



- **Alabama**
- **Arkansas**
- **Florida**

Over the next four issues of Southern Business & Development, we are going to have some fun. It's the "Best of Economic Development in the American South," and each issue will feature three to five Southern states. You can use the results as a unique aid in your search for a suitable site for your business in the American South.



Southern Economic Development Roundtable

We polled the members of the Southern Economic Development Roundtable to come up with the best of 30 economic development categories in each Southern state. SEDR is an invitation-only group of economic developers, educators, economists, site consultants and CEOs who meet once a year in January at WaterColor in Santa Rosa Beach, Fla. The no-fee-to-attend, no-agenda meeting is an opportunity for 50 of the South's best economic development minds to discuss issues relative to economic development in the American South. A group photo of the 2015 SEDR class is published above.

There are 30 categories for each Southern state and states will have some categories that pertain specifically to it, meaning not all of the categories are the same from state to state. The top three vote recipients for each category are recognized and listed in alphabetical order. In the case of a tie, a fourth "winner" is listed. The winners are then followed by other entries that received votes. Therefore, the first listed under each category is no "better" than the third or fourth listed.

This issue features the best of economic development in Alabama, Arkansas and Florida. The results of the best of economic development in Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Missouri will be published in the Summer issue (September), followed by the best of economic development in North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee in the fall issue (December). The "best" series will conclude with the best of Texas, Virginia and West Virginia in the winter 2016 issue (March).

We think you will enjoy reading the results of the "Best of Economic Development in the American South" over the next year. Again, this unique forum can help guide you and your business to a profitable place in the South, the fourth largest economy in the world behind only the U.S., China and India as of the end of 2014. It should be noted that in total GDP, India blew past the American South, Japan and Germany in 2014 according to the International Monetary Fund.

2015 Best of Economic Development in **ALABAMA**

1. Alabama's Three Best Economic Development Assets

- AIDT/Workforce
- Alabama Community College System
- Port of Mobile

Also receiving votes: UAB; Aggressive state and local incentives; Available

sites; Easily accessible transportation corridors; Location; Business climate; Right to work.

2. The Alabama Economy's Most Important Employers

- HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology
- Mercedes-Benz

- Redstone Arsenal/NASA
- UAB Health System

Also receiving votes: Alabama Power; TVA; Honda; Hyundai; EADS/Airbus; Regions; BBVA Compass; Maxwell Air Force Base; Fort Rucker; Blue Cross & Blue Shield; UAB; Auburn University; University of Alabama.

CONTINUED



PHASE I



PHASE II



PHASE III

ALABAMARTP

ROBOTICS TECHNOLOGY PARK

THE ROBOTIC MAINTENANCE TRAINING CENTER

The Robotic Maintenance Training Center is a 60,000 square foot facility where technicians are trained in the field of automation and robotics. The facility is staffed with trainers certified by OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturers) automation vendors and is also a south-eastern U.S.-based training facility for several robotics manufacturers.

THE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Advanced Technology Research and Development Center provides space on a cost recovery fee structure that promotes economic growth through research and development. The building is used by public and private entities that are engaged in research and development of robot/automation technologies.

THE INTEGRATION, ENTREPRENEURIAL & PAINT/DISPENSE TRAINING CENTER

The Integration, Entrepreneurial and Paint/Dispense Training Center is currently in development and is scheduled to open in 2015. This center will allow companies to build and adapt automation for new and existing manufacturing process. It will also allow companies to train in manual paint spraying techniques and offer robotic dispense training.



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WE BUILD THE WORKFORCE



THAT BUILDS THE ECONOMY

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WWW.AIDT.EDU



Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT), an elite workforce training organization, was voted as one of Alabama's three best economic development assets. Pictured is Ed Castille, director of AIDT.

3. Alabama's Most Important New Employers

- Airbus
- Carpenter Technology
- Polaris

Also receiving votes: Austal; Boeing; Remington; Barber Motor Speedway.

4. Alabama's Most Admired Companies

- Alabama Power
- Brasfield & Gorrie
- Regions

Also receiving votes: Mercedes-Benz; UAB; Hoar Program Management; Honda; Hyundai; Toyota.

5. Alabama's Most Admired Manufacturers

- Austal
- Honda
- Hyundai
- Mercedes-Benz

Also receiving votes: United Launch Alliance; Boeing; Mando; Navistar; Toyota.

