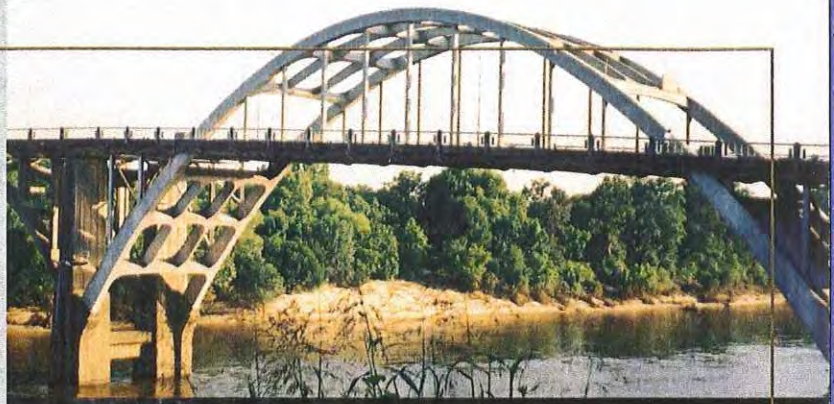
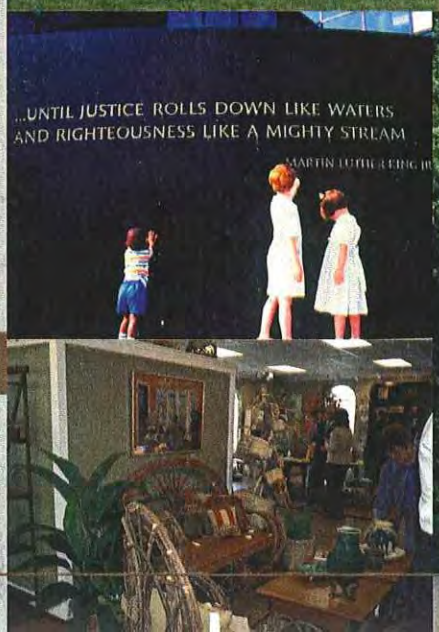
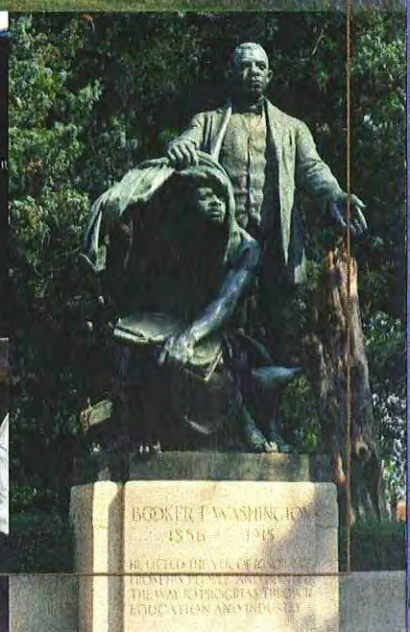
2009 Delta Regional Authority State Plan

State of Alabama







Bob Riley
Governor

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Bob Riley
GOVERNOR

State of Alabama

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Bill Johnson
DIRECTOR

January 31, 2009

Mr. Pete Johnson
Federal Co-Chair
Delta Regional Authority
236 Sharkey Avenue, Suite 400
Clarksdale, MS 38614

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Re: State of Alabama Delta Regional Development Plan

Dear Mr. Johnson:

We are pleased to submit the State of Alabama's Delta Regional Five Year Development Plan beginning with program year 2009. We believe the plan fulfills the Delta Regional Authority's regulatory requirements for submission, and highlights activities that serve some of Alabama's neediest communities and households. We are proud of this effort and believe it is indicative of Governor Riley's philosophy to provide progressive and compassionate leadership.

We appreciate the substantial assistance you and your staff have provided during the past year. We are gaining a better understanding of the program as time progresses. We look forward to working with you during the coming year to deliver the kind of assistance the people of Alabama deserve. If you have questions or concerns about Alabama's State Plan we will address them.

Sincerely,

Bill Johnson
Director

BJ:BMF:pbg
Enclosure

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STATE OF ALABAMA
DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY
MISSION STATEMENT

- Revitalize the economy of the region;
- Reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for citizens/people in the Delta;
- Enrich the Delta's quality of life by creating economy opportunity;
- To combat the continuation of social and economic depression throughout the region (or more simply—to solve people's problems);
- To be the catalyst for positive transformation of Delta communities;
- To increase and geographically disperse quality job opportunities throughout the Delta;
- To give hope to the people of the Delta;
- To empower the citizens of the Delta region to lead productive lives in an environment that is safe, enabling, and of high quality of life;
- To provide opportunities for people to improve their economic status;
- To improve the way of life in the DRA district through means of help in economic development and other related areas;
- To improve the quality of life of those who live in the Delta region;
- To enhance the quality of life in the Delta region through economic development;
- To provide assistance and promote change in the Delta region through leadership and funding support;
- Create a climate of opportunity.

STATE OF ALABAMA
DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY
5-YEAR STATE PLAN
FY 2009

I. Introduction

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) was established by Congress to promote economic growth and improve the quality of life in eight states, 240 counties and parishes. It is a unique partnership of federal, state, and local governments. Within the partnership, the Governor represents the State of Alabama. The responsibility for administration of the DRA program within Delta counties in Alabama lies with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). The Director of ADECA serves as the Governor's Alternate Representative to the Commission.

There are twenty counties located in the Delta Region in Alabama. The counties are: Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Escambia, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Russell, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox. Local governments are represented by multi-county development agencies called Local Development Districts (LDDs). The twenty counties of the Delta Regional Authority are served by six LDDs. See appendix 1 for a list of counties and county data.

On December 27, 2000, the Commission adopted a new strategic plan which would guide its investments in the years ahead. The plan provided a foundation for development in four major goal areas. These are education, infrastructure, transportation, and business development with emphasis on entrepreneurship.

The Delta Regional Authority requires each state to submit a Delta Regional Authority Development State Plan describing the Governor's goals and objectives for the Delta region for his or her state. This plan is designed to set forth the development priorities for the next five years. The policies for Delta Alabama are generated by the needs of the people in the region.

ADECA works closely with the six Local Development Districts (LDDs) in Delta Alabama in the development of eligible projects and the preparation of applications that are consistent with the DRA Code and guidelines. Each LDD operates under a Board of Directors composed of representatives from the various local governments. Each LDD helps DRA target and meet the needs of local communities and build community unity and leadership. The LDDs are an active and essential part of the DRA partnership. Citizen participation is achieved through public hearings held by the LDDs. In addition, a DRA workshop is held annually and allows for public participation.

The Governor has expressed his concern for the development of the state's economically distressed counties. He has established a Black Belt Commission (BBC) and continues to review recommendations made by a previous commission providing a study with recommendations to be carried out by a statewide economic development commission. The BBC is comprised of representatives and/or heads of all of the economic development entities in the State of Alabama and is charged with establishing a long-range, statewide strategic plan.

There are a number of committees involved which include thirteen of the Delta counties, including a committee for the distressed counties, infrastructure, incentives, education, health, and so forth. (See Appendix for Economic Development Matrix of those involved with the Black Belt and the Commerce Commission)

The mission of the Alabama Commerce Commission was to help the great State of Alabama become more competitive in economic development, which in turn would create a more productive and satisfying life for her citizens. One of the observations coming from the Alabama Commerce Commission was that if incomes in the twenty poorest counties of the state were to rise to the level of the state average, then Alabama—as a state—would rise in personal income to the national average.

We envision a DRA Alabama in which:

- Growth will be in all business sectors, allowing both new and existing businesses to prosper.

- Citizens can achieve economic independence by working in jobs that pay livable wages, are safe, and that provide opportunities for advancement.

- Delta communities will have a higher quality of life, access to excellent public schools and lifelong educational opportunities, quality health care, affordable and decent housing, and a clean environment.

- There is full integration into the global economy through effective and extensive cultural and educational exchanges, business transactions and networks, transportation infrastructure, and telecommunications systems.

- The development of strong local leaders and an active citizenry will chart their own future and implement sustainable, local strategies for economic development.

There are many issues facing Delta Alabama, including dramatic structural shifts in the various economic sectors, the quality of the workforce, the increasing importance of entrepreneurship, the strong influence of information technology, and the need for environmental protection as well as long-term issues, such as the consequences of inadequate education, poverty, transportation, and infrastructure needs. Public and private sectors will join with the citizens of the Delta to:

- Ensure that all students receive a strong, basic education regardless of where they live.
- Establish an integrated, accountable workforce development system.
- Provide resources to low income workers to remove barriers to work and economic stability.
- Establish a job strategy to grow and capture high wage jobs and high quality businesses.
- Equip communities with cutting-edge technology to connect them with the global economy.
- Protect the natural resource base to ensure long-term, shared prosperity.
- Provide access to healthcare, especially in medically underserved areas.
- Provide infrastructure for economic growth.

II. Economic Conditions

For both rural and metropolitan areas, the effectiveness of the traditional approach to economic development has begun to decline. Most communities (especially the rural communities) are missing opportunities which could be utilized to help increase job creation. Economic development agencies should expand their focus to include the development of an environment, which would foster growth from within the community, rural or urban, and be an integral and complementary part of the economic development process. Efforts will be made to develop an economic system that will bring together a cohesive, multifaceted system of orientation, training, and assistance.

Objectives of the concept are to: lessen traditional economic development dependency on recruiting and importing jobs outside of the community; diversify local/rural economies; promote economic development through small business creation, incubation, and assistance; attract and train innovative entrepreneurs; better use existing resources; and assist existing small- and

medium-sized businesses. A quality economic foundation for all regions of the state must exist in terms of physical infrastructure, transportation, and information infrastructures and human resources.

One of the primary factors that determine the potential and rate of growth within a county or region is access to basic infrastructure, such as public water, sewer, and transportation. While public and private water systems usually provide service beyond municipal and sometimes county boundaries, sewer service is mostly confined to the larger cities and the surrounding areas. Those areas, which lack access to basic infrastructure, experience the lowest overall growth and the lowest general standard of living (Alabama Rural Development Strategy 2001).

