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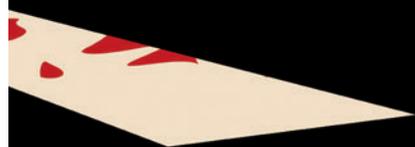
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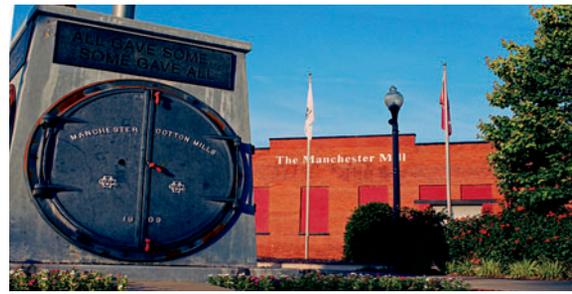
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700,000 square feet






1 million square feet





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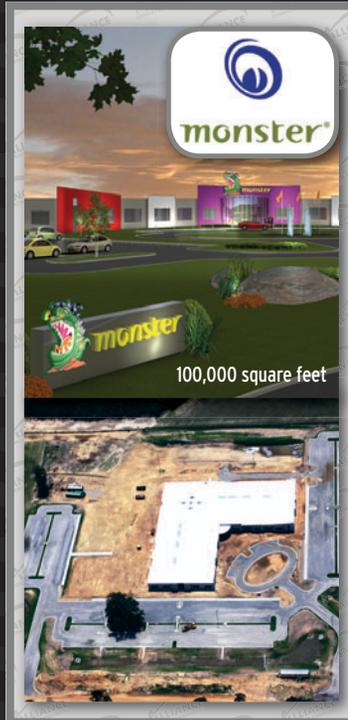
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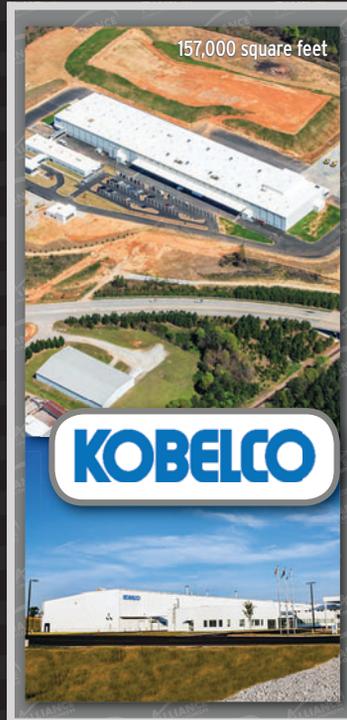
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monster



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JUSHI

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nephron pharmaceuticals corporation

1.2 million square feet

457,000 square feet

IFA



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2 million square feet

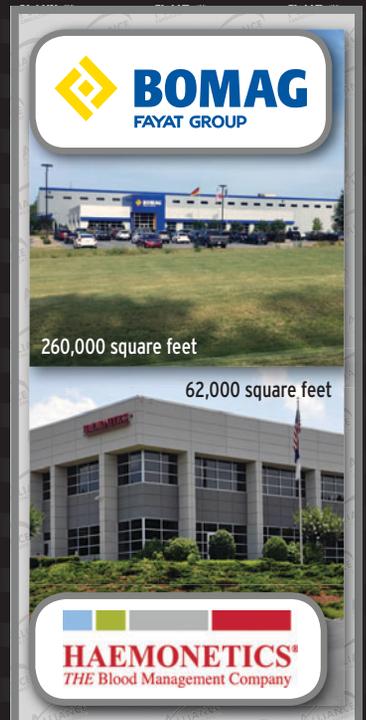


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SOUTHBOUND

By Michael Randle, EDITOR

How do we get out of this mess? We will recover.

IN 40 YEARS IN THE JOURNALISM BUSINESS, I have never covered anything like the coronavirus and its economic effects on not only the U.S., but the world. I have never seen this level of mass layoffs and furloughs by companies both large and small. It is an economic nightmare, a total meltdown. . .mainly because it happened so quickly. Ten million people filed for unemployment in two weeks, a historical record.

We went through a similar situation with the U.S. economy in the Great Depression and the Great Recession, but not this suddenly — the Coronavirus Recession. Compared to the Coronavirus Recession, the Great Depression and Great Recession were slow bleeds.

I am writing this in the first week of April, so I cannot predict how this virus will affect the South's economy or for how long. Yet, I can predict this: there will be a recovery and since this recession is not a typical one — unlike the last recession which was based on a lack of liquidity — the recovery will be strong. So, ask yourself, am I going to be ready for the opportunity that the coronavirus recovery will present?

I judge an economy by economic development project activity. Unlike an economist, I do not judge an economy by real-time data, rather by projects meeting our thresholds each year.

We have spreadsheets on every project meeting or exceeding 200 jobs and/or \$30 million announced in the 15-state American South since 1993. In every year, the total number of projects has reflected exactly how the economy was performing in the South.

For example, in the go-go '90s, 1997 peaked in project activity meeting our thresholds with a total of 636 deals. In the recession of 2001, there were only 409 projects announced. In the Great Recession years of 2007-2009, project totals did this: 510 in 2007; 429 in 2008 and 367 projects in 2009 (the all-time low of our annual ranking called the SB&D 100). Do you remember what people were saying during the Great Recession? They called it the "new normal."

But they were wrong, waaaaayyyyyy wrong. In 2010, the first full-year recovery of the Great Recession, project activity blew up with 596 deals. That's an increase of 229 projects in one year, the largest one-year increase in SB&D 100 history. Was



your economic development agency or the business you own prepared for such an unlikely recovery? I would guess that 75 percent were not.

Then we have this 11-year recovery that ended with the Coronavirus Recession. This 11-year recovery peaked in 2015 and 2016 with 730 and 695 deals respectively making our ranking. I would imagine this year will end up with something like what we saw in 2009.

If you think there may be no deals out there in April and May 2020, you are probably right. However, my prediction is this will be a V-shaped recovery. That means a collapse of projects with a short pause, then a dramatic increase in project activity once the all-clear is announced.

I see some of you canceling your marketing and advertising (at this writing, there are no conferences to attend anyway) and my advice to you is don't. A strong recovery is coming. Is your business or economic development agency ready for the recovery? And don't worry about the election. The recovery will happen no matter who wins. ✪

Correction: Toyota's North American headquarters is in Plano, Texas and Nissan's headquarters is in Franklin, Tenn. We had Toyota listed in the Dallas-Fort Worth MSA and Nissan's in the Nashville MSA in the last issue. Both plants are in those MSAs.

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Winter 2020

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AROUND THE SOUTH

For real-time news on business, politics and economic development in the South, go to RandleReport.com. For all economic development projects announced in the South, go to SB-D.com. For more information on the automotive industry in the South, go to SouthernAutoCorridor.com.



The coronavirus has closed automotive plants, retail outlets, restaurants and other businesses in an unprecedented lockdown. Quarantines and physical distancing have helped slow the virus, but these efforts cannot last indefinitely without causing enormous damage to the economy.

Global manufacturing sinks to lowest level since 2009

In February, the JPMorgan Global Manufacturing PMI fell 3.2 points to 47.2, as the coronavirus disrupted supply chains, trade and overall demand. Manufacturing in the U.S. actually expanded, but with 50.1 percent, the expansion was by the slimmest of margins. New export orders fell to the lowest since 2009.

Banks weathering the storm, so far

It's been a dozen years since U.S. banks weathered the storm of the financial crisis and widespread loan defaults. During those 12 years, banks saw a collapse in energy markets (2016), few economic development projects (2007 to 2009), low interest rates and some stock volatility. Today they are experiencing all of the above. It will be interesting to see how they fare next quarter through these issues, compounded by the coronavirus.

FDI expected to be reduced dramatically because of coronavirus

The *Wall Street Journal* reported in March: "Businesses will likely cut their overseas investments by between 5 percent and 15 percent this year in response to the coronavirus outbreak, but there may also be a longer lasting movement of production back to their home countries, the United Nations said." The article reported that businesses will hold back on planned investments in countries hit hard by the virus, such as the U.S., Italy, China, Japan and Korea.

Eleven-year bull market ends

In March, the stock market plunged 20 percent (it would drop more later in the month) ending one of the longest winning streaks in market history. A 20 percent loss from previous highs defines a bear market.



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SOWELA was named by *Wallethub* as the number one community college in the nation for highest return on education investment.

Louisiana’s FastStart worker training program has been ranked #1 for the last 9 years by *Business Facilities Magazine*.



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AROUND THE SOUTH



How badly will the coronavirus affect the automotive industry? As of mid-March, most automotive plants in U.S. have temporarily closed.

U.S. population growth in 2019 was the lowest in a century

The annual population growth in the U.S. in 2019 was the lowest in 100 years. Population growth in 2019 was one half of 1 percent, lower growth than during the Great Depression in the 1930s, according to the Census. The U.S. population only grew by 1.5 million in 2019.

Federal Reserve: Tariffs a drag on manufacturing

A report written by Aaron Flaaen and Justin Pierce of the Federal Reserve showed that President Trump's tariffs have led to job losses in the manufacturing sector and higher prices for producers and consumers. The researchers state, "Our results indicate that tariffs have been a drag on employment and have failed to increase output." They concluded, "There are virtually no modern episodes of a large, advanced economy raising tariffs in a way comparable to the U.S. in 2018-2019." A similar report by

the Fed, Princeton University and Columbia University said that the tariffs implemented in 2018 cost Americans as much as \$1.4 billion per month.

Fed report says tariffs have backfired

A Federal Reserve report that came out in December laid out the claim that American tariffs imposed by President Trump have hurt American manufacturing. The protectionist policies have slowed manufacturing as well as the overall economy, the report stated. In 2019, economic growth decelerated from 3 percent at the beginning of the year to 2 percent.

Retailers want Trump to dump the tariffs

The coronavirus crisis on top of Trump's tariffs is making some U.S. retailers demand the tariffs be removed. President Trump has hiked tariffs for Chinese goods from 3.1 percent at the start of 2018 to 19.3 percent as of the winter quarter, according to the Peterson Institute for Interna-

tional Economics. No, China is not paying for these tariffs. End users of Chinese goods here in the U.S. are paying for the tariffs. China has responded to Trump's tariffs on Chinese goods and in turn has placed tariffs of 8 percent to 20.3 percent during the same period. In an interview with CNBC, Steve Lamar, president and CEO of the American Apparel and Footwear Association, said that the shoe industry in the U.S. paid about \$3.5 billion in tariffs in 2019 that they didn't pay in 2016. Lamar said, "One of the things we've been asking the president to do is 'if you're looking for an immediate way of injecting capital back into the system, get rid of those tariffs that are currently weighing us down.'"

Coronavirus might devastate the auto industry

How badly will the coronavirus affect the automotive industry? As of mid-March, most automotive plants in the U.S. have temporarily closed.

Analysts are predicting that, depending on the length of the pandemic, sales of light vehicles like SUVs, sedans and pickup trucks could drop between 3 percent and 15 percent. There's more. With the cancellation of large-scale events, automakers are losing millions of dollars in advertising opportunities.

Panic has lessened global demand for oil and gas; U.S. frackers freaked

The coronavirus has affected all kinds of industry, particularly the travel industry. We have seen commodities crushed as of mid-March. Precious metals are down, including gold. Bitcoin is down and even palladium, everyone's favorite metal that had been rising to historical heights, is cratering. But one major U.S. industry has seen a dramatic fall — oil. Combined with a flood of crude from Saudi Arabia and Russia, the virus has cut demand dramatically. A barrel of Brent crude was near \$60 in mid-February. By mid-



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March, it was below \$35 a barrel. The drop in price will cause widespread layoffs in the shale industry in Texas and elsewhere. Undoubtedly, there will be bankruptcies in the industry nationwide.

Milken Institute's "Best Performing Cities"

The Milken Institute came out with its 2020 "Best Performing Cities" ranking in the winter quarter. San Francisco was ranked No. 1, followed by Provo, Utah. But several cities in the South made the top 10, including Austin (3); Orlando (5); Dallas-Plano-Irving (9) and Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, Fla. (10).

If the Supreme Court allows worker authorization for Dreamers to cease, jobs will be lost

If the Supreme Court ends Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, Florida could lose 24,000 jobs a month according to FWD.us. Three quarters of DACA job losses would be concentrated in 12 states.

FCC's broadband data challenged

The Federal Communications Commission estimates that 21 million Americans, or just 6.5 percent of the population, lack access to high-speed internet, or

broadband. However, new data, crowd sourced from an app that tests internet connectivity speeds, found that 65 percent of counties across the United States are averaging connection speeds slower than the FCC's definition of broadband.

U.S. manufacturing closed out December with worst reading since June 2009

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, manufacturing in the U.S. saw its fifth consecutive month of contraction in December. There is no question that after the outbreak of the virus, manufacturing is probably in a deep recession. The Institute for Supply Management's purchasing managers' index fell to 47.2 in December from 48.1

in November. December's performance was the worst score since June 2009, and it marked the eighth decline in the last nine months.

In the face of coronavirus, manufacturing actually expanded in February

According to the Institute for Supply Management's measurements of industry activity, U.S. manufacturing actually expanded ever so slightly in February. We all know that will not be the case in March and probably April. February's manufacturing PMI was 50.1 percent, down from January's 50.9 percent. Any number over 50 indicates manufacturing expansion. In March, several CEOs said that the coronavirus was wreaking havoc on the electronics industry.



New census figures show population keeps shifting from the North to the South

The Census Bureau released new data in the winter quarter that shows population continues to shift from the Midwest and Northeast to the South and Southwest, which has been going on for decades. Congressional seats and electoral votes are allocated to states based on a census conducted every 10 years. Because the 2019 estimates come less than a year before the next decennial census, they closely approximate which states will gain and lose as a result of the 2020 count that gets fully underway in the spring. According to the data, Texas is expected to gain two con-



If the Supreme Court ends Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, Florida could lose 24,000 jobs a month according to FWD.us, group of business and tech leaders committed to immigration and criminal justice reform. Three quarters of DACA job losses would be concentrated in 12 states.

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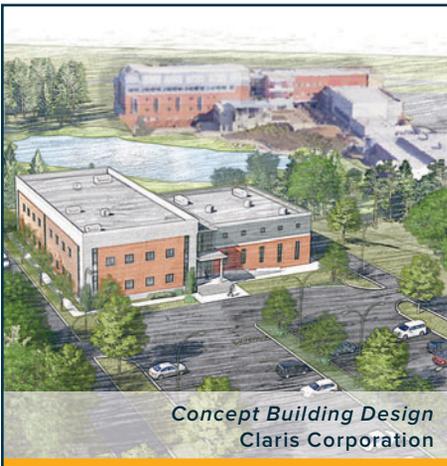
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AROUND THE SOUTH

gressional seats and Florida and North Carolina are expected to gain one. Eight states are likely to lose one seat and New York, Illinois, Michigan and California are in that mix. It would be California's first loss since it became a state in 1850.

North Carolina and Texas at top of *Forbes'* "Best States for Business"

In the winter quarter, North Carolina was named the No. 1 state for business by *Forbes*. Texas came in second and Virginia, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee made the top 10 in the South. Utah, Washington, Colorado and Idaho also made up the top 10.

Google to locate first U.S. operations center in Mississippi

In December, Google announced it was locating its first U.S. operations center in Northwestern Mississippi, although the exact location was not disclosed. Google's current operations centers are located in India and the Philippines. The project will create 350 jobs that will provide customer service to Google users.

Seven Southern markets make top 10 for manufacturing jobs

Greenville, N.C.; Elizabethtown-Fort Knox, Ky.; Spartanburg, S.C.; Jonesboro, Ark.; Morristown, Tenn.; Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, S.C.; and Athens-Clarke County, Ga., made SmartAsset's Best Places to Work in Manufacturing ranking that came out in the winter.

The American South was the only U.S. region to see positive existing home sales in 2019

The South saw a 2.2 percent increase in 2019 in existing home sales, according to the National Association of Realtors. The West saw a decrease of 1.8 percent, the Midwest a decline of 1.6 percent and the Northeast saw a flat rate in 2019.

U.S. Space Command to re-open headquarter site search

On March 4, Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett told lawmakers that the selection of a headquarters for the newly formed U.S. Space Command will be re-opened later this year. Officials from Florida, Alabama, Colorado and other states are expected to file bids for the headquarters.

Service industry expanded in February. Last time for months to come?

Closing restaurants and theme parks, and a collapsing travel industry in March will certainly make February the last month for a while when the services sector grew. Yet, services did grow in February despite the coronavirus. In fact, it grew in February at the fastest pace in a year. The Institute for Supply Management's survey of service-oriented companies, such as restaurants, hospitals and groceries, climbed to 57.3 percent in February from 55.5 percent.

