

2018 Alabama State Economic Report Prepared for the Economic Development Administration: Atlanta Regional Office



**ALABAMA SELECTED FOR MAZDA-
TOYOTA JOINT VENTURE AUTOMOTIVE
PLANT CREATING 4,000 JOBS**

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GOVERNMENT & ECONOMIC
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INTRODUCTION

The Government and Economic Development Institute (GEDI) at Auburn University, part of University Outreach, leads Auburn's EDA University Center and works with its partners from the Harbert College of Business and the Vice President for Research and Economic Development. Auburn's approach to its UC work brings together a cross-disciplinary team from various parts of the university to create synergies that will benefit Alabama's innovation, entrepreneurship and community development across the state. Specifically, the Lowder Center for Family Business and Entrepreneurship and the Office of External Engagement and Support have partnered to form the University Center.

This report was prepared for the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Atlanta Regional office.

For more information, contact:

David Mixson
EDA University Center Director
Government and Economic Development Institute
218 Extension Hall
Auburn University, Alabama 36849
334.844.3887
mixsoad@auburn.edu

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 comprehensive overview of the events occurring during the period of January 2018 through early December 2018.

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.

1. Statistical Snapshot of Alabama

The State of Alabama has made progress in several metrics when compared to the nation. The chart below includes high-level metrics on Alabama’s performance.

Metric	Alabama	National
Population-2017 ¹	4,874,747	325,719,178
Population Change Since 2010	+89,168	+16,380,757
Per Capita Income-2017 ²	\$40,805	\$51,651
State Per Capita Income % vs National	79%	100%
Unemployment Rate-October 2018 ³ (Not Seasonally Adjusted)	4.1%	3.7%
Educational Attainment, population 25 or older with High School Diploma or more ⁴	86.5%	88%
Percentage of Workforce in Durable Goods Producing	8.62%	15%
Percentage of Workforce in Non-Durable Producing	10.5%	10.6%

Employment by Industry

BEA Major Sectors ⁵	2017 Earnings (\$000)	Average Earnings per Job	Rank	2017 Jobs	Percent Distribution in State	Percent Distribution in U.S.
Total by place of work	\$130,790,091	\$49,310	43	2,652,406	100.0 %	100.0 %
Wage and Salary	\$93,889,312	\$45,308	41	2,072,223	78.1 %	77.4 %
Proprietors	\$13,658,011	\$23,541	42	580,183	21.9 %	22.6 %

¹ [2017 Alabama Population](#)

² [Alabama's Income and Taxes](#)

³ [Civilian Labor Force by County](#)

⁴ [StatsAmerica Education](#)

⁵ [StatsAmerica Workforce](#)

BEA Major Sectors ⁵	2017 Earnings (\$000)	Average Earnings per Job	Rank	2017 Jobs	Percent Distribution in State	Percent Distribution in U.S.
Farm	\$1,071,917	\$27,743	11	38,638	1.5 %	0.9 %
Nonfarm	\$12,586,094	\$23,241	46	541,545	20.4 %	21.7 %
Farm	\$1,240,824	\$25,929	14	47,855	1.8 %	1.3 %
Nonfarm	\$129,549,267	\$49,740	43	2,604,551	98.2 %	98.7 %
Private	\$102,512,738	\$46,568	45	2,201,377	83.0 %	86.2 %
Forestry, fishing, etc.	\$606,409	\$37,882	21	16,008	0.6 %	0.5 %
Mining	\$445,033	\$35,583	29	12,507	0.5 %	0.8 %
Utilities	\$1,935,727	\$128,859	18	15,022	0.6 %	0.3 %
Construction	\$7,805,245	\$54,149	43	144,144	5.4 %	5.4 %
Manufacturing	\$18,615,117	\$67,685	37	275,024	10.4 %	6.8 %
Wholesale Trade	\$5,923,967	\$72,869	39	81,296	3.1 %	3.3 %
Retail Trade	\$8,361,143	\$29,559	48	282,864	10.7 %	9.8 %
Trans. and warehousing	\$4,472,880	\$55,896	27	80,022	3.0 %	3.9 %
Information	\$1,578,032	\$58,118	44	27,152	1.0 %	1.7 %
Finance and insurance	\$6,985,914	\$60,855	34	114,796	4.3 %	5.4 %
Real Estate and rental and leasing	\$2,104,993	\$19,828	46	106,163	4.0 %	4.6 %
Professional, technical services	\$11,177,780	\$75,056	22	148,926	5.6 %	7.0 %
Management of companies, enterprises	\$1,929,707	\$98,716	30	19,548	0.7 %	1.4 %
Administrative and waste services	\$4,884,279	\$27,406	50	178,221	6.7 %	6.2 %
Educational services	\$1,134,146	\$27,219	47	41,668	1.6 %	2.4 %
Health care, social assistance	\$14,544,260	\$58,283	26	249,547	9.4 %	11.3 %
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$606,295	\$15,527	48	39,048	1.5 %	2.3 %
Accommodation and food services	\$4,025,988	\$20,445	50	196,914	7.4 %	7.5 %
Other services, exc. public admin.	\$5,375,823	\$31,163	49	172,507	6.5 %	5.7 %
Gov. and gov. enterprises	\$27,036,529	\$67,059	33	403,174	15.2 %	12.4 %

2. Alabama's Targeted Industry Strategy

Alabama's Department of Commerce plans to increase its focus on technology-focused jobs in advanced manufacturing, engineering, research and development, and design. Knowledge based jobs will be the department's focus.

In the spring of 2016, Alabama updated its economic development plan entitled "Accelerate Alabama 2.0." In the plan, seven targeted businesses sectors are identified for recruitment. They are:



Alabama Department of Commerce

of Commerce
www.alabama.com

- Metal and Advanced Materials
- Aerospace/Aviation
- Agricultural Products/Food Production
- Automotive
- Bioscience
- Chemicals
- Forestry Products

In addition, six foundational target sector target industries that are intrinsic to the core competencies of many industries and provide operational processes. They are:

- Corporate Operations
- Cybersecurity
- Data Centers
- Distribution/Logistics
- Information Technology
- Research & Development

Accelerate Alabama 2.0 includes the above targeted industries and foundational targets, recommendations and related tactics centered on the three economic drivers of Recruitment, Retention, and Renewal. The 2.0 plan differs from the initial plan in that it incorporates elements of the Alabama Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research Program to Stimulate Competitive Research.

Aerospace and Aviation

The Mobile area and Southwest Alabama will experience continued growth resulting from the aerospace cluster’s development. With the location of the Airbus manufacturing plant several years ago, the region announced the opening of an aerospace training facility to provide workforce development skills and training. The region has been designated as a federal “Manufacturing Community” by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The aerospace manufacturing industry employees 12,500 jobs in the state.

Agriculture/Food Products

Alabama remains a player in the agriculture and food products sector. Alabama is the second largest producer of broilers and fourth largest producer of poultry and eggs. Food and beverage



exports increased to \$333 in 2015 and sustains 32,000 jobs in the state. Employment is expected to remain stable in the near future.

Automotive Manufacturing

Approximately 40,000 jobs are in the automotive sector and approximately 27,000 are in the growing automotive supplier base. The recently announced Mazda-Toyota partnership represents a \$1.6 billion joint venture assembly plant in the Huntsville area. This facility will employ 4,000 workers and produce over 300,000 vehicles annually.



Bioscience

The state is home to 780 bioscience companies and an annual economic impact of approximately \$7.3 billion. The state has bio-research strengths in the Birmingham to Huntsville corridor. The HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in Huntsville is located in the Cummings Research Park and is poised for growth along with its surrounding entrepreneurs. Similarly, the Innovation Depot incubator in Birmingham, the Auburn Research park, and the University of South Alabama's Biotechnical Research Unit in Mobile should continue to flourish.

Chemicals

The chemical industry is Alabama's second largest export category, with overseas shipments of \$2.2 billion in 2016. With a cluster along Alabama's Gulf Coast containing approximately 25 companies and almost 200 located in other parts of the state, the industry employs 10,400 people.⁶

Forestry Products

Alabama has nearly 23 million acres of timberland. There are more than 650 forest manufacturing companies employing nearly 25,000 people. In 2016, new capital investment for the sector topped \$1.1 billion, creating 1,000 jobs. The state has the 2nd largest timberland base in the U.S. and is the 2nd largest producer of pulp and paper in the U.S.

Metals & Advanced Materials

Alabama's abundance of natural resources, including minerals make it home to more than 1,100 primary metal manufacturing companies. The largest are in the steel, pipe, and specialty metal sectors. Overall, more than 43,000 Alabama residents are employed and with over \$1.5 billion in exports in 2016. The future looks bright as well with the development of carbon fiber, advanced materials, and additive manufacturing advances in the state.⁷

⁶ [Alabama's Chemical Industry](#)

3. Alabama's Economic Condition

North Alabama's economy **will grow by up to 4,000 jobs** as a result of an automotive partnership that is more diverse than ever before. The state will benefit from the announced Mazda and Toyota joint-venture automotive plant expected to be produce vehicles is 2021. The plant will produce 150,000 units of Mazda's crossover model that will be introduced to the North American market and 150,000 units of Toyota Corolla. The two companies are making a \$1.6 billion investment with equal funding contributions.⁸

Economic Development News

The following economic development news occurred throughout the year:

January

John Soules Foods launches Alabama expansion creating 510 jobs⁹

Texas-based John Soules Foods announced plans for a production facility in Chambers County with a three-phase project that **involves a total investment of \$110 million** and the **creation of 510 jobs**. John Soules Foods said it has completed the purchase of a 266,000-square-foot facility in Valley for its new Alabama operation. During Phase 1 of the company's expansion, it will invest \$70 million in the facility and add 210 employees. The second and third phases of the expansion call for another \$40 million in investment and the addition of 300 more jobs in Chamber County.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama



Ivey awards \$580,000 grant to Alabama Launchpad¹⁰

A successful Alabama entrepreneurial program is getting more than a half-million dollars to help lift businesses off the ground. Gov. Kay Ivey announced today a \$580,000 grant for Alabama Launchpad, a program directed by the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama. Alabama Launchpad allows startups to compete against each other before a panel of entrepreneurs for money to develop their businesses.

⁸ [Mazda-Toyota](#)

⁹ [John Soules Foods launches Alabama expansion creating 510 jobs](#)

¹⁰ [Ivey awards \\$580,000 grant to Alabama Launchpad](#)

-William Thornton, al.com

Morgan County announced 436 new industrial jobs in 2017¹¹

Morgan County industries announced plans for adding 436 jobs during 2017, the county's Economic Development Association announced Friday. Development officials said two new industries, 13 non-confidential expansions and five confidential expansions or equipment upgrades **added \$535,439,962 in capital investments in Morgan County**, the largest amount of capital investment for the county in five years. "These new jobs are direct from industries locating here or existing industries announcing expansion projects during 2017," said Jeremy Nails, president of the Morgan County Economic Development Association. "That number doesn't include the construction-related jobs or other jobs being created in the trickle-down effect from these industries. 2018 is looking good with these projects getting **started.**"

-Michael Wetzel, Decatur Daily



Grant puts free high-speed Wi-Fi in downtown Selma¹²

Downtown Selma will get a high-tech upgrade thanks to a \$75,000 grant, the Delta Regional Authority and the United States Economic Development Administration announced Friday. The grant will be used to create a free high-speed Wi-Fi network that will stretch over 10 blocks. The grant is part of a program known as the Selma Innovation District Initiative, which is broken down into three phases: phase one will provide a reliable network while phases two and three both aim to utilize the network to intertwine businesses, help residents, promote tourism and provide safety. Rep. Terri Sewell said in a statement that a reliable internet connection is a necessity in modern society.

-Adam Dodson, The Selma Times-Journal

Toyota Huntsville plant produced 700,000 engines last year¹³

¹¹[Morgan County announced 436 new industrial jobs in 2017](#)

¹²[Grant puts free high-speed Wi-Fi in downtown Selma](#)

¹³[Toyota Huntsville plant produced 700,000 engines last year](#)

Toyota's Huntsville engine plant produced almost 700,000 engines last year. The factory announced today that it is turning out about 3,000 engines per day, six times the number it produced when the plant opened in 2003. Approximately 1,400 people are employed at the factory. The engines power a third of all Toyota vehicles built in the U.S., encompassing the RAV4, Highlander, Tacoma, Tundra and Sequoia models.

-William Thornton, al.com

Kimber to open Alabama firearms manufacturing facility with 366 jobs¹⁴

Governor Kay Ivey announced today that Kimber Mfg Inc., a leading U.S. firearms manufacturer, has finalized plans to open a production facility in Troy, where it **will create 366 jobs and invest \$38 million** into the local economy over the next five years. "With talented Alabamians already manufacturing a wide range of high-quality products that are in demand around the globe, the state can offer Kimber an ideal business environment and a skilled workforce for its expansion project," Governor Kay Ivey said. "Kimber's investment in Troy will create a significant number of high-paying design engineering and manufacturing jobs, and we are committed to helping the company find long-lasting success in Alabama."