Another factor that affects growth and development is employment. Historically, most employment has been in the manufacturing and government sectors; however, there is a trend towards transitioning into more diversified economies. Most rural counties still have a higher percentage of manufacturing and government jobs and less service, professional, and retail jobs than urban areas.

Rural communities often lack the income levels and customer bases that are essential to support large retail and service sector businesses. As the number and percentage of manufacturing jobs in rural areas declines, workers will need to develop new job skills, accept lower paying local service and retail jobs, or commute greater distances to job opportunities in larger cities. Since adults in rural areas are less likely to have graduated from high school, intensive workforce training programs will be needed to teach the necessary skills to adapt to new or first-time job opportunities.

Low income and poor access to health care facilities and services continues to be a defining characteristic of rural Delta Alabama. Although many of the rural Delta counties have made strong gains in median family incomes in recent years, most of the increases may be attributed to an influx of suburban residents who commute to larger urban centers rather than any real increase in local wages.

III. DRA Challenges and Development Opportunities

Challenges are a long-standing problem transition to new economy, low wages, increasing education attainment to meet future growth and development. There is a fervent need to provide infrastructure, improve education, health care accessibility, access to capital and technical assistance for entrepreneurs, provide assistance to communities for leadership development, develop telecommunications infrastructure, and

increase markets for small- and medium-sized businesses through increased trade.

- Increase the supply of employable workers by placing emphasis on upgrading skills among adults who lack a high school diploma.

- Reduce the number of young people who enter the work place in the future without a high school education.

- Develop a comprehensive, cooperative model for infrastructure development that will promote economic growth along corridors and create jobs for Alabamians.

- Provide accessible, affordable health care to Delta Region residents.

- Penetration of overseas markets—provides access to global markets for small- and medium-sized companies.

- Facilitate advanced integrated public and private telecommunications systems that are affordable, easy to use, and accessible to Delta citizens in homes, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government agencies, and businesses.

Goals

Four goals were established by the DRA to guide activities undertaken by the Authority. The State of Alabama will direct efforts to implement these goals in the following way:

Goal 1: Advance the productivity and economic competitiveness of the Delta workforce.

- To develop a workforce that is educated and well-trained for employment.

- Strengthen programs that provide basic skills and workforce training to increase employee capabilities, improve job skills, and upgrade marketable skills.

- Provide access to education opportunities to gain skills and knowledge required for the workforce to participate in a global economy.

- Strengthen basic skills programs in the public school system and establish specific competency requirements.

- Provide access to programs that will promote education excellence and promote lifelong learning.

- Increase adult literacy.

- Provide children with skills needed to be successful in school.

- Utilize telecommunications, computers, and other technological capabilities to deliver education and training programs.

- Reduce the school dropout rate in our Delta counties.

- Support programs that will expand to the use of telecommunications in education, especially K through 12.

- Assist communities in developing programs and services for families and caregivers of young children that will ensure that children are healthy and prepared to succeed in school.

- Ensure that students attain the skills and knowledge that they will need in the workplace and for continued learning.

- Anticipate and respond quickly to changes in the workplace.

- Support training in the public, private, and non-profit sectors in Delta Alabama with the use of new technologies and applications.

Goal 2: Strengthen the capacity of the people of the DRA to compete in the global economy (making communities flourish).

- Work with public and private partners to identify and develop intermodal transportation facilities and corridors in Delta Alabama.

- Support efforts to bring adequate telecommunications to Delta counties and support efforts to link new and existing telecommunications networks.

- Support special innovative service telecommunications applications and programs.

- Provide Delta Region counties access to safe drinking water and wastewater facilities.

- Provide water, sewer, and physical infrastructure needed to serve new and expanding industries and commercial development.

- Support development of new industrial sites.

- Provide capital funding for the development of small business incubators.

- Develop "small parks" with telecommunications infrastructure that will meet the needs of information industries.

- Increase economic progress and local capacity through strategic planning, technology, and leadership development.

- Increase the number of people participating in leadership development programs and support efforts to establish ongoing local leadership training programs for both adults and youth.

- Assist local communities to institute strategic planning and direction for future progress and improvement, including innovative, cost-effective delivery services.

- Encourage the use of telecommunications technology at all levels to assist community and economic development.

Goal 3: Develop and improve DRA's infrastructures to make the region economically competitive.

- Assist counties in restructuring their local economies in order to provide more opportunities for high-value, high-wage employment.

- Support infrastructure development to increase tourism based on economic impact.

- Support training programs in economic planning and development and in export development, and increase the number of small- and medium-sized businesses engaged in international trade.

- Support programs that increase participation of DRA companies in trade events.

- Assist existing firms in marketing their products and services in international markets.

- Support planning efforts, including inventories of available resource to provide information and knowledge for growth and development.

Goal 4: Strengthen the Delta's physical and digital connections to the global economy.

- In DRA's rural counties, the number of counties and parishes totaling high-speed service is almost 18 percent. The accessibility, awareness, and utilization of broadband infrastructure and resources are absolute necessities for individuals, business, government, and institutional success.
- Increase broadband services.
- Assemble and distribute resources for information technology.
- Coordinate website construction.
- Increase knowledge, training, focus resources for planning and implementation.

DRA GOAL 1: Advance the Productivity and Economic Competitiveness of the Delta Workforce.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Foster Civic Entrepreneurship

State Strategy 1.1.1: Support training programs to increase the proficiency of business development practitioners, economic development officials, and international trade professionals.

State Strategy 1.1.2: Assist local communities to institute strategic planning and direction for future progress and improvement of their local economy.

State Strategy 1.1.3: Support local efforts to form partnerships, both short-term and long-term, between local governments, nonprofit community-based groups, and private businesses for economic and community improvement.

State Strategy 1.1.4: Encourage energy-efficiency through school, nonprofit, and community-based programs.

Strategic Objective 1.2: Diversify the Economic Base

State Strategy 1.2.1: Provide capital funding for the development and expansion of small business incubators.

State Strategy 1.2.2: Encourage and support revolving loan fund capitalization efforts for Local Development Districts.

State Strategy 1.2.3: Support efforts to improve access to capital for small- and medium-sized businesses.

State Strategy 1.2.4: Promote job creation through investment in the development of renewable energy resources through the Delta Region.

Strategic Objective 1.3: Enhance Entrepreneurial Activity in the Region

State Strategy 1.3.1: Provide support for programs that seek to establish an entrepreneurial climate throughout the Delta Region.

State Strategy 1.3.2: Support programs and initiatives that provide training, assistance, and other resources to entrepreneurs for the creation and expansion of local businesses.

State Strategy 1.3.3: Support programs that encourage and teach youth entrepreneurship.

Strategic Objective 1.4: Develop and Strengthen Strategic Assets for Local Economies.

State Strategy 1.4.1: Support local efforts to develop and enhance the assets of the Delta Region to increase the level of domestic and international visitation.

State Strategy 1.4.2: Support infrastructure development to increase tourism, based on the economic impact of the development.

State Strategy 1.4.3: Support training programs and workshops on tourism development for local areas.

State Strategy 1.4.4: Support the development, production, and use of local assets for the energy needs of DRA.

Strategic Objective 1.5: Increase the Domestic and Global Competitiveness of the Existing Economic Base

State Strategy 1.5.1: Support programs that will increase goods and services exported from the Delta Region.

State Strategy 1.5.2: Encourage the use of e-commerce applications by small- and medium-sized enterprises to improve their supply, manufacturing, and distribution chains.

State Strategy 1.5.3: Support initiatives that promote increased foreign direct investment in the Delta Region.

State Strategy 1.5.4: Support technical assistance to businesses and organization for achievement of operational efficiencies through energy conservation.

DRA GOAL 2: Strengthen the Capacity of the People of the DRA to Compete in the Global Economy (Making Communities Flourish).

Strategic Objective 2.1: Foster Civic Entrepreneurship

State Strategy 2.1.1: Support youth leadership development efforts through leadership training, experience-based education programs, apprenticeships, youth-operated enterprises, and cooperative education activities.

State Strategy 2.1.2: Support efforts to establish ongoing local leadership training programs.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Enhance Workforce Skills through Training

State Strategy 2.2.1: Strengthen programs that provide basic skills and workforce training to increase employee capabilities, improve job skills, and upgrade marketable skills.

State Strategy 2.2.2: Support workforce readiness programs that provide skills necessary to acquire jobs.

State Strategy 2.2.3: Strengthen basic skills programs in the public school system and establish specific competency requirements.

State Strategy 2.2.4: Continue to improve public education through the implementation of statewide reforms.

State Strategy 2.2.5: Support programs and mobilize resources to increase adult literacy.

State Strategy 2.2.6: Support programs and initiatives that provide for career planning and placement.

Strategic Objective 2.3: Increase Access to Quality Child Care and Early Childhood Education

State Strategy 2.3.1: Support initiatives that provide opportunities for a quality preschool experience through parent support programs, quality childcare, and preschool programs.

State Strategy 2.3.2: Assist communities in developing programs and services for families and caregivers of young children that will ensure that all children are healthy and prepared to succeed in school.

State Strategy 2.3.3: Support educational programs in K-12 that will expand and improve current programs.

State Strategy 2.3.4: Support programs that improve teacher quality by increasing professional development programs.

State Strategy 2.3.5: Support programs that will expand the use of telecommunications in education, especially K-12.

State Strategy 2.3.6: Support initiatives that will provide technical assistance to communities on long-term financing, and resource identification for the continuation of exceptional programs.

State Strategy 2.3.7: Support initiatives that will help parents and caregivers learn positive skills to help them meet the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of all children.

Strategic Objective 2.4: Increase Educational Attainment and Achievement

State Strategy 2.4.1: Support initiatives that promote lifelong learning.

State Strategy 2.4.2: Support programs that reduce the school dropout rate in our Delta Regional counties to equal better than the national average.

State Strategy 2.4.3: Utilize telecommunications, computers, and other technological capabilities to deliver education and training programs.

Strategic Objective 2.5: Provide Access to Health Care Professionals

State Strategy 2.5.1: Support educational programs that train health care professionals who will locate in the Delta Region of Alabama.