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6. Alabama's Most Admired Service Companies

- Alabama Power
- Regions
- TVA

Also receiving votes: AT&T; UAB; BBVA Compass; Blue Cross & Blue Shield; Iron Tribe Fitness.

7. The Best of R&D in Alabama

- Auburn University
- HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology
- REHAU-Cullman
- Southern Research Institute

Also receiving votes: Innovation Depot; UAB; Boeing; Redstone Arsenal; University of Alabama-Huntsville; George C. Marshall Space Flight Center.

8. Best Major Market Aerospace Locations in Alabama

- Birmingham
- Huntsville
- Mobile

Also receiving votes: Montgomery.

9. Best Small Market Aerospace Locations in Alabama

- Andalusia
- Decatur
- Dothan

Also receiving votes: Ozark; Auburn; Enterprise; Troy; Cullman; Gunterville; Tallassee.

10. Best Tier One Auto Supplier Locations in Alabama

- Auburn-Opelika
- Cullman
- Montgomery
- Tuscaloosa

Also receiving votes: Jackson Co. Industrial Park; Birmingham; Shelby Co.; Limestone Co.; C3 Region

CONTINUED

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Australia-based Austal was named one of Alabama's most admired manufacturers. Pictured is the company's shipbuilding complex in Mobile, Ala.

(Fayette, Lamar, Marion counties); St. Clair Co.; Huntsville; Elmore Co.; Talladega Co.; Chambers Co.; Etowah Co.; Jefferson Co.; Walker Co.

11. Alabama's Best Community Colleges for Workforce Training

- Bevill State Community College
- Calhoun Community College
- Wallace State Community College

Also receiving votes: Shelton State; Jefferson State; Faulkner State; Northeast Alabama; Reid State.

12. Best Engineering/Architecture Firms in Alabama

- Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood
- Sain Engineering
- Volkert

Also receiving votes: Williams Blackstock Architects; Tucker Jones Engineers, Birmingham; Gresham Smith; Bhate; Krebs.

13. Alabama's Best Economic Development Law Firms

- Balch & Bingham
- Bradley Arant Boult Cummings
- Maynard Cooper

Also receiving votes: Burr Forman; Butler Snow; Jones Walker.

CONTINUED

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JOBS.

Wallace State Community College is the region's one-stop source for workforce development, offering services for business and industry, and for individuals seeking education and training for a competitive job market.

Wallace State's own business incubator program recently launched Zero RPM, heralded by Governor Robert Bentley as one of the most innovative new industries in the state. The college's 17 technical programs are nationally accredited, and provide training using the latest technology, industry recognized credentialing, and a direct pathway to employment.

Take advantage of our vast network of Workforce Development programs and partnerships and discover how we are transforming our region one life at a time.

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Engineering | Architecture | Construction

ALABAMA

14. Best Contractors for Industrial Projects in Alabama

- Brasfield & Gorrie
- Gray Construction
- Hoar Construction

Also receiving votes: Harbert.

15. Alabama's Best Industrial Real Estate Firms

- EGS Commercial Real Estate
- Daniel Corporation

- Graham & Company
- Industrial Partners

Also receiving votes: Binswanger; CBRE.

16. Best Small Business Banks in Alabama

- Bryant Bank
- Regions
- River Bank & Trust
- ServisFirst Bank

Also receiving votes: Peoples Bank of Alabama; BBVA Compass; Renasant Bank; First Commercial; IberiaBank; Wells Fargo; Traditions Bank, Cullman; West Alabama Bank; Bank of Vernon.

A Decatur, Ala.,-built United Launch Alliance (ULA) Atlas V rocket successfully launched the AFSPC-5 satellite for the U.S. Air Force from Space Launch Complex-41 on May 20, 2015. Decatur was voted as one of the best aerospace industry locations in Alabama.



Walker County

Ranked Among the Best in Alabama – Let Us Show You Why

Best Community Colleges For Workforce Training:
Bevill State Community College

Best Manufacturing Workforce Small Market:
Walker County, AL

Best Small Town Growth Potential in Alabama:
Walker County, AL

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17. Best Megsites in Alabama

- Brilliant Alabama Black Creek Site
- Huntsville Sewell Site
- South Alabama Megasite

Also receiving votes: Guin I-22 Interstate Site; Calhoun County; Decatur Site; Little Canoe Creek Industrial Park; Calera Site.

CONTINUED



Chambers County
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

STRENGTH WOVEN IN

Among the many qualities offered by Chambers County is a large skilled and knowledgeable workforce. With an elevated aptitude in technical skills, the county's complete workforce meets the qualifications that a wide variety of companies are looking for when deciding to locate or expand.

