

EDPA News:

Erwin to head recruitment

Don Erwin has been selected to lead EDPA's recruitment division. Erwin, who joined EDPA in January, will direct the Partnership's efforts to identify and recruit prospective companies to the state. Erwin came to EDPA from Alabama Power Co., where he spent one-half of his 22-year-career in the economic development department, holding the positions of economic development manager, senior international representative and assistant to the vice president.

Erwin has extensive domestic and international recruiting experience and has managed projects in a variety of industry sectors. His considerable experience in the automotive sector has included successful efforts to attract suppliers to the state, as well as involvement with the new Barber Motorsports Park development. In June, Erwin was asked to make a comprehensive presentation on Alabama and its auto industry to a group of automotive executives in Stuttgart, Germany as part of a symposium on investing in the U.S., which was sponsored by the Stuttgart Chamber and the State of Alabama.

"We are very fortunate to have someone with Don's experience, talent and enthusiasm who can step in and head our recruiting program," said EDPA President and CEO Jacquie Shaia. "He has already brought so much to the Partnership and we are excited about the leadership that he will provide in his new role."

Erwin replaces **Billy Joe Camp**, who departs to join a new Alabama-based site consulting firm. Camp had directed EDPA's recruitment effort since 1997.

"Billy Joe has been such an important figure in economic development in Alabama and a major asset to EDPA," Shaia said. "We wish him well in his new endeavor and hope there will be many opportunities to work closely together in the future."

In another recent announcement, **Greg Knighton** was promoted to associate director of Business Information for EDPA. Knighton joined the Partnership seven years ago and has worked the last four years as business analyst. He will help manage the department's efforts to gather and provide the critical information that is necessary to recruit business and industry.

Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

500 Beacon Parkway West
Birmingham, Alabama 35209
(205) 943-4700 telephone
(205) 943-4703 facsimile
www.edpa.org ~ info@edpa.org

BULK

Subscribe to e-Developments...e-mail wwallace@edpa.org, subject: "subscribe e-developments"
You will receive an e-mailed version of the newsletter each month.

August 2001

Automotive Plant Opening at Fort McClellan

Hunjan Moulded Products, a Canadian plastic injection manufacturer for the automotive industry, announced that it will open a factory at Fort McClellan in Anniston. Hunjan is the first industrial development at the former Army base, which was closed in 1999.

The company will locate in a 96,000 square-foot building that was formally used for training soldiers and military police. It will spend more than \$2 million to upgrade the facility. Hunjan will employ 20 at start up and may employ as many as 300 at full production.

Hunjan is a second-tier supplier to companies such as Honda-Canada, Ford and General Motors.

"We see large potential here in Alabama and

here in Anniston" said CEO Bal Hunjan. "Everyone we've met is dedicated and hard working."

He said locating in Alabama gives his company an advantage in a state where the automotive sector has grown by leaps and bounds over the past decade.

Prattville gains 150 jobs

A closed plastics plant will breathe new life as Bemis Co. of Minneapolis moves into the former Wright Plastics plant in Prattville. Wright closed several months ago, taking 60 jobs with it. Bemis, a manufacturer of plastic flexible and pressure sensitive packaging, will hire 150. Bemis employs more than 11,000 worldwide, with a payroll exceeding \$388 million.

Sulligent plant holds grand opening

Allen White Furniture Company recently opened its doors at its new 130,000 square-foot plant in Sulligent in Lamar County. The company invested \$2.5 million in the facility. This is the first major company to settle in the area since 1996, according to Sulligent Mayor Al Elbert.

The company manufactures upholstered sofas, loveseats and ottomans.

"We knew we needed to grow, and there are a lot of raw goods

suppliers in the Tupelo (Miss.) area," said CFO Robin White. "We also knew there were a lot of textile jobs lost here, so there would be a lot of folks here ready to go to work who already knew how to sew."

The company currently has 190 employees in its area plants, and plans to reach 300.

Lamar County has an unemployment rate of 8.7 percent.

Growth in Cullman

Cullman has seen its share of growth lately, with several new announcements and expansions in

the last few months.

Americold, a manufacturer of refrigerator compressors, expanded in June, adding 80 jobs and investing \$3.3 million.

In July, J.H. Wright & Associates opened a repair center for industrial and municipal pumps, mixers and other equipment. Wright invested \$1 million and created 10 jobs.

Also in July, Axsys Technologies, which operates precision machining, invested \$1.5 million in an expansion of their operations.

AITA seeking companies for investors forum

The Alabama Information Technology Association is seeking companies to present at its October seed investors forum. The forum, the second sponsored by the organization, is designed for the early-stage entrepreneur who has a business plan but needs funding to start the business.

Companies interested in applying as presenters for the forum, should consult AITA's website, www.alabama-infotech.org. The meeting is slated for Oct. 3 at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m.

AITA is a state affiliate of the Information Technology Association of America, which works to promote networking in the technology community.