Recession-proof jobs

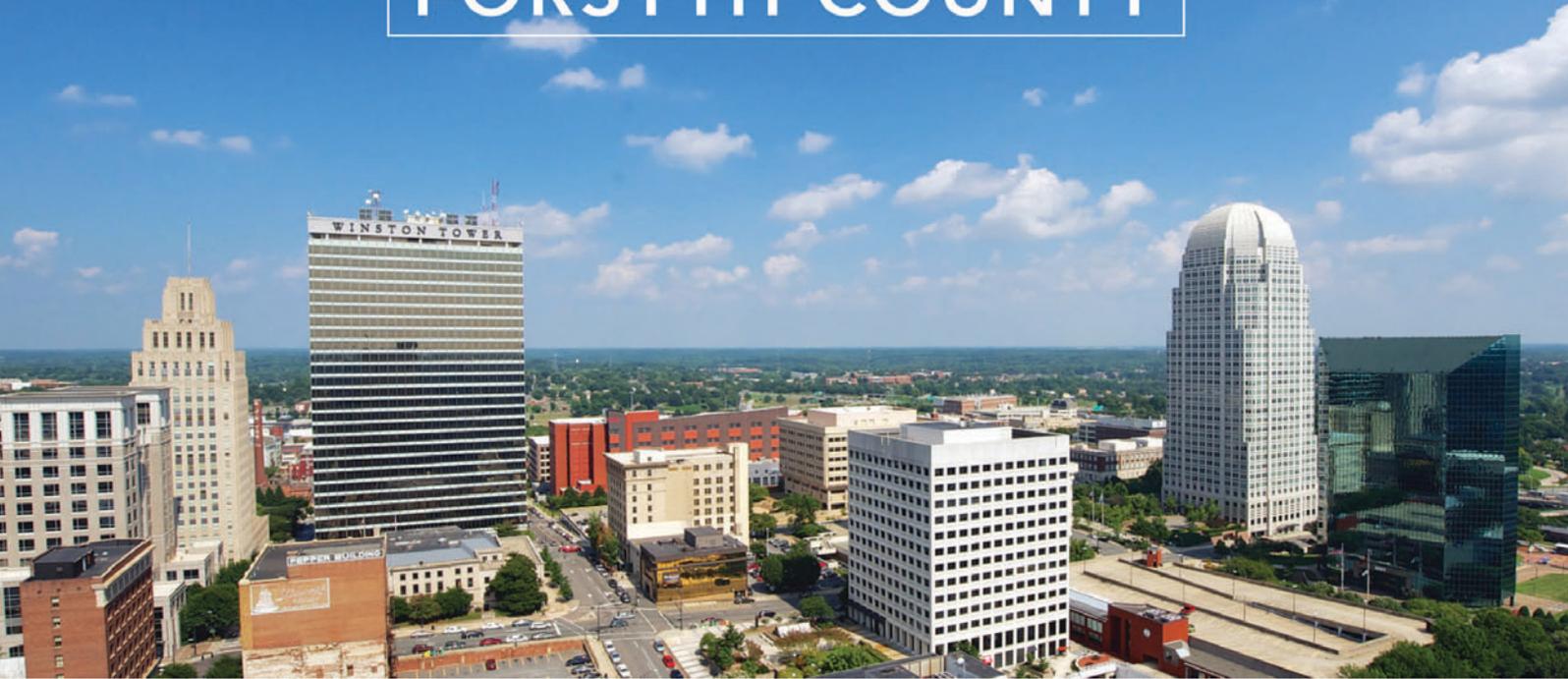
All kinds of sectors are getting hammered, with people being fired or laid off. But there is one sector that will not lay off jobs. Health care is constantly in need and will always be in demand for workers. Before the coronavirus, there was already a shortage of over 1 million healthcare jobs. By 2028, there will be a need of 2 million jobs in the field, recession or not.

Kaplan: Migration to Texas helping its economy

Heavy migration to Texas, especially from California, is helping the state's labor markets, says Robert Kaplan, president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Kaplan said one of the biggest economic problems in the U.S. is people aging out of the workforce at a time when workforce growth is at a standstill. The U.S. saw its lowest fertility rate since the Great Depression last year.

CONTINUED

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AROUND THE SOUTH

Frisco, Texas, was ranked as the most "recession-resistant" city in the United States by SmartAsset.



Dallas-Fort Worth led the nation's MSAs in job creation in 2019

The Dallas-Fort Worth metro area led the nation in job creation among the U.S.'s MSAs in calendar year 2019, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. New, relocating and expanding businesses created 127,600 jobs in DFW in 2019, besting New York and Los Angeles, both of which created nearly 100,000 jobs. Job growth in DFW was 3.4 percent in 2019. That total ranked third nationally, behind Raleigh, N.C. (3.7 percent) and Austin (3.5 percent) in markets of 1 million or more people.

Florida beats Texas in annual U-Haul growth states for 2019

Texas ceded its No. 1 spot to Florida in the annual U-Haul growth states for 2019. North Carolina, South Carolina and Washington made up the rest of the top five. Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan and California made up part of the bottom five with Illinois landing in the last spot for people moving one way using U-Haul vehicles and trailers.

Texas tops in commercial property activity

In 2019, commercial property activity in Texas was

\$54 billion in economic output, according to the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks. That was more than any other state last year. In 2019, investment and development of office, industrial, warehouse and retail buildings contributed \$1.14 trillion to U.S. GDP and supported 9.2 million American jobs.

These cities are recession-proof

SmartAsset recently published its "Most Recession-Resistant Cities" and many in the South made the list. At the top was Frisco, Texas; followed by Cedar Rapids, Ia.; Plano, Texas; Denton, Texas; and Austin, Texas. Here are cities in the South making the top 20:

Most Recession-Resistant Cities

1. Frisco, Texas
3. Plano, Texas
4. Denton, Texas
5. Austin, Texas
7. Lubbock, Texas
8. Cary, N.C.
9. Raleigh, N.C.
11. Round Rock, Texas
15. Arlington, Va.
18. Durham, N.C.
19. Arlington, Texas
20. Killeen, Texas

Report: California has lost more jobs to China than any U.S. state

According to a recent report from the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute, since 2001 (when China joined the World Trade Organization), California has lost 654,000 jobs to the Asian nation. During that time, California also lost 334,000 jobs to Texas. Most of the jobs lost were in the computer and electronics sector from San Francisco and the Silicon Valley in San José.

Rural Kentucky broadband gets \$55 million

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in the winter quarter it will invest \$55.3 million in four high-speed broadband infrastructure projects in rural Kentucky. The project is part of USDA's ReConnect Pilot Program. The investments will connect more than 12,000 rural households and nearly 100 businesses and farms.

Rural Missouri broadband gets \$60 million

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in the winter quarter it is investing \$60.9 million in broadband in rural Missouri. The investments

will improve e-Connectivity for more than 11,000 rural households, 81 farms, 73 businesses, 16 educational facilities, 12 critical community facilities and two healthcare facilities in rural Missouri.

Huntsville, Ala., airport named nation's best small airport

Huntsville International Airport has been chosen by voters as North America's best small airport for *USA Today's* 10 Best Readers' Choice awards. The airport serves Northern Alabama and Southern Tennessee. Delta, American, Frontier, United and Silver Airways provide nonstop service to 10 destinations from the Huntsville International Airport.

Arkansas minimum wage increases to \$10

On January 1, 2020, Arkansas' minimum wage rose to \$10 an hour. The increase is from \$9.25 an hour. The federal minimum wage is currently set at \$7.25 per hour.

Panama City, Fla., led the state in job growth in 2019

The Panama City MSA, which was devastated by Hurricane Michael in October 2018, led the state of Florida in 2019 with a 5.5 percent jump in job gains in trade, transportation and

utilities. The Panama City metro includes Bay and Gulf counties.

Brookings cites Birmingham

The Birmingham, Ala., MSA has made some strides in both inclusion and economic growth, according to the Brookings Institution. Brookings recently published its Metro Monitor, and Birmingham ranked 27th out of 53 metros studied. The Birmingham MSA ranked third nationally in racial inclusion and 21st in prosperity.

Montgomery, Ala., cited by publication

Montgomery was cited by *Site Selection* as ninth among all Tier 2 metro areas in the nation for corporate investment in 2019. A Tier 2 area, defined by the publication, is markets of 200,000 to 1,000,000 residents. Montgomery placed in front of Chattanooga and Greenville, S.C.

Georgia sets another export record

Even though its exports to China were down 21 percent, Georgia set a new record of \$41.2 billion in exports in calendar year 2019. Georgia's imports from China as a result of the tariffs dropped by 17 percent to \$19.8 billion.

Port of Savannah expanding

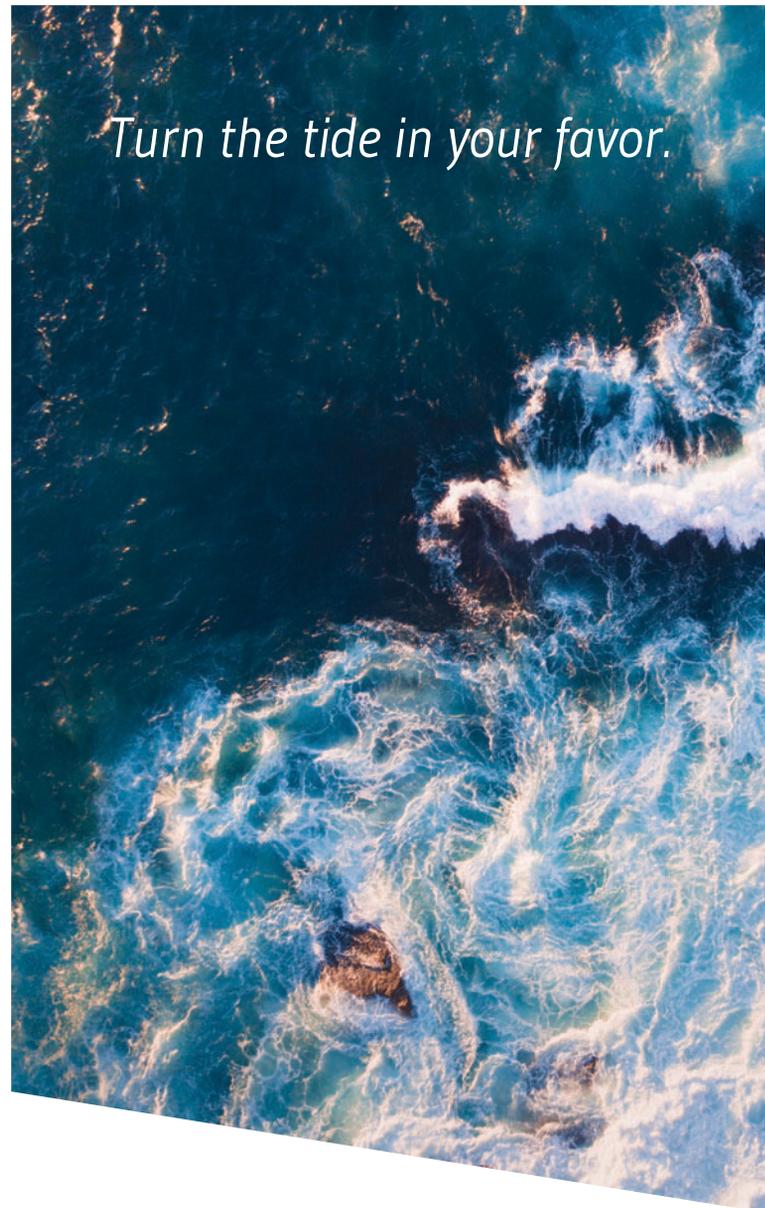
The Port of Savannah is set to expand by more than 145 acres, executive director Grill Lynch announced in February. The container terminal space expansion is the largest in more than 20 years.

Corpus Christi port gets \$100 million

The Port of Corpus Christi, the largest single site for crude oil exports, had \$100 million set aside for improvements in President Trump's 2021 budget. It is the third consecutive year that the Port of Corpus Christi has been included in the President's proposed budget.

Port of Mobile to receive hundreds of millions to dredge channel

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has allocated \$274.3 million to deepen the Port of Mobile for fiscal year 2020. The funding is the federal government's full



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AROUND THE SOUTH

Lake Wylie TODAY

A Place in the Sun

Time to make your summer plans

Carowinds with Peanuts
Charlie Brown and friends help give the park an update

Chamber Spotlight
Lake Wylie Chamber of Commerce news and information

Custom by Spadden

Lake Wylie, S.C., a lakefront suburb of Charlotte, N.C., has seen its population triple since 2000. The York County Council has now voted to put the brakes on new development.

share to widen and deepen the navigation channel.

Louisiana ports suffer in age of trade wars

Louisiana's biggest ports saw falling shipments of steel, petrochemicals and other commodities in the second half of 2019. Cargo volumes at the Port of New Orleans fell 25 percent in the last six months of last year and the much larger Port of South Louisiana saw a 15 percent drop in total cargo.

Forbes cites Opportunity Alabama

In the winter quarter, *Forbes* magazine cited the Birmingham-based nonprofit, Opportunity Alabama, as the best opportunity zone (OZ) community organization for rural communi-

ties. *Forbes* recognized 10 opportunity zone community organizations that show how OZ policy can be used as an economic tool.

South Carolina town puts moratorium on growth

Lake Wylie, S.C., a lakefront suburb of Charlotte, N.C., has seen its population triple since 2000 to 12,000 residents. It has seen its schools fill up and the water system occasionally fail under increased demand. Commutes to and from Charlotte, which is 27 miles away, can take up to 90 minutes. Now the town wants to stop its growth. The York County Council has put a 16-month moratorium on commercial and residential rezoning requests and has ended any new apartment complexes. 🌟

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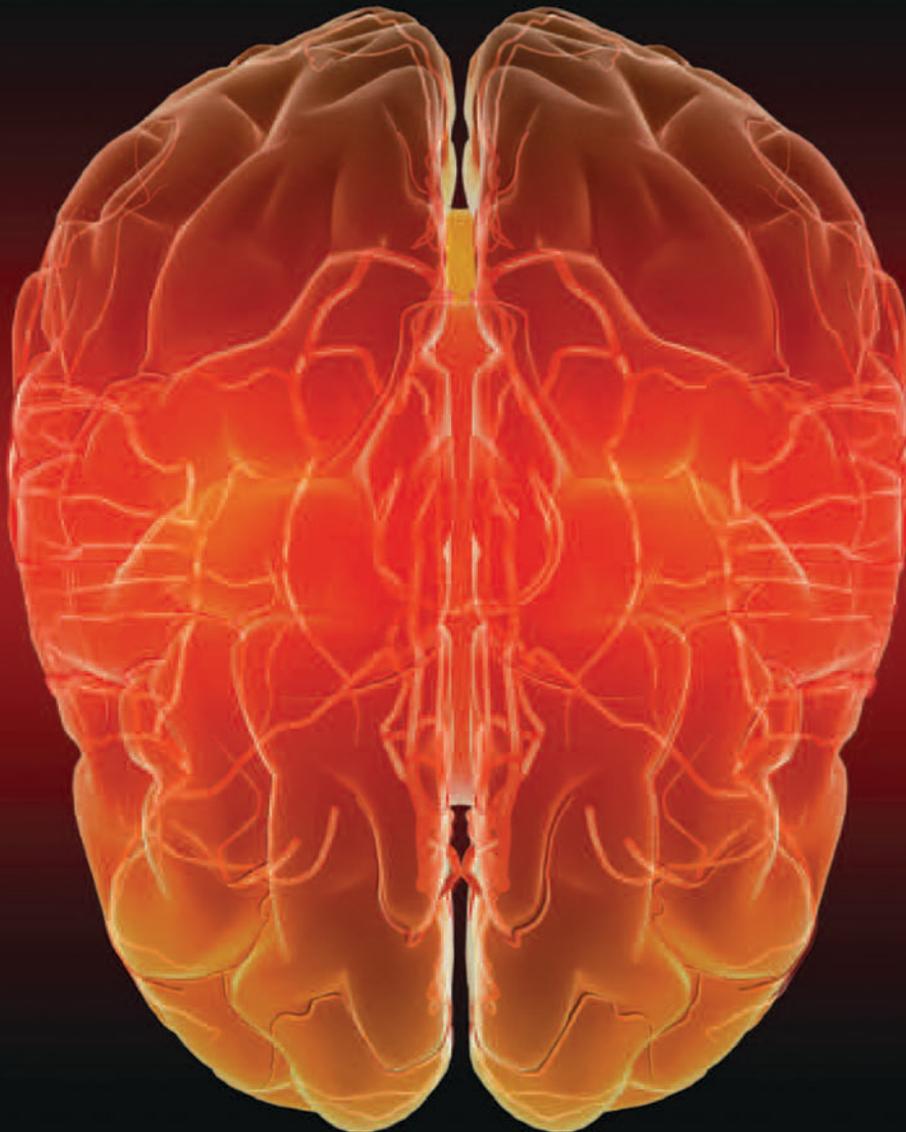
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SNAPSHOTS FROM THE ROAD



1

1: Southern Business & Development hosted its seventh annual Southern Economic Development Roundtable event at WaterColor in January. The invitation-only discussion included 62 people from 12 Southern states. **2:** Iain Vasey. **3:** Shelly Jo Jacobs, Stacy Randle, Nancy Windham. **4:** Chris Masingill, Iain Vasey, Don Pierson and Jason El Koubi. **5:** Jim Newsome, Michael Randle, Deepal Eliatamby. **6:** Chris Masingill, Don Pierson and Gray Swoope. **7:** For the first time, the reception for SEDR was at The Wine Bar, across the street from WaterColor. **8:** Stephen Moret, Ally Rothrock, James McClain, Jason El Koubi and Mark Heath. **9:** Adrienne Slack. **10:** Michael Hecht.



2



3



4



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10



11: Gina Lentz and Mary Swoope. **12:** Mark Vitner. **13:** Matt Kisber. **14:** Jay and Mary Ann Moon. **15:** A panel at SEDR. First row (l to r), George Swift, Gray Swoope, Gene Stinson, Jim Newsome, Mary Ann Moon. Back row: Jay Moon, Don Pierson, Stephen Moret, Michael Olivier and Dr. Glen Fenter. **16:** Jody Bryson, Yolanda and Scott McLain and Stu Heishman. **17:** Jay Schwedler, George Kosinski and Chris Masingill. **18:** J.D. Lowery and Brenda Daniels. **19:** Tyler Engle. **20:** (Foreground) Marvin Moss and Clif Chitwood. (Background) Jeff McKay and Ed Castile.

CONTINUED



SNAPSHOTS



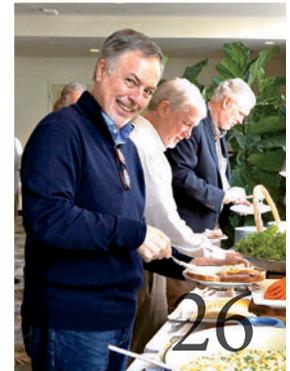
21: J.D. Lowery, Jason El Koubi, Clif Chitwood and Brian Useforge.