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama



Toyota-Mazda selects Alabama for \$1.6 billion auto plant with 4,000 jobs¹⁵

Governor Kay Ivey joined Toyota and Mazda leaders today to announce that the automakers have selected Huntsville, Alabama, as the site of their new joint-venture manufacturing plant. The new plant will have the capacity to build 300,000 vehicles annually, with production split evenly between two lines for each company to produce a new Mazda crossover model that will be introduced to North American markets and the Toyota Corolla. The joint venture represents **a \$1.6 billion investment** that Mazda and Toyota plan to make with equal funding contributions. The site for the new plant in Huntsville sits just 14 miles from Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Alabama, which produces four-cylinder, V-6 and V-8 engines for several Toyota models.

¹⁴[Kimber to open Alabama firearms manufacturing facility with 366 jobs](#)

¹⁵[Toyota-Mazda selects Alabama for \\$1.6 billion auto plant with 4,000 jobs](#)

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

PeopleTec awarded \$33 million missile defense contract¹⁶

PeopleTec of Huntsville has been awarded a \$33.6 million contract for engineering and support by the U.S. Missile Defense Agency. The contract covers systems advisory and engineering activities for international programs in the Ballistic Missile Defense System, according to the U.S. Defense Department. That means work for the system which intercepts ballistic missile threats aimed at regional interests, allies and deployed forces.

-William Thornton, al.com

Selma company lands \$71 million contract to produce Army coats¹⁷

American Apparel, a Selma company, just landed a \$71 million military contract. “Yea, we’re gonna bring it!” said Rosetta Davis. And her laughter said it all. People like Davis have 71 million reasons to smile this week in Selma. “We got to make these military uniforms for the military people,” she said. Above the constant hum of sewing machines inside American Apparel, they are thinking about that **\$71 million contract** the company just landed to make combat coats for the Army. The contract will secure jobs for a least the next five years.”

“There were 13 bids for this coat. It is a very competitive business,” said Chief Operating Officer Chuck Lambert. The new deal comes just two months after American Apparel snared a \$46 million contract from the military to make the very same coat for the Marines. It wasn’t that long ago when the business had doubts whether it could continue its presence in Selma. Started in 1987, American Apparel made pinpoint reductions in operations and staff five years ago. Today, it’s smaller, leaner and scoring big contracts, an American success story of not giving up. Chuck Lambert and his team plan to weave the first batch of Army combat coats in May to the tune of 30,000 units. American Apparel employs just under 750 with plants in Selma, Opp and Centre.

-Bryan Henry, Selma Times-Journal

High-performance auto tuning company Dinan moving to Opelika¹⁸

Opelika is shaping up to be a hot-rodding hot spot: Dinan Engineering, a company known for

¹⁶[PeopleTec awarded \\$33 million missile defense contract](#)

¹⁷[Selma company lands \\$71 million contract to produce Army coats](#)

¹⁸[High-performance auto tuning company Dinan moving to Opelika](#)

the high-performance aftermarket products it makes for cars, has announced a relocation to Alabama. The move represents a consolidation of assets for Driven Performance Brands, which has under its umbrella several companies specializing in various high-performance and racing products. Among them are B&M Racing and Performance, Flowmaster and Hurst Shifters. Driven has owned Dinan since 2013. In August 2017 it acquired APR Performance, “a leading designer and manufacturer of performance software tuning solutions as well as highly engineered hardware products including turbo systems and air intake, exhaust and suspension components for Audi, Porsche and Volkswagen vehicles.”

-Lawrence Specker, al.com

Birmingham startup Pack Health to create 175 jobs in expansion¹⁹

Startup Pack Health plans to open a new headquarters in downtown Birmingham and anticipates **hiring 175 new employees over the next four years**, including programmers, developers, health advisers and other positions, according to the Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA). Pack Health has 30 employees and is renovating a building on First Avenue North that should open this summer. **Capital investment in the project is \$2.9 million**, the BBA says. “In addition to accommodating our growing staff and bringing us closer to UAB and quality of life factors such as Railroad Park, Regions Field and Innovation Depot, this is a space where we can host events, work more closely with our local partners and become a hub for innovation in health and healthcare in Birmingham,” Pack Health President Mazi Rasulnia said.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Tarkett expansion means 50 more jobs²⁰

Tarkett is making another major investment in the Shoals, **putting \$60 million into its Florence facilities** in a move that **will add some 50 employees**, company officials said. The investments will be at the two Tarkett plants in Florence - 430 Lauderdale 30 and 1701 Mars Hill Road. During a meeting last week with the Shoals Industrial Development Committee, company officials said the two local plants have a combined 400 employees. That means Tarkett should have 450 by the time the expansion is completed.

-Bernie Delinski, Times Daily



¹⁹[Birmingham startup Pack Health to create 175 jobs in expansion](#)

²⁰[Tarkett expansion means 50 more jobs](#)

February

IKEA Group buys 25,000 acres in Alabama²¹

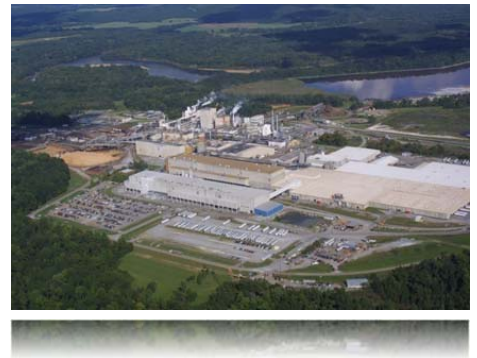
IKEA Group has acquired its first U.S. forest property, and it's in Alabama. The company, which owns approximately 250,000 acres of European forest land, has purchased approximately 25,000 acres in Lowndes County, according to an announcement from the company. The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

-William Thornton, al.com

International Paper to boost investment in Alabama mill to \$522.7 million²²

Memphis, Tennessee-based International Paper (IP) plans to increase a **planned investment in its Riverdale Mill in Dallas County to \$552.7 million** as it optimizes the facility's product mix and boosts productivity. In September 2017, IP announced plans to invest around \$300 million at the Selma plant as part of a strategic plan to grow its industrial packaging business. The additional investment expands on those plans to convert a line making uncoated freesheet, or copy paper, to the production of high-quality whitetop and kraft linerboard, as well as containerboard. These products are important to the packaging industry, which is experiencing a boom due to surging levels of e-commerce.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama



Preformed Windings to employ 85 at new Alabama facility²³

Officials with Preformed Windings Inc. announced today that the company will locate a new manufacturing facility, its first in the United States, in Alabama. The new Pell City location will be dedicated to manufacturing HV coils for the North American market and will **employ up to 85 people**. Preformed Windings, a subsidiary of Scotland-based Parsons Peebles Group, is the world's leading supplier of preformed coils, associated products and services. "We believe Pell City's close proximity to our growing markets, and the community's can-do approach in supporting our location efforts made this an easy decision," said Frank Barrett, CEO of Parson

²¹[IKEA Group buys 25,000 acres in Alabama](#)

²²[International Paper to boost investment in Alabama mill to \\$522.7 million](#)

²³[Preformed Windings to employ 85 at new Alabama facility](#)

Peebles Group. “Mayor (Bill) Pruitt and his team were very responsive to our needs and supportive the entire time. We appreciate their assistance and expertise in helping us locate here.”

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Chinese recycler invest in Alabama, pushed by National Sword²⁴

In a sign of shifting investment caused by China’s new ban on imported plastic scrap, a Shanghai-based plastics company is setting up a factory in Alabama to process recyclables and then export clean material to Asia. Roy Tech Environ Inc. is investing several million dollars in the new facility, in Grant, Ala., near Huntsville, and plans to start operations in the next three months, said CEO Lily Zhang, in a Feb. 15 statement. “We are redirecting our business strategy,” she said, adding that the company will keep its existing recycling plant in China but have “limited operations” there.

-Steve Toloken, Plastics News

Honda rolls out \$85 million expansion and one of the year’s best family cars²⁵

In March 2017, Honda Manufacturing of Alabama announced plans for a multi-phase project to expand its plant in Lincoln. Improvements involve expansions to two vehicle assembly operation lines and are intended to improve manufacturing flexibility, logistic efficiency and adaptability for future technology. The **total investment for the project was \$85 million**, and construction for the first phase is expected to finish



later this year. “This significant financial investment in our Lincoln facility will enhance Honda’s manufacturing efficiency and flexibility to help us meet strong customer demand for our products and prepare us for future opportunities in our industry,” says HMA President Jeff Tomko.

-Tom Little, Business Alabama

Austal makes cut for next round of Navy frigate program²⁶

²⁴[Chinese recycler invest in Alabama, pushed by National Sword](#)

²⁵[Honda rolls out \\$85 million expansion and one of the year’s best family cars](#)

²⁶[Austal makes cut for next round of Navy frigate program](#)

The U.S. Navy has picked five shipbuilders to advance to the next round of its future frigate program, including Mobile-based Austal USA and Mississippi's Huntington Ingalls Industries. The program is a huge prize: The Navy plans to buy 20 ships in what it has termed the FFG(X) program, which denotes an experimental guided-missile frigate. According to a recent defense-industry report, officials anticipate paying nearly a billion dollars per ship. To some extent, the frigates are envisioned as a successor to the Littoral Combat Ships. Austal builds one version of the LCS, an aluminum trimaran, in Mobile; Lockheed Martin builds a second version, a steel monohull, at Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyards in Wisconsin.

-Lawrence Specker, al.com

March

Lumber company to invest of \$100M into economy, provide at least 110 jobs²⁷

Rex Lumber is coming to Pike County and is bringing with it a **guaranteed investment of over \$100 million** into the local economy and the **provision of at least 110 jobs**. The county commission reconvened Wednesday to approve entry into a project agreement with the company, offering \$750,000 in incentives including the purchase of a 214-acre property and reimbursement for site preparation. "It was a no-brainer," said Robin Sullivan, commission chairman. "The first thing that stuck out in my mind was the immediate impact of the amount they're willing to spend to build this place. When someone says they want to invest \$110 million into our community, I get excited pretty fast. I asked the commission for whatever it took to get this company to come here, let's do it because we knew how great the economic impact would be for our area.

-Jacob Holmes, Troy Messenger

Mobile-based AeroStar to expand facility, add aircraft service jobs²⁸

AeroStar, an aviation service company founded in Mobile, has announced plans to more than double the size of its facility and its workforce. According to information released Thursday by the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the company plans to add a 16,875-square-foot building next to its current facility at the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley. The older building encloses about 6,000 square feet. It also **plans to add 28 new positions** to its current roster of 22 employees.

²⁷[Lumber company to invest of \\$100M into economy, provide at least 110 jobs](#)

²⁸[Mobile-based AeroStar to expand facility, add aircraft service jobs](#)

-Lawrence Specker, al.com

Refrigerated food warehouse coming to Dothan is expected to create 50 jobs²⁹

The Houston County Commission Monday is expected to authorize crews to prepare a site for a new large refrigerated warehouse that could **create more than 50 jobs** when fully operational. The food storage and distribution facility was discussed Thursday during the Houston County Commission Administrative meeting. The commission will have to formally approve the site work during its regular meeting Monday morning. The warehouse will be built near the intersection of Westgate Parkway and Technology Drive and will provide about 70,000 square feet of storage space with the flexibility to expand if needed.

-Lance Griffin, Dothan Eagle

Auto supplier MöllerTech opens \$46.3 million Alabama plant³⁰

Auto supplier MöllerTech has completed work on a \$46.3 million Alabama manufacturing facility that **will create 222 jobs** and serve as a flagship plant for a company with operations around the world. Top MöllerTech executives joined state and local leaders for a grand opening ceremony today at the new 150,000-square-foot facility in the Woodstock community's Scott G. Davis Industrial Park, just minutes away from the massive Mercedes-Benz assembly plant in Tuscaloosa County. "This new state-of-the-art plant has been a tremendous effort for everyone involved," said Dr. Gunther Schmidt, CEO of parent company MöllerGroup.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama



Marine manufacturer AdvanTec to open Alabama facility with 46 workers³¹

Canada-based AdvanTec, a leader in marine manufacturing, announced plans today to open a new facility in Baldwin County, **creating 46 jobs** with an annual payroll of \$2.4 million in its first three years. AdvanTec specializes in marine closure manufacturing, as well as industrial pipe bending for oil and gas applications, serving clients in a range of industries. The 40,000-square-

²⁹[Refrigerated food warehouse coming to Dothan is expected to create 50 jobs](#)

³⁰[Auto supplier MöllerTech opens \\$46.3 million Alabama plant](#)

³¹[Marine manufacturer AdvanTec to open Alabama facility with 46 workers](#)

foot facility in Robertsdale will open next month. “As the first of our plants in this region, this location will allow us to better serve our clients in the greater Gulf of Mexico and Southeastern United States, as well as access a skilled labor market with deep experience in marine metal manufacturing,” said Andrew Mund, operations director for AdvanTec in Robertsdale.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Encompass Health ready to open new home office³²

Encompass Health’s new home office is being prepared for its opening next month, with an inviting design that houses the full staff under the same roof. Employees are expected to be fully moved in by April 2 at the \$75 million, seven-story building off Liberty Parkway. The building’s opening will complete a nearly two-year design and construction process for Encompass Health, formerly HealthSouth. The 199,350-square-foot building sits on a seven-acre site. Encompass Health owns an additional 14 acres which can accommodate future growth. The building provides workspace for more than 500 employees and can accommodate up to 660. It is a cast-in place structure with a three-story parking garage providing spaces for 670 vehicles.

