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Alabama Development Office

Alabama 'State of the Year' Four Years in a Row

MONTGOMERY -- In a series of news conferences around the state, Gov. Bob Riley announced that Alabama has been named 'State of the Year' for the fourth year in a row. *Southern Business and Development* magazine makes the award based on job announcements in 17 southern and border states. This is the first time in the magazine's history that a state has won the title for four consecutive years.

"When I came into office, I said Alabama would never have to be a follower again," Gov. Riley said. "And now for four consecutive years we haven't been a follower, we've been the leader. The strategy we developed to create new jobs, expand opportunities and promote economic growth is working to make

Alabama more successful than we've ever been." The magazine noted several of Alabama's major economic development announcements of 2005 run a wide gamut of industries, from aviation and defense to high tech research and financial services.

"To give you an idea of how competitive Alabama has become, there were 58 deals announced in the state in calendar year 2005 with 200-plus jobs and/or \$30 million in investment," the magazine noted. "Alabama's economic development conquests in 2005 featured a variety of projects, including a couple of large BRAC deals in Huntsville, the new Hudson-Alpha Institute bio project in Huntsville, Kronospan's 700-employee wood products plant in Calhoun County, the EADS aerospace project in Mobile and Wachovia's \$400 million data center in Birmingham, among many others." As it did last year, Alabama is sharing the magazine's top honor with North Carolina.

Several Alabama cities were also recognized for awards. Huntsville was named "Mid Market of the Year" for the second consecutive year. Mobile, Anniston and Calhoun County were awarded Honorable Mentions for "Mid-Market of the Year" and Opelika was named "Small Market of the Year."



Alabama Wins "Golden Shovel" Award

Announcements made during the past year have earned Alabama the nation's top "Golden Shovel" award from the trade magazine *Area Development*.

Gov. Bob Riley said the magazine ranked Alabama number one in the nation based on the 10 biggest job-creating and investment projects initiated last year.

"This is like winning the Oscar for economic development," Gov. Riley said. He said he was especially proud that the major industry announcements considered by the magazine are spread all across the state.

"In the past, most of our growth occurred along our interstate corridors. Today, we've succeeded in spreading economic growth and opportunities beyond our interstates," Gov. Riley said. "Every county in Alabama today has unemployment rates in single digits."

West Corp. To Add 100 People At Huntsville Call Center

HUNTSVILLE -- West Corp. is planning to hire 100 people at its Huntsville call center to fill customer care and sales positions.

The Omaha, Nebraska-based company opened its Huntsville office in 2000 and has 800 employees here. West handles incoming calls from the customers of its clients in the wireless phone service industry and other sectors.

"We've had really good success there, and we wanted to be able to grow," said David Pleiss, vice president, investor and public relations.

Riley To Lead Trade Mission Across the Globe

MONTGOMERY -- Gov. Bob Riley is going around the world to try to lure more industries to Alabama and increase exports to the state.

Riley and about 40 business and university officials will begin the trade mission in China and then head for Seoul, South Korea, where he will be joined by about 40 Alabamians. He will then arrive in London, where he will be met by another Alabama delegation.

"This is the largest business mission this state has ever attempted," said Alabama Development Office Director Neal Wade.

Wade said Riley will be the first Alabama governor to lead a trade trip to China since Gov. George Wallace in 1984. Alabama has had a sister state relationship with the Hubei Province since Wallace's trip, and Riley will try to build on that, including having researchers from the University of Alabama at Birmingham participating in a biotechnology forum and having officials from the University of Alabama and Auburn University discuss partnership opportunities with two universities in Hubei.

In South Korea, the trip includes an Appreciation Dinner for Hyundai officials and Korean automotive suppliers who have located plants in Alabama. Riley said he will try to persuade the suppliers to expand their Alabama plants to serve the new Kia plant slated for West Point, Ga.

In London, Riley and other Alabamians will attend the Farnborough Air Exposition, host a reception at Kensington Palace for aviation companies, and co-host a dinner with EADS/Northrop Grumman for

potential suppliers for the military tanker aircraft assembly plant that will locate in Mobile if the joint venture gets a U.S. Air Force contract.

Wade said having the governor head the mission opens more doors because company chief executive officers will turn out to greet a state's chief executive.

In addition to luring new investment, Riley said he will try to expand Alabama's exports.

Gov. Riley has put a major emphasis on promoting export growth during his time in office. In mid-2004, Governor Riley launched "Export Alabama," a statewide effort partnering the Alabama Development Office, the Export Alabama Trade Alliance and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to promote the growth of exported goods and services from Alabama companies. Under this initiative, the state has also undertaken trade missions to South America, Germany, Central America and Israel.

