



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP OF ALABAMA

The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama is a totally private, non-profit organization supported by 70 of Alabama's leading companies and institutions that are committed to quality growth. EDPA's mission is to provide private sector leadership for economic development in Alabama.

The Partnership was created in 1990 by a group of Alabama business leaders who shared a vision for a more dynamic economy in the state and a commitment to support the state's economic development efforts. Since its inception, EDPA has worked to accomplish several core objectives, which include: Raising Alabama's profile as an outstanding business location, attracting new industry, encouraging expansion of existing industry, growing jobs within the state and creating a better climate for growth.

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VantagePoint

A Self Image Boost

Ralph and Mark Petroff want to use the greatest technological achievement of the 20th century to improve Alabama's image with the rest of the world. In the process, they may have a greater impact on the state's self image.

Through their extensive business travels, the successful Huntsville businessmen often encountered individuals whose perception of Alabama did not match reality.

The stereotypes not only stung, but seemed particularly unfair. After all, the Petroffs were involved in advanced technology ventures and hailed from a city with more technology professionals per capita than all but a few locations in the country.

On a personal level, Ralph and Mark were proud sons of a father who had worked with Alabamians on the original rocket team responsible for developing the propulsion systems that made it possible for the United States to win the space race.

Whenever their travels brought them face-to-face with someone predisposed to an image of Alabama as an undeveloped backwater, Ralph and Mark were well equipped to dispel the notion. Now they want to reach a much

broader audience, starting with residents of their home state.

Though many Alabamians know that Huntsville has long been an integral NASA location, few appreciate the critical role that Marshall Space Flight Center had in making sure the U.S. was first to the moon. And, even fewer know that Alabamians from all corners of the state contributed to the amazing success story.

As you can see from Deana Nunley's article on page 34, the Petroff

brothers are on a mission to change all of that. They may be uniquely qualified for the challenge. They are businesslike and strategic in their approach, and passionate in their drive.

The Petroffs have already done considerable research on the early days of the

rocket program which supports their contention that Alabama, more than any other state, has a rightful claim to the slogan, "First to the Moon."

We would like to see their efforts bring much deserved and overdue recognition to Alabama for its role in the U.S. space program. But, we also hope that their initiative will result in greater awareness and pride among Alabamians for the role the state played in such an historic accomplishment. ■

Steve Sewell
Editor



Mark and Ralph Petroff with Saturn V