

## Big Fish Stories

We have a few big fish stories to share in this issue of *Partners*, but unlike the suspicious nature of most tales about reeling in the big one, all of these are completely true. Honestly.

It would be hard to find a spot in Alabama that has inspired more big fish stories than beautiful Lake Eufaula. Called the “Bass Capital of the World,” this 46,000-acre fisherman’s paradise attracts serious and recreational anglers from throughout the country. It has also helped lure some serious businesses that impact the local economy. There’s more on leisure and business activities in the community of Eufaula in the article that begins on page 33.

The Bass Anglers Sportsmen Society (B.A.S.S.) is not only a big fish in Alabama, it’s a prominent player in all of outdoor sports. With 600,000 members, B.A.S.S. is the largest fishing organization in the world. The undisputed leader in promoting recreational and tournament fishing, this hugely successful Montgomery-based organization became part of ESPN Outdoors in 2001. Combine its innovation, reputation and record of success with the resources of ESPN, and its impact stands to become even greater. The story of the rise and growth of B.A.S.S. starts on page 20.

A number of major motion pictures have been filmed in Alabama, but

none has been bigger than the one set to begin production in and around Montgomery and Wetumpka in January (see *Advances*, page 9). *Big Fish*, a Columbia Pictures film, will be directed by Tim Burton (*Batman*, *Planet of the Apes*) and will star Albert

Finney, Ewan MacGregor and Jessica Lange.

The movie is based on the novel, *Big Fish: A Novel of Epic Proportions*, by Birmingham-native Daniel Wallace. Wallace joins a number of notable Alabama



writers whose books were adapted for the big screen, including Harper Lee (*To Kill A Mockingbird*); Winston Groom (*Forrest Gump*), Fannie Flagg (*Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*) and Mark Childress (*Crazy in Alabama*).

Once *Big Fish* has made its run in movie theaters, you’ll likely find the video or DVD at a local Movie Gallery. This Dothan-based company has quietly become a heavyweight in the video rental business by finding a niche in small towns. Sort of a big-fish-in-a-small-pond-strategy, if you will.

When you weigh all of the sizeable fish we have in Alabama, it’s easy to see why we go hook, line and sinker for their stories.

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