-William Thornton, AL.com

Startups to compete for \$100,000 in Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad finale³³

Local startups will have the opportunity to win \$100,000 at the Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad finale event in Auburn on April 4. Nearly a dozen Alabama companies competed in the preliminary competition in February at the Courtyard by Marriott in Auburn. Teams that advanced to the finale round included four teams from Auburn, one from Alexander City and one from Tuskegee. Alabama Launchpad was founded in 2006 as a program of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama. Alabama Launchpad helps high growth companies start, stay and grow in Alabama while supporting, advocating, and recognizing entrepreneurship statewide. The program awards around \$800,000 each year to help startups grow. The funding is provided by grants and corporate sponsorships.

-Carla Nelson, Opelika-Auburn News

Evonik expands Birmingham healthcare business with 50 new jobs³⁴

³²[Encompass Health ready to open new home office](#)

³³[Startups to compete for \\$100,000 in Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad finale](#)

³⁴[Evonik expands Birmingham healthcare business with 50 new jobs](#)

Evonik Corp. officials today announced that significant new investments in the company’s Birmingham labs will add extensive manufacturing and R&D capabilities while also **creating more than 50 high-paying jobs**. Following **\$50 million in investments over the past four years**, the Birmingham site is now home to Evonik’s global Competence Center for Medical Devices, which aims to develop new system solutions for medical technology and to expand the competencies of Evonik in the areas of biomaterials and medical polymers. In addition, the company said it is installing a new, high-speed fill line for its extended-release drug delivery business, which focuses on polymer-based micro particles administered through injection or IV.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Proposed Birmingham industrial park, residential community to receive \$6 million grant³⁵

A proposed high-tech industrial park and residential community near Barber Motorsports in Birmingham could receive \$6 million in federal grants to spur development of the projects. U.S. Steel, Birmingham, Southern Museum of Flight, Jefferson County and Leeds has partnered on the project called Grand River Technology Park and Grand River Homes. The project **could create more than 1,200 jobs** and generate an **economic impact of more than \$85 million in the Greater Birmingham area**, according to information from the Alabama Department of Labor.

-Erin Edgemon, AL.com



Auburn University to hire 500 tenure-track faculty³⁶

Auburn University President Steven Leath announced plans to hire 500 tenure-track faculty by 2022 targeting a broad range of research and scholarly disciplines at the leading land-grant university. “Our vision for Auburn is to become a world-class academic, research and service university in the true spirit of our land-grant heritage,” said Leath. “The strategy and initiatives launched today are designed to position Auburn as an undisputed go-to destination for that special caliber of student, faculty, staff and development partner driven to make a meaningful impact on the state of Alabama, the nation and the world.” According to the 2017 Auburn

³⁵[Proposed Birmingham industrial park, residential community to receive \\$6 million grant](#)

³⁶[Auburn University to hire 500 tenure-track faculty](#)

University Economic Impact Study, the Auburn University system and its alumni contributed \$5.4 billion to the economy of the State of Alabama in 2016-2017. The study estimates that Auburn's impact is responsible for creating some 25,826 jobs in Alabama during that timeframe in addition to the university's own direct employment.

-Auburn University

Yorozu Opens Jasper Plant³⁷

Auto parts maker Yorozu opened its \$110 million auto parts manufacturing plant in Jasper, Alabama. The Tier 1 automotive supplier produces metal stamped suspension components for automakers including Honda, Toyota and Nissan.

-Area Development News Desk

April

Tuscaloosa company plans new lumber mill³⁸

A 130-year-old Tuscaloosa company is preparing to build a new lumber mill in south Alabama, which is expected to create more than 100 jobs and produce 250 million feet of board annually. The Westervelt Co. said in a news release the new facility is still in the planning phase, but its specific location and design should receive final approval from its board of directors soon. The new mill will complement Westervelt's existing lumber facility in Moundville, which the company called the second-largest southern yellow pine production facility in the United States.

-Stephen Dethrage, Tuscaloosa News

Governor Ivey signs legislation creating Alabama School of Cyber Technology³⁹

Governor Kay Ivey on Monday signed into law SB212, sponsored by Senator Arthur Orr and Representative Anthony Daniels, which creates the Alabama School of Cyber Technology and Engineering in Huntsville. She also signed HB175, the state's Education Budget. The Alabama School of Cyber Technology and Engineering, will be an independent, residential school that is established for academically-motivated and gifted Alabama students with educational opportunities and experiences in the rapidly growing fields of cyber technology and

³⁷[Yorozu Opens Jasper Plant](#)

³⁸[Tuscaloosa company plans new lumber mill](#)

³⁹[Governor Ivey signs legislation creating Alabama School of Cyber Technology](#)

engineering. The school will also assist teachers, administrators, and superintendents across the state in replicating cyber technology and engineering studies in their own schools.

-Office of the Governor

Aviation company expanding to Birmingham, hiring up to 500⁴⁰

Aviation company Stewart Industries International is expanding its operation to Birmingham and **creating at least 200 new jobs**. Stewart Industries International has leased the former Kaiser Aircraft facility adjacent to Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport to enhance logistical support to its existing customers and to provide convenient maintenance support to the east coast-based aviation industry, the company said on Wednesday. This is an expansion of the work Stewart Industries is performing for Delta Airlines, American Airlines and other aircraft leasing firms and airline operators at its Roswell, New Mexico FAA Repair facility. Other growth plans include maintenance support to companies associated with aircraft leasing and air cargo freight, Stewart Industries said.



Dale Mullinax, president of Stewart Industries international Birmingham, said the new facility is expected to employ 200 people initially, but that number could grow to 500 within a year. Doris Sewell, chief executive officer of Kaiser Aircraft Industries said Stewart Industries International has the potential to rapidly expand and utilize the full Kaiser facility. “We have reviewed many proposals during the three and one-half years that our facility has been closed, but our objectives have now been met with the arrival of Stewart Industries International,” she said. Sewell said Stewart Industries will give hiring preference to former Kaiser Aircraft employees, and the company will reinstate Kaiser’s former program of training inner city school candidates for the aviation industry.

-Erin Edgemon, AL.com

Three local startup companies win share of \$100,000⁴¹

Three local startup businesses are getting a chance to move their business forward by winning prize money from the Auburn



⁴⁰[Aviation company expanding to Birmingham, hiring up to 500](#)

⁴¹[Three local startup companies win share of \\$100,000](#)

Regional Alabama Launchpad competition. The finale event took place at the ALFA Pavilion at Ag Heritage Park in Auburn last night in which two Auburn-based businesses and one Tuskegee-based business took home shares of a \$100,000 prize. “What we hope is they make some type of impact for economic development,” LaKami Baker, managing director of the Lowder Center for Family Business and Entrepreneurship, said of the competitors.

Energy H2O, a Tuskegee-based business, won the \$50,000 prize. The company produces natural Alkaline mineral water. The two Auburn-based businesses that took home prize money included FoPark and Tennibot, claiming \$40,000 and \$10,000 respectively. Tennibot is billed as the world’s first autonomous tennis ball collector and FoPark is a parking management solution. “I believe that these businesses came a long way from the start of the January event,” said Frank Braski, founder of ColumbusMakeIT!, who was a judge in the competition. “These companies in particular have the greatest possibility of impacting a very large group and also importing services and products from outside the region and bringing that wealth to here.”

-Carla Nelson, Opelika-Auburn News

Transit Authority gets \$3.6 million in transportation grants⁴²

The Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority is getting \$3.6 million in federal funds to replace buses. The U.S. Department of Transportation announced the money today through its Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as part of \$264 million in grants around the country. The money in Birmingham will replace buses that have exceeded their usability, reducing maintenance and other costs ahead of the city hosting the 2021 World Games. Nationwide, the funds are going to improve bus systems in 139 projects across 52 states and territories through the FTA’s Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program. Birmingham landing on the list is significant, since federal officials said demand for the money far exceeded the available funds. FTA received applications for 453 eligible projects, totaling approximately \$2 billion in requests.

-William Thornton, AL.com



Provalus is training rural Alabama workers for its high-tech jobs⁴³

⁴²[Transit authority gets \\$3.6 million in transportation grants](#)

⁴³[Provalus is training rural Alabama workers for its high-tech jobs](#)

Brewton may not be the first place you would expect to find jobs in software development, website design and technology help desk staffing, but Provalus is finding great success in this south Alabama town. Atlanta-based Optomi launched Provalus with the intent of growing technology jobs in rural areas. Brewton was announced as the flagship for Provalus last summer with plans to create more than 300 jobs. Eight months later, the company has set up shop in temporary space while its new facility is under construction. But it's not passively waiting – it's adding jobs and changing lives. The company just completed its fifth boot camp – a nine-week intensive training program that teaches applicants to become software developers and programmers. **Nearly 40 people have already been hired.** “We’re projecting to be probably close to 75-80 towards the end of 2018, so that’s pretty exponential growth,” said Daniel Guelzo, general manager with Provalus Brewton. “That’s **targeted to 300-350** within the next couple of years.” Will Ruzik, executive director of the Coastal Gateway Regional Economic Development Alliance, said Provalus is finding such success in Brewton, he wouldn't be surprised to see that number grow. “Three hundred jobs is where the mark was set,” he said. “This could be 400, this could be 500. They are growing so fast right now and they’re having success in finding their talent, so this could be endless as to where they end up.”

-Michael Tomberlin, Alabama News Center

Brewton receives \$700,000 grant for Provalus infrastructure⁴⁴

Gov. Kay Ivey has awarded a \$700,000 grant to **help create up to 300 new jobs** in the Brewton area within the next several years. The Community Development Block Grant will provide infrastructure necessary for Provalus, a company specializing in business technology and support, to locate in the city. “Bringing new industry and employment opportunities to Alabama is a priority of my administration, and Provalus has made that same commitment on a nationwide basis,” Ivey said. “I am pleased to join with local leaders in this venture which will bring new jobs to the Brewton area.” Provalus, a division of Atlanta-based Optomi, has a mission of building technical service centers in underserved parts of the United States. CDBG funds will be used to provide water and sewer services to the new Dogwood Hill Technology Park off U.S. 31 where Provalus will be located. Additionally, a new water well and 300,000-gallon water tank will be developed off Alabama Highway 41 to meet industrial and residential demands. Provalus, which currently employs 17 people at a temporary location in downtown Brewton, expects to have 300 employees at its Brewton center by 2022.

-Josh Easley, The Brewton Standard

⁴⁴[Brewton receives \\$700,000 grant for Provalus infrastructure](#)

Google breaks ground on \$600 million data center⁴⁵

Search engine giant Google broke ground Monday on a \$600 million data center in Bridgeport, Alabama, its eighth U.S. facility and 14th worldwide, according to the Alabama NewsCenter. The Google facility, Alabama's first large-scale data center, will be a hub for the company's Internet traffic. The center will be built with energy efficiency in mind, and the Tennessee Valley Authority is working with Google to supply enough renewable energy to meet 100% of the data center's power needs, a goal that will entail the repurposing of a decommissioned coal-fired plant next to the company's 360-acre site. The project, according to WAFF, is expected to create hundreds of construction jobs and **100 high-tech jobs once** the data center is complete. This is anticipated to be a "game-changing" boon for the area, which relies heavily on a manufacturing economy. Google has already started the area's shift toward high tech with a \$100,000 gift to the Jackson County School District, a portion of which will go toward the development of local STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs.

-Kim Slowey, Construction Dive

Kimberly-Clark announces \$100 million investment in Mobile facility⁴⁶

Kimberly-Clark Corp. announced today that it has approved a capacity expansion at its manufacturing facility in Mobile to support K-C Professional's continued bath tissue category growth in North America. With an **estimated investment of more than \$100 million**, this two-year project aims to deliver improved capacity, greater manufacturing efficiency, and enhanced product quality. "The Mobile team is excited about the role we will play in supporting the projected growth of the bath tissue category in North America as a result of this capacity expansion project," said Todd Visscher, mill manager for Kimberly-Clark's Mobile operations. "This investment, the commitment of our employees, and the community support will together bolster Mobile Mill's competitive position within Kimberly-Clark." Less than a year ago, Kimberly-Clark announced another significant investment in the Mobile facility for the construction of an on-site state-of-the-art combined heat-power plant and various other production enhancements. "This investment is a testament to the strength of Kimberly-Clark's Mobile facility and its workforce," said Bill Sisson, President and CEO of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

-Jerry Underwood

⁴⁵[Google breaks ground on \\$600 million data center](#)

⁴⁶[Kimberly-Clark announces \\$100 million investment in Mobile facility](#)

Hyundai Power Transformers USA to Expand Operations in Montgomery⁴⁷

Hyundai Power Transformers USA, Inc. (HPT) has announced a **\$33 million expansion of its Montgomery facility resulting in the creation of 86 new jobs**. The expansion will enable the company to establish a “Smart Factory” and increase production of its power transformers by more than 60 percent. The expansion will include a newly-constructed training facility that will contribute to fostering an advanced labor force, taking the company one step closer to achieving its plan of generating \$200 million in revenue by 2021.