22: Rick Farmer and J.D. Lowery.

23: Chuck Whipple and Dr. Glen Fenter. **24:** Chris Masingill, Tyler Engle, Jim Newsome, Dr. Glen Fenter and Jane Fryer. **25:** (Foreground) Mike Eidson and Hollie Pegg.

26: Mark Herbison, Kyle Spurgeon and Mike Eidson. **27:** Hal Johnson, Jay Schwedler, Stephen Moret and Kyle Spurgeon. **28:** Michael Olivier, Jay Schwedler, Stephen Moret, Kyle Spurgeon and Mark Herbison.

29: Gene Stinson, Sam Powers, Chris Masingill and Tyler Engle. **30:** Rick Farmer, J.D. Lowery, Marvin Moss, Clif Chitwood, Ed Castile, Neal Wade and Mike Eidson.





31: Neal Wade, Mike Eidson, Tray Hairston, Raul Peralta, Chuck Whipple, Bob Leak and Jason El Koubi. **32:** Mark Vitner, David Rumbarger, George Kosinski, David Thornell and Ellen McNair. **33:** Jody Bryson, Troy Wayman, Kevin Lovelace, Scott and Yolanda McLain. **34:** Ally Rothrock and Mark Heath. **35:** George Swift and Gray Swoope. **36:** Jane Fryer. **37:** Brian Useforge, Iain Vasey, Raul Peralta and Chuck Whipple. **38:** Stephen Moret, Mary Ann Moon, Michael Olivier, Dr. Glen Fenter and Michael Randle. **39:** Bob Leak, Jr. **40:** Jeff McKay. 📍

RELOCATIONS & EXPANSIONS

For real-time news on business, politics and economic development in the South, go to RandleReport.com. For all economic development projects announced in the South, go to SB-D.com. For information on automotive in the South, go to SouthernAutoCorridor.com.



New coal mine coming to Tuscaloosa County, Ala.

A new coal mine to be built in northern Tuscaloosa County will bring 350 high-paying jobs (starting salary is \$85,000 a year). The underground coal mine will be built by Warrior Met Coal, which will invest \$578 million.

ALABAMA

Redstone Arsenal growing to 50,000 workers by 2025

Huntsville's Redstone Arsenal will grow from 44,000 employees to "over 50,000 by 2025," its senior commander said recently, and it plans \$2 billion in infrastructure investments in the next five years to keep growing.

Airbus to increase production in Mobile

Airbus announced it will increase production of its A320 aircraft at the compa-

ny's manufacturing facility in Mobile. The company is also in the midst of building a new line for the A220 aircraft at the site in South Alabama. The \$40 million investment in a new hangar will push total investment at the site to over \$1 billion. The expansion will create 275 jobs.

Manufacturer expanding near Montgomery

St. Louis-based Hager Companies is planning a \$25 million expansion of its facility near Montgomery. The project will generate 51 new jobs.

Timber manufacturer to locate plant in Arkansas

Structurlam Mass Timber Corporation, a mass timber manufacturer, is investing \$90 million in a facility in Conway, Ark. The company is retrofitting a former steel plant that will house 130 new jobs.

The company makes door hinges and closures, locks and security systems.

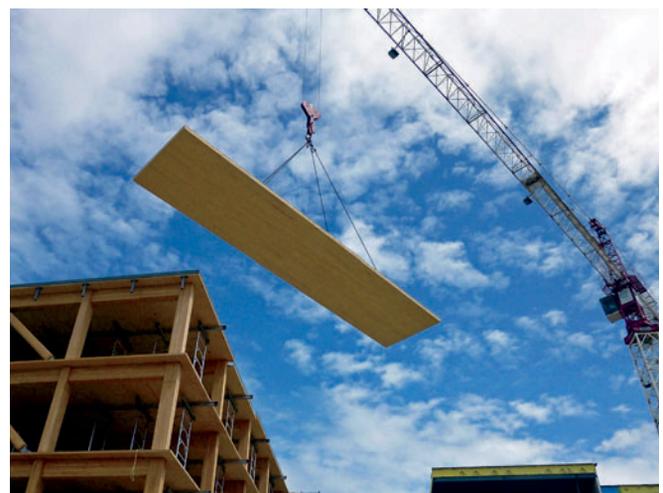
Ascend finalizes plans for \$175 million project

Ascend Performance Materials has finalized plans for

a \$175 million project to expand production at its Decatur, Ala., manufacturing facility and construct energy cogeneration units at the site. The project will add 10 manufacturing jobs to Houston-based Ascend's Alabama workforce, which exceeds 400 people. The project at the Ascend facility — one of only four in the world that produces adiponitrile, or ADN, on a large scale — will generate 150 jobs.

Shuttered latex plant to reopen on Alabama-Georgia line

A company plans to create as many as 400 jobs as it reopens a closed latex factory in southeast Alabama. Medical Industries of the Americas will reopen a shuttered factory in Eufaula, Ala., in coming months to produce products including latex gloves.





Food manufacturer to invest \$125 million in Georgia

The Kerry Group, headquartered in Ireland and a leader in the food industry, is expanding its facilities in Rome, Ga. The project will create 400 jobs.

ARKANSAS

Charlotte-based Nucor expands in Blytheville

Nucor will build a coil-paint line at its Nucor Steel Arkansas plant, which will make that facility the Charlotte-based company's first that can produce painted steel. Nucor has not disclosed the cost of the latest expansion. The company recently completed a \$230 million cold-rolled steel line at the plant in Blytheville, and is currently installing a \$240 million galvanizing line.

Steel fabrication manufacturer to expand in Arkansas

SFI Arkansas, a steel fabricator, plans to expand in Conway, Ark. The project will create 75 new jobs.

The VA opening new clinic in Fort Smith

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is building a 45,900-square-foot clinic in Fort Smith that could add around 100 jobs — doctors, nurses and support staff —

and “significantly” increase healthcare access for veterans.

FLORIDA

Florida's Tyndall AFB slated for \$1.5 billion in emergency funding

All but destroyed by Hurricane Michael, Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City, Fla., is slated to get a major boost for recovery and redevelopment in this year's federal defense budget, receiving more than \$1.5 billion for emergency construction projects. Estimates for the full reconstruction of the base have ranged from \$3 billion to more than \$4 billion.

LNG export facility to be constructed in Florida

A new LNG export facility has been announced for Jacksonville, Fla. Eagle LNG has partnered with Matrix Service Company to build a \$500 million facility that could provide up to 26,000 construction and permanent jobs in Northeast Florida.

New customs facility in

Hendry County to bring 1,700 jobs

A new state-of-the-art customs and border protection facility will be built at Airglades International Airport, 100 miles north of Miami, to help with trade (especially perishable imports like fruits, vegetables and fish) between the U.S. and Latin America. The \$2.1 million facility is expected to create 1,700 long-term jobs in Hendry County.

Progressive on hiring spree in Florida

Ohio-based Progressive Insurance has announced plans to hire up to 8,000 employees this year across the U.S. One thousand of those jobs are planned for Tampa, and another 270 are expected to be hired in St. Petersburg.

Citibank plans 500 high-tech hires in Brandon, Fla.

Citibank has plans to hire 500 high-tech, high-growth jobs by the end of 2020 in the Tampa Bay area. The jobs will be roughly two thirds technology-focused and one third operational, including data engineers, software engineers and business and data analysts.

Arthrex to add 560 jobs in Florida

Collier County, Fla.'s largest private-sector employer, a

manufacturer of orthopedic devices, is expected to expand its payroll even further after it begins occupying a new headquarters building in Naples later this year. The new 300,000-square-foot headquarters includes a wellness medical center, a hotel and a fitness center. Arthrex, which has added 1,000 workers since 2015, is adding 560 jobs when it moves into the headquarters.

GEORGIA

Amazon to open second Atlanta area warehouse

Amazon announced in the winter it will build a 1 million-square-foot warehouse in Newnan, Ga., which is in the Atlanta metro. It's the second major Amazon project for metro Atlanta. The project will create 500 jobs. Amazon currently operates almost 80 such fulfillment centers in North America.

Amazon building fulfillment center on Gwinnett-DeKalb line

The mysterious Project Rocket development is indeed an Amazon fulfillment center. Amazon is building the new center on the Gwinnett-DeKalb line, and the project is expected to deliver 1,000 new jobs to the area.

Big fishery gets bigger in Florida

Atlantic Sapphire plans to make a \$340 million investment to build a 1.1-million-square-foot fish processing plant in Miami, retaining 54 workers and creating 237 new jobs. The new facility would be in addition to the company's salmon recirculating aquaculture system facility there, which is one of the largest aquaculture farms planned in the world.



RELOCATIONS & EXPANSIONS

Horse Soldier Bourbon announces \$50 million expansion in Kentucky

American Freedom Distillery, founded by members of the first U.S. Army Special Forces unit to enter Afghanistan following the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, has announced it will expand in Somerset, Ky., launching a two-phase, \$50 million project that will add 56 jobs.



Macy's to open tech hub in Atlanta

Macy's will open a tech hub in Midtown Atlanta, adding 600-plus jobs, making it one of the first tenants of a newly constructed \$80 million building called T3 West Midtown. Macy's confirmed it will invest \$14 million in the technology hub there that will employ 630. Most of the jobs will be in software development.

GEICO adding jobs in Georgia

Insurance provider GEICO is adding jobs at its Macon campus. The company is hiring 500 workers.

New flooring manufacturer headed for Dalton, Ga.

Hong Kong-based Novalis Innovative Flooring will build its first U.S. production facility in Whitfield County to produce vinyl flooring materials. Novalis is investing \$30 million dollars in the project and expects to create at least 120 new jobs.

China-based flooring maker hiring hundreds in Bartow County, Ga.

A China-based flooring manufacturer says it will create 238 jobs and invest \$26 million in a refurbished facility in Adairsville. Green-View Floors International will renovate a vacant building there to establish its first manufacturing facility in the United States.

German grocery retailer Lidl to build distribution center in Georgia

Lidl US, a grocery retailer, announced in the winter it will invest \$100 million in a 925,000-square-foot distribution center in Covington, Ga. The project will create 270 new jobs.

Walmart partnership to bring 600 jobs to Georgia

The FPL meat processing plant in Thomas County, Ga., is partnering with Walmart to create 600 jobs. The project is Walmart's first meat processing plant.

KENTUCKY

New corps headquarters slated for Fort Knox, Ky.

The Department of the Army has selected Fort Knox, Ky., to be the home of the headquarters of the Fifth Corps. The new headquarters will support U.S. forces and operations in Europe. The move will bring 635 soldiers to Fort Knox.

New distribution center bringing 100 jobs to Montgomery County, Ky.

Wastequip, a manufacturer of waste handling equipment, will locate a new distribution center in Mt. Sterling. The \$7.28 million investment is expected to create 100 jobs.

Hart County, Ky., food plant to invest \$92.8 million

Salad dressing maker, T. Marzetti Co., plans to expand its Hart County plant with a \$92.8 million investment creating up to 140 full-time jobs.

Massachusetts manufacturer chooses

Louisville

Massachusetts-based Packaging Technology Group has chosen a Louisville location where it plans to create up to 40 new jobs. The company will spend \$2 million to launch the plant, where they will make thermal shipping and packaging products for the biopharmaceutical and life sciences sector.

Crown Holdings begins construction in Bowling Green

Philadelphia-based Crown Holdings has begun construction on a 327,000-square-foot beverage can manufacturing facility, costing nearly \$150 million, at Kentucky Transpark in Bowling Green. The company plans to hire 126 in Warren County for a spring 2021 opening.

LOUISIANA

Dormant ethane cracker near Lake Charles restarts after \$175 million investment

An ethane cracker in Cal-

Manufacturer to expand in St. Tammany Parish, La.

Allpax Products, a maker of equipment for the food and pharmaceutical industries, is expanding its facilities in St. Tammany Parish. The company is investing \$7 million to add 80,000 square feet of space. Shown here is one of Allpax's products used to heat low acid foods prone to spoilage to extend their shelf life.





Missouri's DRE Health to manufacture face masks

DRE Health Corporation, a Kansas City-based manufacturer of medical supplies, plans to build a manufacturing plant for disposable gloves and disposable face masks in response to the coronavirus outbreak. The project is expected to add several hundred jobs and cost upward of \$40 million.

casieu Parish that had been shuttered for nearly two decades was renovated and has been restarted. In 2015, Thailand-based Indorama Ventures struck a deal with then-Governor Bobby Jindal's administration for economic incentives in exchange for a \$175 million investment. Indorama sought to take advantage of cheap natural gas as a feedstock and power supply coming from the Permian Basin in west Texas.

Medline Industries creating 464 jobs in Louisiana

Medline Industries will build an 800,000-square-foot distribution center and create more than 460 new jobs in St. Tammany Parish. The \$53 million medical supply facility will replace a smaller Medline distribution center located between Covington and Goodbee.

Ampirical to build HQ in Louisiana

A company that specializes in electrical infrastructure engineering, design and construction management will build a 78,000-square-foot corporate headquarters in Louisiana and consolidate its existing St. Tammany Parish locations into the new build-

ing. Ampirical plans to create 400 new jobs with an average annual salary of more than \$85,000 including benefits, and invest \$20 million at the facility near Covington over the next decade.

New York fintech to open office in New Orleans

New York City-based Raison Capital will establish an office in New Orleans. The fintech office will house 50 workers.

Tech firm hiring 160 in Lafayette

Canadian technology firm CGI is looking to fill 160 new jobs for its Louisiana operations. The technology industry continues to grow in Lafayette despite recent struggles at Waitr, the restaurant delivery company headquartered there that's had three rounds of layoffs in the past year.

Louisiana textile mill hiring hundreds more than expected

Louisiana-based Vidalia Mills is now turning over a limited amount of product and plans to ramp up production in the near future. The mill, which is located in Vidalia, La., just across the Mississippi River from Natchez, Miss., will require more employees than

originally planned. Initial projection was 300 hires, the number has grown to 500.

MISSISSIPPI

Hundreds of new jobs for Mississippi Delta

Job opportunities are coming to Clarksdale, Miss., with the opening of the Robotics Process Automation Center of Excellence. Employees at the center will program computers to do tasks such as payroll, documentation and banking. The center will create over 200 jobs for the area.

Ajinomoto Foods expands in Mississippi

Ajinomoto Foods North America, a manufacturer of Asian and ethnic frozen foods, is increasing capacity in Oakland, Miss. The project is a \$27.3 million corporate investment, raising the number of employees to 450.

Innocor expands production at two facilities in Baldwin, Miss.

Polyurethane foam manufacturer Innocor will invest \$4.1 million to increase pro-

duction at its two facilities in Baldwin. The company plans to create 90 jobs to produce the popular "mattress in a box" products.

Defense company announces Mississippi expansion

Global aerospace and defense technology company Northrop Grumman Corp. is expanding in the northeast Mississippi city of Iuka, investing \$8.3 million and creating 40 jobs.

Wayne Farms adding jobs in Mississippi

Wayne Farms is adding 200 jobs at its facility in Laurel, Miss. The \$16.9 project will upgrade the Wayne Farms Fresh Production plant there.

Johnson Controls expanding in Hattiesburg

Johnson Controls is expanding, bringing between 40 to 50 new jobs to its Hattiesburg facility. The plant currently employs around 225 to manufacture YORK and Miller-Picking brand systems.

CONTINUED

Lockheed Martin expands in Hancock County, Miss.

Global security and aerospace company Lockheed Martin is investing \$20.9 million to expand its operations at NASA's Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, where the primary activity is designing and building satellites and spacecraft for government and commercial customers. Lockheed Martin currently employs 118 workers at the location.



RELOCATIONS & EXPANSIONS

State-of-the-art greenhouse to be built in rural North Carolina

Massachusetts-based Little Leaf Farms, a producer of fresh lettuce, is building a greenhouse complex in Burnsville, N.C., in Yancey County. The \$86 million project will create 100 jobs.



MISSOURI

Missouri's medical marijuana facilities to fill thousands of jobs

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has approved 60 medical marijuana cultivation sites and 192 dispensary locations. According to the Missouri Medical Cannabis Trade Association, they predict the industry will create 4,000 jobs and generate an economic impact of \$500 million on the state's economy.

Plumrose USA to expand
Plumrose USA, a prepared foods and packaged meat company, is planning to build a new bacon facility in Moberly, Mo. The facility in Randolph County is expected to bring nearly 200 new jobs to the region and represents more than \$68 million in capital investment.

Three companies expanding in Kansas City

Three companies are expanding in Kansas City, with plans to create 388 new jobs and invest a projected \$4.9 million. Homebase, which develops and markets apartment management software, is expanding its existing facility in Kansas City and expects to create 300 new jobs. Simplifyy, a startup that focuses on tech solutions for property management, is investing \$4.1 million to open an office and plans to hire 71. Mark II Transfer Station, a construction and demolition waste transfer station, was recently built and expects to add 17 new jobs, with a capital investment of \$842,000.

A Columbia, Mo.-based rental company is creating hundreds of jobs

EquipmentShare, a high-tech rental company based in Co-

lumbia, plans to hire hundreds across the state. William Schlacks and his brother Jabbok started the company in San Francisco, but moved the headquarters to Missouri, and recently announced plans to double their headcount this year, with 800 new jobs there.

NORTH CAROLINA

Eli Lilly investing \$470 million in major

North Carolina expansion
Indiana-based Eli Lilly and Company will invest over \$470 million and create more than 460 new jobs in Durham, N.C. The global healthcare and biopharmaceutical company's project will bring a new state-of-the-art pharmaceutical manufacturing facility to North Carolina's Research Triangle Park.

Publix building distribution center in Greensboro

Publix Super Markets has broken ground on a new refrigerated distribution center in Greensboro. The Lakeland, Fla.-based grocer said the

Greensboro facility is expected to cost \$400 million and create up to 1,000 jobs.