State Strategy 2.5.2: Support programs to provide primary health care to DRA citizens.

Strategic Objective 2.6: Promote Health through Wellness and Prevention

State Strategy 2.6.1: Bring the infant mortality rate into parity with the nation.

State Strategy 2.6.2: Support programs to strengthen prenatal and neonatal health care and to provide education programs to reduce the infant mortality rates.

State Strategy 2.6.3: Support programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

DRA Goal 3: Develop and improve DRA's infrastructures to make the region economically competitive.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Foster Civic Entrepreneurship

State Strategy 3.1.1: Encourage local leaders to explore innovative, cost-effective arrangements for delivery of services, including service consolidations.

State Strategy 3.1.2: Provide training, consultation, and financial support for local leaders and organizations to build capacity to address infrastructure challenges.

State Strategy 3.1.3: Support partnerships and regional efforts in infrastructure development.

State Strategy 3.1.4: Encourage water and wastewater infrastructure development through "self-help" projects that use the skills and commitment of local communities.

State Strategy 3.1.5: Support strategic planning initiatives for local organizations and agencies to capitalize on economic development opportunities created by the DRA Highway System.

Strategic Objective 3.2: Build and Enhance Basic Infrastructure

State Strategy 3.2.1: Support job creation and retention by investing in water, sewer, site development, industrial access roads, and other physical

infrastructure to serve new and expanding industrial and commercial development.

State Strategy 3.2.2: Pursuant to DRA's residential service policy, ensure public health, regulatory compliance, and economic opportunity by providing new and existing customers with safe drinking water. The State will give priority to water projects that serve areas with documented health hazards.

State Strategy 3.2.3: Pursuant to DRA's residential service policy, ensure public health, regulatory compliance, and economic development by providing new and existing customers with wastewater disposal and treatment services. The State will give priority to wastewater projects that serve areas with documented health hazards.

State Strategy 3.2.4: Support the development and construction of strategic community facilities that will enhance opportunities for job creation and retention.

Strategic Objective 3.3: Increase the Accessibility and Use of Telecommunications Technology

State Strategy 3.3.1: Support initiative that implement Alabama's Strategic Plan for Telecommunications in DRA's area.

State Strategy 3.3.2: Support efforts to link new and existing telecommunication networks.

State Strategy 3.3.3: Support training in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in Delta Alabama in the use of new technologies and applications.

State Strategy 3.3.4: Support projects that will evaluate existing architecture, infrastructure and equipment or facilitate the development of new applications and networks.

State Strategy 3.3.5: Support projects that will assist in the development of architecture infrastructure and equipment for new networks.

State Strategy 3.3.6: Support promising and innovative telecommunications applications and programs.

State Strategy 3.3.7: Encourage strategic investment in telecommunications infrastructure, including the use of conduit for fiber optic cable in basic infrastructure projects, which increases local, regional, and global connectivity.

State Strategy 3.3.8: Develop "smart parks" with telecommunications infrastructure, which will meet the needs of information industries.

Strategic Objective 3.4: Build and Enhance Environmental Assets

State Strategy 3.4.1: Support programs to raise awareness and several support for the reclamation and reuse of brownfields properties in industrial areas and mine-impacted communities.

State Strategy 3.4.2: Encourage eco-industrial development that can responsibly take advantage of the region's natural resource assets.

State Strategy 3.4.3: Support regional planning and economic development policies and programs that promote good stewardship of the region's natural resources.

State Strategy 3.4.4: Support programs that encourage planning for, and development of, healthy and livable communities.

Strategic Objective 3.5: Promote the Development of an Intermodal Transportation Network

State Strategy 3.5.1: Work with state and local partners to identify and develop intermodal transportation facilities.

State Strategy 3.5.2: Support programs to encourage the expanded use of existing intermodal facilities.

State Strategy 3.5.3: Extend rail spurs into industrial areas, with a priority on those that serve multiple sites.

DRA Goal 4: Strengthen the Delta's physical and digital connections to the global economy.

Strategic Objective

Strategic Objective 4.1: Increase the Accessibility and Use of Broadband Technology

State Strategy 4.1.1: Support initiatives that implement Alabama's Strategic Plan for Telecommunications in the Delta Region.

State Strategy 4.1.2: Support efforts to link new and existing telecommunications networks.

State Strategy 4.1.3: Support training in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in Delta Alabama in the use of new technologies and applications.

State Strategy 4.1.4: Support projects that will evaluate existing architecture, infrastructure and equipment or facilitate the development of new applications and networks.

State Strategy 4.1.5: Support projects that will assist in the development of architecture infrastructure and equipment for new networks.

State Strategy 4.1.6: Support promising and innovative telecommunications applications and programs.

State Strategy 4.1.7: Encourage strategic investment in telecommunications infrastructure, including the use of conduit for fiber optic cable in basic infrastructure projects, which increases local, regional, and global connectivity.

State Strategy 4.1.8: Develop "smart parks" with telecommunications infrastructure, which will meet the needs of information industries.

Strategic Objective 4.2: Redirect rural transportation infrastructure funding into linked networks

State Strategy 4.2.1: Work with state and local partners to identify and develop intermodal transportation facilities.

State Strategy 4.2.2: Support programs to encourage the expanded use of existing intermodal facilities.

State Strategy 4.2.3: Extend rail spurs into the industrial areas, with a priority on those that serve multiple sites.

Strategic Objective 4.3: Promote the Development of a "New" and Innovative Broadband Program

State Strategy 4.3.1: Support regional planning and economic development policies.

State Strategy 4.3.2: Support programs that encourage planning for and development of increased broadband capabilities for the 20 counties in the Delta Region.

State Strategy 4.3.3: Support projects that will evaluate existing broadband infrastructure expanding and increasing knowledge.

Six Local Development Districts (LDDs) serve the Delta Region. The population and occupation trends of the Delta Region are given by Local Development Districts.

District 2
Delta Region Counties: Greene, Hale and Pickens

THE REGION

The West Alabama region is a seven-county, 5,384 square mile area located in West Central Alabama. Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa are the counties that comprise this region. The region represents 10.5% of the State's land area but is inhabited by only 268,208)6.03%) people. The character of the land is rural with numerous small towns and cities except Tuscaloosa County, which contains the Tuscaloosa Metropolitan area.

The West Alabama Planning and Development Council (WAPDC) was founded in 1966. The agency originally consisted only of the governments in Tuscaloosa County. As other counties and municipalities joined, the name was changed from the Tuscaloosa Area Council of Local Governments to its current name. The Council's goal is to develop and implement policies and programs that can help local governments plan and act together on issues of regional significance. The WAPDC serves as a regional planning and development commission, providing services in economic development, community planning and technical assistance, aging programs, Medicaid Waiver services, metropolitan transportation planning and a senior employment service. The WAPDC membership is comprised of seven counties and thirty-six municipalities.

POPULATION

The West Alabama region's population as reported by the 2000 census is 268,208, representing an increase of 8.53% compared to the region's 1990 population. Six of the seven counties gained population during the decade.

	1980	1990	2000	%Change 1990-2000
WAPDC REGION	236,564	247,125	268,208	8.53%
BIBB	15,723	16,576	20,826	25.64
FAYETTE	18,809	17,962	18,495	2.97
GREENE	11,021	10,153	9,974	-1.75
HALE	15,604	15,498	17,185	10.89
LAM,AR	16,453	15,715	15,904	1.20
PICKENS	21,481	20,699	20,949	1.21
TUSCALOOSA	137,473	150,522	164,875	9.54

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2000 Data

INCOME—PERSONAL & PER CAPITA

Personal income is the current income received by residents from all sources, but exclusive of transfers among persons, measured before deductions of income and other personal taxes. Per capita income is the average income for each person, that is when all income for a defined area is divided by all persons living in that area.

Per Capita Income offers a clear picture as to the economic blight being suffered by the people of this district. The difference in the district per capita and that of the State continues to widen. With Tuscaloosa County taken out of the picture, the difference would be much greater. With the exception of Lamar County, all counties in the district have experienced more than a 100 percent increase during the period shown, and the gap continues to widen.

PER CAPITA INCOME

	1984	1989	1998
BIBB	7,756	10,910	17,680
FAYETTE	9,018	11,452	18,191
GREENE	5,948	8,376	14,932
HALE	6,644	8,179	15,738
LAMAR	9,496	11,797	17,814
PICKENS	7,859	9,956	17,192
TUSCALOOSA	9,797	13,886	22,314

District 5
Delta Region Counties: Bullock, Butler, Lowndes, and Macon

The South Central Alabama Region is a six-county, 4,011.3 square mile area located in central Alabama. Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon, and Pike are the State's counties that comprise this region. The region represents 7.9 percent of the State's land area but is inhabited by only 113,961 people. The principal character of the land is rural, strewn with numerous small communities and towns. (Montgomery County and its municipalities are part of the region when it comes to U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) matters. For the purpose of this Statewide Plan, however, Montgomery is discussed in the Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission's (CARPDC) sections.)

The South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC) was founded in 1969. The Commission's goal is to develop and implement policies and programs that can help local governments plan and act together on issues of regional significance. SCADC serves as a regional planning and development

commission, providing services in economic development, community planning and technical assistance, aging programs, Medicaid Waiver services, and geographic information systems. SCADC membership is comprised of six counties and twenty-six municipalities (not including Montgomery County and its municipalities).

POPULATION

The South Central Alabama region's population reported by Census 2000 stands at 113,961, representing an increase of two percent compared to the region's 1990 population.

	1980	1990	2000	%Change 1990-2000
SCADC	114,518	111,750	113,961	2.0
Bullock	10,596	11,042	11,714	6.1
Butler	21,680	21,892	21,399	-2.3
Crenshaw	14,110	13,635	13,665	0.2
Lowndes	13,253	12,658	13,473	6.4
Macon	26,829	24,928	24,105	-3.3
Pike	28,050	27,595	29,605	7.3
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000				

Population projections through 2015 show little or no growth for counties in the South Central Alabama region.