-Staff, Montgomery Chamber

Autocar opens \$120 million heavy-duty truck factory in Alabama⁴⁸

Indiana-based Autocar today marked the official opening of a \$120 million heavy-duty work truck assembly plant in Birmingham that adds a new dimension to Alabama’s growing vehicle manufacturing industry. When Autocar announced the factory in September 2017, the company said the average annual base compensation for its workforce would be more than \$58,000.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Milo’s Tea adding third shift to Bessemer plant, hosting job fair⁴⁹

Milo’s Tea Company is looking to fill 30 new positions, as it adds a third shift to the revamped Bessemer plant it opened last year. The company will also be hosting a job fair this Saturday at its 15.5 acre headquarters. Last year the company expanded its Bessemer facility, where it brews and bottles more than 250 gallons of all-natural beverages per minute. Milo’s beverages are then shipped to over 13,000 retailers in 46 states.

-William Thornton, AL.com



Etowah County industrial park named AdvantageSite⁵⁰

An 1,100-acre site off Interstate 59 and U.S. 11 in Etowah County is the latest large tract of Alabama land to earn AdvantageSite designation from the Economic Development Partnership

⁴⁷[Hyundai Power Transformers USA to Expand Operations in Montgomery](#)

⁴⁸[Autocar opens \\$120 million heavy-duty truck factory in Alabama](#)

⁴⁹[Milo’s Tea adding third shift to Bessemer plant, hosting job fair](#)

⁵⁰[Etowah County industrial park named AdvantageSite](#)

of Alabama. The publicly-owned Little Canoe Creek Industrial Park is approximately 3.4 miles from Interstate 59 via exit 174. The site has rail on the north end of the property and is 12 miles from the Northeast Alabama Regional Airport.

-William Thornton, AL.com

May

WestRock plant in Lanett primed for growth with expansion⁵¹

LANETT, Alabama — The Chambers County Development Authority announced that WestRock Co. plans an investment in its manufacturing operation in Lanett that will increase the facility's competitiveness and position the area for job growth. Atlanta-based WestRock, a provider of differentiated paper and packaging solutions, will expand its Chambers County operation to accommodate an increase in business, as well as **prepare the plant for future growth with the addition of at least 50 jobs.**

According to WestRock, the Lanett expansion project will include a building expansion, new shipping docks, additional office space, new equipment and other upgrades. "WestRock is a proud member of the Chambers County community, and we appreciate the support of the Alabama Department of Commerce and the Chambers County Development Authority as we increase the scope of our operations in Lanett," said Pete Durette, president of WestRock's Enterprise Solutions. "We look forward to continuing to contribute to Lanett and Chambers County."

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama



Auto supplier SMP expands US footprint at new Tuscaloosa plant⁵²

Samvardhana Motherson Peguform (SMP) marked the official opening of a 700,000-square-foot Alabama auto parts plant with optimism that hiring could surpass initial projections. Though SMP inaugurated the Tuscaloosa plant Friday afternoon, the facility already has a workforce of 320 people, months before actual production begins. The company said the factory could eventually employ more than 1,000. When SMP formally announced the Alabama plant in

⁵¹[WestRock plant in Lanett primed for growth with expansion](#)

⁵²[Auto supplier SMP expands US footprint at new Tuscaloosa plant](#)

August 2015, the supplier said the **\$150 million facility would have 650 workers** by the fourth year of operation.

-Jerry Underwood, Alabama NewsCenter

Cubic Corporation Expands Operations in Huntsville⁵³

Cubic Corporation opened its expanded GATR facility, which operates within the Cubic Mission Solutions business division at Cummings Research Park in Huntsville, Alabama. According to company officials, the business space has increased over two fold, consolidating its operations into one 100,000 square-foot facility. The expansion supports GATR's growing operations and combines the development, engineering, production and administrative functions in one central location. "We're very pleased to introduce our new facility to the Huntsville community," said Roark McDonald, Vice President and General Manager, GATR, Cubic Mission Solutions. "With our newly consolidated facility, we are fully prepared to meet the increasing demands of our customers in the U.S. and internationally and ready to expand our workforce."

-Area Development News Desk

"Every Student Succeeds Act" Plan Approved by U.S. Department of Education⁵⁴

Governor Kay Ivey on Monday announced that Alabama's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Education. The Alabama ESSA state plan focuses on the needs of students and teachers around the state including adding National Board Certified math and science teachers in hard to staff areas, improving the Alabama Reading Initiative and increasing the overall number of highly qualified teachers. Governor Ivey, in the FY19 budget, requested a substantial increase to help hire National Board Certified Teachers in math and science into hard to staff areas, \$4 million to improve the Alabama Reading Initiative, and \$725,000 in scholarships for students training to teach math and science. Each of those requests were enacted for the upcoming fiscal year.

-Alabama News Network Staff

Nations Roof moving HQ from Atlanta area to Mobile⁵⁵

⁵³[Cubic Corporation Expands Operations in Huntsville](#)

⁵⁴["Every Student Succeeds Act" Plan approved by U.S. Dept. of Ed](#)

⁵⁵[Nations Roof moving HQ from Atlanta area to Mobile](#)

A commercial roofing company announced plans Wednesday to move its headquarters from the Atlanta area to Mobile, **bringing about 25 jobs** and the prospect of more in the future. Nations Roof has had a presence in Mobile for several years, operating from two blue metal buildings down Lees Lane off Halls Mill Road, close to where Mobile County plans to build a soccer complex.

Nugent said the company is building a new office on Airport Boulevard where it will house a variety of staff including IT, accounting, business development, engineers, architects and customer service. About five employees are being moved from Lithia Springs to Mobile, and around 10 new employees have been hired. Over the next year, Nugent said, he expects to put about 25 employees in the new building. More may come after that; the company allowed for room to expand, he said.

-Lawrence Speckler, al.com

735-acre Hope Hull land gets AdvantageSite designation⁵⁶

More than 700 acres straddling Lowndes and Montgomery counties along Interstate 65 now has a designation locals hope will speed development. A site along Tyson Road in Hope Hull is now an Alabama AdvantageSite through the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama. The site, made up of 735 acres, has all needed utility access and is **one** minute away from the interstate. AdvantageSites are featured on EDPA's buildings and sites **database**, the statewide clearinghouse of industrial buildings and tracts used by site selection consultants, state economic developers, and companies looking to expand in Alabama. A quick glance on these databases provides information about utility, rail and highway access, as well as geographic and technical information. Sites must also meet size, zoning and accessibility requirements to get the designation.

"It proves that our site is ready for prospective industry, much of the preliminary work has been completed, and we are ready to locate an industry," Byard said.

-William Thornton, al.com



⁵⁶[Hope Hull land gets AdvantageSite designation](#)

Alabama company lands \$47M government contract⁵⁷

The Department of the Navy's Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic has awarded Sentar Inc. a \$47 million contract to provide cybersecurity risk-management operations support services to the Defense Health Agency. The contract calls for Sentar to help Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic execute various cybersecurity functions and activities within several health IT directorate operational divisions and Military Health System facilities.

Sentar will support several hundred Department of Defense MHS facilities and Programs of Record, which can be comprised of anywhere from 1,500 to more than 60,000 server and workstation assets. The company will be operating in Charleston, South Carolina; San Antonio, Texas; Falls Church, Virginia, and other locations around the world.

-Hanno van der Bijl, Birmingham Business Journal

Pipe Industry Coming to Dallas County⁵⁸

The Dallas County Economic Development Authority announced Thursday that a plastic pipe manufacturing facility is relocating to Dallas County.

Timewell Drainage Products, based out of Timewell, Illinois, is moving to the Craig Industrial Park. Timewell purchased a 40,000 sq. ft. building on 20 acres from the Craig Field Airport & Industrial Authority. "Market consolidation in the past 5 years has resulted in very limited options for HDPE pipe in the South. We are setting up a manufacturing facility in Dallas County, Alabama to better serve our growing agriculture and storm water customer base in that region."

AIDT is working with Timewell to develop a local workforce training and hiring program. Timewell plans to **initially create 15 to 20 jobs** and eventually increase to 30 jobs. Beginning pay are expected to be \$13 to \$15 per hour. Timewell manufactures 3" – 15" single wall pipe and 4" – 48" MaXflo dual wall corrugated HDPE tubing products.

-James Jones, Selma Times-Journal

Hyundai to invest \$388 million to prep Alabama plant for next-generation engines⁵⁹

⁵⁷[Alabama Company Lands \\$47 million government contract](#)

⁵⁸[Pipe Industry Coming to Dallas County](#)

⁵⁹[Hyundai to invest \\$388 million to prep Alabama plant for next-generation engines](#)

Hyundai is investing \$388 million to construct a plant dedicated to manufacturing engine heads and enhance existing operations to support production of new models of Sonata and Elantra sedans. The investment **will create 50 new jobs** at the automaker's Montgomery manufacturing complex. Hyundai said it will cost approximately \$40 million to construct the 260,000-square-foot building that will house the head machining equipment. Construction on the engine head machining plant is scheduled for completion in November.



The engine plants produce approximately 700,000 engines per year to support vehicle production at both HMMA and Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia in West Point, Georgia. In March 2017, HMMA marked the production of its 5 millionth Alabama-made engine.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

New industry to bring 70 jobs to Gadsden⁶⁰

Some **70 new jobs are coming to Gadsden** after the City Council on Tuesday approved a tax abatement for a new industry. Calcean Minerals and Materials, LLC, is currently operating out of Florida, but the company is investing \$2.6 million to relocate in Gadsden. Calcean specializes in oolitic aragonite, a type of sand that is harvested in the Bahamas, refined and used in industries like glass, agriculture and plastics. Mayor Sherman Guyton said the average salary of the 70 jobs will be \$44,000. He also said the development will have a long-term impact on the community through high-quality jobs and sustainable industry. The main reason Calcean had decided to come to Gadsden was because of the developed and readily available workforce.

The tax abatement is for five years and does not apply to taxes that generate revenue for education. The property tax abated is expected to be \$12,615 per year and construction-related transaction taxes are estimated at \$27,890.63.

-Michael Rodgers, The Gadsden Times

Motion Industries plans \$9.6 million renovation in Irondale⁶¹

⁶⁰[New industry to bring 70 jobs to Gadsden](#)

⁶¹[Motion Industries plans \\$9.6 million renovation in Irondale](#)

Motion Industries, an industrial parts distributor, is planning a complete \$9.6 million renovation that will add 20 percent capacity to the existing facility, said Joe Limbaugh Jr., vice president of operations, distribution and properties. The renovation **will make room for at least 50 new employees**, he said. Motion Industries now employs 600 at its Irondale headquarters.

The Irondale City Council on Tuesday approved a tax abatement to assist Motion Industries in the expansion. The abatement agreement was completed in partnership with the state and Jefferson County, Mayor Charles Moore said. The abatement is on non-educational property taxes from the increased value to the Motion Industries property from the renovation. Sales and use taxes associated with the construction will also be abated. The tax abatement was approved without discussion by the council during Tuesday's meeting.

-Erin Edgemon, al.com

EOS will locate flagship facility in Huntsville, creating 100 jobs⁶²

Australian aerotech and defense company Electro Optic Systems Pty Ltd, or EOS, announced today it will build its flagship U.S. manufacturing facility in Huntsville. Within the first year of operation, EOS expects to hire up to 100 full-time employees, and the facility has been scaled to grow to at least 250 employees if contract awards continue on the current trajectory, company officials said.

A leader in remote-controlled or robotic weapons systems, EOS is based in Hume, Australia and does business in the military space, missile defense and surface warfare sectors. Its products incorporate software, lasers, electronics, optronics, gimbals, telescopes, beam directors, stabilization and precision mechanisms.

-William Thornton, al.com

Fertilizer Coating Facility Opened in Alabama⁶³

On June 5, Pursell Agri-Tech opened its first controlled-release fertilizer plant in Sylacauga, Alabama. The company is producing its own branded controlled-release fertilizer products for the row crop, specialty and turf markets. The facility is a partnership with Pursell Agri-Tech LLC, its industrial partner and shareholder Stamicarbon B.V., and Maire Tecnimont Group.

