitiveness by providing new online tools for companies to market themselves to foreign buyers, and find foreign partners for investments, goods, and services.¹⁶⁵

Closing

This report is intended to represent a high level of analysis comparing relevant national statistics to those of the State of Alabama in order to determine if our state compares favorably to national trends. We have also created a narrative identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that represent Alabama's progress and opportunities in innovation, manufacturing and business climate, shortcomings in poverty and reliance on the federal government, and menacing challenges with revenue shortfalls and government regulations.

Information contained in this report is the result of broadly conducted research and analysis of news media reports, economic forecasts, and various indicators produced from a number of responsible sources including but not limited to:

- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- StatsAmerica
- U.S. Cluster Mapping
- Alabama Department of Labor
- Alabama Department of Commerce
- Business Alabama Magazine
- Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

Inside back cover (over): The Alabama Department of Public Health's COVID-19 risk indicator is a county-level snapshot of trends over time in cases, test positivity, and hospitalizations for COVID-19.

¹⁶⁵ [Alabama Online Global program gives new marketing tools to exporters](#)

COVID-19 RISK INDICATOR BY COUNTY