Gene therapy company investing \$100 million in Sanford, N.C.

Genetic medicines company, Audentes Therapeutics, will create 209 new jobs in Lee County, investing \$109 million to locate a manufacturing facility there. The primary focus of the company is rare neuromuscular diseases.

Aircraft Solutions investing nearly \$100 million in North Carolina

Aircraft Solutions will establish a new subsidiary at North Carolina's Global TransPark to recycle aircraft parts and materials. The company will create 475 jobs and invest nearly \$100 million to establish the new facility in Lenoir County.

Radiopharmaceutical companies plan production complex in Hickory, N.C.

ITM (Isotopen Technologien München AG), a group of radiopharmaceutical com-



Italian tissue manufacturer plans June opening for Oklahoma plant

Italian tissue manufacturer Sofidel Group anticipates an early June grand opening for its \$360 million plant in Inola. A total of 350 people will be employed at the 1.8 million-square-foot facility in Rogers County, which is expected to be fully operational this summer.



panies, plans to construct a manufacturing facility in southeast Hickory, to produce a new generation of targeted drugs for the treatment of cancer. ITM plans to create 137 jobs and invest \$12 million in machinery and equipment. An additional \$5 million will be invested in new facility construction there.

Microsoft expands Morrisville operations

Global technology and software company Microsoft will invest \$47.5 million and create 500 new jobs to expand its operations in Wake County. In October, Microsoft also announced an expansion in Charlotte that will create 430 jobs with a \$23 million investment.

Merck expands in Eastern North Carolina

Merck, the biopharmaceutical giant, is investing \$57 million in its facilities in Wilson, N.C. The company is locating a filling and packaging line for one of its vaccines. The deal will create 55 jobs.

OKLAHOMA

Seaboard's hog slaughtering plant in

Oklahoma to add jobs

Guymon, Okla.'s Seaboard hog processing plant is undergoing a \$100 million expansion. The 1,500-employee plant will add 200 jobs.

Whirlpool opens \$55 million distribution center

A new Whirlpool distribution center is expected to bring 150 jobs to Cherokee Industrial Park Plant In Oklahoma. It is located next to a Whirlpool manufacturing plant that makes slide-in ranges under the Whirlpool, Amana, Maytag, KitchenAid and JennAir brands.

Webco Industries to invest millions in Oklahoma

Webco Industries plans to invest at least \$10 million into a leadership campus expansion adjacent to the company's two manufacturing facilities in Sand Springs, Okla. The 48-acre site will become Webco's corporate headquarters and house its technical development and testing facilities.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Army Cyber Command HQ means opportunity for Aiken

The establishment of the U.S.

Jemison Metals expands in Sumter, S.C.

Jemison Metals, a supplier of carbon flat-rolled products, plans to expand operations at its complex in Sumter. The \$14 million investment is expected to create 57 new jobs.

Army's new Cyber Command headquarters at Fort Gordon in South Carolina and other related developments have created a huge opportunity for the entire Palmetto State, especially Aiken. During the coming months and years, the flagship Columbia campus and USC Aiken will partner with various cybersecurity entities that will strengthen both schools.

Electrolux is adding 500 jobs in South Carolina

Electrolux is adding 500 positions at its plant in Anderson County. The company received significant tax incentives in 2017 in an effort to keep the plant from relocating to Mexico. The deal calls for a \$200 million investment.

Georgia-Pacific plans \$145 million expansion in Darlington

Georgia-Pacific plans to make an investment of more than \$145 million at its Darlington plant to expand plate and bowl making operations under its Dixie brand.

Niagara bottling plans complex in Florence

Niagara Bottling, which manufactures a variety of bottled water and beverage products, plans to establish a production campus at Pee Dee Touchstone Energy Commerce Park in Florence. The company will invest more than \$70 million to construct a facility that is expected to create 70 jobs over the next five years.

Alorica expands in North Charleston

Call center Alorica plans to

expand its current operations in North Charleston. The \$1.2 million investment will create more than 300 new jobs. The company services a variety of brands in the retail, healthcare, energy and utilities industries.

Medical call center coming to South Carolina's capital

Call 4 Health will establish a health services call center in Columbia, S.C. The center will house 300 workers.

Brewery to invest \$6.5 million in Sumter

Sumter Original Brewery is establishing operations in downtown Sumter. The first craft brewery in Sumter will create 20 new jobs.

TENNESSEE

Amazon bringing 1,000 more jobs to Tennessee

Amazon is adding to its Tennessee investments by establishing a new, state-of-the-art fulfillment center in Memphis. The online retailer will create 1,000 full-time jobs at its new Shelby County facility. Employees will pick, pack and ship smaller items, such as books, electronics and consumer goods.

Conagra announces investment, new jobs in Jackson

Conagra Brands has announced it will invest \$106 million and add over 400 jobs to its existing facility in Jackson, Tenn. Conagra produces brands such as Healthy Choice and Hunt's.

CONTINUED

RELOCATIONS & EXPANSIONS



Sweet deal in Tennessee

McKee Foods, a maker of snack foods such as Little Debbie Snacks, is planning a major expansion in Hamilton County. McKee will invest \$500 million in the plant and add 480 jobs.

Spirit Airlines to bring 345 jobs to Tennessee

Spirit Airlines is locating an operations control center to Williamson County. About 240 jobs will be relocated from Florida and the company will add 100 local hires. The project calls for an \$11 million investment.

Financial services firm adding 200 workers in Nashville

AllianceBernstein, the financial services firm that relocated its headquarters to Nashville from New York in 2018, is adding 200 workers. The company plans to move into the new Fifth + Broadway campus by year end, and also plans to increase its overall investment in Nashville by

more than \$11 million. AllianceBernstein now employs over 1,200 in Nashville.

Brewery to invest \$49 million in Memphis

Blues City Brewery in Memphis has announced it is undergoing a \$49 million upgrade. The project will create 155 jobs.

Foam Products Corp. adding jobs following expansion

A multi-million-dollar expansion at a manufacturing facility in Unicoi County, Tenn., will bring jobs. Georgia-based Foam Products Corporation in Erwin completed the nearly two-year project at its Erwin facility in December. The company currently employs 70 workers.

Now, they are in the process of hiring more. This comes as the plant completed a recent \$1 million expansion to the building and added \$6 million worth of new equipment.

TEXAS

Amazon expanding footprint in Texas

Amazon has announced it will locate a 1 million-square-foot warehouse in Irving, Texas, near DFW International Airport. The e-commerce giant will hire 1,000 for the warehouse that was built in 2018 on a speculative basis. The space is being retrofitted for about \$53 million and could be completed by August. Amazon is also expanding in Far East Dallas with a lease to occupy the Eastpoint Distribution Center next to Union Pacific Railway's intermodal yard. The building was occupied by Shippers Warehouse, which vacated the property last summer.

Florida-based pet products giant is setting up big call center in Texas
Florida-based Chewy Inc., is adding to its North Texas

facilities in Richardson. The company is hiring 700 for the call center to handle customer service and order calls.

Another tech company is moving from California to North Texas

Dasan Zhone Solutions (DZS), a provider of technology to the telecommunications industry, will be shifting its headquarters from Oakland to Plano. DZS, which has more than 700 employees, will still keep a presence in the Silicon Valley.

Verizon investing \$285 million in new project

Verizon announced in the winter quarter it will invest \$285 million in a new project in Las Colinas, Texas. The expansion will cover 2.3 million square feet of high-rise office buildings. The campus will have parking for 3,600 spaces, meaning the job count would be in the thousands.

Lubbock Economic Development Alliance announces three wins
The Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA)

SpaceX preparing Texas rocket factory and launch facilities

SpaceX has successfully delivered Starship hardware and manufacturing parts and tools to the company's rocket factory and launch facilities in Boca Chica, Texas. SpaceX is transferring its Cocoa, Fla., Starship production hub to Texas along with its employees. Shown here is "Starhopper," a prototype of SpaceX Starship.





announced during a press conference in December the expansion of three businesses adding 343 jobs and \$10.8 million in capital investment in the Lubbock community. Key Organics, a food processing facility, will build an organic grains and milling facility, investing \$5.8 million and adding 38 new jobs. Saint Francis Ministries will open three new offices in Texas with the largest one in downtown Lubbock, adding 190 jobs there. Tyler Technologies, a software company, announced plans to add 115 jobs along with \$5 million in capital investment.

German company bringing jobs to Waco
Berlin-based ZinkPower announced in the fall quarter that it will locate a hot-dip

galvanizing facility in Waco. The company will invest \$32 million, create 100 new jobs and serve the structural steel industry.

Holt Manufacturing to hire 160 in Waco, Texas

The Holt family of San Antonio, whose company claims the title of “largest Caterpillar equipment dealer in the United States,” will make Waco a manufacturing hub for land-clearing and oilfield equipment and water trucks used at construction sites. Holt has permits for a \$12 million overhaul of the facility and plans to hire 160 people to work there.

VIRGINIA

Amazon will build two new facilities in Virginia’s Hampton Roads region
Amazon will build two facilities in Virginia’s Hampton Roads region. The two facilities will house 1,500 workers.

Big win for Richmond
CoStar Group announced that it has concluded a national search for its research operations headquarters, selecting Richmond, Va. CoStar expects to create approximately 730 jobs and invest a quarter billion dollars there. The IT

Eastman coating Martinsville, Va., with growth and jobs

Investing more than \$50 million in the Martinsville area over the past eight years, Eastman Chemical Company, headquartered in Kingsport, Tenn., has continued to solidify its claims as a leading manufacturer of high-performance window tint and paint protection film for automotive applications and window film for residential and commercial applications. The company’s recently announced move to the former Stanley Furniture building was one of the largest expansions the Martinsville area experienced in 2019.

company curates and certifies information on the vast majority of commercial real estate transactions in the U.S.

SimpliSafe creating 572 new jobs in Virginia

Boston-based SimpliSafe, a producer of home security systems, will invest \$5.5 million to establish a customer support operation in Henrico County, Va. The project will create 572 new jobs.

Cybersecurity firm creating 164 jobs

Cybersecurity firm Expel has announced a \$1.4 million investment to expand its operations in Fairfax County, Va. The investment will increase the size of the company’s Herndon headquarters and create 164 new jobs.

Macedon Technologies expands Virginia headquarters

Macedon Technologies will invest \$1.65 million to expand its corporate headquarters in the Reston community of Fairfax County. The company plans to create 147 new jobs. Macedon is a provider of Appian solutions for businesses. (Appian is a cloud computing company headquartered in Tysons, Va.)

WEST VIRGINIA

Pratt & Whitney investing in West Virginia jet engine plant

Pratt & Whitney will invest \$30 million in its jet engine facility in Bridgeport, W.Va. The company makes engines used by Savannah-based Gulfstream on its business jets.

Call center adding jobs in West Virginia

Ibex is adding new customer service agents at its call center in Charleston, W.Va. The deal will create 100 jobs.

Flooring manufacturer expansion will bring new jobs to Randolph County

“It is the largest employer in Beverly and the largest private, for-profit company in Randolph County,” said Robbie Morris, the Executive Director of the Randolph County Development Authority. The AHF Manufacturing (formerly Armstrong Flooring) Plant in Beverly, W.Va., is the largest pre-finished hardwood flooring plant in the United States. The plant worked with the county to expand in late November last year and will hire 50 to 60 new direct jobs. 📍

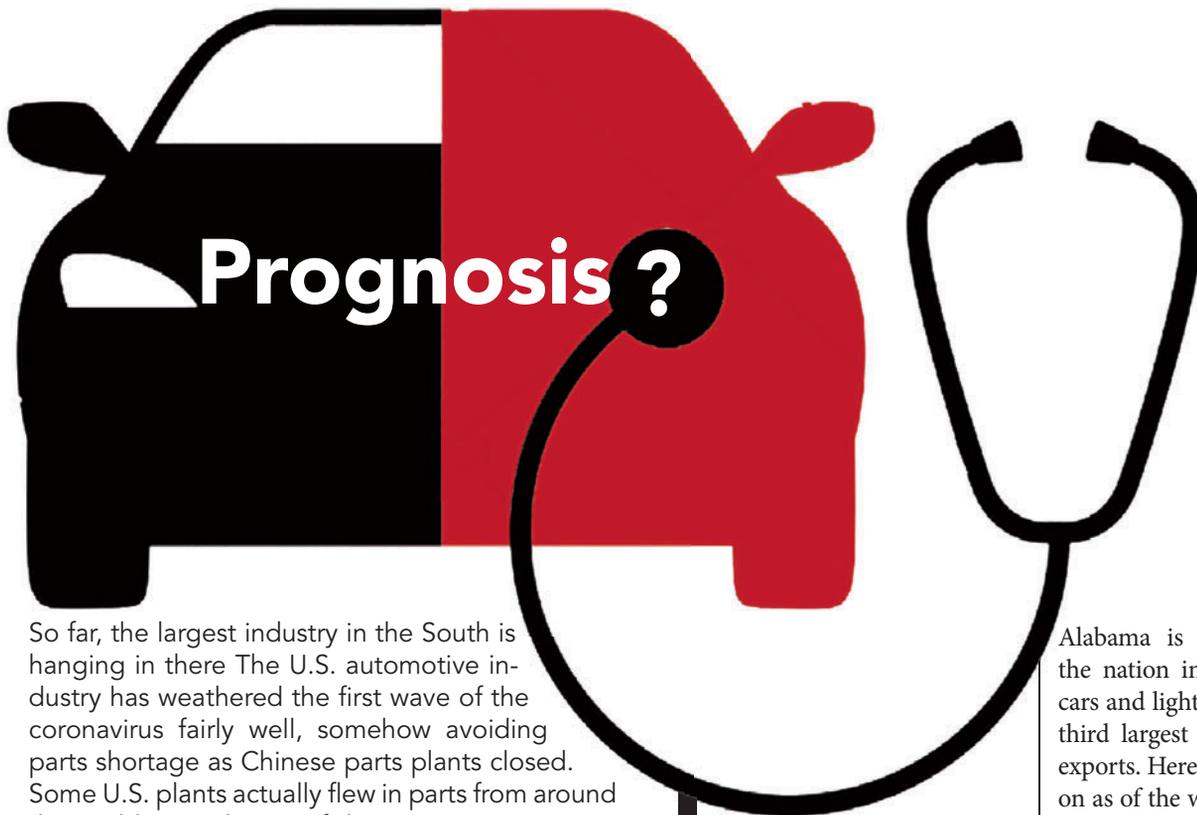


Clorox to build large plant in West Virginia

In the winter quarter, Clorox announced it will build a manufacturing facility in the southern part of Berkeley County in West Virginia. The \$190 million plant will house 100 workers.

SOUTHERNAUTO CORRIDOR★COM

For real-time news on business, politics and economic development in the South, go to RandleReport.com.
For all economic development projects announced in the South, go to SB-D.com. For more information on the automotive industry in the South, go to SouthernAutoCorridor.com.



So far, the largest industry in the South is hanging in there. The U.S. automotive industry has weathered the first wave of the coronavirus fairly well, somehow avoiding parts shortage as Chinese parts plants closed. Some U.S. plants actually flew in parts from around the world, a costly way of shipping.

While automakers in the South avoided shortage, now a new threat has emerged. With each day that the U.S. economy is shut down, disposable incomes are getting hammered. A look back at SB-D.com archives of the SouthernAutoCorridor department or cover stories from 2008 to 2011, is a reminder that the U.S. automotive industry lifted the United States out of the last recession. Now, with this completely different situation, automakers could be forced to reduce spending, and slow or even close assembly plants. Many Southern Auto Corridor plants are closed temporarily as I write this at the end of March.

Adam Jonas, a veteran analyst at Morgan Stanley, in an article in *U.S. News* in March, sees sales in the U.S. this year drop by 9 or 10 percent, or to 14 million from 17 million last year.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many of the projects listed here were announced prior to the coronavirus outbreak.

ALABAMA

The overall automotive industry is in flux, but not in Alabama

Nashville-based Nissan is cutting production worldwide. GM closed several plants last year in North America. Some plants in the Southern Auto Corridor have halted production, at least temporarily, because of the coronavirus.

But in Alabama, all four of the state's automakers are expanding, even though the three in production have halted the assembly lines temporarily in late March as a result of the pandemic.

Alabama is fifth largest in the nation in production of cars and light trucks. It is the third largest state in vehicle exports. Here is what is going on as of the winter quarter at Alabama's automotive plants: Mercedes-Benz in Tuscaloosa, Ala., is completing a \$1 billion expansion; Honda in Lincoln, Ala., is undergoing an \$85 million expansion; Hyundai in Montgomery, Ala., in the midst of a \$410 million expansion; Mazda Toyota in Huntsville, Ala., is constructing a new, \$1.6 billion plant.

Mazda Toyota accepting applications for Huntsville plant

Mazda Toyota has started accepting applications for production line positions at its new plant in Limestone County, Ala. As of January,

the company announced it is accepting applications for 3,000 positions.

Hyundai made more vehicles at Alabama plant in 2019

South Korea-based Hyundai announced in the winter it produced 336,000 vehicles in 2019 at its plant in Montgomery. The total was about 4 percent higher than in 2018. The Santa Fe SUV led all vehicles made at the plant last year. The facility also assembles the Sonata and Elantra sedans.

Auburn auto supplier plans \$24 million expansion

Germany-based wheel manufacturer Borbet Alabama is planning a \$23.9 million expansion of its Auburn operation, creating 25 jobs over the next two years. The company makes light metal alloy wheels for the automotive industry.

Automobile terminal at Alabama State Docks will create jobs

An automobile terminal is being constructed at the Alabama State Docks in Mobile. The \$60 million, 57-acre terminal will handle shipments of finished automobiles. . . up to 150,000 vehicles annually. The project is a joint venture between Terminal Zarate, based in Argentina, and Neltume Ports based in Chile.

Auto supplier plans to expand in Jasper, Ala.

