



## 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.

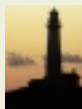
The Partnership was created in 1990 by a group of Alabama business leaders who shared a vision for a more dynamic economy in the state and a commitment to support the state's economic development efforts. Since its inception, EDPA has worked to accomplish several core objectives, which include: Raising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

## Lifting the Veil

For decades, few people in Alabama could claim to know much about Southern Research Institute. Its nondescript buildings on Birmingham's Southside might have been in plain sight, but there always seemed to be a veil of mystery surrounding the Institute.

Though SRI is an independent research organization, many assumed it to be a government body. And there wasn't much to dispel the misperception. SRI did its work quietly, without fanfare, and many of its projects did, in fact, originate from the federal government.

But the seeds for the SRI were actually planted by, and for, business in Alabama. In 1941, then Alabama Power Co. President Tom Martin provided the vision and the drive that led to the Institute's creation, believing that it could support industry in the state through research.

In time the National Institutes of Health became a primary customer, along with various government agencies that came to rely on SRI for leading research. The Institute might have been low profile, but it was held in high esteem among its clients for reliability and innovation.

Today, as you can read in Sandra Bearden's story that starts on page 21, SRI is involved in research projects that focus on making people healthier, businesses more productive, the environment cleaner and our nation

safer. In addition to the NIH and government agencies, its clients include major pharmaceutical companies and other private businesses.

SRI's most impressive accomplishments have come in drug development and discovery, but it also conducts leading research in engineering, environment and energy, homeland security, infectious diseases, and chemical and biological warfare. Its Transportation Division is supporting the state's rapidly growing automotive industry.

President and CEO Bob Lonergan arrived two years ago following a career in the private sector, bringing an entrepreneurial focus and under-

standing of the importance of being visible. He has SRI knocking on doors of business and industry, making them aware of the Institute's considerable capabilities.

Lonergan also realized that SRI is important to the state's economic development, and can have a much greater impact. The Institute is establishing closer relationships with economic developers, who recognize that access to such

a resource is valuable for companies looking to enhance productivity and competitiveness.

SRI achieved remarkable success operating quietly and under the radar for many years, but it's refreshing to see it assume a higher profile. With the veil lifted, more people can appreciate what a magnificent jewel Alabama has to offer. ■

*Steve Sewell*  
Editor