⁶²[EOS will locate flagship facility in Huntsville, creating 100 jobs](#)

⁶³[Fertilizer Coating Facility Opened in Alabama](#)

The facility is built with proprietary coating processes and with a low-cost modular design. It is unique with its coating technologies and its design, which Pursell Agri-Tech and Stamicarbon are working to license to fertilizer producers, traders, blenders and distributors.

-Margy Elckelkamp, AGPRO

Facebook to invest \$750 million in Alabama data center with 100 jobs⁶⁴

Facebook announced plans today to **build a \$750 million data center in Huntsville that will create 100 high-paying jobs** and provide a boost to Alabama’s emerging technology sector.

Once construction is completed, the Huntsville data center will employ 100 people in jobs with an average annual salary of \$80,000. Known previously only by the codename

“Starbelt,” the data center will be located in the North Huntsville Industrial Park. Last month, the Huntsville City Council gave unanimous approval for the company’s project entity, “Starbelt LLC” to purchase 340 acres in the park for

\$8.5 million. Facebook said it chose Huntsville because of quality-of-life factors, the city’s pro-business environment and the area’s educated and available workforce.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama



Gulf Shores unveils \$85 million Embassy Suites project near public beachfront⁶⁵

A new \$85 million Embassy Suites hotel, described as a “transformative” project, will anchor Alabama’s most visible and recently renovated public beachfront. The city of Gulf Shores, on Tuesday, announced it has reached an agreement in principle with DD Partners LLC, a development team led by Birmingham-based developer Ron Durham and Marietta, Georgia-based developer Ron Day. The group will lead the construction of a 229-room, mixed-use hotel development on a 1.93-acre parcel at the corner of West Beach Boulevard and West 1st Street.



The development team expects to complete all necessary permitting by the end of 2018 and

⁶⁴[Facebook to invest \\$750 million in Alabama data center with 100 jobs](#)

⁶⁵[Gulf Shores unveils \\$85 million Embassy Suites project near public beachfront](#)

begin construction in early 2019. Construction is expected to take place for 22 months, Brown said, with an opening targeted for the beginning of the summer of 2021.

-John Sharp, al.com

Military awards Alabama's GeneCapture \$1 million contract to develop portable disease detector⁶⁶

The Department of Defense has awarded Huntsville's GeneCapture a \$1 million, two-year contract to develop a portable device that war fighters can use to identify disease-causing germs. The Small Business Technology Transfer Research (STTR) contract is from the DOD's Joint Science and Technology Office for Chemical and Biological Defense.

-Michael Tomberlin, Alabama News Center

Allied Mineral Products breaks ground on \$11 million expansion in Pell City⁶⁷

Allied Mineral Products broke ground Wednesday on an **\$11 million expansion** in Pell City. "This expansion is part of our strategic growth," said Allied Mineral Products President Paul Jamison. "This increases our manufacturing presence in Alabama." Allied Mineral Products purchased Riverside Refractories in Pell City in late September 2017, and is **retaining 30 jobs** from its facility in Anniston with this expansion.



Allied Mineral Products, Inc., which is based in Columbus, is a leading global manufacturer of monolithic refractories and precast, pre-fired refractory shapes with 12 manufacturing facilities in eight countries, three precast shapes facilities and two research and technology centers.

Jamison said the Pell City plant should be in full production by the end of 2019. Goodgame Company is in charge of the massive construction project. Jason Goodgame said the production facility and warehouse that is on the drawing table is 169,625 square feet, with 10,000 square feet of designated office space. "They will be closing a facility in Anniston and relocating the workers to the Pell City plant," Goodgame said. He said workers began the site work on the Allied Mineral Products' property last week.

-David Atchison, St. Clair Times

⁶⁶[Military awards Alabama's GeneCapture \\$1 million contract to develop portable disease detector](#)

⁶⁷[Allied Mineral Products breaks ground on \\$11 million expansion in Pell City](#)

Amazon to create 1,500 jobs at Alabama fulfillment center⁶⁸

Internet retail giant Amazon confirmed plans today to open a fulfillment center in Jefferson County with **1,500 full-time employees** working alongside advanced robotics technology. Amazon will build the 855,000-square-foot facility center on 133 acres of property being purchased from U.S. Steel off Powder Plant Road in Bessemer, located just minutes away from Birmingham. **Total investment in the project is \$325 million.**



“We are thrilled to bring our first fulfillment center to the state of Alabama, creating 1,500 full-time jobs,” said Mark Stewart, Amazon’s vice president of North America customer fulfillment. “Alabama has a talented workforce and we look forward to making a positive economic impact in a state where we are committed to providing great job opportunities and an exceptional customer experience.” The center will contribute \$203 million to the county’s economic output annually, while adding \$123 million to the county’s GDP, according to the study prepared by the Center for Business and Economic Research in the University of Alabama’s Culverhouse School of Business. The facility will contribute \$232 million to Alabama’s economic output each year and add \$137 million to the state’s GDP, the study says.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Newest Alabama company will develop nuclear engine for Mars spaceship⁶⁹

The international nuclear technology company BWX Technologies, Inc. opened a Huntsville office Thursday to begin developing products for the aerospace and military including a nuclear propulsion system that could send rockets to Mars. The size of the workforce in Huntsville is dependent on growth in the new markets it plans to create, but Certain said BWXT hopes to **hire between 75 and 150 people in the next four or five years.**

-Lee Roop, al.com

LG Electronics to open Alabama solar panel plant, creating 160 jobs⁷⁰

⁶⁸[Amazon to create 1,500 jobs at Alabama fulfillment center](#)

⁶⁹[Newest Alabama company will develop nuclear engine for Mars spaceship](#)

⁷⁰[LG Electronics to open Alabama solar panel plant, creating 160 jobs](#)

LG Electronics, a leading provider of residential solar panels in the United States, **plans to invest \$28 million** to open an advanced solar module assembly plant in Huntsville, **creating 160 jobs**.

LG will establish the new factory with two production lines at an existing building on the company's 48-acre campus in Huntsville, where the company has had operations for four decades. The new jobs will increase LG's employment by 60 percent, to more than 400 workers.



Starting in early 2019, LG's new Alabama factory is expected to produce 500 megawatts of the company's high-performance N-type solar panels annually. "That's over a million solar panels a year," Kwon said. The new solar plant will help LG better serve its U.S. customers, Kwon said. The company selected Alabama after conducting a competitive, multi-state search, he added.
-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Auto supplier Unipres to add 70 jobs in \$40 million Alabama expansion⁷¹

Unipres, an automotive supplier specializing in stamping technologies, **plans to invest \$40 million in an expansion that will create 70 jobs** at its Alabama production facility, according to the St. Clair County Economic Development Council. The expansion at the company's production center in Steele will include adding a new hot stamping process. The project will enhance production and allow the company to further support supplying quality parts for Nissan Motor Co.'s luxury mid-size vehicle. Unipres added 55 jobs in a 2015 expansion, according to Commerce data.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Governor Ivey Announces GE Appliances to create 255 jobs with expansion in Decatur⁷²

GE Appliances plans to **invest \$115 million** in an expansion of its manufacturing facility in Decatur that will **add 255 full-time jobs**, bringing the plant's total employment to nearly 1,300. The investment will help GE Appliances increase production to meet increasing demand for its top-mounted freezer refrigerators and represents the company's latest step toward fulfilling a

⁷¹[Auto supplier Unipres to add 70 jobs in \\$40 million Alabama expansion](#)

⁷²[Governor Ivey Announces GE Appliances to create 255 jobs with expansion in Decatur](#)

strategic goal of becoming the leading major appliance business in the U.S.

The investment will add approximately 40,000 square feet to the plant, along with new cutting-edge manufacturing equipment that further advances GE Appliances' plan to transition to a fully interconnected digital factory. This advanced equipment will also provide the Decatur operation with rapid flexibility, enabling it to offer future product innovations while building on a legacy of quality leadership. Overall, the investment will boost production capacity by 25 percent and make the Decatur plant a "refrigerator super site" for GE Appliances.

GE Appliances' Decatur plant is already the largest industrial employer in Morgan County. The company conducts approximately \$95 million in business with suppliers across Alabama, and the construction of the expanded Decatur facility and increased production is expected to expand this business. Following the investment, the five-year economic impact of the Decatur operation is expected to increase to \$2.2 billion, according to GE Appliances. "Today's expansion announcement is a reflection of the company's commitment to our Decatur community and a testament to the accomplishments of the GEA-Decatur team," Decatur Plant Manager Renee Story said. "This investment means we will not only be able to welcome more than 250 new associates and enhance our skill level, but also expand our relationships with local suppliers.

-WTVY

Carpenter Technology Announces Plans for Emerging Technology Center⁷³

Carpenter Technology Corporation today announced plans for adding an Emerging Technology Center on its Athens, Alabama campus. The facility will initially focus on Additive Manufacturing (AM) technology development, with future investments slated for soft magnetics and meltless titanium powder. Over time, Carpenter expects **to invest \$52 million** in the Emerging Technology Center, which will **create approximately 60 jobs** over the next five years.

-Globe Newswire

BAE expanding in Huntsville, adding 'hundreds of jobs'⁷⁴

⁷³[Carpenter Technology Announces Plans for Emerging Technology Center](#)

⁷⁴[BAE expanding in Huntsville, adding 'hundreds of jobs'](#)

BAE Systems, the third-largest defense contractor in the world, announced plans today for a **\$45.5 million expansion** in Huntsville including a new manufacturing and office facility in Cummings Research Park. Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce said the expansion will eventually **bring “hundreds of jobs”** and be completed in 2019. The new facility will cover 83,000 square feet at the corner of Old Madison Pike and Jan Davis Drive, the company said. “It will include engineering development space, manufacturing space, and Department of Defense lab space. A 20-acre site for the building will provide expansion room for phased growth in the future,” the chamber of commerce said.

-Lee Roop, al.com



Kaishan Group to open Alabama manufacturing facility with 62 jobs⁷⁵

Kaishan Group, a worldwide manufacturer of industrial air compressors, announced plans today **to invest \$11 million** to build a new U.S. corporate headquarters and manufacturing facility in Baldwin County. At an event Monday, the company broke ground on the new 65,000-square-foot facility, which is scheduled to be completed in the second quarter of 2019. The Loxley location **will create 62 new manufacturing jobs** during its first three years of operations.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Rex Lumber Co. announces new facility, jobs coming to Pike County⁷⁶

Rex Lumber Co. announced Tuesday morning at a groundbreaking ceremony that it **will invest \$110 million in a new facility**. The facility will be located just five miles north of Troy on County Road 7714 in the Harmony Community. It expects **to employ around 110 people**. Officials say the Southern Yellow Pine sawmill is expected to be operations by June 2019.

-WSFA Staff, wsfa.com

Woodbridge Alabama opens Huntsville plant⁷⁷

⁷⁵[Kaishan Group to open Alabama manufacturing facility with 62 jobs](#)

⁷⁶[Rex Lumber Co. announces new facility, jobs coming to Pike County](#)

⁷⁷[Woodbridge Alabama opens Huntsville plant](#)

Woodbridge Alabama officially opened its Huntsville manufacturing plant today, with plans to hire more workers. Woodbridge is an automotive parts supplier, manufacturing polyurethane seating foam for the Nissan Titan, Altima and Rogue models. The plant, which employs about 130, is currently shipping to its customers in Tennessee and Mississippi. In 2019, the company will begin supplying arm rest parts and seating foam for two additional customers. Company officials said they are **looking to hire about 25 more employees** at various levels. The Woodbridge Group operates in more than 60 locations and employs about 9,000 worldwide.
-William Thornton, al.com

Honda announces \$54.8 million expansion in Lincoln⁷⁸

Honda is announcing another expansion at its Talladega County factory, a little more than a year after its last one. The automaker is pumping another **\$54.8 million into the plant**, adding more than 50,000-square-feet to its Line 2 operations. The project is expected to be finished in early 2021. Last year, Honda announced an \$85 million expansion at the south end of its Line 1 operations. It expects to open that addition next month. Together, the two projects will add more than 425,000 square feet to its production operations. Honda Manufacturing of Alabama employs more than 4,500 people and has invested more than \$2.6 billion in its plant, which annually produces more than 340,000 vehicles and engines.
-William Thornton, al.com

Machine shop to bring 30 jobs to Morgan County⁷⁹

The Morgan County Commission approved a 10-year tax abatement for a precision machine shop, M&J Precision, a new division of M&J Industries, that is expected **to employ 30 workers** with an average annual wage of \$50,000. The commission gave M&J an abatement of about \$7,250 annually in non-educational ad valorem taxes and personal property taxes. The estimated capital investment for the project is \$3.19 million, according to company attorney Barney Lovelace. The company expects to begin work on the project by Aug. 1 and be completed by June 1, 2020, Lovelace said.

Of the **\$3.19 million investment**, \$2.9 million is budgeted for manufacturing equipment, \$100,000 for a new building and \$190,000 for non-manufacturing equipment, Morland said. He also said the project would create new state, county and city taxes of about \$8,400 yearly

⁷⁸[Honda announces \\$54.8 million expansion in Lincoln](#)

⁷⁹[Machine shop to bring 30 jobs to Morgan County](#)

across the 10-year abatement agreement.