Based in Michigan, Michigan Hayashi Telemu North America is ramping up production at its plant in Jasper, Ala., to supply the Mazda Toyota plant being built in Limestone County, Ala. Hayashi Telemu manufactures interior components. The expansion will bring employment at the plant to 125.

Truck manufacturer breaks ground on Alabama expansion

Navistar broke ground on an expansion of its plant in Huntsville in the winter quarter. The company assembles commercial trucks and buses. The deal is expected to result in 145 new jobs, doubling the plant's current workforce.

GEORGIA

Korean battery maker begins hiring 2,000 in Georgia

SK Battery, a South Korean maker of lithium batteries, has started hiring for its new plant in Jackson County, Ga. The company is expected to hire 2,000 workers.

Georgia lands first Korean supplier to car battery plant

Georgia has landed the first Korean supplier to the electric vehicle battery plant that will serve as the single largest foreign investment in the state's history. EnChem, which makes electrolytes that go into rechargeable lithium batteries, will build two separate facilities next to the nearly \$1.7 billion SK Innovation plant in Jackson County. Combined, the two locations will create 300 jobs with an investment of \$61.35 million.

Toyota Financial Services opens hub in Georgia

Toyota Financial Services — the finance and insurance

brand for Toyota in the United States — will open a new office in Alpharetta and become one of three “hub” locations for the company that supports automotive dealers across the nation. The investment of more than \$8 million will bring 150 new jobs to Fulton County.

Auto supplier to build new plant in Georgia

Japan-based Mitsui Kinzoku Die-Casting will build a new plant in Spalding County, Ga. The company will invest \$20 million in the facility and hire 30 workers to make parts for electric vehicles.

KENTUCKY

WABCO expands Kentucky distribution hub

WABCO plans to triple its employment as it invests over \$3 million in the distribution portion of its heavy duty truck parts manufacturing and warehousing facility in Hebron, where it currently employs 77 people.

Clark Material Handling completes expansion in Lexington

Clark Material Handling announced the completed expansion of its third facility in Kentucky. The Lexington-based company is a manufacturer of forklift trucks and spare parts.

Manufacturer expands Kentucky plant

Logan Corporation, a dump truck bed manufacturer, will expand its plant in Salyersville, Ky. The company plans to invest \$1.2 million.

MISSOURI

GM investing \$1.5 billion in Missouri expansion

General Motors recently confirmed it will invest \$1.5 billion to produce its next-generation Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon midsize pickups at its plant in Wentzville, Mo. The plant, where the Chevy Colorado and Express, and the GMC Canyon and Savana are built, currently employs about 4,000 hourly and 330 salaried employees. The announcement represents one of the largest single investments from the private sector in Missouri.

NORTH CAROLINA

Auto parts manufacturer to build second plant in the Charlotte Region

Cataler North America Corporation, a manufacturer of catalysts for automobiles and engines, will build a new manufacturing plant in Hickory, creating 151 jobs. The Japanese company will invest a minimum of \$42 million in the project in Catawba County.

CONTINUED

Clark Material Handling has completed its expansion in Lexington, Ky. The project allows the company to move one of its forklift production lines, the “S-Series,” back to Lexington from a plant in Asia.



SOUTHERNAUTO CORRIDOR.COM

As part of a \$600 million expansion project of its existing facility in Ridgeville, S.C., Volvo will add a second production line for an electrified version of its flagship XC90 crossover.



Battery maker to invest \$10 million in Greensboro

Sunlight Systems, a battery maker based in Greece, announced it will open its first U.S. facility next year in Greensboro. The company will invest \$10 million and create 46 jobs. Sunlight Batteries will assemble and distribute lithium batteries from the facility.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Volvo building U.S. battery assembly plant

In preparation for bringing a new line of electric vehicles to the U.S. market, Volvo announced it will build a battery assembly plant at its existing facility in Ridgeville, S.C. The plant is part of a \$600 million expansion project there, which began rolling out the Swedish automaker's luxury sport sedan, the S60, in late 2018. The current expansion also includes a second production line for an electrified version of its flagship XC90 crossover. Approximately 1,000 jobs will be created for the XC90 production line, but no word yet on how many

jobs might be created for the battery assembly plant.

Auto supplier's \$58 million expansion in Anderson

NTN Driveshaft has announced a \$58 million expansion and the addition of 140 new employees at its facility in Anderson. The company, headquartered in Japan, first announced the construction of a new plant in Anderson in 2016 with an initial investment of \$84.5 million and the creation of 300 jobs.

Chassis manufacturer expands in South Carolina

Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation, a manufacturer of vehicle chassis, is expanding its plant in Cherokee County, S.C. The almost \$14 million expansion will create 193 jobs.

Pierburg expanding in Greenville County

Pierburg, a manufacturer of components for air supply and emission control, announced plans to expand its existing operations in Greenville County. The \$27 million investment will create 95 new jobs. Pierburg is

one of three brands under the Rheinmetall Automotive group.

Global Lending Services plans \$4.2 million expansion in Greenville

Global Lending Services, an automotive lending company, will invest more than \$4.2 million to expand its current operations in Greenville, creating 669 new jobs. The company has developed technology to approve customers at competitive rates in less than 20 seconds.

TENNESSEE

General Motors plans major expansion in Tennessee

General Motors plans to invest \$40 million at its Global Propulsion Systems plant in Spring Hill, Tenn. The project will increase capacity of the 5.3L V8 engines for GM's full-size trucks and SUVs.

Volkswagen Chattanooga ramps up hiring

Volkswagen Chattanooga announced its goal of hiring up to 600 production employees over the next three months. "As we continue to grow our Tennessee operations as Volkswagen's North American hub for electric vehicle manufacturing, we must also grow our team," said Tom du Plessis, president and CEO of Volkswagen Chattanooga.

Ficosa to add 100 jobs in Tennessee

Michigan-based manufacturer of vehicle mirrors and other parts, Ficosa, will discontinue operations at its facility in Shelbyville, Ky., and move the plant's manufacturing activity to its facility in Cookeville, Tenn. The consolidation will result in 100 new hires at the Cookeville location.

Auto supplier to expand in Tennessee

Michigan-based Adient is investing over \$23 million in its automotive seating plant in Lexington, Tenn. The expansion project will create 330 jobs.

Chinese auto supplier expands in Tennessee

China-based Minth Group, a designer and manufacturer of structural body, trim and decorative parts for the automotive industry, will invest \$87 million to expand operations in Lewisburg, Tenn. The supplier will create 254 new jobs in Marshall County.

AutoZone readies for Memphis expansion

A building permit was just filed for AutoZone's previously announced \$145 million downtown digital expansion project. In addition to work at AutoZone's headquarters, the expansion will also in-



Korea-based EnChem, which makes electrolytes that go into rechargeable lithium batteries, will build two separate facilities next to the nearly \$1.7 billion SK Innovation plant in Jackson County, Ga.



Mack Trucks recently unveiled its brand-new facility in Roanoke County, Va. The \$13 million Roanoke Valley Operation will provide 250 jobs.

clude two other buildings in Memphis. In total, the project is expected to create 130 jobs.

Auto supplier expands in Henderson, Tenn.

Automotive products manufacturer Arvin Sango will expand its existing operations in Henderson. The company supplies stamped auto body parts and door safety parts for the automotive industry. Its customers include Toyota and Nissan. Sango Co. is headquartered in Japan, and Arvin Sango is headquartered in Indiana. The company is expected to create 153 jobs in Chester County.

TEXAS

GM completes \$1.4 billion expansion of its large SUV plant in Texas

General Motors has completed the \$1.4 billion expansion of its SUV plant in Arlington, Texas. The automaker celebrated by unveiling new generation Chevy Suburban and Tahoe models. The 1.6 million-square-foot addition to the plant that was built in 1954 will bring total square footage to 5.75 million.

GM Arlington moving 300 temps to full-time

Close to 300 temporary workers at General Motors' largest assembly plant in Arlington,

Texas, are being moved up to full-time status, the automaker announced recently. Nationwide, more than 1,350 hourly GM employees at 14 manufacturing plants and other sites in eight states will be elevated to full-time status.

Texas-based Toyota invests \$394 million into flying taxis

Toyota Motor Co. is making a \$394 million investment in California-based Joby Aviation, one of the handful of companies with the goal of making electric air taxis that shuttle people over gridlocked highways and city streets. Toyota is the lead investor, and makes Joby the best-funded "eVTOL" (electric vertical take-off and landing) startup in a booming category that must still overcome regulatory hurdles and concerns about passenger safety and noise. Joby has raised a total of \$720 million.

Major changes at San Antonio Toyota plant

Toyota officials announced in the winter quarter model changes at their plant in San Antonio, Texas. The plant will stop assembling its best-selling Tacoma pickup truck and move all of that production to a plant in Mexico. To fill the gap of Tacoma truck production, the Japanese auto-

maker will move assembly of its lowest-selling vehicle, the Sequoia SUV, from its plant in Indiana to San Antonio in 2021. Toyota officials said that the San Antonio plant has been at maximum capacity since 2016 and that the move will "make room for market growth and achieve long-term sustainability of future production in San Antonio." Some auto industry officials speculated that the move will give Toyota the ability to produce more SUVs at the Texas plant in the future. The plant has been open since 2006, and to date, has only produced pickup trucks. Toyota will continue to produce the full-size Tundra pickup there.

Continental to invest \$100 million in Texas

Michigan-based Continental, an automotive parts manufacturer, is investing \$100 million in a new plant in New Braunfels, Texas. The project will retain 400 jobs and create 130 more. The company will make radar sensors for the automotive

industry at the new facility.

VIRGINIA

Four hundred new jobs for Chesterfield County, Va.

Carvana, an e-commerce platform for buying and selling used cars, plans to invest \$25 million to establish a new vehicle inspection and reconditioning facility in Chesterfield County. The project will create 400 new jobs.

New trucking plant will create 250 jobs in Roanoke

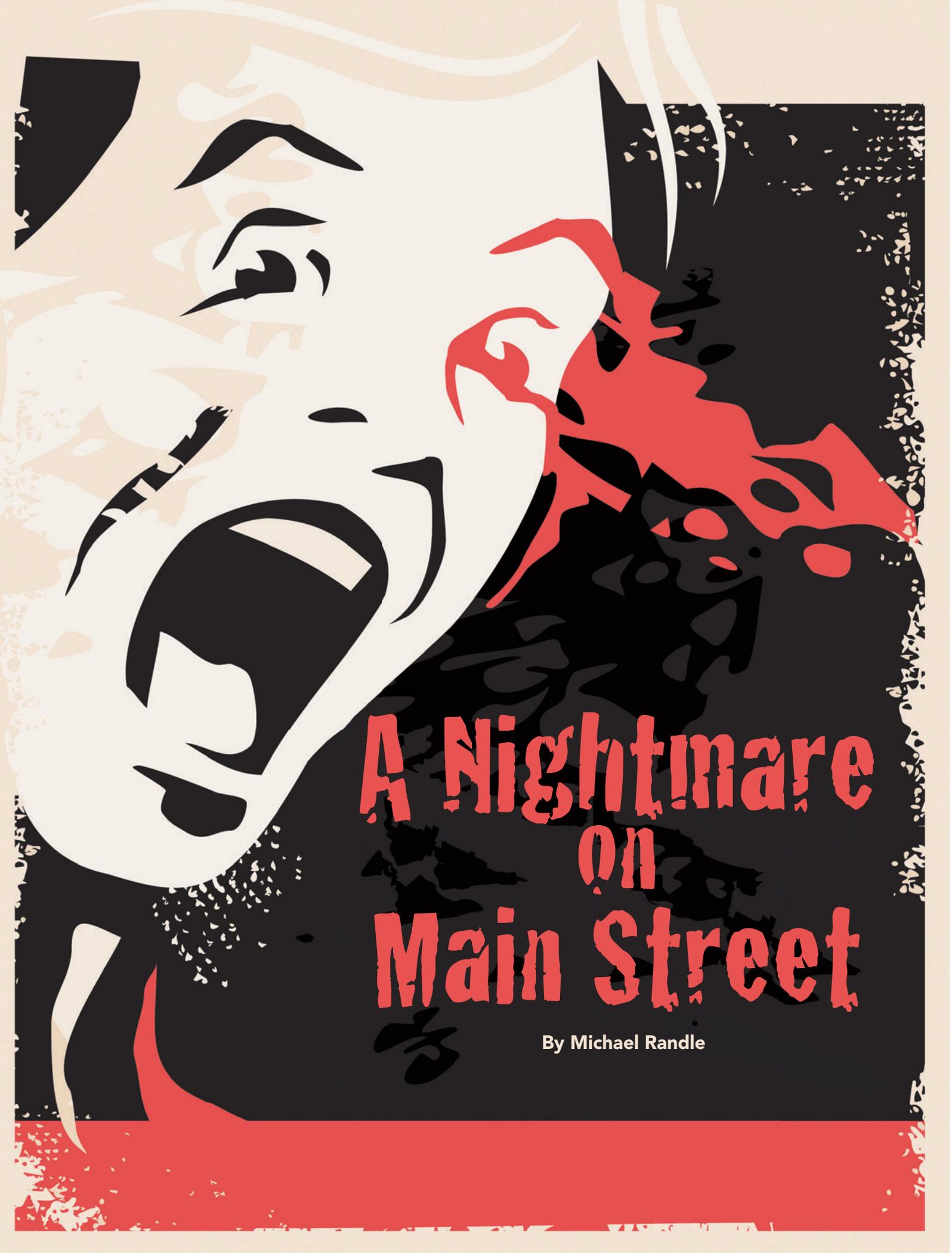
Mack Trucks recently unveiled its brand-new Roanoke County facility. The \$13 million Roanoke Valley Operation will provide 250 jobs.

Truck manufacturer to expand in rural Virginia

Custom Truck One Source, a manufacturer of specialized trucks and heavy equipment, is investing \$2.6 million to expand its operations in Bedford County, Va. The project will create 61 jobs. 🚛



Texas-based Toyota Motor Co. is making a \$394 million investment in California-based Joby Aviation, one of the handful of companies with the goal of making electric air taxis.



A Nightmare on Main Street

By Michael Randle

There are a number of challenges currently facing our economy in addition to the coronavirus. These challenges, at least for now, are different than the housing crisis that began in some states like Florida as early as 2005. By 2008, lenders — even those like Lehman Brothers, which was founded in the mid-1800s — went bankrupt as the bubble burst. In other words, the last recession was based on a lack of liquidity. This, the Coronavirus Recession, is different.

Since the onset of the coronavirus, millions of jobs have been lost and there are financial issues we really don't even know about as of yet. We do know that the virus has snuffed out millions, if not tens of millions, of jobs and experts are saying that the unemployment rate as a result of this virus could run up to 15 to 30 percent. In other words, a total disaster never experienced by this country.

Matthew Phillips, a wonderful reporter with CNN (he is an assistant news editor, always the hardest working ones and real journalists) emailed me in April, "Hi Michael, it's been a while since we last talked. Wanted to see if you had a minute to catch up later today. Interested to chat about the effect the virus is having on Southeast manufacturers, what you're hearing and seeing from clients, etc."

I called Matthew back (he was covering the Trump afternoon virus show) and then texted him: "Hi Matthew, good to hear from you again. Here is the deal: Seventy-five percent of everything in the South's economy is closed. Nationwide, coronavirus job losses, by my count, could total 50 million by summer, unemployment rate may hit 20 percent from 3.5 percent

in a year, if not higher. Matthew, if you need anything else, just call me tonight. I am in deadline, so working late, but you shouldn't need a damn thing after that assessment." Matthew never called back.

It all started when the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped nearly 3,600 points during the week of February 24-28, including the sharpest one-day decline in market history. Fears of the coronavirus were apparently a driving force behind the panic, as investors fled equities and added to their bond market accounts. Others just sold out altogether — total liquidations — as a result of the virus crisis.

The last week in February also saw the benchmark U.S. 10-year Treasury yield setting a new record low of 1.14 percent. Shortly after, in early March, the 10-year yield fell below 1 percent. A few days later, it fell below .5 percent. All of this because of a respiratory virus that saw just 11 deaths in the U.S. on March 5, to 9,600 deaths by April 5, 2020. The economic effect of that is terrifying. Who knows what those figures will be when this print product reaches readers.

CONTINUED

Some shares of company stocks, including Apple, entered bear market territory (losses of 20 percent or more) in late February for a day or two. Microsoft officials said during that week that its personal computing division would not meet first quarter revenue projections due to a slowdown in its supply chain from China.

Also during the last week of February, company after company issued warnings that they would miss their projected earnings this year. Ninety-six percent of the S&P 500 lost at least 10 percent of their stock value in the last week of February.

During the same week, the entire stock market entered a correction with over a 10 percent crater. By March 11, the Dow was down 20 percent from its February high, meaning we entered bear market territory. The stock market has not seen a bear market in 11 years.

The market has not been this volatile since 2009. On March 4, 2020, however, former Vice President Joe Biden's strong showing in the Super Tuesday election helped lift stocks to the second-best point gain in market history, according to Fox

News. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rallied almost 1,200 points on March 4, the day Michael Bloomberg quit his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination and firmly placed his support behind Joe Biden. Then on March 5, the market crashed again. In short, this economy is all over the place and it's a crapshoot with the market all the way into mid-April.

A bear market would enter the fray on March 9, as the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell by over 2,000 points. It was the worst trading day since 2008. The wild swings in the market were happening as investors grappled with the sinking price of oil and the spread of the coronavirus.

Then on Friday, March 13, stocks rallied from their worst day in more than 30 years to their best day since 2008 after President Trump announced a National Emergency and leaders of private companies in the U.S. agreed to help with testing of the virus. Volatile? Are you kidding me? As of this writing, we have weeks, if not months, of volatility left in the stock market. It is almost useless trying to predict the stock market, even for the experts.

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One of the biggest economic fears today is the fact that China is the world's factory floor and when workers there are told to work at home as a result of a virus, the world sweats it out.