Almost 3,000 businesses in Alabama sell their products overseas, and more than 75 percent are small and medium-size companies. These companies employ nearly 73,000 Alabamians.



Gov. Bob Riley

Hyundai Facility Named Among Best in Industry

MONTGOMERY -- J.D. Power and Associates has named Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, LLC. as among the best in the industry. HMMA placed 10th among 73 plants throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and South America.

Only one other plant has ever been ranked higher in its first year of operation. The new Sonata ranked third in the highly-competitive midsize car category, behind only the veterans Camry and Accord. The entire Hyundai brand ranked third overall, behind only Lexus and Porsche.

Huntsville To Oversee Lunar Rocket

HUNTSVILLE -- Alabama is officially back in the moon rocket business. Engineers at Marshall Space

Flight Center will oversee the development of NASA's next-generation lunar rocket, a companion cargo rocket and a new lunar lander.

Work has been going on for six months, but the NASA announcement parceled out duties between Marshall at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville and nine other space agency centers scattered around the country.

The eventual goal is to land on Mars. But for the near term, the center that developed the Saturn V rocket two generations ago is again shooting for the moon.

Marshall Director David King said that getting back to the moon will be even tougher than reaching it the first time since plans call for an extended stay rather than a brief visit. The project is dubbed "Constellation."

"We're going to have to plan this in a much more precise way," King said. "It is larger in scope than what we did the first time by a long shot."

Astronauts will ride in a gumdrop-shaped pod that resembles an Apollo capsule.

India Firm Set To Open in Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM -- An India-based technology company is planning to open an office in Birmingham, eventually creating 100 jobs in what organizers hope will be the first of many companies coming to the state from that country.

ITC Infotech, a subsidiary of India's ITC Limited, will locate its Southeast headquarters here with 20 initial jobs. The company plans to add 80 more jobs in three years. ITC handles information technology services for clients, including networking, programming and software testing. It is the first company to announce plans to locate in the state since the establishment of the Alabama-India Business Partnership (AIBP), a group set up to stimulate economic activity and investment. AIBP made its debut last month with a reception and dinner at the Ross Bridge Golf Resort.

Anil Agarwal, president of AK-Global Solutions Inc. and founder of the Alabama India Business Partnership, said Indian companies are finding entry into Alabama via partnerships with existing firms. For instance, ITC has formed a strategic alliance with Agarwal's AK-Global, a technology consulting firm, to make locating here easier.

"ITC chose Birmingham because of the diversity of our economy with the financial, medical, steel, manufacturing and other industries," said Michael Shattuck, director of business development at the Metropolitan Development Board. "This has opened the door for other companies."



Oncology Supply To Expand Distribution Center in Dothan

DOTHAN -- Oncology Supply, a division of AmerisourceBergen Corp.'s Specialty Group, has announced that AmerisourceBergen will invest \$12 million in Dothan to expand its oncology distribution facility.

The project is slated to begin later this summer and at full development, 40 new employees will be hired.

The company is one of the nation's largest oncology

distributors and delivers chemotherapy and medical surgical products to community-based oncology clinics throughout the United States on a next-day delivery basis.

"This investment and development will continue to support Oncology Supply's rapid growth into the foreseeable future," said company President Bill Stickler.

High Tech Directory Available for Alabama

HUNTSVILLE -- Alabama's technology-based companies now have a tool that will make their company information readily available to prospects around the world and will increase the exposure that these companies have to potential business.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), with the assistance of the University of Alabama at Huntsville (UAH), have created an online directory that highlights the wealth of high-tech resources within the state of Alabama.

The directory contains information on high tech Alabama companies categorized in aerospace, automotive, biotech, communications, electronics, information technology, optical media and equipment, engineering and testing, commercial and industrial machinery.

Visit www.hightechdirectory.alabama.gov to access the directory. The project was funded by a grant from Gov. Bob Riley and administered through ADECA's Science, Technology and Energy Division.



Thumbs Up!

Tom Kim, chief executive officer of Maxforma Plastics, LLC, and Gov. Bob Riley give the company's project a thumbs up during ribbon cutting ceremonies in Opelika. Maxforma Plastics will invest \$14 million in the area and hire more than 100 people to manufacture bumper back beams as well as the bumper's impact resistant core, components designed to protect an automobile and its passengers from accident or injury. The company is a Tier One supplier to Hyundai Motor Manufacturing of Alabama.