-Michael Wetzel, Decatur Daily

Radiance Technologies breaks ground on Huntsville HQ⁸⁰

Radiance Technologies broke ground Tuesday on its new corporate headquarters in Huntsville. The facility, which should open late next summer in Cummings Research Park West, will have more than 100,000 square feet. Its opening will coincide with the company's 20th anniversary. The project is being developed by Triad Properties and built by Fite Construction based on a design from Fuqua and Partners. The new facility will allow the company to consolidate its Huntsville operations into one campus. Radiance handles contracts for the U.S. Department of Defense, NASA and national intelligence customers, with work in cyber security, systems engineering, intelligence, and prototyping and integration.



-William Thornton, al.com

Golden State Foods opens US meat site to serve McDonald's⁸¹

US foodservice supplier Golden State Foods (GSF) has opened a new meat processing plant in Opelika, Alabama, which will service both McDonald's and Nestlé. The 165,000-square-foot plant has an annual production volume of approximately 170 million pounds of protein products. It represents GSF's first fresh beef processing plant, with six frozen and five fresh patty lines dedicated to burger patties. **Creating more than 200 jobs**, the site will serve six McDonald's distribution centres and 2,900 McDonald's restaurants throughout the southeast of the US as well as four Nestlé manufacturing facilities.

-Staff, foodbev.com

UA to lease office space at Mobile's GulfQuest museum⁸²

The GulfQuest National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico is welcoming a new tenant to its distinctive building on the Mobile waterfront: The University of Alabama.

⁸⁰[Radiance Technologies breaks ground on Huntsville HQ](#)

⁸¹[Golden State Foods opens US meat site to serve McDonald's](#)

⁸²[UA to lease office space at Mobile's GulfQuest museum](#)

The university announced Tuesday that it plans to lease some office space inside the facility. The new office “will serve as a nexus for research and programmatic initiatives that will benefit the region, primarily in the area of transportation.”

-Lawrence Specker, al.com

Governor Ivey Awards Grant to Create Jobs in Winfield⁸³

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has awarded a \$300,000 Community Development Block Grant to provide the infrastructure necessary for Tiffin Motor Homes’ new RV Center in Winfield, **creating 65 new jobs**. The city of Winfield will use the grant to extend sewer service to the new facility which Tiffin will construct on 29 acres of property within the city’s I-22 Industrial Park. There are currently no sewer lines available for sewage disposal.

-Zac Carlisle, WTVA

Work on new \$75M manufacturing facility in Alabama gets underway⁸⁴

Continental Motors Group Ltd. has broken ground on a nearly 275,000-square-foot engine and parts manufacturing facility at the Brookley Aeroplex in Mobile. The factory will include new equipment and an area dedicated to new manufacturing techniques and processes such as additive manufacturing and automation. The \$75 million investment will also include new customer and technology development infrastructure.

-Staff Writer, bbj.com

Walmart opens first Alabama distribution center in Mobile⁸⁵

Walmart officially opened its \$135 million distribution center in Mobile County Tuesday morning. The building itself covers 2.6 million square feet, 45 football fields can fit inside the facility. This center helps serve about 700 Walmart stores in Alabama, Mississippi and beyond, creating a positive economic impact for this area.



“There’s a lot of data that we look at, most importantly the

⁸³[Work on new \\$75M manufacturing facility in Alabama gets underway](#)

⁸⁴[Work on new \\$75M manufacturing facility in Alabama gets underway](#)

⁸⁵[Walmart opens first Alabama distribution center in Mobile](#)

workforce, the demographics, the centroid of how we how we picked this location, and how it relates to other regional distribution centers,” said Jeff Breazeale, the VP of Direct import logistics for Walmart. “We also have the close proximity to the Port of Mobile, and good interstate travel, so a lot of good reasons they picked Alabama,” said Governor Ivey. More than 570 people are already working at this center, and once fully operational, they **plan to employ more than 750 people.**

-Nicolette Schleisman, wkrg.com

Koch Foods announces \$80 million expansion in Gadsden, to hire 200⁸⁶

Construction is expected to start this month. The expansion will create one of the nation’s largest poultry processing plants, with a payroll of approximately \$4.8 million. Etowah County expects about \$214,000 through sales and use tax during construction of the facility, and about \$4 million in state, county and city education taxes over ten years. The City of Gadsden will receive \$1 million over ten years.



-William Thornton, al.com

Briggs & Stratton to open Alabama distribution hub, creating 20 jobs⁸⁷

Briggs & Stratton Corp. announced plans today to open a 400,000-square-foot distribution center in Alabama, *adding 20 new jobs* to its significant manufacturing presence in Auburn. The new Alabama distribution hub, focusing on Briggs & Stratton engines and other products, will allow the company to reduce delivery times to its customers in the Southeast region. The new facility is expected to be operational by spring 2019.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Tuscaloosa County plant plans \$2 million expansion⁸⁸

Northport manufacturer Stresscrete Inc. is **planning a \$2 million expansion** and will add about 16 jobs. The company, which currently employs 75, will **add about 16 jobs** as part of the expansion. Construction should be completed in October. Stresscrete, Inc. makes concrete

⁸⁶[Koch Foods announces \\$80 million expansion in Gadsden, to hire 200](#)

⁸⁷[Briggs & Stratton to open Alabama distribution hub, creating 20 jobs](#)

⁸⁸[Tuscaloosa County plant plans \\$2 million expansion](#)

utility and decorative poles. Included in the expansion will be cranes and machines to etch the poles. The Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority approved a tax abatement package for the expansion. The abatements apply to about \$1.4 million of the project cost, and the TCIDA estimates that, with the expansion, the company would contribute almost \$1 million in tax revenue.

-William Thornton, al.com

Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad kicks off 2019 Startup Competition⁸⁹

The Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad Competition is returning to the Auburn area for the second year in a row, giving local entrepreneurs an opportunity to compete for funding and receive valuable mentoring as they develop their business ideas.

After concluding the 2018 competition where three of the 11 participating start-ups were awarded funding, the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA), the City of Auburn, Auburn University and the Auburn Research and Technology Foundation (ARTF) have again partnered to bring the regional Alabama Launchpad Startup Competition to the greater Auburn area. The Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad is set to begin in October with startups competing for a share of up to \$50,000. New ventures and startups from five counties in East Alabama—Chambers, Lee, Macon, Russell and Tallapoosa— are invited to begin submitting applications on Oct. 1.

-David Dorton, Auburn News

Lohr North America plant bringing 140 jobs to Lincoln⁹⁰

Lohr North America will be converting a building in Lincoln’s industrial park into a plant where it plans **to employ about 140 people**. The plant will be housed in a speculative building the city built in the city’s 160-acre industrial park off McCaig Road near Interstate 20. The building currently has 100,000 square feet, but Lohr plans to add about 40,000, Watson said.

-William Thornton, al.com



AGCOR breaks ground on new plant⁹¹

⁸⁹[Auburn Regional Alabama Launchpad kicks off 2019 Startup Competition](#)

⁹⁰[Lohr North America plant bringing 140 jobs to Lincoln](#)

⁹¹[AGCOR breaks ground on new plant](#)

The City of Good Hope's first manufacturing plant officially broke ground Wednesday morning. AGCOR, a manufacturer and retailer of metal siding and metal trusses currently located in Vinemont, is making the move to Good Hope to a new 128,000 square-foot facility that will allow the company to retain its 26 current jobs in the area while **adding 20-25 additional jobs over the next two years.**

-Tyler Haynes, Cullman Times

Six companies named finalists in Alabama Launchpad⁹²

Six companies are advancing as finalists in the Alabama Launchpad Startup Competition. The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, which sponsors Launchpad, announced the finalists today. The finale will take place in Huntsville on Sept. 27th at 4 p.m. at LogiCore Headquarters. Twenty-four startups from across the state submitted applications to compete in this round of competition, and 21 met the criteria to be reviewed by the judges and considered to become finalists. Startups are competing in one of two tracks: concept stage for entrepreneurs launching businesses and seed stage for businesses accelerating growth.

-William Thornton, al.com

Airbus kicks off construction on Flight Works Alabama education center⁹³

Flight Works Alabama, a new aviation experience center near Airbus' manufacturing facility in Mobile, is ready to begin its take off. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey joined Airbus executives, city and county leaders from Mobile, and industry and educational partners in breaking ground for the hands-on instructional facility. In May 2017, Ivey announced plans to build the center, with a goal to bolster Alabama's workforce development efforts and inspire young people to pursue careers in aerospace. Wednesday's event officially launched construction of the facility, which is due to open in late 2019.

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

HudsonAlpha holds ribbon cutting for Paul Propst Center⁹⁴

A new addition to the HudsonAlpha campus is now open in Huntsville. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the Paul Propst Center was held on Wednesday morning. The new 105,000 square foot facility will house components of HudsonAlpha's education and research programs.

⁹²[Six companies named finalists in Alabama Launchpad](#)

⁹³[Airbus kicks off construction on Flight Works Alabama education center](#)

⁹⁴[HudsonAlpha holds ribbon cutting for Paul Propst Center](#)

HudsonAlpha leaders say the new building will also be used to foster collaboration between growing biotech companies.

-WAFF 48 Digital Staff

City Claims \$300 grant⁹⁵

Brewton claimed the largest single grant awarded in the announced projects on Monday as Gov. Kay Ivey announced funding for workforce development projects. “We are grateful for the help we received from Gov. Ivey, Sen. Doug Jones and Rep. Bradley Byrne and from Rep. Alan Baker to help make this project a reality,” said Brewton Mayor Yank Lovelace. “Our team has worked tirelessly for more than a year on this project and the groundwork took years before that. Projects like ProValus can change an entire region, and that can only happen when local, state and federal governments work together for the common good.” Announcements on Monday included a total of \$1.157 million in grants and more than **\$13.4 million in local investment**. Brewton’s grant award is \$300,000.

-Joshua Frye, Brewton Standard

Alabama trade mission in Romania, Bulgaria⁹⁶

Alabama state and business leaders are visiting two eastern European nations this week on a five-day mission to open new markets. Alabama Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield and representatives of seven companies are visiting Romania and Bulgaria this week, with meetings scheduled in Bucharest and Sofia. The Alabama Commerce Department says state-based companies exported \$6.8 million in goods to Bulgaria in 2017, an increase of nearly 1,400 percent from the previous year, while **exports to Romania totaled \$2.2 million last year**, up more than 170 percent.

-William Thornton, al.com

Troy University receives \$3.2M grant to boost plastics industry⁹⁷

An Alabama university has received a multimillion-dollar federal grant. Troy University received \$3.2 million in grant money from the National Institute of Standards and Technology to establish the Center for Materials and Manufacturing Sciences. The grant is the largest ever received by the school within the science disciplines. The three-year grant will enable the

⁹⁵[City Grant](#)

⁹⁶[Alabama trade mission in Romania, Bulgaria](#)

⁹⁷[Troy University receives \\$3.2M grant to boost plastics industry](#)

University to purchase lab research equipment, provide scholarships for students and provide support for research and the management of the center, which will be a part of Troy's School of Science and Technology. Moreover, the center will help prepare the next generation of the workforce for the industry.

-Staff writer, Birmingham Business Journal

Bezos' Blue Origin wins rocket engine contract, Alabama plant coming⁹⁸

Blue Origin, the rocket company started by Amazon chief Jeff Bezos, has won a major contract to build its new BE-4 engines for the next generation of United Launch Alliance rockets and will build those engines in Huntsville, Ala., officials said today. ULA said Thursday that two BE-4 engines will power the booster stage of the company's new Vulcan Centaur rocket due to take off for the first time in 2020. The upper stage will be powered by engines made by Aerojet Rocketdyne, which is also building a new Huntsville plant. ULA builds its rockets in a plant in Decatur, Ala. The Blue Origin plant will cover 400,000 square feet in Cummings Research Park, employ 400 workers and **represent an investment of \$200 million**. Groundbreaking is expected in 2-3 months, officials said.

-Lee Roop, al.com

Milestone: Toyota Alabama plant produces first next-gen engine⁹⁹

Toyota's Alabama plant produced its first next-generation 4-cylinder engine **after a \$106 million investment** to prepare the Huntsville facility for advanced production. The milestone occurred this week, exactly one year after the automaker announced the investment in Alabama to build next-gen engines using a new approach called Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA). "I could not be prouder to reach this milestone. Launching our new TNGA engine is a true testament to our highly-skilled workforce," said David Fernandes, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama. "They are leading Toyota Alabama into the future of advanced engine production."

