

Date: November 1, 2005

To: I-85 Corridor Alliance Board

From: Larry Fillmer, I-85 Corridor Alliance Executive Director  
Ray Vaughan, Board Secretary

Subject: October 27, 2005 Board Working Session Meeting Minutes - **Corrected**

The I-85 Corridor Alliance Board Working Session for October was convened at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 27, 2005 at the NCAT in Auburn, Alabama. The attendees at the meeting were:

1. Larry Fillmer – Auburn University, Development
2. Ray Vaughan – Wildlaw
3. Valerie Gray – Chambers County Industrial Development Board
4. Joe Sumners – Economic Development Institute, Auburn University
5. Dean Matheson – Interport/SDS
6. Deroald Hopkins – First Tuskegee Bank
7. Ralph Foster – Auburn University, Outreach
8. Maria Traylor
9. Lori Huguley (for Al Cook) – City of Opelika
10. Titus Lindsey (for Margaret Bentley) – Alabama Power
11. Bill Hutto – Auburn-Opelika Airport
12. Scott Slocum – Weston Solutions, Inc.
13. Joanne Jordan – Southern Union State Community College
14. David Wilson – Auburn University, Outreach
15. Cary Cox – Auburn Training Connection, City of Auburn

**Introduction:**

Larry Fillmer opened the meeting. We again appreciate Al Giffin and NCAT for their hospitality and for allowing the Board to hold its meeting at their facility.

**Officers' Reports:**

Deroald Hopkins welcomed everyone.

Ray Vaughan reported that our 501(c) (3) status letter had not been received from the IRS. We are past the four month time frame and should have heard by now or very soon. Apparently, some problems are occurring at the IRS, in general, as other groups have had their recognitions delayed as well.

Scott Slocum reported that we have \$2,986 in the bank account.

**Follow-up Report on the Executive Committee Meeting:**

Larry reported on the Executive Committee meeting held on October 12, 2005. In summary, the Executive Committee discussed the viability of the current cluster structure. The Committee concluded that the resource inventory developed around the cluster focus is very valuable but that the cluster structure is not functional at this time. The Committee also concluded that the Alliance has had the most success when we have been able to rally around specific projects and programs. Members of the Executive Committee stated that we need continuing leadership from Auburn University, because there is no other organization within the Alliance that can step up at this time to take over that leadership role. Larry Fillmer acknowledged with his new responsibilities as Development Officer-Major Gifts for Auburn University, that it is now appropriate for Larry to relinquish his duties as Executive Director. After discussions with Dr. Wilson, it was determined that Joe Sumners and the Economic Development Institute will take over the administrative structure for the Alliance, and Joe will become executive director for the Alliance in January 2006. Larry will continue to participate, as an Auburn University representative.

We also agreed that we have lost some of the participation of some areas, especially from the western end of the Corridor. It was noted that Montgomery, Shorter and Tallassee have not been active with the Alliance for about the last six months. It was decided that we would focus on projects and geography representing those organizations and communities that have been active in promoting the Corridor. This decision was in no way intended to exclude any of the charter organizations and communities from participating in the Alliance, but did attempt to recognize the realities that other activities have taken priority over their participation in the Alliance.

Larry proposed that Joe, Larry and the officers get together during November and put together a proposal that would recognize the realities stated above and readjust the structure of the Alliance for 2006. Once this has been completed, then a proposal would be brought before the entire Board at a meeting before the end of calendar year 2005. This would include recommendations for officers for 2006.

During the Executive Committee Meeting it was discussed that future projects undertaken by the Alliance should align with current major initiatives and projects outlined for Auburn University. It was felt that this alignment would be consistent with the desire to have Auburn University continue to assume a leadership role in the Alliance. Included in the areas of focus would be support and involvement with the expansion and development of the Auburn-Opelika Airport and the development of the new Research Park. Additionally, because of the success of the Fall Forum and the desire to have this forum as an annual event, work needs to begin on planning for the 2006 program.

The Executive Committee also discussed the need for an Innovation Center, which should be envisioned as a virtual center and not a physical structure. This virtual center would focus on working with Corridor enterprises on applied technology versus research technology. Dr. P.K. Raju is developing a concept paper on a **Product** Innovation Center that would clarify the concept of this Innovation Center and ensure that projects considered by this virtual center do not infringe on research into new technology.

#### **National Business Aviation Association Trade Show:**

Back in the early part of 2005, the I-85 Corridor Alliance committed to support the Region in a marketing and branding program that included participation in one or two trade shows. As a result of that commitment, the I-85 Corridor Alliance will be supporting the Auburn-Opelika Airport at the National Business Aviation Trade Show in Orlando, Nov. 9-11, 2005. The I-85 Corridor Alliance and the Airport will have contiguous booth space at the show. Ralph Foster has been working on our booth, and the City of Auburn will be providing personnel to work with the booth during the show. Larry Fillmer, Al Cook and Valerie Gray will also be attending the show and will provide booth support as required.

#### **Discussion regarding I-85 Corridor Alliance support for Auburn-Opelika Airport Initiatives:**

Bill Hutto talked about the airport expansion and improvements that are currently under consideration. There was an open discussion of priority items for the airport and how the Alliance could provide project assistance to Bill and on these items. Key areas that may need assistance: (1) promotion of continued support from cities and the county; (2) support for Representative Hubbard in his efforts to fund development of road access to the airport; (3) support for a land exchange being presented to the Auburn University Board of Trustees at their November meeting for the needed right-of-way to connect the new terminal into Glenn Avenue/Frederick Road and I-85 exit 57; (3) participation in consideration of how airport facilities can be used to promote economic development for the area (review plans for the new buildings and assistance with enterprise recruitment), and (4) support for incentives to help bring businesses into the airport and to locate their aircraft there (perhaps an airport development authority). One major issue that Bill did identify that will need attention as plans for expansion develop is the need for uniform taxation rates from the Cities of Auburn and Opelika. Today, the airport site is located partially in Auburn and partially in Opelika and depending upon where facilities and operations are located on the airport property, the tax rates will vary.

#### **Additional Business:**

Larry talked about marketing support for the Research Park. A Marketing Task Force, chaired by Chip Burson, Office of Research, has been formed to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the Park. Larry is participating in the Task Force, as required, and there may be opportunities for project support from the Alliance.

Groundbreaking is currently scheduled for November 17, 2005 with the first building tentatively scheduled for completion in late 2006 or early 2007.

Ray Vaughan reported and gave an update on the proposal for a National Grassland in the Black Belt. An economic white paper developed by Dr. Diane Hite of Auburn University will be released soon by WildLaw.

Valerie Gray reported on a new company to the Huguley Park and the development of the Langdale Mill project. Valerie also reported that the City of Valley has purchased one of the other mills that have been closed and will be considered for commercial development.

Joe Sumners briefly discussed a new Auburn University publication highlighting Auburn University's support of Alabama's economy.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

**Next meeting to be scheduled for December.**