

**I-85 Corridor Alliance  
Meeting Notes  
National Center for Asphalt Technology  
Auburn, Alabama  
July 27, 2006**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am.

Present were:

- ♦ *Joe Sumners, AU/ECDI (Executive Director)*
- ♦ *Larry Fillmer, Auburn University*
- ♦ *Titus Lindsey, Alabama Power Company*
- ♦ *Valerie Gray, Chambers County IDB*
- ♦ *Ralph Foster, AU Outreach Information*
- ♦ *Mike Easterwood, AU/EDI*
- ♦ *Margaret Gunter, ACHE*
- ♦ *Krista McClendon, AUM Outreach*
- ♦ *Mary White, Southern Union*
- ♦ *Sandy Nichols, Wildlaw*
- ♦ *Lee Hayes, Chambers County Career Tech*
- ♦ *Sharon Oswald, AU College of Business*
- ♦ *Cary Cox, City of Auburn, Auburn Training Connection*
- ♦ *Bill Hutto, AU Airport*
- ♦ *George Blanks, AU College of Engineering*
- ♦ *Mary Lou Ewald, AU College of Science and Math*
- ♦ *Harold Powell, City of Shorter*

1. Joe Sumners called the meeting to order and introductions were given.
2. Ralph Foster reported on the June 21 **Networking Workshop**, which was held at the Valley Civic Center. He thanked Valerie Gray and City of Valley representatives for the set-up and for allowing the use of their meeting space. The event attracted 96 participants, including many who were new to the Alliance. There were seven exhibits from Auburn University, Southern Union, some of the communities, and the Auburn University airport. Breakout sessions were larger than expected because of the high turnout. Linda Swann from the Alabama Development Office spoke. Joe made a brief presentation about the Alliance. And then participants were broken up into five roundtables. Each group identified regional assets, challenges, priorities and strategies.

A summary of the event was distributed with the minutes (attached). The event received press coverage in the Montgomery Advertiser, the Opelika-Auburn News, and the Valley Times, as well as on television.

Overall, the event was deemed a success by those who attended and the group agreed to have another one next year.

Joe thanked Ralph for all of his work.

3. **Promotion and Marketing Committee Report.** Ralph passed out a one-page handout for the home page of the asset map website. His staff revised the asset map with icons showing the regional assets. The new image may be found at [www.i85corridor](http://www.i85corridor).
4. **Business and Innovation Forum Planning Committee Report:** Larry passed out the tentative agenda for the November 2-4 program. Auburn University has a contract with the Lodge at the Grand National Golf Course in Opelika for most of the program. The program will start on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and we intend to invite 40 CEOs, executive officers, etc. The agenda will focus on: 1) alternative energy, 2) wireless technology and 3) transportation, with emphasis on the AU Research Park.

The planning team is working on identifying a keynote speaker for Thursday evening. Possibilities include Tim Cook, the president and COO of Apple Computer, an Auburn Graduate; Ed Reynolds, president of network operations for Cingular wireless; and Stuart Varney, the business and financial editor for Fox News, who was in Montgomery 18 months ago. He is a large landowner in south Alabama.

We will seek to have representation from the Governor's office and other politicians, although that is the weekend before the election.

On Friday, the program will start with an overview of the Research Park, alternative energy, and wireless technology. During lunch there will be a presentation about the I-85 corridor alliance, perhaps with a mayor speaking. Then there will be a discussion focusing on venture capital.

Breakout sessions will seek to solicit discussion and response to earlier presentations. Then there will be a transportation presentation followed by dinner at the Jewel Collin Smith museum with a tour.

On Saturday, there will be a tour of the National Center for Asphalt Technology, followed by brunch under a tent at the Research Park. Participants will then be bused to the stadium, attend the football game, and then be bused back.

The Lodge should be a fantastic location. An exhibit area will be provided with the opportunity for anyone to make an exhibit or distribute materials.

Sponsorships are going well. There are commitments from cities of Auburn, Opelika, Alabama Power Company, and Auburn University. We have contracted with George McMillan and Associates who are seeking additional sponsors.

#### **5. Manufacturing Minor for Non-engineers**

Sharon Oswald reported that Auburn University College of Business teamed up with Southern Union to get the technical minor approved. Plans are to launch it next fall, if funding can be found to support it. Money is needed to pay Southern Union instructors and for marketing. A Website is being developed. The program will be highlighted at the Business and Innovation Forum.

#### **6. Alabama BEST Program: George Blanks**

George Blanks, executive director of K-12 Engineering Outreach, made a presentation about the BEST (boosting engineering science and technology) program. The program seeks to promote excellence in math and science in Alabama high schools. It engages high schools students through participation in a robotics competition.

The program promotes teamwork, problem solving, and creativity. It includes a competition and a mentorship relationship with engineers from local companies.

The program is free for schools but is funded by local businesses. It takes about \$2000 to sponsor a local school. George noted that there is room for four more Alabama high schools.

Teacher training is scheduled for Saturday August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Kick off Day is a 2:00 PM, Sunday, September 17, 2006, at Auburn High School. Game Day (robotics competition) is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> in the Student Activities Center starting at 1:00 PM.

Mike Easterwood agreed to ask ADECA to see if there are any funding opportunities to support BEST.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Mark your calendar:

The next I-85 Corridor Alliance work session is scheduled for Thursday, August 24, 2006, at the National Center for Asphalt Technology in Auburn (8:00 - 9:30 AM).