

Date: August 26, 2004
To: I-85 Corridor Alliance Executive Council
From: Larry Fillmer
I-85 Corridor Alliance Program Manager
Subject: August 26, 2004 Executive Council Meeting Minutes

The I-85 Corridor Alliance Executive Council convened at 8:00 a.m. CDT on Thursday, August 26th at the Hilton Garden Inn in Auburn, Alabama. The attendees at the meeting were:

1. Margaret Bentley – Alabama Power
2. Jerry Clement – Batson-Cook (Educational Services Cluster)
3. Al Cook – Economic Development – City of Opelika
4. Phillip Dunlap – Economic Development – City of Auburn
5. Ralph Foster – Office of Outreach – Auburn University
6. Robert Jackson – CDC – City of Tuskegee
7. Ellen McNair – Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce
8. Sandra Nichols – WildLaw
9. Harold Powell – Town Clerk – Town of Shorter
10. Joe Sumners – Economic Development Institute – Auburn University
11. Maria Traylor – Auburn-Opelika Convention Bureau
12. Ray Vaughan – WildLaw
13. John Veres – AUM
14. David Wilson – Auburn University
15. Larry Fillmer – I85 Corridor Alliance

Larry Fillmer opened the meeting and gave the Executive Council brief updates on meetings that had been held since the last Executive Council Meeting in June. Among these were meetings regarding the Innovation Partnership Center on August 4, 2004 at Southern Union State Community College; the Center for Sustainable Rural Living on August 10th at the E.V. Smith Research Site; and the Infrastructure Services Cluster Meeting on August 17th. Larry also described attending the monthly meeting of the Auburn Training Connection on Wednesday, August 18th. Larry further indicated that he had met with Nathan Norris, Director-Marketing and Sales for “The Waters,” a planned development community of 2500 home sites at Exit 16 off I-85. Participation at all of these meetings is helping to coordinate and support the various initiatives being undertaken by the Clusters.

David Wilson provided the Executive Council with a summary of discussions that he had conducted since the July 8th I-85 Network Meeting. Included in these discussions were meetings with Auburn University President, Dr. Richardson and Auburn University Provost, Dr. Tom Hanley. David indicated that both Dr. Richardson and Dr. Hanley had provided very positive comments regarding the I-85 program and were supporting the efforts that had been undertaken. David also indicated that he had had a very good meeting with Mayor Hamm of the City of Auburn. These discussions were also very positive regarding the City of Auburn's involvement and participation in the I-85 Alliance. Phillip Dunlap reinforced David's summary of the discussions with Mayor Hamm. Phillip indicated that the City of Auburn would be very supportive in supporting the I-85 Corridor Alliance develop marketing and branding programs that would be complimentary to the recruiting efforts that are being undertaken by the various economic development directors in the Corridor. Since the Marketing and Branding program were already an agenda item further discussion of this effort was deferred until later in the meeting. David concluded his summary by advising the Executive Council that the formal work being conducted by Andrew Smith and the OTF Group would conclude at the end of September.

Cluster updates were provided by the Cluster Leaders. Maria Traylor represented the Tourism and Community Development Cluster and identified that the Cluster had met in late July to begin planning several initiatives for the fall. Jerry Clement reported that the Educational Services Cluster had not met since May; however, Jerry has been involved with Larry and Dean Matheson regarding the efforts of the Infrastructure Services Cluster. Jerry also indicated that he would be convening the Educational Services Cluster in early September and will begin to engage the Cluster in opportunities to assist with Work Force Development in the Region, which from input provided by local manufacturing firms is a critical need within the Corridor. The Infrastructure Services Cluster met on August 17th and continued to address its mission and focus. This Cluster is now meeting on a regular monthly schedule.

Larry Fillmer and Ray Vaughan presented the "Articles of Incorporation" for approval by the Executive Council. After a review and discussion by the Executive Council, the Articles were approved with one change. Harold Porter, City of Shorter and Ellen McNair, Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce were added to Article IX. The Executive Council gave Larry Fillmer approval to obtain a post office box for the I-85 Corridor Alliance. This will allow the Alliance to have a business address for Incorporation purposes. Once Larry has obtained the address and it is added to the Articles of Incorporation, he will file the Articles with the Lee County Probate Office. IRS paperwork for the designation of a 501(C)3 Non-Profit Corporation will be submitted after the State of Alabama has approved the Articles of Incorporation.

Ray Vaughan also covered the proposed "By-Laws." Again, the By-Laws were submitted as a draft for discussion purposes. It was agreed that everyone would review the By-Laws and submit any comments or changes to Larry Fillmer prior to the next Executive Council Meeting. Larry will then summarize the changes and present them to the Council for consideration at the next meeting.

Larry Fillmer introduced the concept of an I-85 Corridor Alliance Marketing and Branding program. Larry indicated that there would be two components to the development of this program. First, Joe Summers, Economic Development Institute, has agreed to help the Alliance develop a current and future inventory of sites, resources, institutions and enterprises that give our Region its unique characteristics. Joe has indicated that his organization will attempt to complete this work in the next 90 days. Joe will be seeking help from all of the Clusters and the Executive Council to complete this project. Second, Larry Fillmer will be in discussion with a number of marketing/advertising firms in the Region to ask for program proposals. These proposals will include detail plans, marketing objectives and budgets for the project. When complete, these proposals will be reviewed and considered by the Executive Council. These two efforts will be coordinated and conducted in conjunction with each other to minimize the time required to start the branding and marketing efforts. Larry will also be working with the various Economic Development Directors and the area Chambers of Commerce to be sure that these efforts are complimentary to other programs already underway in the Corridor.

The Executive Council reviewed a draft letter from the Co-Chairpersons to Governor Riley concerning the upcoming Annual Meeting of the Southern Growth Policies Board. During the July 8th I-85 Network Meeting a suggestion came from the floor to encourage the Governor to consider holding the meeting in Tuskegee at the Kellogg Center instead of the Grand Hotel at Point Clear. The draft letter requested this change of venue. The Executive Council considered the letter and decided that there was a high probability that contracts for this event have already been agreed to with the Grand Hotel and that it would be better to discuss the matter with the Governor informally rather than through the letter. It was suggested that the Council enlist the assistance of Mayor Hamm and State Representative Mike Hubbard to discuss the upcoming Board Meeting with the Governor. The Council also offered several possible alternative suggestions. These included requesting an opportunity for the I-85 Corridor Alliance to be on the program or to suggest that either pre or post planning meetings for the Board be scheduled within the Corridor. Larry Fillmer will contact Mayor Hamm and request his assistance in this matter.

The final item of business considered by the Executive Council was a request from the East Central Alabama Rural Entrepreneurship Consortium (ECAREC) to become a member of the Executive Council. Because the structure of the Council is likely to change with the adoption of its Articles of Incorporation and new By-Laws, it was felt that it would be inappropriate at this time to honor this request as provisions for adding members to Executive Council or the Board of Directors will be spelled out in the By-Laws. Larry Fillmer will so advise ECAREC.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

The next meeting for the Executive Council will be on Thursday, September 23rd in the Montgomery area.