Alabama schools place in top 25 for ACT scores

Four Alabama high schools placed in the top 25 in the nation for ACT scores. The Jefferson County International Baccalaureate School ranked seventh; Birmingham's Altamont School ranked 11th; and the Alabama School of Math and Science in Mobile, and Lamp Magnet School in Montgomery placed between 20th and 25th in the nation.

Rankings were based on the averages of total scores earned by the class of 2001.

The ACT is a standardized test covering English, math, reading and science reasoning. Both the ACT and SAT are used in college admissions. The ACT is more popular in the South.

Dothan Gains Regional Jet Service

Delta Connection carrier Atlantic Southeast Airlines will introduce four daily nonstop Canadair regional jet flights between Dothan and Atlanta beginning October 1. With the new jet-service, ASA will offer six daily flights between Dothan and Atlanta. The other two flights will be served by turboprop aircraft.

Mercedes-Benz visitor's center announces changes

If you're planning to visit the Mercedes-Benz visitor's center, take note of recent changes.

* Admission to the museum is free.

* Plant tours:

- 12-54 years old - \$5.00
- Senior Adults - \$4.00
- Children under 12 not permitted
- Groups of ten or more receive a dollar off per ticket.

* Museum hours:

- Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- First Saturday of each month, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Closed Sundays, holidays and Saturdays (except first one of the month)

Birmingham ranks high for high-growth companies

Birmingham ranks fifth in LMAs (Labor Market Areas) with populations from 750,000 - 1 million for its 1,067 high growth companies.

The study, released by the National Commission on Entrepreneurship, weights the percentage of existing firms with high employment growth and the percentage of firms that had at least 20 employees in their first five years. The data help gauge the breadth of entrepreneurial activity, the density of entrepreneurial growth companies and the number of entrepreneurs in any region.

Alabama cities among tops for cost-effective growth

Two Alabama cities ranked in the top 55 markets for cost-effective growth in the July 2001 issue of *Expansion Management*. Auburn-Opelika ranked fifth of the 276 metropolitan areas and Mobile ranked 50th.

Factors considered include 10-year population growth, nine-year employment growth, average wage levels, and nine-year average wage-per-job growth, as well as average annual wage growth over the last

The study ranks metropolitan areas based on which areas achieved the highest degrees of growth in the population and work force, combined with the lowest current wage levels and rates of wage growth. This statistic is important, because companies may be drawn to areas of high population and employment growth, but cannot afford wage growth.

Top auto brands have Alabama presence

Business Week recently ranked the auto industry's top four brand names - three of the four have an Alabama connection. Mercedes-Benz, Toyota and Honda ranked second, third and fourth, respectively. Mercedes-Benz and Honda operate vehicle manufacturing plants in the state and Toyota is building an engine manufacturing plant in Huntsville.

Alabama No. 8 for small businesses

A recent study by the Washington D.C.-based Small Business Survival Committee ranks Alabama as the eighth-best spot in the nation for operating a small business in its "Survival Index 2001."

The study examined factors such as tax ratings, electricity costs, minimum wage, crime and laws discouraging labor unions.

\$90 million research tower in the works

An 11-story, \$90 million research tower is the first of four projects aimed at making the University of Alabama at Birmingham one of the nation's top research institutions.

The Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Institute will give UAB 240,000 square feet of new research space and create 1,400 jobs.

The project recently received a \$25-\$35 million pledge from the State, subject to approval by the State Legislature.

The biomed research tower is expected to boost the university's research funding by \$100 million.

Buy.com Golf Championship on the way

The Buy.com Golf Championship will arrive in Prattville's Robert Trent Jones Capitol Hill Golf Course in late October. The tournament, which attracted 40,000 fans to last year's Dothan site,

is expected to draw 50,000 spectators this year. It will take place from Oct. 22-28.

Capitol Hill's Senator Course rated in the Top 10 New Public Courses by *Golf Magazine* (2000) and the Legislator Course rated in the Top 10 Best New Courses by *Golf Digest* (2001).

Do you have suggestions or comments about EDPA's new website or newsletter?

We'd like to hear from you!

Please e-mail comments to info@edpa.org

A year in the life of the Legends

The Legends at Capitol Hill Resort and Conference Center is celebrating its one-year anniversary. In that year, a group of 40 generals, the Neville Brothers, Harper Lee, and an elephant (a guest of the University of Alabama Alumni Association) have been among its guests. The resort, situated along the Robert Trent Jones Capitol Hill golf course in Prattville, is a non-private facility, available to both groups and individuals, offering a range of room and conference packages.

For more information, contact The Legends at (334) 290-1235 or visit the website, www.legendsgolfresort.com.

Want your news in developments?

Do you have news that you would like to have considered for inclusion in *Developments*? Send it via one of the three methods below to the attention of Wendy Wallace:

fax:

(205) 943-4703

e-mail:

wwallace@edpa.org

mail:

500 Beacon Parkway W.
Birmingham, AL 35209