The China factor

One of the biggest economic fears when the virus began in China is the fact that the second largest economy in the world is the world's factory floor. When workers there are told to stay at home as a result of the virus, the world sweats it out. Many factories, schools and colleges in Japan and China were closed in late February and much of March. Fortunately, many of the schools and factories in China, Japan and South Korea reopened by April as the virus retreated.

The U.S. economy for the past two years has seen trade with China crater as a result of tariffs. Tariffs have already had an immense negative effect on trade via supply chains. Tariffs have reduced foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to the United States from \$471 billion in 2016 (pre-tariffs) to \$253 billion in 2018 (post-tariffs). Note 1: The tariffs implemented by President Trump were designed to increase FDI, the idea being that foreign companies would bypass the tariffs by building more plants in the U.S. The numbers more than two years into the implementation of the tariffs show the exact opposite is happening. Note 2: There is nothing political about these FDI totals. I just count this stuff up regardless of who is the president.

Add the coronavirus to the tariffs and I cannot remember a time in my life when the worldwide supply chains have been more disrupted. In other words, we are experiencing a double

whammy — tariffs and the virus — on worldwide commerce and trade, especially with China.

In early March, *Forbes* published an article that essentially projected that the coronavirus will end up being the “final curtain” on China's 30-year reign as the world's leading manufacturing nation. I am not so sure about that claim. The article was written at the height of the virus. The number of those infected by the virus in China has dropped significantly.

The *Forbes* article predicted that Mexico will benefit the most from issues resulting from the virus. But supply chains cannot change dramatically overnight. It will be interesting to see how tariffs and this virus affect supply chains worldwide. In the *Forbes* piece, experts predicted the China fallout would redirect FDI — \$12 billion to \$19 billion a year — from China to Mexico.

So how bad was the last week of February to April?

In 75 years, the S&P has seen only 26 market corrections, according to *CNBC* in an article it published the last week of February. So corrections of 10 percent or more — especially in one week — are rare. Here is what *CNBC's* Fred Imbert wrote in that article: “During those corrective periods, the S&P 500 has declined by an average of 13.7 percent and has taken about four months to recover. That's of course if they don't turn into bear markets.” Well, there is no comparison to market histories with the coronavirus. It is charting new territories.

For example, the markets totally collapsed in March. At one point during the month, the Dow Jones Industrial Average had dropped 10,000 points, or one third its February high. The uncertainty swirling around the pandemic is spooking everyone.

Federal officials came in with a massive \$2.1 trillion stimulus deal, just to get everyone on their feet, including workers and companies of all sizes. As of the end of March, there were millions of workers that had lost their jobs. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in March that unemployment reports in early April might see an unemployment rate rise from 3.5 percent in February to 20 percent in April. We believe the May unemployment mark will be much higher than 20 percent.

Other issues with this economy

There are other issues affecting the U.S. and the South's economy. The chief demographic challenge is simply the void of people. We have a record number of people aging out of the workforce and a record low number of people entering the workforce. For decades after World War II, we could count on 200,000 people on average turning working age (16) per month. By 2025, that figure will drop to an average of 50,000 people turning working age per month, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau. It gets worse. In some states today, there are more Baby Boomers dying than there are people born. The last two years have seen the lowest birth rates in this country since the Great Depression.

We have written about the subject of low birth and high death rates for four years now. We have written ad nauseam about the fact that we simply do not have enough people in this country to fill millions of job openings. The coronavirus will obviously change that.

There were over 7 million job openings eight months ago and we were chipping away at that figure at 1.8 million job gains on average each year over the past three years. Now, the economy has slowed and there are about 6 million job openings in the U.S. By the time this article is published, there might be 4 or 5 million job openings as a result of the coronavirus. There might be none.

Still, there are more job openings than there are people out of work. The 273,000 jobs created in February 2020 was a great total, but that was prior to the virus. With this pandemic, there is no question that millions in the U.S. have lost their jobs, at least temporarily.

So what is the answer to low birth rates and high death rates? There are three answers: (1) Accept slower growth in the economy; (2) Increase tax credits for those having chil-

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“You enter the labor force, you work until a certain age, and you retire. Or maybe you don’t. More and more people are working into their later years, a trend that is expected to continue.”
— Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

According to BLS, the labor force growth rates of those 65 and older are projected to outpace all other age groups over the 2014-2024 decade.



dren to boost birthrates; (3) Increase legal immigration. There is nothing political about those three choices. It’s just math.

This administration has cut legal immigration from an average of 1.1 million per year over the last 10 years to 200,000 in 2019. Just when we need more legal immigrants, they are cut by more than 80 percent. However, not everyone in President Trump’s administration believes in cutting immigration. In fact, Trump’s chief of staff said recently that we need to ramp up immigration dramatically.

Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney spoke at a private meeting in the United Kingdom in February saying that the U.S. “desperately needs” more people. Multiple media assets quoted Mulvaney saying, “We are running out of people to fuel the economic growth that we’ve had in our nation over the last four years. We need more immigrants.” Note: Mick Mulvaney lost his job in the first week of March. Trump fired him.

Is it controversial in this political environment to claim that the only way out of this dire demographic situation is to increase legal immigration in this country to 2 million or 3 million people per year? It shouldn’t be. It’s math and it’s the only way out as Mulvaney said. Then again, the U.S. has never accepted more than 2 million legal immigrants in a single year since data has been produced (1900).

Mulvaney’s claims that “we need more immigrants” is in stark contrast to Trump senior policy advisor Stephen Miller. Miller has worked hard to not only cut illegal immigration, but legal immigration as well. And he has accomplished his goal. We haven’t seen a year when only 200,000 legal immigrants were admitted into the U.S. since World War II.

Until now, neither the Obama administration in its last few years or the Trump administration seemed to understand that (1) without people, our economy cannot grow; (2) without a growing population, Social Security and other social programs such as Medicare cannot be funded.

Social programs like Social Security and Medicare are funded generationally. That means the taxes taken out of my paycheck today pay for my parents’ social programs. If there is a generation when less people are paying FICA, those social programs will undoubtedly be in jeopardy. You’ve heard reports that the Trump administration may cut Social Security and/or Medicare. Now you know the reason why. We simply do not have the population growth that can support these programs.

A tsunami of economic challenges

Is climate change real? That’s for you to decide as it, like immigration, has become politicized like so many other things that affect our lives. The vast majority of scientists view climate change, specifically rising seas and warmer weather, as fact. Data also supports that fact in that recent years have been the warmest in history. Doubters believe the rising temperatures are cyclical. What if they aren’t cyclical? What if rising temperatures and seas are here to stay? Certainly the experts in the site selection community must factor these developments in their proposals for new and expanding industry.

My stepfather died a few years ago. He was a smart man, a Latin professor at University of Alabama Birmingham. He was also a devout agnostic. At his funeral, one of his best friends, a reverend, spoke during the ceremony and told the story about trying to convince my stepfather that he should “believe in God,

just in case.” Should we believe in climate change “just in case?”

Our president believes climate change is a “hoax,” and has struck down all kinds of regulations to lower carbon emissions in this country. His goal is to reduce regulations, therefore freeing industry to expand without as many environmental restrictions in an effort to improve the economy. Problem is, most companies, including the automotive industry and other manufacturers, have adjusted their platforms to conform to the new environmental rules and regulations set forth under previous administrations.

President Trump — not Congress — also withdrew from the Paris Agreement, an environmental pact among almost every country in the world to battle climate change. According to the United Nations: “The Paris Agreement builds upon the Convention and for the first time brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. As such, it charts a new course in the global climate effort.

“The Paris Agreement’s central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Additionally, the agreement aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change. To reach these ambitious goals, appropriate financial flows, a new technology framework and an enhanced capacity building framework will be put in place, thus supporting action by developing countries and the most vulnerable countries, in line with their own national objectives.”

Technically, the U.S. is still a part of the Paris Agreement. President Trump announced it would cease all participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate

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According to Mark Williams, a South Carolina-based site consultant, "The greatest concern in today's searches relates to higher awareness of flooding."



change management on June 1, 2017. His objections were that the agreement would hamper American business interests, even though just about every country in the world, including Russia and China, have signed on to make efforts to keep temperature increases below 1.5 degrees this century.

As written, Trump, through an executive order, announced in June 2017 the U.S. would leave the world effort of confronting climate change. But rules of the agreement are clear; the earliest possible effective withdrawal date by the United States cannot happen before November 4, 2020, four years after the Agreement came into effect in the United States and one day after this year's U.S. presidential election. In other words, the U.S. must continue reporting its emissions to the United Nations until the next president is elected.

So, what if climate change is a hoax? What if this is simply a random weather pattern that comes and goes? There is only one answer for that: we have nothing to worry about, at least for several generations after us, depending on when the hotter weather patterns cease. But for now, it doesn't look good, at least for Baby Boomers, GenXers, Millennials and those being born today.

The South is ground zero for climate change

For more than 50 years, no U.S. region has grown like the 15-state American South that this publication covers. In 1955, the Midwest, the Northeast and the South all had about the same population — between 54 million and 56 million residents. Today, the South is home to 125 million people. The Northeast has 63 million residents and the Midwest has 62 million. That means the South is home to as many people as the Northeast

and Midwest combined.

The South leads all U.S. regions in just about every economic category tracked by the U.S. government. For example, the South's gross domestic product was \$6.6 trillion in calendar year 2018. The next closest region in GDP was the West with \$5.1 trillion. The South's GDP is almost double that of the Midwest's.

In an age of labor constraints and record low birth rates, the South, more than any other region, is where more people in the country migrate to each year. Texas and Florida are migrant magnets, and so are just about all Southern states, including Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. In fact, the South led all regions in 2019 with population growth of 0.81 percent. The rate was followed closely by the West at 0.66 percent. However, the Northeast's population dropped by slightly more than 0.1 percent.

In 2018, migration to the South was well over 1 million people. Most of the migration to the South — both temporary and permanent — is weather-related. There are tens of millions of people that were born in the Northern U.S. now living in the South, and the No. 1 reason is the mild weather in winters. In fact, many "snowbirds" as they are called by native Southerners, move to the South in the fall and return to their native states such as Michigan, Minnesota, New York or elsewhere like Canada, in the spring.

Within the next 30 to 100 years — no expert seems to agree on the timeframe — will Northern climates in the U.S. be suitable in the winter as a result of global warming? Furthermore, will global warming in the next two to four generations reverse the

snowbird effect? In other words, could there be a time in the future when people from the South migrate to the North in the summer simply because it is too hot? Think about the ramifications of that when it comes to American demography.

While the population of the South greatly surpasses other U.S. regions, a too-hot-to-live South in the summer could be a big problem economically for the region. There are days in the South during the summer when outdoor work is an impossible task. That alone will slow the region's growth.

If climate change is a reality and seas and temperatures continue to rise, the South will be ground zero for a changing nature. In other words, places in the U.S. where it is already hot, like Arizona, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Alabama and the like, may take an economic hit each summer. Construction work would slow as there will be days when it just can't be done.

In a study in 2017 by the journal *Science*, researchers analyzed the economic harm that global warming could do to the U.S. Their research showed that while the South may be ground zero for a hotter climate in the U.S., states such as Michigan, Minnesota, Maine and Montana would actually benefit from a warmer climate. In other words, their research showed that not all states

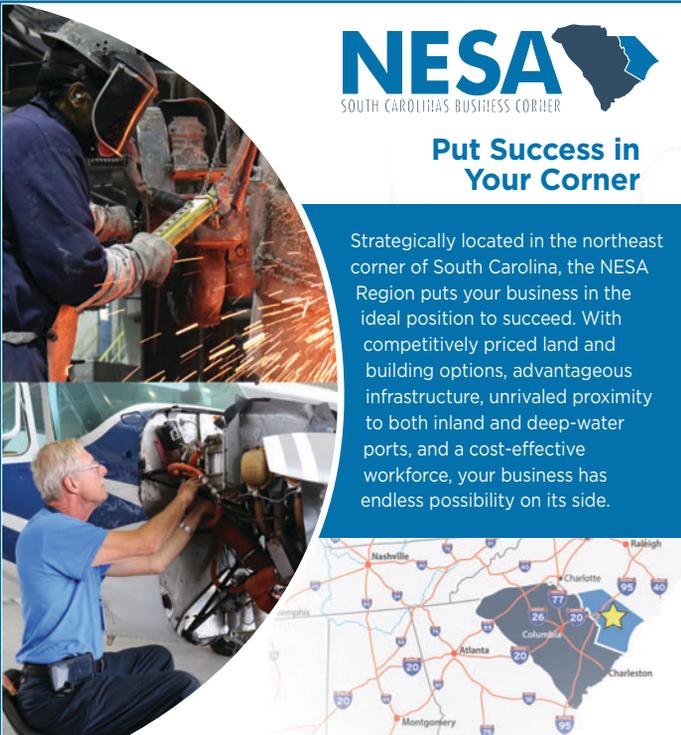
would suffer equally.

This would also apply worldwide. Hotter countries in tropical zones such as those in Africa and Southern Asia would see deadly heat waves, while people in countries in Northern Europe would hardly notice the change in temperatures.

Causes of global warming

A majority of scientists believe that global warming is caused by higher levels of greenhouse gases. The gas creates an overlay that traps heat from the sun and sends it back to the Earth's surface. Most of these gases are the result of burning fossil fuels, such as coal and natural gas for electricity generation, transportation, industrial plants such as oil and chemicals, and the commercial and residential use of heating oil.

NASA recorded carbon dioxide levels in December 2019 of 412 parts per million. According to *Scientific American*, the last time carbon dioxide levels were that high was 2.6 million years ago during the Pliocene era. At that time, the Arctic was 14 degrees Fahrenheit warmer in the summer than it is now. So, the Arctic was frozen only during the winter in the Pliocene era. Back then, sea levels were 98 feet higher than today, high enough to flood New York, Miami, London and Shanghai. The reason the



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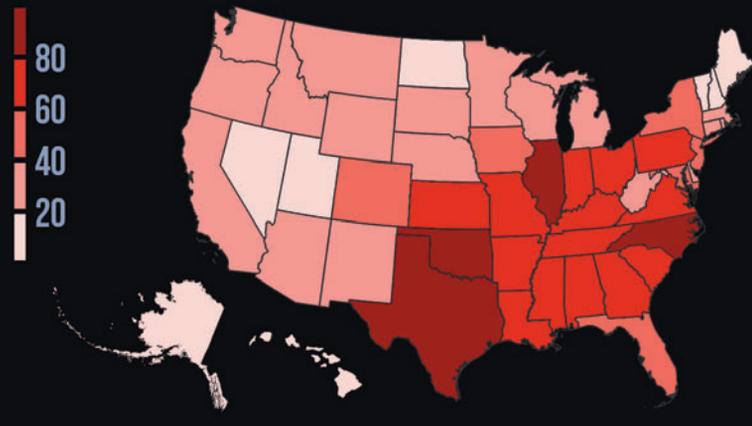
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BILLION-DOLLAR DISASTERS WEATHER & CLIMATE EVENTS



Billion-dollar weather and climate disasters are on the rise across the country. This map illustrates total number of disasters and cost from 1980-2019, adjusting for inflation.

Source: NOAA/NCEL

Earth is not as hot as it was then is that greenhouse gases have risen so quickly since 1900, temperatures have not had a chance yet to catch up.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group of more than 1,300 scientists from the U.S. and other countries, forecasts temperature rises of 2.5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century. Once again, the IPCC maintains that the effects of global warming on individual countries and regions in those countries will vary over time, and places that are already hot will suffer much more than colder climates.

There is a 100-year-old joke (or maybe it is accurate) in economic development circles that claims the greatest effect on the South's rise in its economy from dirt poor to the home of major economies such as Dallas-Fort Worth, Atlanta, Charlotte, Austin, Nashville, Northern Virginia and the like, was the invention of the air conditioner. That said, if it took the invention of the air conditioner in 1902 to bolster the region's economy, it was obviously too hot to live comfortably in the South. If global warming hits increases on the extreme scale of 10 degrees Fahrenheit, it would be too uncomfortable to live in the South in the summer, air conditioning or not.

Weather and site selection

In 1993, Southern Business & Development published a map of the South showing the number of tornadoes that touched down in each county in every state in the region since 1950. The data was provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and showed that some counties in the South saw more than 170 tornado touchdowns since 1950, while an adjoining county only saw 20. It was remarkable site selection information to share, even before the internet was widely used.

Look up "most tornado-prone counties in the U.S." on the internet today and you will find that Weld County, Colo., is

the No. 1 county with 262 tornado touchdowns from 1950 to 2016. Caddo County, Okla., just west of Oklahoma City, was well up the list of the most tornado-prone counties in the U.S. In May of 2003, the General Motors assembly plant in Oklahoma City was hit by a massive tornado. The plant closed three years later.

As with tornadoes, weather has a tremendous effect on site selection. And if our weather is about to turn for the worse as a result of climate change, what are site consultants telling their clients as they ponder new, expanded or relocated projects? We asked Mark Williams, a South Carolina-based site consultant, how global warming has changed the corporate and industrial site selection industry. "The greatest concern in today's searches relates to higher awareness of flooding," Williams said. "I can't refer to any specific data that exists, but 15 years ago we were thinking about 100-year flood plains. Now we are looking at 500-year flood plains and overall greater evaluation of drainage. The concern is widespread."

Conclusion

Pandemic is a scary word. It means schools are closed, no sporting events, all public gatherings essentially halted on the spot. Restaurants, unless they have a drive through, are closed. Your favorite bar is closed.

But don't panic. If this is a 10- to 12-week situation and the \$2.1 trillion stimulus is put in place and delivered quickly, there is a possibility our economy could be revived at a rate never seen before. After all, even though the U.S. was in a manufacturing recession just before the coronavirus event, we did not fall into recession because people were not buying things. Retail and services in general were the only thing propping this economy before the virus. Now that is gone.