INCOME—PERSONAL & PER CAPITA

Personal income is the current income received by residents from all sources, but exclusive of transfers among person, measured before deductions of income and other personal taxes. Per capita income is the average income for each person, that is when all income for a defined area is divided by all persons living in that area.

Per Capita Income offers a clear picture as to the economic blight being suffered by the people of this district. One will notice that the State average in 2006 $36,714 compared to the region per capita average income of approximately

$24,886. This is a staggering difference and the disparity between the state per capita income and the district per capita income seems to be expanding even though there have been tremendous increases at the regional level.

PER CAPITA INCOME

	1989	1999	2006
U.S.	18,566	26,482	36,714
Alabama	13,669	22,987	30,894
SCADC Avg.	10,287	17,834	24,886
Bullock	9,212	16,830	20,487
Butler	10,247	17,462	25,545
Crenshaw	11,057	20,436	29,521
Lowndes	10,628	15,252	23,066
Macon	8,825	15,945	20,893
Pike	11,752	21,079	29,805
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (Haver Analytics), April 2008. Table CA1-3 [1]			

* Per capita personal income was computed using Census Bureau midyear population estimates. Estimates for 2000 to 2006 reflect County population estimates available as of April 2008.

District 6
Delta Region Counties: Region six is the largest Delta Region with all ten counties included in the Delta.

The Alabama Tombigbee Region is a ten-county, 9,700 square mile area located in Southwest Alabama. Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Marengo, Perry, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox are the State's counties that comprise this region. The region represents 18 percent of the State's land area but is inhabited by only 209, 0-45 people. The character of the land is rural, strewn with numerous small communities and towns.

The Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC) was founded in 1970. The ATRC's goal is to develop and implement policies and programs that can help local governments plan and act together on issues of regional significance. The ATRC serves as a regional planning and development commission, providing services in economic development, community planning and technical assistance, aging programs, Medicaid waiver services, and rural transportation. The ATRC membership is comprised of 10 counties and 47 municipalities.

POPULATION

The Alabama Tombigbee region's population reported by Census 200 stands at 209, 045, representing a decrease of 1.012 percent compared to the region's 1990 population.

Population Figures for the ATRC Region

	1980	1990	2000	2007	% Change 2000-2007
Choctaw	16,839	16,018	15,922	14,173	-11.0%
Clarke	27,702	27,240	27,867	26,496	-4.9%
Conecuh	15,884	14,054	14,089	13,160	-6.6%
Dallas	53,981	48,130	46,365	43,079	-7.1%
Marengo	25,047	23,084	22,539	21,276	-5.6%
Monroe	25,047	23,084	22,539	21,276	-6.4%
Perry	15,012	12,759	11,861	10,602	-10.6%
Sumter	16,908	16,174	14,798	13,306	-10.1%
Washington	16,821	16,694	18,097	17,226	-4.8%
Wilcox	14,755	13,568	13,183	12,779	-3.1%
Total	**225,600**	**211,689**	**209,045**	**194,861**	
Source: U.S Census Bureau					

Population projections through 2005 show little or no growth for counties in the Alabama Tombigbee region.

INCOME—PERSONAL & PER CAPITA

Personal income is the current income received by residents from all sources, but exclusive of transfers among person, measured before deductions of income and other personal taxes. Per capita income is the average income for each person, that is when all income for a defined area is divided by all persons living in that area.

Per Capita Income offers a clear picture as to the economic blight being suffered by the people of this district. One will notice that the State average in 1998 was $22,054 compared to the region per capita income of approximately $17,000. This is a staggering difference and the disparity between the State per capita income and the District per capita income seems to be expanding even though there have been tremendous increases at the regional level.

Per Capita Income Figures for the ATRC Region							
Rank (of 67) in 2006		1984	1989	1998	2006	2006 Percent of State Avg.	2006 Percent of National Avg.
41	Choctaw	8,515	10,230	17,780	25,114	81%	68%
44	Clarke	8,099	11,665	18,309	24,856	80%	68%
54	Conecuh	7,679	10,506	18,104	23,938	77%	65%
40	Dallas	8,126	10,313	17,675	25,250	82%	69%
15	Marengo	7,688	10,729	18,959	28,190	91%	77%
46	Monroe	8,888	11,495	18,094	24,697	80%	67%
61	Perry	5,709	7,643	14,190	22,517	73%	61%
64	Sumter	6,703	9,803	15,071	21,401	69%	58%
60	Washington	7,878	10,694	17,912	22,701	73%	62%
67	Wilcox	7,283	9,448	13,728	18,895	61%	51%

Source: Regional Economic Information System, Bureau of Economic Analysis

A. EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Table 11 shows employment numbers broken down by industry for the ATRC region. By far manufacturing is the largest industry in the region followed by government positions and retail.

Table 11: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY	
2004 ATRC REGION	**TOTALS**
Total employment	88,381
Wage and salary employment	71,725
Proprietors employment	16,656
Farm proprietors employment	3,806
Nonfarm proprietors employment	12,850
Farm employment	4,554
Nonfarm employment	83,827
Private employment	68,828
Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other	1,189
Mining	82
Utilities	367
Construction	3,995
Manufacturing	18,396

Wholesale trade	1,298
Retail trade	9,751
Transportation and warehousing	3,803
Information	665
Finance and insurance	2,004
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,292
Professional and technical services	884
Management of companies and enterprises	154
Administrative and waste services	2,161
Educational services	794
Health care and social assistance	3,362
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	302
Accommodation and food services	2,750
Other services, except public administration	5,576
Government and government enterprises	14,999
Federal, civilian	626
Military	1,306
State and local	13,067
State government	2,680
Local government	10,387

Source: Census 2000

FOREST RESOURCES

The timber/ forest products industry is the largest industry in the region. Table 12 shows the cash receipts from timber for the years 2003 and 2004. In nine of the regions ten counties, a forest related industry is among the largest employers. Weyerhaeuser, Boise Cascade, Georgia Pacific, Rock Tenn, and International Paper employee the largest percentage of the region's workers in this industry. This industry continues to expand also; Louisiana Pacific is constructing an OSB mill in Thomasville expected to employee around 130 people.

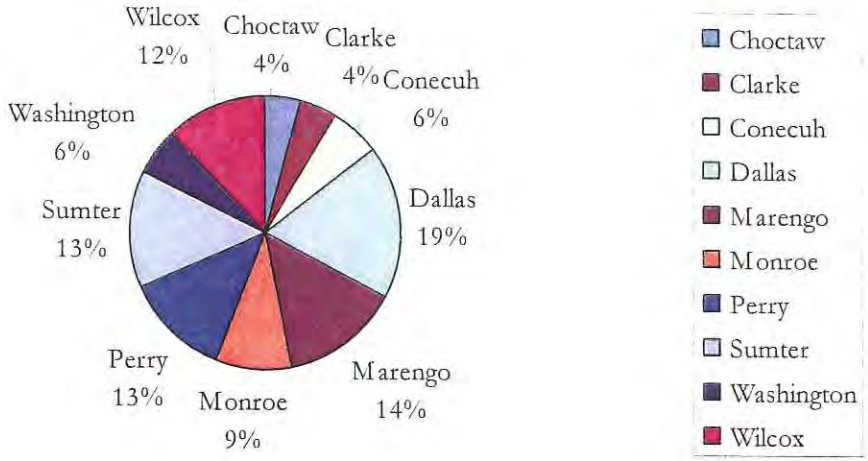
TABLE 12 :CASH RECEIPTS FROM FARM MARKETINGS 2003-2004 (THOUSANDS OF $)								
County	Private Non-Farm	Timber	Forest Industry Timber		Government Timber		Total Farm and Forestry	
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
Choctaw	13,458	27,231	3,148	6,369	143	289	24,815	45,158
Clarke	42,941	56,057	6,305	8,233	802	1,047	56,470	72,580
Conecuh	10,247	17,724	7,203	12,458	*	*	31,175	42,749
Dallas	4,692	12,324	1,345	3,533	39	102	56,036	71,847
Marengo	12,053	29,481	2,584	6,323	*	*	38,226	64,892
Monroe	19,056	29,291	9,840	15,133	589	905	66,303	77,726
Perry	3,758	7,018	1,087	2,030	582	1,087	26,396	30,466
Sumter	4,330	12,540	481	1,392	169	490	22,450	34,848
Washington	14,065	28,311	455	916	8	16	30,945	51,035
Wilcox	10,610	27,420	2,233	5,772	355	917	25,435	51,333
ATRC Region	**135,210**	**247,397**	**34,681**	**62,159**	**2,687**	**4,853**	**378,251**	**542,634**

Source: Alabama Agriculture Statistics Service

AGRICULTURE

Although declining in past years, agriculture continues to be a very important economic force in the Alabama Tombigbee region. Many factors have brought on the decline in agriculture, but perhaps none as evident as the decline in the price farmers receive for their products and the increase in cost of production. Farming today has become big business and the small family farm is fast becoming a thing of the past. Table 13 and Figure 5 provide statistics on the number of farms, acres of land in farming, and average farm size in the ATRC region.

Total Farm Acreage in the ATRC Region
Percentage by County
Total Acreage = 1,314,668



Source: Alabama Agriculture Statistics Service

TABLE 13: FARM STATISTICS FOR THE ATRC REGION			
County	**Number of Farms**	**Land in Farms**	**Average Farm Size**
		Acres	
Choctaw	244	55,224	226
Clarke	284	56,962	201
Conecuh	369	81,825	222
Dallas	490	235,894	481
Marengo	508	188,892	372
Monroe	443	119,992	271
Perry	376	165,018	439
Sumter	443	176,878	399
Washington	396	73,942	187
Wilcox	306	160,041	523
Total	3,859	1,314,668	332

Table 14 gives a breakdown of cash receipts in the ATRC region. The table provides the total for all commodities, government payments, farm forest products, and total farm receipts. Figure # illustrates the breakdown of total cash receipts from farming in the region. The figure shows that Dallas County accounts for 25% of the region's farm receipts.