-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama



MTC Logistics Plans \$58 Million Cold Storage Facility in Mobile, Alabama¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸[Bezos' Blue Origin wins rocket engine contract, Alabama plant coming](#)

⁹⁹[Milestone: Toyota Alabama plant produces first next-gen engine](#)

¹⁰⁰[MTC Logistics Plans \\$58 Million Cold Storage Facility in Mobile, Alabama](#)

MTC Logistics announced plans to build a 300,000 square foot, \$58 million, cold storage facility on property owned by the Alabama State Port Authority in Mobile, Alabama. The company plans **to create between 50 and 70 jobs** while providing a boost to the port's container operations. Company officials said the 5- stories tall facility and will contain almost 12 million cubic-feet of refrigerated space, enabling it to store 40,000 pallets of product. All of the product will transit in on containers and will be processed through APM Terminals before or after arriving at MTC Logistics

-Staff, Area Development News Desk

Cullman Economic Development Agency Wins 2 International Awards for Recent Projects¹⁰¹

At the annual conference of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in Atlanta on Tuesday, the Cullman Economic Development Agency (CEDA) received gold and silver awards for two of its recent industry retention projects: "Educators in Industry" and AGCOR Steel. IEDC describes itself as "the world's largest membership organization for economic development professionals. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life in their communities by creating, retaining, and expanding jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, our members represent the entire range of economic development." CEDA Director Dale Greer told The Tribune Tuesday afternoon, "This is an international conference. There are a thousand people here. Some of the award winners I saw: Canada had won an award, Hong Kong won an award. So, it's a pretty significant accomplishment."

-W.C. Mann, Cullman Tribune

Huntsville cybersecurity firm gets \$12.1 billion contract¹⁰²

Huntsville cybersecurity firm Sentar, Inc. has been awarded a potential nine-year, \$12.1 billion multiple award contract from the U.S. Army. The contract is for providing Information Technology Enterprise Solutions-3 services, or ITES-3S, to the army, other defense department agencies, and all other federal agencies. The contract scope includes nearly all areas of enterprise IT, including cybersecurity, information systems security, information assurance, business planning, IT administration and training services. The contract ceiling value is \$25 billion.

¹⁰¹[Cullman Economic Development Agency Wins 2 International Awards for Recent Projects](#)

¹⁰²[Huntsville cybersecurity firm gets \\$12.1 billion contract](#)

-William Thornton, al.com

Huntsville approves agreement to bring in 5G technology¹⁰³

Huntsville residents are one step closer to realizing some of the fastest mobile network speeds in the country, thanks to City Council's decision to approve a wireless rights of way use agreement with Uniti Fiber. The agreement permits the company, a leading provider of infrastructure solutions - including cell site backhaul and small cell for wireless operators- to construct small cells in the public right of way. Small cells are the infrastructure that make 5G deployment possible. Hailed as the next evolution of cellular networks, 5G provides mobile users with virtually zero lag time and higher speeds. The network further supports growth of emerging technologies such as augmented and virtual reality, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and autonomous vehicles.

-City of Huntsville

Auburn to lead \$2M Department of Energy project¹⁰⁴

Auburn University researchers are leading a \$2 million U.S. Department of Energy project that is intended to improve fuel efficiency and fuel economy. The project is intended to create a bio-based fuel additive that can be blended with diesel fuel to reduce soot and greenhouse gas emissions and yield cleaner engine operations in cold-weather conditions. Auburn will be collaborating with researchers at the University of Alabama, Cornell University and Virginia Tech. Corporate partners are Microvi Biotech Inc. and EcoEngineers.

-Tyler Patchen, Birmingham Business Journal

Epic Alabama Shipyard purchases BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards Alabama¹⁰⁵

Epic Alabama Shipyard, LLC ("Epic") is honored to announce it has purchased BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards Alabama LLC and all of its related shipyard facilities in Mobile, Alabama. Epic will provide ship repair and maintenance services to its customers, utilizing the existing facilities and dry docks, including the Alabama Dry Dock, which is one of the largest in the Gulf of Mexico. Epic is owned by Epic Companies, LLC, a Houston, Texas based global offshore construction and decommissioning company, which will service vessels from its own fleet in Mobile. Epic is also exploring opportunities to fabricate offshore structures and new build

¹⁰³[Huntsville approves agreement to bring in 5G technology](#)

¹⁰⁴[Auburn to lead \\$2M Department of Energy project](#)

¹⁰⁵[Epic Alabama Shipyard purchases BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards Alabama](#)

barges/small vessels in Mobile. Epic executive Rob Gilbert noted, “Mobile is perfectly situated to support the maritime and energy sector, both in the Gulf of Mexico and throughout the Caribbean.” Epic will work closely with the City of Mobile and the State of Alabama in developing a local workforce as its operations grow.



-Business Wire

Governor Ivey Awards \$2.7 million to enhance recreational trails program in Alabama¹⁰⁶

“Alabama is a land of bountiful natural beauty, and our state and local trails are a means to experience and enjoy that outdoor splendor,” Governor Ivey said. “I am pleased to award these grants, and I encourage everyone to enjoy these and any of the many other trails in our state.” The grants were awarded from funds made available to the state from the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs administers the program in Alabama. “Trails come in many forms and magnitudes, but they provide character and so much more to our communities,” ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell said. “I join with Gov. Ivey in commending those who work so diligently to make these recreational outlets available for all to enjoy.”

-Kathryn Rickmeyer, WAFF48

Eissmann expands Pell City facility with \$14.5 million investment¹⁰⁷

Alabama Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield joined St. Clair County and Pell City officials to help Eissmann Group Automotive LLC celebrate the completion of a **\$14.5 million expansion** project at the auto supplier’s Pell City campus. Eissmann announced plans in June 2016 to expand its Pell City facility with a new 130,000-square-foot building featuring advanced manufacturing equipment for a new production line. The **project is adding 200 workers** to the company’s St. Clair County workforce. “From the first investment Eissmann Automotive made in Pell City, the community and elected officials have made us feel welcomed and supported,” Claudia Eissmann, chair of the Advisory Council of Eissmann Automotive Deutschland GmbH. “Our facility has grown within the community and we look forward to continuing to work with the City of Pell City, the St. Clair County Commission and the Economic Development Council for

¹⁰⁶[Governor Ivey Awards \\$2.7 million to enhance recreational trails program in Alabama](#)

¹⁰⁷[Eissmann expands Pell City facility with \\$14.5 million investment](#)

many years to come.”

-Jerry Underwood, Alabama News Center

Governor Ivey announces \$1.5 million grant for Haleyville Fiber Infrastructure Project¹⁰⁸

Governor Kay Ivey on Wednesday announced that the Appalachian Regional Commission has approved a \$1,500,000 grant to the Tombigbee Electric Cooperative for the Haleyville Fiber Infrastructure Project. This project will help install 99 miles of new fiber construction which will provide internet access to approximately 252 businesses and over 1,500 households in Marion and Winston Counties. “The internet is vital to economic development, health, education, and really all areas of our modern life. This grant will help extend broadband networks into some underserved areas in rural Alabama,” Governor Ivey said. “I appreciate the efforts of Congressman Robert Aderholt and Tombigbee President Steve Foshee. Their leadership and hard work is moving our state forward. Expanding broadband internet is a key piece of my plan to increase the quality of life for all Alabamians, especially those in rural Alabama. I know many more projects like this are on the horizon and Tombigbee can serve as a shining example of success.”

-Office of the Governor

Alabama aerospace company expands into Rocket City¹⁰⁹

An Alabama aerospace company is expanding to the Rocket City. Onyx Aerospace Inc. is taking 2,058 square feet of office space at the mixed-use Stovehouse development in Huntsville. Work on the new 200,000-square-foot complex began last year. It features curated restaurant, retail, office and entertainment space. “Stovehouse is a vibrant destination that has given us the freedom and flexibility we were looking for,” said Steve Hanna, president of Onyx Aerospace, in a release

-Hanno van der Bijl, Birmingham Business Journal

Auto supplier Hwashin to add 50 jobs with \$26M Alabama expansion¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸[Governor Ivey announces \\$1.5 million grant for Haleyville Fiber Infrastructure Project](#)

¹⁰⁹[Alabama aerospace company expands into Rocket City](#)

¹¹⁰[Auto supplier Hwashin to add 50 jobs with \\$26M Alabama expansion](#)

Auto supplier Hwashin America Corp. announced plans to expand its Butler County manufacturing operation with a **\$26 million investment in new equipment and 50 new jobs**. Hwashin, which produces body components for Hyundai’s Alabama auto assembly plant, has been in expansion mode since arriving in Greenville in 2003. The operation began with a 150,000-square-foot facility and 200 workers. Today, the company’s 650,000-square-foot plant is staffed with more than 750 workers.

-Jerry Underwood, Alabama News Center

Baldwin County tech incubator opens in Fairhope¹¹¹

The city of Fairhope, the Baldwin Community and Economic Development Foundation and The University of Alabama (UA) recently announced the opening of Hatch, a downtown business resource incubator and tech hub aimed at providing guidance and linkages to statewide resources for local entrepreneurs in the early stages of forming a startup company. The new center held a grand opening in Fairhope last Friday, Nov. 2. “Since Fairhope’s beginning, the city has attracted entrepreneurs and independent thinkers,” Fairhope Mayor Karin Wilson said. “Many cities spend considerable effort to develop ‘think tanks.’ We believe that Fairhope is the perfect place to launch Hatch and we are excited to support and partner with The University of Alabama and the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance on this initiative

-Ron Sivak, Lagniappe Weekly



Westervelt Co. plans Clarke County lumber mill with 125 jobs¹¹²

Governor Kay Ivey and officials of Tuscaloosa-based Westervelt Co today announced that the company will build a new lumber mill in Clarke County, **creating 125 jobs**. The company is expanding its wood products manufacturing business through the construction of the new facility, which will produce Southern yellow pine lumber. The Thomasville Mill will join the company’s existing facility in Moundville, which has been operating since 1997. Construction is

¹¹¹[Baldwin County tech incubator opens in Fairhope](#)

¹¹²[Westervelt Co. plans Clarke County lumber mill with 125 jobs](#)

expected to begin mid-2019, with operations beginning in late 2020.

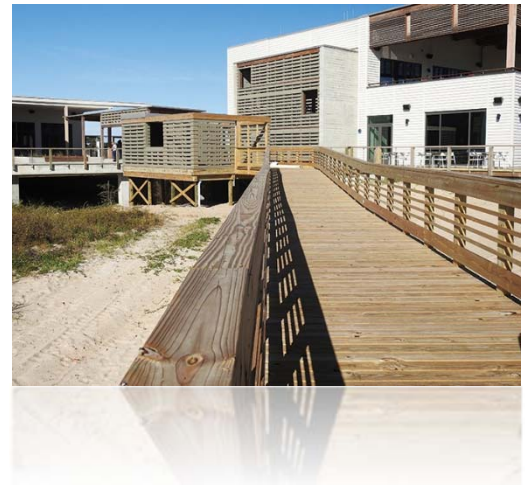
-Jerry Underwood, Made in Alabama

Alabama’s Crown Jewel Opens at the Gulf¹¹³

With much fanfare, the \$140 million Lodge at Gulf State Park opened with an accompanying 350-room Hilton Hotel, replacing the original Lodge built in 1974 and destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Financed in large part by Alabama’s earliest settlements from the BP oil spill through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process, the lodge and conference center uses sustainable and resilient materials. With concrete and a dense, hardened material that cuts and paints like natural wood, the facility is strong enough to withstand hurricane-force winds and is well above flood level, earning the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety’s first-ever FORTIFIED Commercial™ Hurricane Bronze Level.

-Erica Joiner West



Shaw Industries celebrates \$250 million expansion in Andalusia¹¹⁴

ov. Kay Ivey and others are in Andalusia today to commemorate a **\$250 million expansion** of the Shaw Industries facility there. The expansion, announced about a year ago, involves construction and expansion of the plant, as well as installation of “substantial amounts of new manufacturing equipment,” the company announced. The improvements deal with ergonomics, safety and energy efficiency at the plant. They are set to be completed by 2020. More than 1,000 employees work at the plant, which creates fiber used to make carpet.

Shaw Industries, under an umbrella of brand names, manufactures carpet, resilient, hardwood, tile and stone, laminate, synthetic turf and other items for residential and commercial markets.