We have survived dark times before and emerged shining. Still, there is no sugarcoating the situation at this writing. In a matter of 90 days, millions of jobs have been lost, at least

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temporarily, in just about every sector of business.

This recession is not like the Great Recession which was a slow bleed. It is, as you may have heard, more like 9/11. A shock, a bomb, a trauma, a bad surprise and the result is turmoil, for your family and everything around you, including the governments that assist you.

Combine all that with demographic challenges in terms of the lowest birth rate in nearly 100 years and you have double trouble. Throw global warming into the mix and this is the most problematic and depressing cover story I have written since 2008 — if not in my entire 40-year journalistic career — because it is triple trouble.

Yet, the U.S. economy has been resilient for 11 years now. The U.S. remains in its longest recovery period in history, until the economists and the government tell us that this is the end of an 11-year recovery. Officially though, we can't fall into a recession unless GDP falls for at least two quarters. I am confident GDP, during this deal, will fall for two-straight quarters.

The U.S., as a place to operate a business, is as competitive as it has ever been for manufacturing, technology and other sectors. Competitive in that costs of doing business remain low in

the U.S. and much lower in the South.

However, if the U.S. and the South's historic 11-year economic run is at an end, even temporarily, this is the time, based on the circumstances, for it to end. A headwind is blowing and it is at our door.

Finally, if the U.S. is indeed in recession as of the winter quarter and spring quarters, there is a silver lining for the South's economy. We have been writing about economic development in the South since 1983, and we have seen plenty of downturns over the last 37 years. There were the recessions of 1991-1992, 2001 and 2007-2009. We survived all of them and then we prospered.

About that silver lining: In all of those years, project activity in the South in the form of relocations — not necessarily new and expanded projects — increased dramatically. You see, if you are making money hand over fist in New York, California or Illinois in an expanding economy, operating in those high-cost states is acceptable. But when the economy turns sour, those companies look for less costly locales and the South is just that — the lowest cost place to operate a business in the world's largest economy. ✪



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FIRST-RATE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES
IN THE SOUTH

Over the next three issues, Southern Business & Development will publish write-ups about what we believe are the best economic development agencies in the 15-state American South. These will include state agencies, utilities and local organizations both large and small. This first segment will feature first-rate economic agencies in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia and Kentucky. The next issue will feature agencies in Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina and Oklahoma. The final segment will focus on organizations in South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

The ranking is based on our knowledge of the agencies after visiting over 1,400 economic development organizations in the South over the last 26 years. It is also based on several other factors including deal activity, deal quality and the organization's reputation among those in economic development in that state.

This section on first-rate economic development agencies will also run on all of our websites including RandleReport.com, SB-D.com and SouthernAutoCorridor.com.



John Bradley

ALABAMA

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

TVA's economic development team — led by John Bradley and Heidi Smith (SEDR members), two outstanding economic development professionals — is a power company that serves parts of seven Southern states. On its website is a Site Selector suite of tools where you can search 2,000 available sites in TVA's GIS database. In the last several years, TVA has assisted in billions of dollars of investments in the Valley, including the Mazda Toyota plant in Limestone County, Ala. The Tennessee Valley Authority is a corporate agency of the United States. It receives no taxpayer funding, deriving virtually all of its revenues from the sale of electricity.

Alabama Power

Birmingham-based Alabama Power offers competitive prices, reliable electricity supply and stellar service to 1.4 million homes, businesses and industries in the Southern two thirds of Alabama. Alabama Power is a subsidiary of Southern Company, one of the nation's largest producers of energy. It has been involved in thousands of projects in the state, including the Mercedes-Benz plant in Tuscaloosa County, Ala. The company also provides electricity to the Honda plant in Lincoln, Ala., and Hyundai in Montgomery, as well as more than a hundred automotive suppliers in the state.



Greg Canfield

PowerSouth Energy

PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, headquartered in Andalusia, Ala., is a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative providing the wholesale power needs of 20 distribution members in Alabama and northwest Florida. Much of PowerSouth's territory is in rural Alabama as it serves end-users in 39 Alabama counties and 10 Florida counties. It also serves growing suburban areas of the state.

Alabama Department of Commerce

Led by Greg Canfield and Ed Castile, (two members of SB&D's Southern Economic Development Roundtable) the Alabama Department of Commerce had one of its most memorable years in 2018, as the state was named "State of the Year" by Southern Business & Development. That year, Alabama landed Mazda Toyota (4,000 jobs), Amazon (1,500 jobs), and saw expansions from Mercedes-Benz and Airbus. Alabama's state economic development agency is one of the best in the country, as is AIDT, the state's workforce development organization. The Alabama Department of Commerce also employs some of the best industry recruiters in the country.

Some accolades for Alabama and Alabama Department of Commerce:

- Southern Business & Development: "State of the Year" in 2019
- IBM Services/IBM Plant Location International (2019 Global Location Trends Report): Top state for jobs from FDI projects announced in 2018
- *Area Development*: Golden Shovel Award in 2019
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Chambers County Development Authority

This small economic development agency representing a county in East Alabama near the Georgia border has done some big things.

Chambers County includes the cities of LaFayette, Lanett and Valley. The area is located on Interstate 85, convenient to three major urban centers — Atlanta (86 miles north-east), Birmingham (134 miles northwest) and Montgomery (79 miles southwest). The county has recruited several large automotive suppliers that serve the Kia and Hyundai plants located nearby. Chambers County

Development Authority (CCDA) has been a main driver in rebuilding the community's economic base after the textile mills declined. It has blazed a new trail for diversity and long-term stability, and has seen more than 28 industry expansions in the last five years. Valerie Gray, executive director of CCDA, was named the 2019 recipient of the David R. Echols Distinguished Service Award for exemplary service to Alabama's economic development. Gray is the first economic developer from a rural Alabama county to be selected for the award, which is the highest Alabama recognition in her field. It is named after Echols, a successful economic developer who died in 2010.



Valerie Gray and Gov. Kay Ivey



Ellen McNair

Montgomery Area Chamber

The Montgomery Chamber's experienced, professional economic development team is led by SVP Ellen McNair (also an SEDR member). The Montgomery Chamber is a key player in bringing new industry to the area, including the major economic game-changer, Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama. The Montgomery Chamber's staff is an outstanding collection of economic development professionals. The Chamber has assisted in redeveloping downtown Montgomery into a marvelous place to live, work and visit.



Dale Greer

Cullman Economic Development Agency

Long run by Peggy Smith and now Dale Greer, the Cullman Economic Development Agency is one of the most successful in its peer group in not only Alabama and the South, but the nation. Cullman has consistently been named among the top Micropolitans in the United States by such trade publications as *Site Selection* and *Southern Business & Development* magazines. Its central location directly on Interstate

65 — the spine of the Southern Automotive Corridor — is second to none. The automotive industry rules in Cullman, but the county is thriving with other industry sectors.

Industrial Development Board of the City of Auburn

Long run by Economic Development Director Phillip Dunlap, the City of Auburn has been a poster child for highly successful industry recruitment. Home of Auburn University, the city was recently named one of the best small cities to start a business by ChamberOfCommerce.org.

Opelika Economic Development

The city of Opelika is directly on Interstate 85 and is located between two South Korean plants, Hyundai in Montgomery, Ala., and Kia in West Point, Ga. This has given the city a great opportunity to work with many Korean parts suppliers that supply both plants. The City of Opelika, the Opelika Economic Development Department and the Opelika Industrial Development Authority were excited in January to announce the creation of the Opelika Innovation and Technology Park (OITP). The new park is located in an Opportunity Zone (OZ) at the gateway corridor to Opelika along U.S. Highway 280 West between Veterans Parkway and Waverly Parkway. Lori Huguley is the director of economic development for the city of Opelika.

Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance

Led by David Thornell, an economic developer who has worked in rural areas almost his entire career, the Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance is a three-county organization. Interstate 22 has opened up these three counties to prospective industry like never before. Having had the opportunity to lead economic development and chamber of commerce organizations in both Alabama and Mississippi for the past 34 years, Thornell has enjoyed success in every aspect of building and improving communities. The three rural counties in Northwest Alabama (Marion, Lamar

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and Fayette counties) have a diverse employer base, including automotive, textiles, building materials and metals.

Other first-rate economic development agencies in Alabama include: Huntsville Madison Chamber; Morgan County EDA; Tuscaloosa County IDA; Mobile Area Chamber; Birmingham Business Alliance; Shoals EDA; North Alabama IDA; Baldwin County EDA; Walker County Development Authority; Hoover IDB; St. Clair Economic Development Council; Coastal Alabama Partnership; Jefferson County EIDA; Talladega EDC; Limestone County EDA; Alabama Municipal Electric Authority; Dothan Area Chamber; Port of Huntsville; Wiregrass EDC; Butler County EDC; Gadsden Etowah County IDA; Selma and Dallas County EDA; Jackson County EDA; Franklin County EDA; DeKalb County EDA.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Economic Development Commission

Guided by Secretary Of Commerce and Executive Director Michael Preston, Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) is the state's primary economic development agency. Companies in Arkansas hail from France, Germany, Japan and the U.K., to massive manufacturers like Nucor and the largest retailer in the world — Walmart — which operates its headquarters in Bentonville, Ark. Arkansas' economy varies from large agriculture, steel-making, poultry and tech found in Northwest Arkansas and Little Rock.

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J.D. Lowery

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tal credits — in your local electric cooperative, based on your usage. That means when the cooperative thrives, members earn a return that is distributed via capital credits to each member of the cooperative. In the last five years, the cooperatives have returned approximately \$107 million to their members in patronage payments. Electricity costs from the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas are some of the lowest in the entire South. J.D. Lowery is the manager of community and economic development for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas.

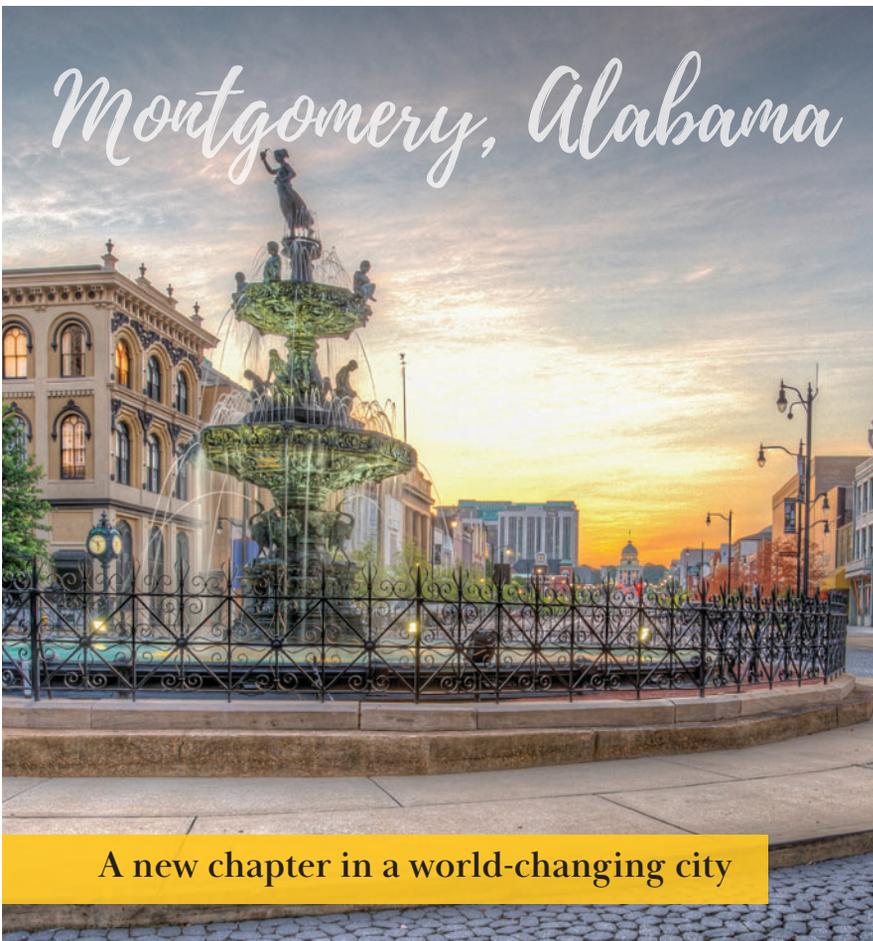
Mississippi County Economic Development

Located on the Mississippi River and in the Northeast Arkansas Delta is Mississippi County, Ark. This county is the second-largest steel-making county in the U.S. Nucor Steel, Nucor Yamato Steel, Big River Steel and other steel-makers and suppliers employ thousands

in this tiny county of less than 55,000 residents. In fact, Mississippi County, Ark., in terms of percentage of manufacturing workers in the labor force, is for sure in the highest 1 percent in the country. The county is also home to the Arkansas Aeroplex, a former Air Force base that has enormous potential for the aerospace industry. Clif Chitwood is one of Arkansas' premier economic developers and is a member of SEDR. Since 1999, he has been working hard to attract industry to Mississippi County.

Little Rock Regional Chamber

Led by President Jay Chesshir, the Little Rock Chamber recruits business to a dynamic city. Metro Little Rock is at the crossroads of Interstate 30 and the most heavily traveled Interstate in the nation, Interstate 40. The region benefits from a diversified economic base revolving around advanced manufacturing, aerospace, information technology, medi-



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cal/healthcare, military and nonprofit industries.

Paragould Regional Chamber

SB&D publisher Michael Randle has visited Paragould and met with Sue McGowan, CEO of the Paragould Regional Chamber, and was astounded by its manufacturing base. The com-

munity of Paragould has enjoyed the restoration of historic landmarks, the construction of new facilities, and numerous commercial and industrial investments. Paragould's investment represents a long-term belief in the future of the community. Results from the Census showed population increased 18.6 percent over the past decade in

Paragould. It should be noted that Paragould Light Water & Cable (a municipal owned utility) will complete a fiber optics project to every home and business in the city this year.

Jonesboro Regional Chamber

Home to Arkansas State University, the Jonesboro Chamber is led by CEO Mark Young and Vice President of Economic Development Mike Philpot, a very capable team. The area near Memphis has a strong manufacturing base with Nestlé, Unilever, Nice-Pak, ABB Group, TrinityRail and FMH Conveyor operating large plants in the area. . . just a small sampling of the manufacturers operating in Jonesboro.

Other first-rate economic development agencies in Arkansas include: Port of Little Rock; Northwest Arkansas Council; Conway Development Corporation; Invest Bentonville; Fayetteville Chamber; AR-TX Regional Economic Development; City of West Memphis; Batesville Chamber; Springdale Chamber; Mountain Home Area Chamber; Jefferson County Alliance; City of Mammelle; Greater Hot Springs Chamber; Arkadelphia Regional EDA; Arkansas Valley Alliance; Newport EDC; Marion Economic Development; El Dorado Chamber; City of North Little Rock; Magnolia EDC; Fort Smith Chamber; Rogers-Lowell Chamber; Searcy Chamber; Forrest City Chamber; Harrison Chamber of Commerce.

FLORIDA

Enterprise Florida

Morphed from the Florida Department of Commerce in 1993, Enterprise Florida was the first public-private funded state economic development agency. Enterprise Florida's private funding got off to a rough start in the 1990s and the state stepped in to support the agency. Led today by Secretary of Commerce, President and CEO Jamal A. Sowell, Enterprise Florida is one of the South's strongest state agencies. Its newsroom is first-rate, up-to-date and very well written.

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St. Johns County Economic Development

Based in St. Augustine, Fla., the economic development agency in St. Johns County is certainly one of the best in the South. It's a small department that accomplishes huge things. For example, the expansion of the PGA Tour headquarters in Ponte Vedra Beach has been recognized by numerous media assets, including *Southern Business & Development*, *Area Development* and *Facility Planning*. The new 187,000-square-foot facility will serve as the worldwide headquarters for the PGA Tour. The \$86 million deal will add 307 jobs to the 800 existing employees at the PGA headquarters. But there is a lot more to St. Johns County than beautiful weather and pristine beaches.

Melissa Glasgow, Director of Economic Development for St. Johns County, runs a tight ship. She was just recognized as a Top 50 Economic Developer in North America for 2020 by Consultant Connect. St. Johns County was ranked as the top performing local economy in Florida in a Wall Street 24/7 analysis of counties' gross domestic product growth from 2012 to 2015. In 2018, St. Johns County was ranked No. 1 in retail and business investment in Florida with 13.1 percent growth. You might want to check out this county that is located just South of Jacksonville. It is on the move.

Florida Power & Light/ NextEra Energy

Florida Power & Light Company hasn't always been one of the best economic development utilities in the South, but it certainly is now, and has been for years. The company generates, transmits, distributes and sells energy. On the solar front, it is one of the most innovative utilities in the region. Its economic development department is now run by Crystal Stiles, a very impressive leader. Crystal's Economic Development Manager, Cathy Chambers, worked for Jerry Mallot at the JAXUSA Partnership in Jacksonville, Fla., for many years.

EDC of Florida's Space Coast

This economic organization has not only survived total disaster (unemployment up to 13 percent) but thrived like never before in a recovery. According to Lynda Weatherman, the long-time CEO of economic development on the Space Coast, she got a call from NASA and was told, "Oh, by the way, we are shutting down the Space Shuttle program." That was in 2011. Of course, Weatherman was shocked. Twenty-five thousand people worked on the Shuttle

program "inside the gate of the Cape." There were tens of thousands more working in Brevard County outside the gate on the Shuttle program. The problem then was very little was being manufactured in terms of space vehicles in Brevard, such as rockets, engines and capsules. It was essentially a launch site. Now, everyone on the Space Coast is manufacturing space-related products — Blue Origin, SpaceX, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, ULA, Firefly, Relativity and OneWeb. Brevard County and Florida's Space Coast is without question one of the greatest comeback stories of any place in the South and since Lynda Weatherman has led the organization since 1994, she and her staff have seen it all.