TABLE 14: CASH RECEIPTS FOR THE ATRC REGION 2004				
County	2004 Cash Receipts (thousands of dollars)			
	Total All Commodities	Government Payments	Farm Forest Products	Total Farm Receipts*
Choctaw	7,860	135	2,713	8,076
Clarke	3,198	158	3,658	6,233
Conecuh	7,572	1,078	3,375	12,544
Dallas	44,240	3,958	4,529	47,549
Marengo	18,559	1,862	7,342	23,183
Monroe	21,813	2,994	6,032	31,411
Perry	16,031	1,311	1,844	20,725
Sumter	15,340	1,376	2,614	17,816
Washington	17,769	423	2,331	16,415
Wilcox	8,064	962	7,621	11,710
Total	160,446	14,257	42,059	195,662
*Includes other farm income (machine hire and custom work, custom feeding fees, and other business related income.				

Source: Alabama Agriculture Statistics Service

Percentage of Total Farm Receipts in ATRC Region

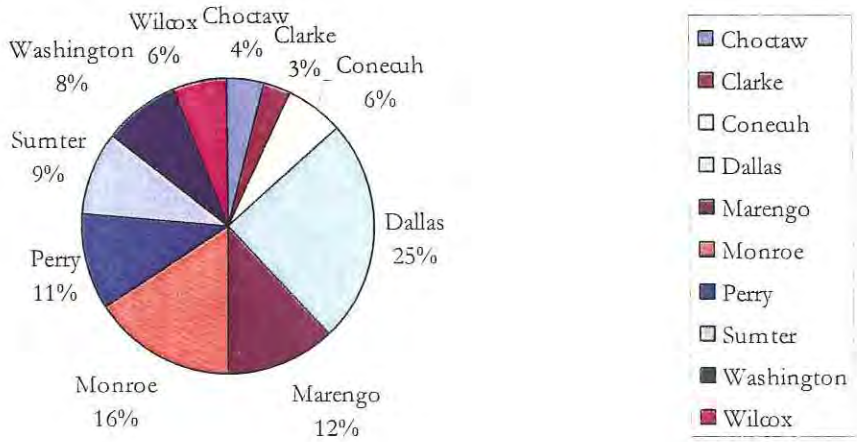


Figure 6: Total Farm Receipts
Source: Alabama Agriculture Statistics Service

LARGE EMPLOYERS

In addition to the forest product industry, there are numerous other manufacturing operations within the region and surrounding areas that employee large numbers. There are many sewing operations dispersed throughout the region. New Era Cap Company, which makes professional baseball caps, has two factories in the region employing over 500 persons. Other sewing concerns include AC Fabricators, Vanity Fair, American Apparel, and Meadowcraft. Auto manufacturing has also provided many job opportunities to parts of the region. Hyundai Motors and its spin-off producers provide over 400 jobs to Dallas County residents. Guyoung, an automotive stamping operation, employs over one-hundred workers in Conecuh County.

Other categories providing large numbers of jobs are healthcare, local government, and public school systems. Local hospitals are included in the list of top employers in three of the region's ten counties. In Perry County, both of the nursing homes are considered large employers. County and local governments also provide employment to a large number of people in the ATRC region. Public school systems and public post secondary systems rank high in every county in the region with regards to number employed.

B. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Alabama's number one ranked Workforce Development Program has extended its reach in to every county in the ATRC region. The program provides One-Stop Career Centers and career opportunities on post-secondary campuses serving all ten counties. The region is divided in to two workforce development regions (Regions 6 and 9), each having specific goals to best meet local needs. These regions have boards that work in coordination with the Office of State Workforce Development. For specific industrial projects, the Alabama Industrial Development Training Program (AIDT) is available on an "as needed"basis. This program provides training for both new and existing industries labor pools.

In addition, a recently announced U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant in the amount of $25 million will enhance workforce development in some of ATRC's counties.

C. UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment rates in the ATRC region have decreased and then began to increase over the past five years (Table 15). From the period between 2004 and 2006 unemployment rates in all ten counties have decreased. In 2007 and 2008, the region has seen a steady increase in unemployment claims filed due to the downturn of the economy. When compared to both the state and national averages, the region continues to have higher percentages of unemployed workers.

TABLE 15: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR ATRC COUNTIES					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
United States	**5.5**	**5.1**	**4.6**	**4.6**	**4.8**
Alabama	**5.6**	**4**	**3.6**	**3.5**	**5.7**
Choctaw	8.5	6.1	5.1	5.3	7.3
Clarke	8.8	5.9	5.6	5.4	7.8
Conecuh	8.6	5.7	5	5.7	8
Dallas	10.2	7.9	7.4	7.5	9.7
Marengo	6.2	5.3	4.1	4.8	6.4
Monroe	7.4	5.6	5.5	5.7	8.8
Perry	10.1	8.2	7.6	7.7	10
Sumter	9.5	6.7	6.1	5.8	7.4
Washington	9.6	5.7	5.2	5.3	7.2
Wilcox	11.9	8.5	7.7	8.6	12.3
Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, Winter 2009.					

D. UNDEREMPLOYMENT

The Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Alabama released a study of underemployment by Workforce Investment Area. ATRC's region has counties in two Workforce Investment Advisory Areas. These regions are 6 and 9. Sumter, Choctaw, Marengo, Perry, Dallas, and Wilcox make up Region 6. Washington, Clarke, Monroe, and Conecuh are included in Region 9 along with non-ATRC counties Escambia and Baldwin.

The study found that a large percentage of workers in the ATRC region are underemployed. Underemployment is defined as persons who believe that their education and training, skills, or experience are not fully utilized in their current job and that they qualify for higher paying or more satisfying jobs. Region 6, which was composed of six ATRC counties, had an underemployment rate of 28.5%. This figure was higher than the state average of 24%. Region 9, which includes Clarke, Monroe, Washington, and Conecuh counties, had an underemployment rate of 22.8%. Table 16 is a summary of the repots findings for ATRC counties.

TABLE 16: UNDEREMPLOYMENT IN ATRC REGION		
County	Underemployment Rate	Available Labor Pool
Choctaw	25%	1,468
Clarke	22.20%	3,457
Conecuh	31.70%	1,998
Dallas	30.80%	6,783
Marengo	22.60%	3,017
Monroe	20%	2,338
Perry	26.40%	1,323
Sumter	30.90%	1,816
Washington	30.50%	1,918
Wilcox	34.50%	1,582

Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

E. ECONOMIC CLUSTERS IN THE ATRC REGION

GROWING ECONOMIC CLUSTERS

NORTH CLARKE COUNTY

Development of the North Clarke Industrial Park, anchored by the $200 million Louisiana Pacific Plant construction, has spurred economic development. This project is partially funded by a tax increase enacted by the Clarke County Commission to fund infrastructure in industrial parks throughout the county. The project also includes infrastructure grants from federal agencies, including the EDA. Tied to this project is a new Thomasville water treatment plant along with storage facilities. Significant business, institutional and professional expansion is also fueling Thomasville's economic expansion.

DALLAS-MONTGOMERY-AUTAUGA COUNTIES

Construction of Hyundai Motor Company's first U.S. plant in Montgomery is currently driving development in this cluster. Spin-offs from Hyundai Motor have provided increased development and accompanying employment in all these counties. Dallas County, one of ATRC's ten counties, has three suppliers: Renosol Seating, Hanil E-HWA Interior Systems Alabama, and Lear/Kyungshin-Sales Marketing. These three have provided hundreds of new jobs for the area.

CONECUH COUNTY (I-65 CORRIDOR)

Infrastructure improvements and the emergence of the Coastal-Gateway Economic Development Authority (consisting of Conecuh, Escambia, and Monroe Counties) has provided additional coordination and marketing for this corridor.

WEST ALABAMA – EAST MISSISSIPPI

Development of a multi-state economic development effort, including an area industrial site, has enhanced interest in this economically deprived corridor. Not only is this effort ongoing, but it has encouraged similar efforts in other counties and municipalities. A recently approved U.S. Department of Labor WIRED Grant of $25 million will be used for workforce development in this area.

DEMOPOLIS AREA

Continuing improvements to U.S. Highway 80, along with the presence of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway position Demopolis to be a gateway city for West Central Alabama. Currently, business development along U.S. Highway 80 is fueling the economic expansion of the area.

SOUTH CLARKE AND WASHINGTON COUNTY

"ThyssenKrupp announced that it will build a $3.7 billion state-of-the-art steel and stainless steel processing facility in north Mobile County close to the Washington County line. The plant is expected to begin operation in 2010, and when fully operational, create 2,700 jobs. The facility will manufacture and process carbon steel and stainless steel for high-value applications by manufacturers in the United States and throughout North America. The plant will serve industries including automotive, packaging, construction, electrical and utility, in addition to serving manufacturers of appliances, precision machinery and engineered products (http://www.thyssenkruppnewusplant.com/)."

The ThyssenKrupp project is expected to have a strong positive impact on Washington and Clarke Counties.

B. VITAL PROJECTS/ PRIORITIES

Regional Priorities
Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission

1. Infrastructure improvements: Including promotion and enhancement of multi- county parks (i.e. water and sewer, telecommunications, etc)
2. Transportation:

   A) Complete four-laning of United States Highway 80
   B) Four lane United States Highway 43 in Clarke and Marengo Counties
   C) Four lane United States Highway 84 in Monroe, Clarke, and Choctaw Counties
   D) Support proposed I-85 extension through region (Montgomery to Meridian)
3. Develop targeted workforce development efforts to provide a trained, quality workforce in the region, thus strengthening economic development efforts.
4. Provide better housing, through private and public sources, to the region.
5. Provide better healthcare in rural areas.

Region 7
Delta Region County: Barbour

The Southeast Alabama District consists of seven counties. These counties are Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston. This district is located in the southeastern-most quadrant of Alabama. Barbour, Henry, and Houston counties are bordered to the east by the Chattahoochee River which separates these counties from southwest Georgia. Houston, Geneva, and Covington counties are bordered to the south by the counties of the State of Florida. Houston County is, therefore, the southeastern-most county in the State of Alabama. The seven counties encompass 4,838 miles or 3,096,320 acres. There are 61 incorporated communities in the district.
The Dothan metropolitan area, consisting of Dale and Houston counties, had a 2000 population of 137,916. Dale and Houston counties are the only southeast Alabama counties that are part of a metropolitan area. The remaining five counties are primarily rural. County populations ranged from 16,310 (Henry county) to 88,787 (Houston county) in 2000. The combined population for the seven counties was 290,274 in 2000.