Workforce qualities:

- Complete Chambers County workforce totals 20,265
- High workforce knowledge in Engineering and Technology
- High degree of specialization in Production, and Construction and Extraction
- Prime-age workers (ages 25 to 54) comprise 66 percent of workforce
- Strong technical school and community college programs

STRENGTH WOVEN IN

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ALABAMA

18. Best Small Town Industrial Sites in Alabama

- Breeding South Site-Limestone Co.
- Cullman Industrial Parks
- Greenbrier Site-Limestone Co.
- Oxa 21 Site-Limestone Co.

Also receiving votes: Guntersville; Athens; Greenville; Enterprise; Clanton; Hamilton; Fayette; Monroeville; Andalusia.

19. Alabama's Best Manufacturing Workforce (Small Market)

- Cullman
- Enterprise
- Lanett
- Walker Co.

Also receiving votes: Ozark; Pell City; Fort Payne; Andalusia; Athens; Guntersville; Monroeville; Scottsboro.



Wallace State was voted one of the three best community colleges for workforce training in Alabama. Pictured with SB&D publisher Michael Randle is Vicki Hawsey Karolewics, president of Wallace State Community College.

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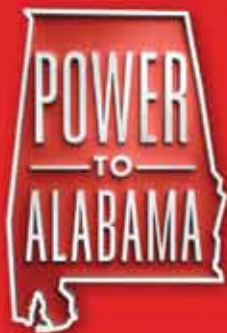
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No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers. Contact: Chris Grissom, Esq., 205.521.8514 or Alex Leath 205.521.8899, 1819 Fifth Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama 35203



The HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in Huntsville, Ala., was voted one of Alabama's most important employers.

20. Alabama's Best Manufacturing Workforce (Mid-Market)

- Auburn/Opelika
- Florence-Muscle Shoals
- Tuscaloosa

Also receiving votes: Dothan; Decatur; Gadsden.

21. Alabama's Best Manufacturing Workforce (Large Market)

- Birmingham
- Mobile
- Montgomery

Also receiving votes: Huntsville.

22. Best Growth Potential in Small Town Alabama

- Alex City/Lake Martin
- C3 Region (Fayette, Lamar, Marion Counties)
- Fairhope
- Walker Co.

Also receiving votes: Monroeville; Guntersville; Calera; Trussville.

23. Best Mid-Market Growth Potential in Alabama

- Anniston-Oxford
- Phenix City
- Tuscaloosa

Also receiving votes: Auburn-Opelika; Pelham; Alabaster; Athens; Calera.

24. Alabama's Best Local Economic Development Agencies

- City of Auburn Economic Development
- Cullman Economic Development Agency
- Montgomery Area Chamber

Also receiving votes: Huntsville/Madison Co., Chamber; Birmingham Business Alliance; Tuscaloosa Co., IDA; City of Opelika; Shoals EDA.

25. Best Alabama Cities for African-American Business Ownership

- Birmingham
- Mobile
- Montgomery

Also receiving votes: Gadsden; Decatur; Guntersville; Alex City; Baldwin Co.

26. Best Places to Retire in Alabama

- Gulf Shores/Foley
- Lake Martin
- Spanish Fort/Fairhope

Also receiving votes: Orange Beach; Smith Lake; Guntersville; Florence; Alex City; Huntsville; Arley.

27. Alabama's Best Craft Breweries

- Avondale Brewing
- Back Forty
- Good People

Also receiving votes: Straight to Ale; Trim Tab Brewing; Cahaba Brewing.

28. Alabama's Best Sporting Events

- Alabama Football
- Auburn Football
- Regions Golf Classic
- Talladega NASCAR Races

Also receiving votes: Barber Motor Speedway; Birmingham Barons; Montgomery Biscuits.

29. Alabama's Best Non-Sporting Events

- Mobile Mardi Gras
- National Shrimp Festival-Gulf Shores
- To Kill a Mockingbird Production-Monroeville

Also receiving votes: W.C. Handy Music Festival-Florence; Rock the South; Galaxy of Lights-Huntsville; Southern Makers.

30. Best Three Restaurants in Alabama

- Cotton Row
- Highlands
- Hot & Hot

Also receiving votes: Little Savannah; Bottega; Felix's; Nicki's West; Shula's Steakhouse. ■



Best Small Market Aerospace Locations in Alabama

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