Bay County Economic Development Alliance

In January 2019, Becca Hardin spoke to the invitation-only Southern Economic Development Roundtable near her home of Panama City. It was three months since much of eastern Bay County was devastated by Hurricane Michael in October of 2018. It was an inspirational presentation considering

the circumstances. Becca and her staff survived the disaster and came out fighting to restore everything that county lost during that hurricane. What they have done since Hurricane Michael is nothing short of a miracle. One of their largest employers — Tyndall Air Force Base, which was totally destroyed — has a minimum of \$1.5 billion coming to it for a rebuild.

Lee County Economic Development Office

Lee County, Fla., (think Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Estero, Sanibel and many others) has a dynamic economy. In fact, SB&D publisher Michael Randle was in the Lee County EDO offices the week Hertz announced it was relocating its world headquarters to Estero, Fla., from New Jersey in May of 2013. Randle had met with Gray Swoope, Secretary of Commerce of Enterprise Florida, the day before in Orlando and Swoope had hinted that something big was about to be announced. Lee County has a population of slightly more than 750,000, and it has increased by 14.2 percent since 2014, so the labor shed has no issues. Aviation and aerospace are big in Lee County, as are headquarters and the life sciences. As an organization that was retooled a few years ago, Lee County Economic Development, led by John Talmage, has few peers.

The Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership

First accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 1974, the Ocala/Marion Chamber & Economic Partnership (CEP) is among the elite top 1 percent of Chambers of Commerce nationwide that have been recognized for excellence by receiving the 5-Star Accredited designation. This is the highest accreditation level awarded by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Ocala/Marion CEP is an outstanding organization that is well staffed, including CEO Kevin T. Sheilley.

Other first-rate economic development agencies in Florida include: Tampa Hillsborough EDC; JAX/USA Partnership; Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance; Orlando Economic Partnership; FloridaWest EDA; Team Volusia; BDB of

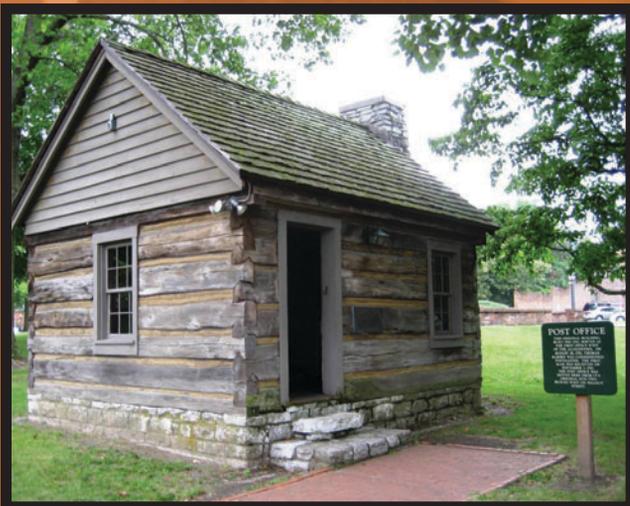
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Meriwether County IDB
 SB&D chose tiny Meriwether County, a second home of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Warm Springs), not for the size of its economic development agency, but the person who is in charge of it, Jane Fryer. When Jane was running the economic development agency in neighboring Troup County, she greatly assisted in the capture of the Kia plant in West Point, Ga., in 2006.



Jane Fryer

Kia was on the fast track to build a plant near its sister plant, Hyundai, which was up and running in Montgomery, Ala. Michael Randle was in Southwest Virginia when he received a call from Gray Swoope, then the head of Mississippi's economic development department. Swoope said the Kia site search wasn't going well. So, Randle pulled out his map and drew a line from Montgomery (home of Hyundai) to Georgia. The first county across the Georgia line on Interstate 85 is Troup County. Randle called Jane Fryer, the No. 1 economic developer in Troup County and LaGrange, and asked, "Jane, have you heard anything from Kia?" She said, "No, nothing." "Well," Randle said, "you are about to." Jane helped with securing the land on Interstate 85 from multiple landowners and Kia is now one of the largest manufacturers in the state of Georgia.

is also a huge industry in Georgia. And it all begins with a call to the Georgia Department of Economic Development, a more-than-capable state economic development agency.

Georgia Power

Walt Farrell is the statewide manager for economic development for Georgia Power, a subsidiary of The Southern Company, which is also headquartered in Atlanta. Given Walt's accomplishments in business recruitment, his recent move into the role of Manager of Statewide Economic Development for the Georgia Power team comes as no surprise. Walt oversees the team and supports the facilitation of site selection, start-up and expansion of businesses investing in Georgia. Georgia Power's economic development department is second to none.

Invest Atlanta

This organization has taken the reigns as Atlanta's primary economic development agency. The agency's leadership is outstanding. Dr. Eloisa Klementich is the CEO of the organization. Previously, Eloisa served as managing director of business development at Invest Atlanta. Before coming to the organization, she served as special assistant for economic development at the U.S. Economic Development Administration in the Office of the Secretary. She also served as California's assistant deputy secretary for economic development and commerce and has held various roles with city and national governments, including the consultant for Mexico's President Vicente Fox, working on best practices for addressing constituent issues and requests.

Cherokee Office of Economic Development

Led by Misti Martin, who has served as the President of the Cherokee OED since 2004, this is a rock solid organization. The agency has earned several awards from the Southern Economic Development Council, including; (1) Special Judges Award for Comprehensive Community Outreach and Award of Excellence for the Cherokee Film Summit; (2) Award of Excellence for COED Website; (3) Award of Merit for COED Annual Report. The

Palm Beach County; Florida's Great Northwest; Gulf Power/NextEra Energy; City of North Port; Central Florida DC; Pinellas County ED; Tallahassee-Leon County OEV; Seminole Regional Chamber; Florida High Tech Corridor; Bradenton Area EDC; Central Florida Research Park; Greater Osceola PEP; Seminole County ED; Indian River Chamber; EDC of St Lucie County; EDC of Okaloosa County; Charlotte County ED; Hernando County OBD; Columbia County EDD; Nassau County EDB; Flagler EDC; Pasco EDC; Plant City EDC; St Johns Chamber; Highlands County IDA; Boca Raton ED; Martin County ED; Greater Naples Chamber; Santa Rosa County EDO; Gainesville Chamber.

GEORGIA

Georgia Department of Economic Development

With Atlanta leading the way, this state is one of the South's most innovative. Just look at Midtown Atlanta. Midtown is a tech mecca and Atlanta's suburbs are home to some of the world's most successful companies. It's stunning to watch the growth of the tech industry in Atlanta. But, Georgia is a large state and has much more to offer than just Atlanta, even though the busiest airport in the world and one of the nation's largest economies are incredibly impressive. The logistics industry in Savannah and Brunswick, with their ports, is a gateway to the Southeast. Augusta's growing cyber industry is off the charts. Aerospace



Dr. Eloisa Klementich

organization has also been recognized by IEDC with the Gold Award for Excellence for Redevelopment and Reuse. . . Cherokee 75 Corporate Park and the Cherokee OED was the deal's developer.

The Savannah Economic Development Authority

The Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA) has been recognized many times over the years as an out-

standing economic development agency. For example, SEDA is a 2018 recipient of the McKinley "Mac" Conway Award by *Site Selection Magazine*. Led by Trip Tollison, SEDA has been one of the most consistent economic agencies for its size in the South. Ideally located on the Atlantic Ocean, the Savannah region is home to close to 1 million people and a skilled workforce that includes more

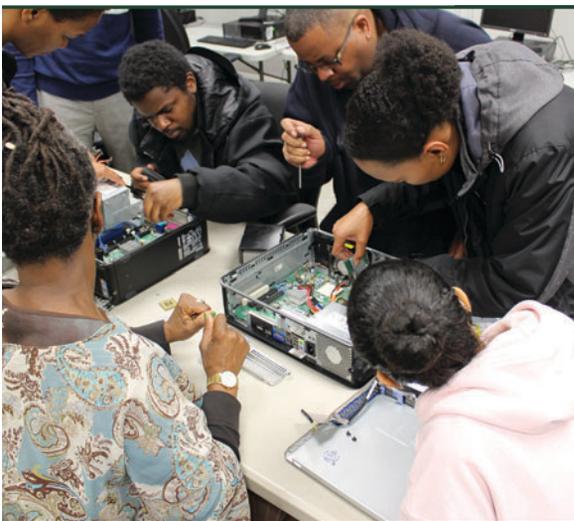
than 4,000 military personnel transitioning to the civil sector each year.

Other first-rate economic development agencies in Georgia include: Go Energy Financial; Electric Cities of Georgia; Griffin-Spalding DA; Jackson County Area Chamber; Cobb County Chamber; Valdosta-Lowndes IA; Gwinnett County Chamber; Dublin Laurens DA; Augusta EDA; Henry County DA; Fayette County DA; Cartersville-Bartow DED; Greater Hall Chamber; Coweta County DA; Carroll Tomorrow; Liberty County DA; Newton Covington ED; Greater Rome Chamber; Dalton-Whitfield County JDA; Macon-Bibb IA; DA of Bryan County; Albany Dougherty EDC; Columbus Chamber; DA of Fulton County; Houston County DA; DA of Walton County; Stephens County DA; Macon EDC; LaGrange-Troup County Chamber; DA of Bulloch County; Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber; Athens Clarke EDF; Duluth ED; Midtown Alliance; Decide DeKalb; Development Authority of Rabun County.

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Larry Hayes

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development

The Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development has been the most consistent state economic development agency in the entire South over the last 25 years. Rarely — if ever — has this state agency cleaned house after a new administration has been voted in. . . a good thing almost every time. Experts like Mandy Lambert worked long enough at the Cabinet to retire. Larry Hayes, one of the most dynamic Secretaries of Commerce in the South, is back in action in an interim capacity under new governor Andy Beshear. Hayes also served for years as Secretary for the new governor's father, former Gov. Steve Beshear.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

TVA's economic development team, led by two outstanding economic development professionals, John Bradley and Heidi Smith, is a power company that serves parts of seven Southern states. On its website is a Site Selector suite of tools where you can search 2,000 available sites in TVA's GIS database. In the last several years, TVA has assisted in billions of dollars of investments in the Valley, including the Mazda Toyota plant in Limestone County, Ala. The Tennessee Valley Authority is a corporate agency of the United States. It receives no taxpayer funding, deriving virtually all of its revenues from sales of electricity.

Commerce Lexington Economic Development

Led by Bob Quick and Gina Greathouse, Commerce Lexington Inc. is an outstanding economic development organization. Lexington is home to the University of Kentucky and one of the most talented workforces in the South.

The Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives gave Commerce Lexington the ultimate award as the 2016 Outstanding Chamber of the Year.

Danville-Boyle County EDP

Jody A. Lassiter is CEO of the Danville-Boyle County Economic Development Partnership (Develop Danville, Inc.). It is a fantastic economic agency representing one of the most historic counties in not only Kentucky, but in the entire country. *Global Trade* magazine named the Danville-Boyle County Economic Development Partnership (Develop Danville, Inc.) as one of America's 18 leading economic development corporations. Develop Danville, Inc. represented the smallest community in population among other state, metro and county organizations recognized. Today, the City of Danville, which is the county seat of Boyle County, is a thriving community of 16,292 people on the southern edge

Louisville Forward

Louisville Forward is the primary economic agency for Kentucky's largest market. . . an excellent, innovative, major manufacturing market in the American South. Louisville is home to UPS' largest world hub. It is among only a dozen U.S. cities that have all five major performing arts groups. The booming bourbon culture permeates the Louisville MSA. Led by Mary Ellen Wiederwohl, Chief of Louisville Forward, and Rebecca Fleischaker, Director of the Department of Economic Development, this is an impressive team. Some of its accolades include: (1) For the fifth year in a row, Louisville Forward recognized

as a "Top Economic Development Group" by *Site Selection* magazine; (2) fDi Intelligence ranked Louisville the fifth most business friendly large American city of the future; (3) Microsoft named Louisville its first regional hub for artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), and data science. Through this partnership, the Future of Work Initiative team is working with Microsoft to prepare Louisville businesses, educators and the public for the next wave of technological innovation, making Louisville a national leader in the emerging data economy.



Mary Ellen Wiederwohl



Jody Lassiter

of Kentucky's famed Bluegrass Region. The City is blessed with an abundant water supply, highly efficient roads and infrastructure, and a well-educated workforce.

Other first-rate economic development agencies in Kentucky include: LG&E KU; Kentucky Power; Greater Louisville Inc.; Shelby County IDF; Elizabethtown-Hardin County Industrial Foundation; Nelson County ED; East Kentucky Power Cooperative; TRI-ED EDC; Franklin-Simpson IA; Bowling Green Chamber; One East Kentucky; Ashland Alliance; Team Taylor IDA; Hazard-Perry County EDA; Morehead-Rowan CED; Marshall County ED; Murray Calloway EDC; Bullitt County EDA; Kentucky CDC; Spencer Taylorsville Chamber; Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority; Greater Paducah EDC; Southwestern Kentucky EDC; Lebanon-Marion CED; Harrodsburg-Mercer County ID; Glasgow-Barren County IDEA; Corbin EDA; Somerset-Pulaski County EDC; Richmond IDC; Mt. Sterling-Montgomery County IA; Georgetown-Scott County Chamber; Winchester & Clark Co. ID; Logan Economic Alliance; Marshall County ED; Graves Growth Alliance; Muhlenberg Alliance for Progress; Greater Owensboro EDC; Madisonville Hopkins County EDC; Kyndle. ✪

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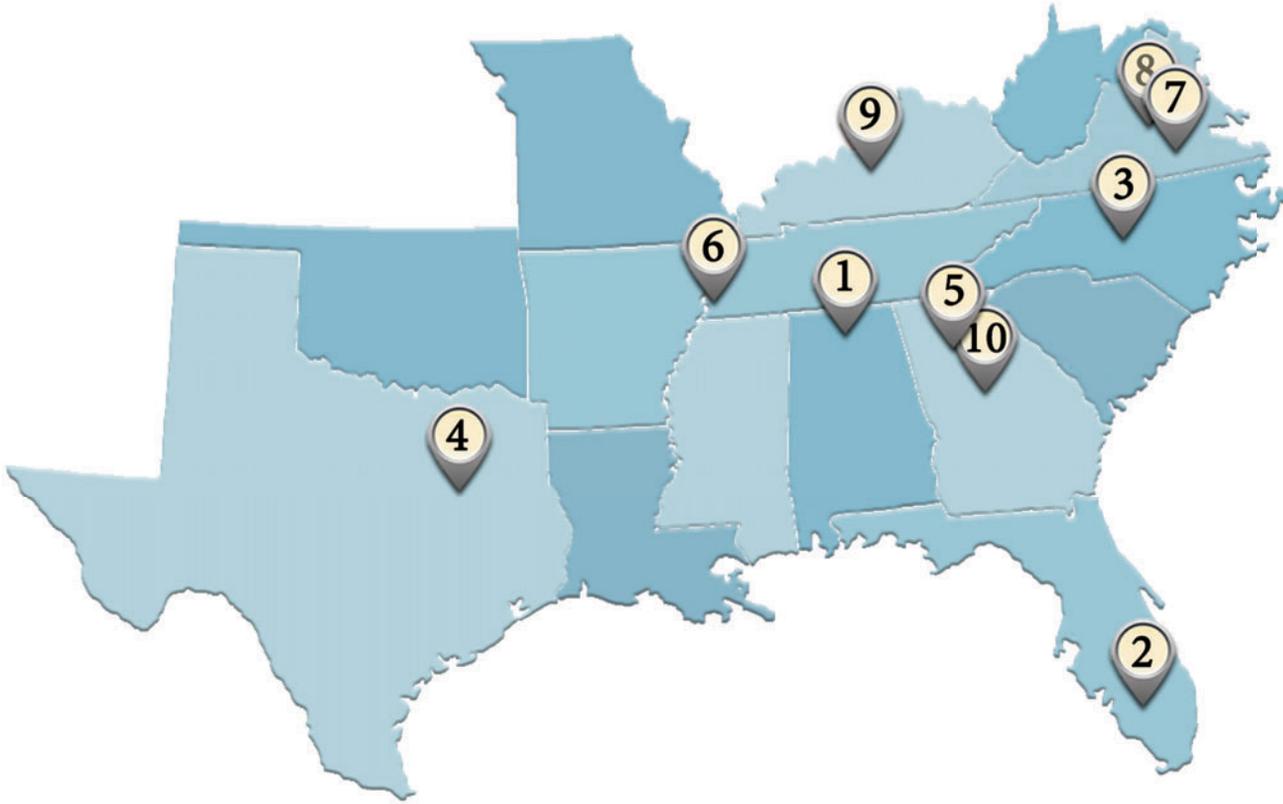
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Contact Michael Randle at michael@sb-d.com
for more information.

TOP DEALS

The American South's 10 largest new or expanded manufacturing and selected non-manufacturing job announcements



ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE IN THE WINTER 2020 QUARTER

Development	Jobs	Investment*	N/E/R**	Location	Description
1. Redstone Arsenal	6,000	\$2,000	E	Huntsville, Ala.	Defense
2. U.S. Customs	1,700	\$2	N	Hendry County, Fla.	Border protection
3. Publix	1,000	\$400	N	Greensboro, N.C.	Distribution
4. Amazon	1,000	\$53	N	Irving, Texas	Distribution
5. Amazon	1,000	N/A	N	Gwinnett Co., Ga.	Fulfillment center
6. Amazon	1,000	N/A	N	Memphis, Tenn.	Fulfillment center
7. Amazon	1,000	N/A	N	Suffolk, Va.	Fulfillment center
8. CoStar Group	730	\$250	N	Richmond, Va.	IT
9. U.S. Army	635	N/A	E	Fort Knox, Ky.	Military
10. Macy's	620	\$14	N	Atlanta, Ga.	Tech hub

*Investment in millions **N=New, E=Expansion, R=Relocation

Source: RandleReport.com

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