The district has a strong manufacturing base. Products manufactured in the district include automotive components, agricultural products, primary and secondary wood products, processed foods, textiles, latex products, plastic products, signs and advertising specialties, engineered metal buildings, electronic and electrical equipment, and truck trailers and campers. Distribution and warehousing, service industries, primary health services, and government are also big contributors to the economies of the district. Fort Rucker, Alabama,

the Army Aviation Center, is also a strong component of government employment and has a significant economic impact on the district.

Southeast Alabama has 1,324 miles of state and federal highways and 6,380 miles of county roads. The Chattahoochee River provides water transportation on the eastern border of the district. The district has a total of 15 licensed airports. Daily commercial flights are provided from Dothan, Alabama. Each community in the district is within a 90-minute commute to commercial airports. These airports are located in Dothan and Montgomery, Alabama, in Columbus, Georgia, and in Panama City and Pensacola, Florida. Two main-line railroads and seven short-line railroads were the area.

POPULATION

The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission is comprised of the seven most southeastern counties in Alabama. The district is predominantly rural with the largest city being Dothan, Alabama, which is located in Houston County. The population of Dothan is 57,737 (2000). The district had a 3.8 percent population increase for the period of 1980 to 1989 and a 6.7 percent increase from 1990 through 2000. Currently, all of the counties in the district are classified as "long-term economic distressed" by the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

In order to set the framework for other sections of this narrative, information on population, those counties growing and those declining is necessary. From previous research for the EDA Progress Report and recent Census 2000 figures, we found the region's growth for the decade of the 90s to be at a much slower pace than the state's growth rate. The growth rate for the region was 6.75 percent while the growth rate for the State of Alabama was 10.1 percent. During the past 10 years, the southeast Alabama region has experienced growth in population from 272,120 in 1990 to 290,274 in 2000, which previously mentioned was well below the state average.

Table 1 presents an historical picture of the district's population growth from 1960 through 2000 and the percentage change between the decades. From this chart, we developed a Regional Growth Profile dividing the seven counties into three categories: (1) high population growth--those that exceed the State's 10.1 percent margin of change from 1990 to 2000, (2) slow growth counties—those with positive change yet below the 10.1 percent margin, and (3) no growth counties—those counties that experienced a decline in population change. This is an interregional classification, and thus, it serves for regional comparisons only. Looking at Table 1, it can be seen that the decade of the 80s was the slowest period of population growth of the four decades listed.

	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
ALABAMA	3,893,978	4,040,587	4,447,100	10.1%
SEARP&DC	262,147	272,120	290,274	6.7%
BARBOUR	24,756	25,417	29,038	14.2%
COFFEE	38,533	40,240	43,615	8.4%
COVINGTON	36,850	36,478	37,631	3.2%
DALE	47,821	49,633	49,129	-1.0%
GENEVA	24,253	23,647	25,764	9.0%
HENRY	15,302	15,374	16,310	6.1%
HOUSTON	74,632	81,331	88,787	9.2%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU				

INCOME—PERSONAL & PER CAPITA

Two barometers for looking at the economic progress (or lack thereof) in Southeast Alabama are per capita income and median family income. To see if "real" progress has been made, dollars need to be adjusted for inflation (or turned in to what we call "constant" dollars). This section focuses on both of these measures and the constant dollar adjustment to measure the change that has occurred during the past three decades beginning in 1969 and ending in 1989.

There are two different sources of government figures on per capita income (PCI): the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA figures are always higher than the census figures. Both are useful for comparison if they are not mixed—i.e., comparing Census to Census and BEA to BEA.

From the Bureau of the Census PCI figures, Table 2 was developed for illustrative purposes. Since Table 17 covers three decades from 1969 through 1989, historical progression or recession can be noted. Comparisons are also made with the U.S. and Alabama. In 1969, Henry and Barbour Counties had the lowest PCIs of the district with 53.3 percent and 57.5 percent of the U.S. PCI, respectively. By 1989, Henry County's PCI, as a percent of the U.S.'s PCI, had grown 15.4 percent; this is quite a remarkable improvement. The state's growth rate for the three decades was only 4.9 percent. Therefore, Henry County made significant progress in PCI improvement. Barbour, Coffee, Geneva, and Houston Counties had notable improvements during these three decades in comparison to the nation's average with 8.5 percent, 5.7 percent, 4.3 percent, and 6 percent, respectively. Houston County's PCI is the only one in the district to exceed the state's PCI.

The district's PCI, which goes from a low of 64.6 percent of the nation's PCI to a high of 84 percent, still remains a matter of concern. Progress, albeit slow, has been made.

Using the Bureau of Economic Analysis data on PCI, there is some variance in the data. These figures are consistently higher (BEA uses a different methodology). In terms of improvement in PCI, comparing the years 1995 and 1997, all counties and the state showed positive growth. Houston County had the largest increase—from $19,823 in 1995 to $21,069 in 1997.

Consistent with census results, Henry, Barbour, Coffee, and Houston Counties show the most gain. In the BEA view, only Dale County declined against the state's PCI for the three decades.

TABLE II
PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME
1984,1989, 1998, CURRENT DOLLARS

	1984	1989	1995	1998
BARBOUR COUNTY	8,699	12,417	16,204	19,360
COFFEE COUNTY	9,636	14,420	18,022	21,590
COVINGTON COUNTY	9,256	11,995	16,005	18,646
DALE COUNTY	9,412	12,612	16,529	19,318
GENEVA COUNTY	9,350	13,233	16,734	18,576
HENRY COUNTY	9,632	12,529	15,796	19,164
HOUSTON COUNTY	10,251	15,188	19,823	23,203
SEARP&DC REGION	9,462	13,199	17,016	19,980
ALABAMA	10,209	14,266	19,041	22,054
UNITED STATES	13,149	17,738	23,208	27,203

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, June 2000.

District 8
Delta Region County: Escambia

The South Alabama region is a three-county, 3,778 square mile area located in extreme Southwest Alabama. Baldwin, Escambia, and Mobile Counties comprise this region. The regions represents 7.4 percent of the state's land area and is inhabited by 578,598 people, 13 percent of the state's population. The

character of the land ranges from urban to rural, strewn with numerous small communities.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) was founded in 1964. The SARPC's goal is to develop and implement policies and programs that can help local governments plan and act together on issues of regional significance. The SARPC serves as a regional planning and development commission, providing services in economic development, community planning and technical assistance, environmental planning, geographical information system, aging programs, State Health Insurance Program, Medicaid waiver services, and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) urban transportation. The SARPC membership is comprised of three counties and twenty-seven municipalities.

The County depends heavily on farming and forest products. The major agricultural products produced in Escambia County are soybeans, cattle, cotton, hogs, fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

The County is on the Alabama-Florida border north of Escambia County, Florida. In Alabama it is adjacent to Baldwin County to the west, Monroe and Conecuh Counties are to its north, and Covington County is to its east.

POPULATION

The South Alabama Regional 2007 population estimate is 613,775 representing an increase of 9.4 compared to the regions 2000 population.

Population - 1990 to 2007.

	1990	2000	2007	% Change 2000-2007
SARPC Region	512,441	578,698	613,775	9.4
Baldwin	98,280	140,415	171,769	8.2
Escambia	35,518	38,440	37,600	-9.8
Mobile	378,643	399,843	404,406	9.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, 1990 – 2007.

Escambia County is a rural county with an estimated 37,600 people in 2007. This is approximately a 2.2% decrease since 1990. There are five incorporated municipalities ranging in populations from less than 500 to 7,767.

INCOME—PERSONAL & PER CAPITA

Income/Poverty

In Escambia County, 21.9% of individuals have an income below the poverty level compared to 16.8% for the State of Alabama. The median family income is $43,769 compared to the State's $50,210.

Income-Personal and Per capita

Personal income is the current income received by residents from all sources, but excusive of transfers among persons, measured before deductions of income and other personal taxes. Per capita income is the average income for each person, that is when all income for a defined area is divided by all persons living in that area.

Per Capita Income offers a clear picture as to the economic well being of an area. One will notice that the state average is higher compared to the region per capita income. See table below. An even more staggering difference is the disparity between the region's per capita income and the United States. The per capita income for the region in 1997 was 77% of the U.S. and in 2000 the per capita income for the region is only 58.5 compared to that of the U.S.

Per Capita Personal Income for South Alabama EDD Counties; 2000 and 2005

	1997	2000	2005
United States	25,288	29,843	34,471
Alabama	20,672	23,674	29,623
Baldwin	22,431	20,826	23,661
Escambia	16,680	14,396	N/A
Mobile	19,371	17,178	19,930

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1999, U.S. Census – Fact Sheet; Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM

Unemployment

The unemployment for Escambia County in 2007 was 8% compared to the State's 7%.

Education

In Escambia County 40% of the 25+ population are high school graduates compared to the State's 32.3%, 10.5 % have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to the State's 19.1%. There is only one higher learning institution, which grants associate level degrees.

District 10
Delta Region County: Russell

The region represented by the Lee-Russell Council of Governments is located in East Central Alabama along the Chattahoochee River, which is also the western boundary of the State of Georgia. The region occupies 1.5 percent of the land area of Alabama, or 448,327 acres. The population consists of 164,848 people. Located an hour from the Atlanta International Airport, two hours from Birmingham, and four hours from Mobile and the gulf Coast, the region's strategic location is producing rapid population growth.

The terrain in the northern portion of the region is Piedmont Plateau, characterized by hilly topography with gentle to steep slopes. The terrain for the southern portion is Coastal Plain, which is level too gently rolling. The networks of creeks, many lakes, and the Chattahoochee River make the area desirable for both industry and tourism. The western areas are drained by the Saugahatchee and Chewacla Creeks as they flow to the Tallapoosa River. The creeks in the eastern areas, Little Uchee, Halawakee, and Wacoochee, flow to the Chattahoochee River. The natural resources of the region include water, forestry, clays, and sand and gravel.

