



## 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. With a staff of more than 40 professionals working in research, marketing, recruitment and trade, the Partnership provides support and resources to grow the state's economy.

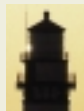
The Partnership was created in 1990 by a group of Alabama business leaders who shared a vision for a more dynamic economy in the state and a commitment to support the state's economic development efforts. Since its inception, EDPA has worked to accomplish several core objectives, which include: Raising 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



## Preparing for Success

Someone in the sports world once commented that the "will to win" is overrated. The critical factor is "the will to *prepare* to win." Another saying goes: "success occurs when preparation meets with opportunity." If this philosophy is true, then there are good signs that Alabama is on the right course for the future.

One can look around the state today and find plenty of examples of preparing for success. In fact, two of our feature stories in this issue of *Partners* focus on efforts to position Alabama for future growth.

This kind of purposeful and proactive economic development is encouraging. It's an indication of true vision and of the commitment that is necessary to bring about sustained economic growth in the state. Such attributes are important if we are to continue the success that we have enjoyed in Alabama in recent years—and reach even more ambitious goals.

The Alabama State Docks is one of our state's most important infrastructure assets. Its annual impact on Alabama's economy is an estimated \$3 billion and, more importantly, it is our primary gateway for international trade and commerce. Because the Docks operates on its own revenues, it would be tempting to take it for granted.

But, as you will read in the story beginning on page 28, Alabama is investing in an expansion and renovation project that will result in the Docks becoming an even bigger asset to the state, with infrastructure improvements that will make Alabama's port more competitive for moving high-value goods. In addition, a new management structure will make it possible for the State Docks to operate even more like a business, with a long-term strategic plan and clearly defined measures of accountability.

Alabama's efforts to attract interest from companies in the semiconductor industry have focused almost exclusively on preparedness. Working cooperatively through the Alabama Semiconductor Alliance, four communities have pre-certified sites for the semiconductor industry, demonstrating that they have the infrastructure in place to support the unique demands of such manufacturing facilities.

In addition, two-year colleges in the state have joined with the Alliance to implement an industry-approved microelectronics curriculum that will produce a qualified work force for the industry. It's a fine example of a solid partnership between economic developers and educators.

Our research universities, an extremely vital part of the state's infrastructure, also have an eye to the future. With the help of a just-announced \$35 million commitment from the State of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham will move forward with plans for a new research facility that will create 1,400 well-paying positions. It will be the first phase of a long-term plan that could ultimately create 3,400 jobs and attract an additional \$100 million in annual research funding for UAB.

In economic development, looking for opportunity is the easy part. Preparing to take advantage of future opportunities is the hard work requiring vision and leadership. Long-term planning will position this state far into the future. ■

*Jacquie Shaia is president and CEO of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama.*