-William Thornton



¹¹³ [Alabama’s Crown Jewel Opens at the Gulf](#)

¹¹⁴ [Shaw Industries celebrates \\$250 million expansion in Andalusia](#)

Alabama Business Closing Announcements¹¹⁵

Closing or Layoff	Initial Report Date	Planned Starting Date	Company	City	Planned # Affected Employees
Closing *	10/30/2018	12/31/2018	GLOBE METALLURGICAL	Selma	84
Closing *	10/17/2018	11/16/2018	JELD WEN WINDOWS & DOORS	Ozark	80
Closing *	10/03/2018	12/03/2018	BORGERS USA	Vance	271
Closing *	09/28/2018	11/26/2018	REMBRANDT FOODS	Abbeville	55
Closing *	09/17/2018	09/14/2018	AC INCORPORATED	Lincoln	58
Layoff *	08/13/2018	08/24/2018	CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS	Birmingham	89
Layoff *	08/09/2018	09/28/2018	VALLEY SERVICES INC	Statewide	169
Closing *	07/18/2018	07/28/2018	VERIZON WIRELESS	Huntsville	151
Layoff *	07/16/2018	09/14/2018	STANDARD TEXTILE CO.	Enterprise	70
Layoff *	07/16/2018	09/07/2018	FEDERAL MOGUL	Jacksonville	47
Closing *	06/12/2018	06/12/2018	MASTERBRAND CABINETS	Auburn	445
Closing *	05/18/2018	07/17/2018	RMC - JACKSONVILLE	Jacksonville	207
Closing *	05/01/2018	06/30/2018	REXAM BEVERAGE CAN COMPANY	Birmingham	73
Closing *	04/16/2018	06/15/2018	KASAI NORTH AMERICA	Prattville	92
Layoff *	04/12/2018	06/15/2018	NUTCRACKER BRANDS, INC	Dothan	66
Layoff *	04/12/2018	04/26/2018	VECTOR AEROSPACE	Andalusia	56
Closing *	03/19/2018	06/01/2018	C&S WHOLESALE SERVICES, INC.	Montgomery	195
Layoff *	03/02/2018	04/14/2018	FEDERAL MOGUL	Jacksonville	65
Closing *	03/02/2018	04/29/2018	BAE SYSTEMS	Mobile	80
Closing *	03/02/2018	04/29/2018	BAE SYSTEMS	Mobile	80
Closing *	02/28/2018	04/30/2018	VOGUE INTERNATIONAL, LLC	Phenix City	150
Closing *	02/05/2018	11/26/2018	CORIZON HEALTH	State Wide	648
Closing *	02/01/2018	03/27/2018	ASM RESEARCH	Tuscaloosa	57
Closing *	02/01/2018	03/31/2018	MHM SERVICES, INC	Vienna	276
Closing *	01/22/2018	03/31/2018	LIBERTY NATIONAL	Hoover	68
Closing *	01/22/2018	03/16/2018	SAMS CLUB #8212	Irondale	136
Layoff *	01/09/2018	01/22/2018	RUSSELL BRANDS (FRUIT OF THE LOOM)	Alexander City	75
Closing *	01/09/2018	03/19/2018	KADANT BLACK CLAWSON, LLC	Theodore	51

4. Alabama SWOT

Strengths:

- 1) **Business Friendly Climate:** Alabama was ranked among the top states for doing business according to the publication Area Development. The state ranked 3rd overall

¹¹⁵ [Alabama Business Closing Announcement](#)

in the magazine's 2018 "Top States for Doing Business."¹¹⁶ Alabama ranked in the individual categories:

- Leading workforce development programs: No. 3
 - Most improved economic development policies: No. 3
 - Shovel-Ready Sites program: No. 3
 - Speed of Permitting: No. 5
 - Favorable Regulatory Environment: No. 6
 - Favorable utility rates: No. 7
 - Cooperative and responsive state government: No. 7
 - Overall Cost of doing business: No. 3
 - Competitive Labor environment: No. 8
 - Business incentive program: No. 2
- 2) **Huntsville, also known as the "Rocket City"** is ranked as the nation's top metro area in aerospace and defense. One of the area's top employers, Boeing, plans to add 400 jobs by 2020.¹¹⁷
 - 3) **Alabama's Industrial Development Training (AIDT)** program. According to a leading site consultant, Alabama is ahead of other states in using industry to help direct high school, two-year college and four-year college curriculums to fill workforce needs.¹¹⁸
 - 4) **Natural Resources**-Alabama's forest product industry recorded projects involving \$1.2 billion in new investment and more than 1,000 anticipated jobs according to the Alabama Forestry Association and the 2016 New and Expanding Industry Report issued by the Alabama Department of Commerce.¹¹⁹
 - 5) **Automotive Industry**- Since the landing of Mercedes-Benz in the 1990's, this plant along has impacted 20,000 jobs and had an annual impact of \$1.5 billion in 2017.

Weaknesses:

- 1) **Road and Bridge Infrastructure**-The state has more than 1,000 bridges that are deficient according to a report by the American road and Transportation Builder's Association. The top ten most structurally deficient bridges are split between the Birmingham and Mobile areas.¹²⁰ The state does not have matching funds should a federal infrastructure funding bill pass.
- 2) **Pipeline of Skilled Workers**-Numerous studies have confirmed Alabama's businesses continue to struggle to find skilled workers.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ [Top state for doing business 2018](#)

¹¹⁷ [Business Facilities](#)

¹¹⁸ [Jeff Bezos and Alabama Economic Development](#)

¹¹⁹ [Alabama Forest Products](#)

¹²⁰ [Alabama's Deficient Bridges](#)

¹²¹ [Skilled Workers](#)

- 3) **Broadband**-Many rural areas of the state still do not have access to broadband internet service. In 2016, only 66% of Alabamians have access to high-speed internet. According to the Federal Communication Commission, only 44% living outside cities have access.¹²²
- 4) **Rural Healthcare**-Access to healthcare in many rural parts of Alabama continues to decline with the closing of several county hospitals.¹²³

Opportunities:

- 1) **Exports:** Alabama exports topped \$20.5 billion in 2016, spearheaded by gains in transportation equipment, chemicals, and paper products. Expanding exports is a priority in the state's Accelerate Alabama 2.0 economic development plan.¹²⁴
- 2) **Pre-Kindergarten Education:** According to the National Institute for Early Childhood Education, Alabama's state-funded program is the best in the nation for the 10th consecutive year. The program is known for its high-quality, but its reach is limited due to limited state funding.¹²⁵ During 2017, the program was expected to reach 25 percent of eligible students, and increase from 20% the year before.
- 3) **Data centers:** Alabama will be benefiting from data centers, including Google's \$600 million facility in Jackson County. Blue Cross and Blue Shield, AT&T, and the Southern Company have invested in the centers around the Birmingham area. Future growth is likely in this area and Alabama stands to benefit if pursued.¹²⁶

¹²² [High Speed Internet Access](#)

¹²³ [Alabama's Rural Hospitals](#)

¹²⁴ [Alabama Exports](#)

¹²⁵ [Alabama Program Ranked Best](#)

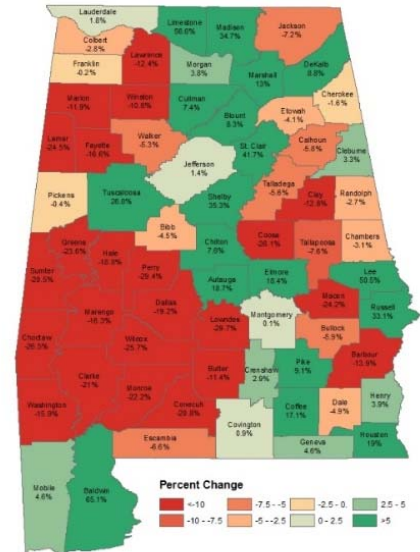
¹²⁶ [Data Center Jobs](#)

- 4) **Port Birmingham development:** Growth potential being one of the few places where barge, railroad connectivity, and access to the highway system.¹²⁷

Threats:

- 1) **Demise of Rural Alabama’s population.** According to University of Alabama researchers, most non-metro area counties will see a decline in population by 2040 of 3%. This has ramifications for education, healthcare, and quality of life.¹²⁸
- 2) **Dependence on Federal Spending:** WalletHub released a study on the Most and Least Federally Dependent States of 2017 and Alabama ranked 4th. The state ranked 4th in State Resident’s Dependency and 14th in State Government Dependency. Should federal budgets be cut, this would magnify the state’s budget situation.¹²⁹

Alabama County Population Change, 2010-2040



Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama, March 2017.

5. Economic Resiliency

Below are highlights of activities aimed at increasing Alabama’s economic resiliency.

\$1.5 million grant awarded to establish automotive training facility at Calhoun¹³⁰

Calhoun Community College has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Secretary of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration to create a new automotive technology program facility on the Decatur campus. The announcement was made by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. According to Calhoun’s estimates, **the project should create 219 jobs and generate \$32 million in private investment.** “The facility will provide entry-level skills necessary to enter into and excel in the automotive service and repair industry,” the release said. “It will expand and strengthen the automotive cluster in northern Alabama and southern Tennessee, **enhancing the region’s economic resilience.**”

-The News Courier

¹²⁷ [Port Birmingham](#)

¹²⁸ [Rural Population Decline](#)

¹²⁹ [Most Dependent States](#)

¹³⁰ [\\$1.5 million grant awarded to establish automotive training facility at Calhoun](#)

\$2.5 million grand for expansion of Ozark’s Alabama Aviation College¹³¹

Governor Kay Ivey announced that Enterprise State Community College will receive \$2.5 million dollars to expand the Alabama Aviation College in Ozark. The funds are part of the Alabama Capital Improvement Trust Fund which awards funds for projects that promote economic development and industrial recruitment in the state. The Alabama Aviation College offers training and coursework in one of Alabama’s fastest growing career fields - aviation. Specifically, students are offered programs in aircraft maintenance and avionics technology. The grant funds announced today will be used to renovate campus infrastructure to expand the College’s Advanced Composite Training Program and prepare the campus for future program expansions.

-Press Release, WTVY

Federal grant to help Port of Mobile add vehicle-handling facility¹³²

The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced a \$12.7 million grant that will help add a new feature to the Alabama State Docks in Mobile: A vehicle-friendly loading site that could serve the state’s growing automotive industry. According to information released Tuesday by the DOT, the project being funded by the grant “converts an abandoned bulk handling facility at the Port of Mobile into a roll-on/roll-off mobile vehicle processing facility.” It will be able to handle automobiles, military vehicles, trucks, and other rolling stock that can be driven or towed directly onto ships.



\$315 million from RESTORE Act to fund projects in Mobile, Baldwin counties¹³³

A whopping \$315 million is coming to infrastructure, environmental restoration and economic development projects in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, courtesy of the RESTORE Act and the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council. It’s funding nearly 50 projects, some of which have obvious potential to change life on the coast. The biggest include \$56 million for five major road expansion projects in Baldwin County, \$28 million for a new facility at the Port of Mobile, \$27 million for projects affecting Dauphin Island’s Aloe Bay and \$21 million to redevelop the docks in Bayou La Batre. Tens of millions of dollars will go to projects to improve water-sewer systems and eliminate sewage overflows.

-Lawrence Specker, al.com

¹³¹[\\$2.5 million grand for expansion of Ozark’s Alabama Aviation College](#)

¹³²[Federal grant to help Port of Mobile add vehicle-handling facility](#)

¹³³[\\$315 million from RESTORE Act to fund projects in Mobile, Baldwin counties](#)

Governor Ivey signs Alabama Broadband Accessibility Act¹³⁴

Governor Kay Ivey on Wednesday signed into law SB149, the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Act, authorizing the creation of a broadband accessibility grant program to be administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. The bill, sponsored by Senator Clay Scofield and Representative Donnie Chesteen, also creates the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund.

“The internet is vital to economic development, health, education, and to be honest, all areas of our modern life. This common sense legislation will help us attract new broadband to areas that need it most, especially in rural Alabama,” Governor Ivey said. “I congratulate Senator Scofield and Representative Chesteen for a job well done in seeing this bill through the legislature. It is just another step forward as we improve access to high-speed internet sooner rather than later.”

-Alabama News Network Staff, Alabama News Net

FAA directs \$25 million to Alabama airport improvements¹³⁵

A fresh round of Airport Improvement Program funding from the FAA means millions of dollars in grants for Alabama facilities, including \$7 million for the Downtown Mobile Airport. The grants are part of the Federal Aviation Administration’s Airport Improvement Program, which helps fund “improvements related to enhancing airport safety, capacity, security and environmental concerns.” Alabama airports received \$20.6 million in a wave of grants announced this week, following \$4.7 million awarded in June. The \$7.1 million for Mobile Downtown Airport is by far the largest grant out of that \$25.3 million total, but it’s not the only seven-figure one. Other airports receiving between \$1 million and \$3.1 million are Lanett Municipal Airport, MacCrenshaw Memorial Airport in Greenville, Tuscaloosa Regional Airport, Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport and H.L. (Sonny) Callahan Airport in Fairhope.

-Lawrence Specker, al.com

MotionMobs partners with Montgomery startup on tech training initiative¹³⁶

Montgomery-based startup, CodingSolutions, has partnered with Birmingham’s MotionMobs to launch a new training program to prepare software development talent from Alabama

¹³⁴[Governor Ivey signs Alabama Broadband Accessibility Act](#)

¹³⁵[FAA directs \\$25 million to Alabama airport improvements](#)

¹³⁶[MotionMobs partners with Montgomery startup on tech training initiative](#)

universities for career positions with companies across the state. “Our entire team is grateful to be a part of this program. We’ve seen the challenges of building and growing a talented technical team first hand. This gives candidates the opportunity to build a software project impacting our community and find a career path on technical teams at nonprofits, start-ups, and large companies all constantly looking to hire more engineers in our state,” said Taylor Peake, president of MotionMobs.

-Tyler Patchen, Birmingham Business Journal

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