POPULATION

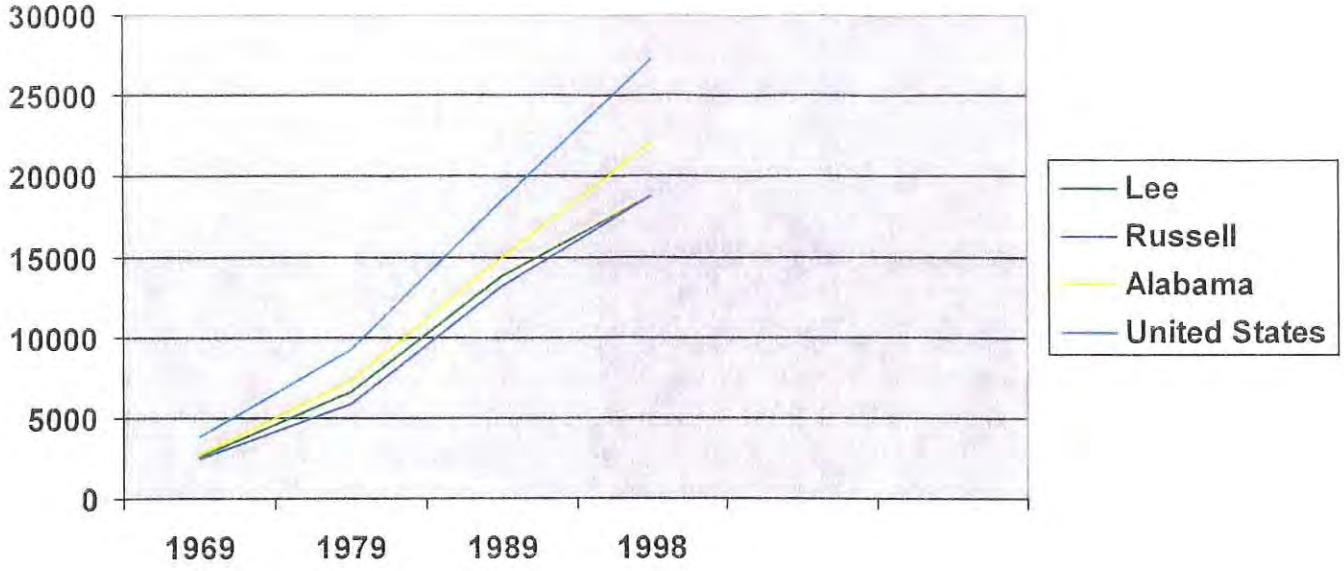
Table 1. Population in Lee and Russell Counties, 1990 and 2000.
CDP=Census Designated Place CDP Boundary changed from 1990-2000
CCD=-County Census Division
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 200 data.

The assets of the region are bringing rapid population growth. In the past decade, Lee County's population grew by more than 32 percent or 27,946 people (Table 1). Lee County has seen growth in industries, hundreds of new businesses, bank expansions, and a large number of new single-family homes. The Auburn-Opelika area was designated as a Metropolitan Statistical Area by the U.S. Government in June of 1999. Lee County's location along the I85 corridor, proximity to Atlanta, the role of Auburn University, the quality of life, and good public schools all point to continued growth in the next decade, with a 17 percent increase in population expected by 2010. According to 2000 Census data, Russell County's population growth rate since 1990 was 6 percent, or an increase of 2,896 people. Much of the growth can be attributed to industries moving from Columbus, Georgia, to Russell County, the Columbus MSA

attracting large employers, and the relatively inexpensive real estate in Russell County. According to U.S. projections, Russell County will show a 6.9 percent increase in population by 2010.

	Population 2000	Population 1990	1990-2000 Change
Lee County	**115,092**	**87,146**	**32%**
Auburn	**42,987**	**33,830**	**27%**
Opelika	**23,498**	**22,122**	**6%**
Smiths, CDP	**21,756**	**3,456**	**Not Available***
Beauregard-Marvin	**9,246**	**5,809**	**59%**
Beulah CCD	**5,465**	**3,680**	**49%**
Loachapoka-Roxana CCD	**3,432**	**2,898**	**18%**
Smiths-Salem CCD	**25,922**	**13,945**	**85%**
Russell County	**49,756**	**46,860**	**6%**
Phenix City	**28,265**	**25,312**	**12%**
Hurtsboro Town	**592**	**707**	**-16%**
Ladonia, CDP	**3,229**	**2,905**	**11%**
Crawford CCD	**3,234**	**2,979**	**8.5%**

The average per capita income in Lee and Russell Counties has been steadily increasing since 1969; however, both counties remain below the state and national income averages. The average 1998 per capita personal income for Lee County and Russell Counties was $18,831 and $18,756, respectively. In Alabama, the average per capita personal income was $22,054, compared to $27,203 for the United States.



PER CAPITA INCOME

Table 2. Per Capita Income, 1969-1998.

Economic Distress

Determination of Distressed Counties

The Delta Regional Authority adopted the Economic Development Authority's (EDA) definition of a "distressed county" to meet the establishment of distressed criteria for purposes of funding.

An area is considered distressed if it meets one of the following:

1. An unemployment rate that is, for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available, at least one percent greater than the national average unemployment rate.

2. Per capita income that is, for the most recent period for which data are available, 80 percent or less of the national average per capita income.

3. A special need, as determined by EDA, arising from actual or threatened severe unemployment or economic adjustment problems resulting from severe short-term or long-term changes in economic conditions, for example:

    1. Substantial out-migration or population loss;
    2. Underemployment, that is, employment of workers at less than full time or as less skilled tasks than their training or abilities permit;
    3. Military base closures or realignments, defense contractor reductions-in-force, or Department of Energy defense-related

funding reductions;
4. Natural or other major disasters or emergencies;
5. Extraordinary depletion of natural resources;
6. Closure or restructuring of industrial firms, essential to area economies; or
7. Destructive impacts of foreign trade.

Of the 236 Delta Regional Authority counties, at this time this definition for distressed counties was adopted, 214 counties met the required criteria. The State of Alabama will provide services to the "Distressed Counties" in all five goal areas with the understanding that because of their unique problems, there may be a need to provide a stronger focus in a particular goal area, such as health or capacity building. Efforts will be made to provide physical infrastructure that will eliminate health hazards and promote job opportunities. There will also be a focus on health, safety, and environmental programs that will ensure healthy workers and healthy children. In order to improve the well being of the citizens in "Distressed Counties," training in basic skills and workforce training of the citizens in "Distressed Counties," training in basic skills and workforce training programs will be emphasized in an ongoing effort to improve the quality of life.

There are currently 20 counties in Alabama that are designated as "Distressed" by the Delta Regional Authority. These are Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Escambia, Greene, Hale Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Russell, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox. The state recognizes that the designation of these counties may change because counties will be evaluated on an annual basis by the Delta Regional Authority.

Needs and Assessments by Counties:

Region 2: Greene, Hale, and Pickens Counties

Greene County

Greene County's major agricultural products are catfish, cattle and calves. Major manufactured products are processed catfish, forestry products, and roofing felt. U.S. Highways 11 and 43 run through the county in north-south routes and I-20/59 crosses through the county also in a north-south direction. Greene County is adjacent to Tuscaloosa and Pickens counties to the north, Hale county to the east, Sumter county to the west, and Marengo county to the south. The Black Warrior River forms the eastern boundary of the county and the Tombigbee River the western boundary. Both rivers are navigable and intersect at the southern tip of the county. The county has one hospital and one library.

Population

Greene County is a small, rural county is west central Alabama with a 2000 population of 9.974. This is a decrease of 1.7 percent from 1990 and continues the decline from 1980. There are four municipalities in the county ranging from 227 to 1,878. The population is projected to stabilize over the next few years.

Income/Poverty

In Greene County, 29.9 percent of families have income below poverty compared to the State's 12.5 percent. The median family income is $24,604 compared to the State's $41,657.

Unemployment

In 2001, the county's unemployment rate was 10.7 percent compared to the State's rate of 5.3 percent. In Greene County, 64,8 percent of the 25+ population are high school graduates compared to the State's 75.3 percent. The percentage of college graduates is 10.5 percent compared to the State's 19 percent. A county school system provides K-12 grades. There is one vocational school in the county.

Greene County Needs

Education:	Leadership training programs for the youth and adults Renovation of several facilities Day Care facilities and operators Work force training Telecommunications and distance learning facilities
Transportation:	Four-lane U.S. 43 throughout the county
Infrastructure:	Construct sanitary sewer system in Forkland Expand service area of Eutaw sewer system Improve water pressure in Eutaw system 500,000 gallon storage tank to serve Union area (Fosters-Ralph Water System) ($500,000)
Health Care:	None Given

Hale County

Hale County's major agricultural products are catfish, crawfish, cattle, and calves. Major manufactured products are processed catfish, forestry products, and roofing felt. U.S. Highway 80 runs east to west through the southern tip of the

Pickens County

Pickens County's major agricultural product is broilers. Major manufactured products are forestry products. U.S. Highway 82 crosses the county east to west. The county is adjacent to Lamar County to the north, Tuscaloosa County to the east, Greene and Sumter counties to the south, and the State of Mississippi to the west. The Tombigbee River forms part of the western boundary and is navigable. The county has one hospital and four libraries.

Population

Pickens County is a rural county in west central Alabama with a 2000 population of 29,949. This is an increase of 1.2 percent from 1990 and halts the decline from past few censuses. There are eight municipalities in the county ranging in population from 33 to 2,567. The population is projected to gradually increase over the next few years.

Income/Poverty

In Pickens County, 20.1 percent of families have income below poverty compared to the State's 12.5 percent. The median family income is $32,937 compared to the State's $41,657.

Unemployment

In 2001, the county's unemployment rate was 11.4 percent compared to the State's rate of 5.3 percent. In Pickens County, 69.7 percent of the 25+ population are high school graduates compared to the State's 75.3 percent. The percentage of college graduates is 9.8 percent compared to the State's 19 percent. A county school system provides K-12 grades. There is one vocational school in the county.

Pickens County Needs

Education:	Develop leadership training for youth and adults Day care facilities and operators Work force training Additional telecommunications and distance learning Facilities Expansion to Gordo library
Transportation:	Construct north-south corridor from Muscle Shoals to Mobile Four-lane U.S. 82

Infrastructure:	Renovate Ethelsville water system—eliminate asbestos lines ($350,000) Expand capacity of Aliceville water system Expand capacity of Aliceville sewer system Renovate freeform sewer treatment facility ($300,000) Establish sewer system for Ethelsville and Pickensville Repeater for weather warning system ($30,000), Five Emergency sirens ($8,500 each + poles) to be Installed in Memphis, Macedonia, Palmetto, Pickensville, and Beaver Town. This will be linked To E-911 system.
Health Care:	Expand and renovate existing hospital—new roof

Region 5: Bullock, Lowndes, Macon, and Butler Counties

DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY
South Central Alabama Development Commission Needs and Assessments

BULLOCK COUNTY

Infrastructure:	Develop and improve water systems Develop and improve sewer systems Develop industrial park Renovate central business districts
Transportation:	Improve streets and sidewalks Expand and improve airport facilities
Education:	Improve quality of education facilities and opportunities Library renovation
Health:	Expand and improve healthcare delivery system Improve nutrition/senior centers
Entrepreneurship:	Develop small business incubator satellite Gap financing/RLF

BUTLER COUNTY

Infrastructure:	Develop and improve water systems Develop and improve sewer systems

	Develop new industrial park Renovate central business districts
Transportation:	Improve streets and sidewalks Construct additional I-65 interchange Expand and improve airport facilities
Education:	Improve quality of education facilities and opportunities
Health:	Expand and improve healthcare delivery system Improve nutrition/senior centers
Entrepreneurship:	Develop Farmer's Market Gap financing/RLF

LOWNDES COUNTY

Infrastructure:	Develop and improve water systems Develop and improve sewer systems Develop industrial park Renovate central business districts
Transportation:	Improve streets and sidewalks Improve airport facilities
Education:	Improve quality of education facilities and opportunities Construct Library
Health:	Expand and improve healthcare delivery system Improve nutrition/senior centers
Entrepreneurship:	Commercial development Gap financing/RLF

MACON COUNTY

Infrastructure:	Develop and improve water systems Develop and improve sewer systems Develop industrial park Downtown redevelopment
Transportation:	Improve streets and sidewalks Airport Master Plan/Improvements Construct additional I-85 interchange

Education:	Improve quality of education facilities and opportunities Construct library
Health:	Expand and improve healthcare delivery system Improve nutrition/senior centers
Entrepreneurship:	Develop convention and visitor's bureau Gap financing/RLF

Region 6: Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox

The Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC) serves Choctaw County, Clarke County, Conecuh County, Dallas County, Marengo County, Monroe County, Perry County, Sumter County, Washington County, Wilcox County, and the municipalities within.

All ten counties are distressed counties and all are a part of the Delta Regional Authority. The following is a list of projects, which would assist the areas in moving forward economically and socially. This list is the needs of the above referenced counties.

Development Projects:

Infrastructure :	Including promotion and enhancement of multi-county parks (i.e., water and sewer, telecommunications, etc.)
Transportation:	Complete four-laning of U.S. Highway 80 Four-lane U.S. Highway 43 in Clarke and Marengo counties Four lane U.S. Highway 84 in Monroe, Clarke, and Choctaw Counties Support proposed I85 extension through region (Montgomery to Meridian)
Education:	Develop targeted workforce efforts for a quality workforce
Housing:	Provide better housing through public and private sources
Healthcare:	Provide better healthcare in rural areas

DECLINING ECONOMIC CLUSTERS

WILCOX –PERRY COUNTY

Continued out migration and high unemployment rates signify that the Wilcox-Perry County area is a declining economic cluster.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

Projects are broken down into the following categories: Business & Industry, Housing, Government Facilities & Services, Transportation, Recreation, Healthcare, and Education & Manpower.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

Expand Water and Sewer in Industrial Parks	ATRC Region	Unknown
Develop Port at Naheola	Choctaw County	$2,000,000
Construct Docking Facilities	Clarke County	Undetermined
Murder Creek Development Project	Conecuh County	$10,000,000
Improve Countywide Industrial Parks	Dallas County	$1,000,000
Restoration of Historic Properties	Dallas County	Unknown
Expand Sewer for Industrial Park	Jackson	$350,000
Water and Sewer Improvements to Industrial Park	Linden	$300,000
Develop County Industrial Park	Marengo County	Unknown
Develop ID Park in Beatrice Area	Monroe County	$750,000
Industrial Park Improvements	Perry County	$1,000,000
Riverfront Development	Selma	$750,000
Develop ID Park in Cuba	Sumter County	$2,000,000
Develop Dock Facility	Washington County	Undetermined
Improve Countywide Industrial Parks	Washington County	$2,000,000
Comprehensive Industrial Park	Washington County	$1,000,000
Conserve and Enhance Historic Properties	Washington County (Old St. Stephens)	$300,000
Infrastructure for I.D. Park on Highway 28	Wilcox County	$1,000,000
Coastal Gateway ID Park - Infrastructure	Conecuh County	$2,000,000
Infrastructure for Demopolis ID Park	Marengo County	$1,500,000
Expand Evergreen ID Park on I-65	Conecuh County	$1,000,000
Construct Docking Facility	Dallas County	$1,500,000
Basic Infrastructure at Vaiden Field	Perry County	$1,500,000
Gas Line Construction	McIntosh	$4,000,000

Water Tank Construction	McIntosh	$3,000,000
Expand Road System and Rail Spur at Craig Field Industrial Park	Dallas County	$3,000,000
Water and Sewer Extension I-20/59 ID Park	City of Livingston	$2,000,000
Water, Sewer, and Gas Line Extension at Port of Epes	Sumter County	$1,500,000
Road Improvements at Airport Industrial Park	City of Demopolis	$3,000,000
Water Treatment Plant & Service Lines	Thomasville	$20,000,000

HOUSING

Housing Rehabilitation	Camden	$400,000
Housing Rehabilitation	Chatom	$300,000
Public Housing	Choctaw	Unknown
Housing Rehabilitation	Grove Hill	$1,000,000
Community Housing Renewal	Jackson	$500,000
Elderly and Low Income Housing	Lisman	Unknown
Housing Rehabilitation	Livingston	$300,000
Public Housing	Millry	$1,000,000
Public Housing	Perry County	$1,500,000
Public Housing	Repton	$2,000,000
Low Income Housing	Thomaston	$1,000,000
Housing Rehabilitation	Vredenburgh	Unknown
Improve Drainage in Housing Projects	Washington County	Unknown
Public Housing	Wilcox County	$1,500,000
Develop Regionwide Housing Plan	ATRC Region	$1,000,000
Neighborhood Renewal	Thomasville	$1,500,000
Housing Rehab	Selma/Dallas County	$2,000,000

GOVERNMENT FACILITIES & SERVICES

Expand Sewer System	Beatrice	Unknown
Expand and Improve Water System	Chatom	Unknown
Natural Gas Lines	Chatom	Unknown

Sewage System Upgrade	Chatom	$1,000,000
Complete Countywide Water System	Choctaw County	Unknown
Countywide Water System	Clarke County	Unknown
Upgrade Sewage Systems Countywide	Clarke County	Unknown
Sewage System	Coffeeville	$1,000,000
Countywide Water System	Conecuh County	$2,750,000
Water System Extension	Coy	Unknown
Expand Water System	Cuba	Unknown
Expand Countywide Water System	Dallas County	Unknown
Sewage System	Epes	$1,000,000
Expand Sewage System	Evergreen	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Excel	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Fulton	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Gilbertown	$1,000,000
Construct Water Treatment Facility	Grove Hill	$2,250,000
Increase Size of Water Mains	Grove Hill	$500,000
Correct Storm Drainage Problems	Grove Hill	$625,000
Water System Extension	Jackson	$650,000
Upgrade Water Distribution System	Jackson	$750,000
Sewage System	McIntosh	$15,000,000
Water & Sewage	Mexia	Unknown
Sewage System	Millry	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Needham	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Oak Hill	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Orrville	$1,000,000
Upgrade Water Distribution System	Orrville	$750,000
Expand Sewage Facility	Pennington	Unknown
County Water System	Perry County	$1,750,000
Sewage System	Pine Apple	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Repton	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Silas	$1,000,000
Upgrade Sewer Systems	Sumter County	Unknown
Sewage System	Sweet Water	$1,000,000
Water System Extension	Sweet Water	Unknown
Sewage System	Thomaston	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Toxey	$1,000,000
Sewage System	Vredenburgh	$1,000,000
Drainage Project	Vredenburgh	Unknown
Countywide Water System	Washington County	Unknown

Sewage at County Schools	Washington County	Unknown
Improve Solid Waste Program	Washington County	Unknown
Countywide Water System Improvements	Wilcox County	Unknown
Expand County Water System	Wilcox County	$1,750,000
Rehab Water System - Thomaston	Thomaston	$1,000,000
Rehab Water System - Coffeeville	Coffeeville	$1,000 ,000
Rehab Sewer & Drainage	Selma	$1,750,000
Water Treatment Plant & Service Lines	Thomasville	$20,000,000
Surface Water Drainage	Orrville	$750,000
Rehab Water & Sewer Systems	Regionwide	Unknown

TRANSPORTATION

Airport Improvements	Chatom	$750,000
County Roadbank Stabilization	Choctaw County	$450,000
Highway and Bridge Improvements/ Highway 84 Four Lane	Choctaw County	Unknown
Highway Improvements on 156	Choctaw County	Unknown
Four Lane Highway 84	Clarke County	Unknown
Expand Rural Transportation System	Dallas County	Unknown
I-85 Extension (Montgomery to I-20/59)	Dallas, Perry, Marengo, and Sumter Counties	Unknown
Bypass Construction	Demopolis	Unknown
Airport Improvements	Demopolis	Unknown
Airport Improvements and Extension	Jackson	$625,000
Rural Transportation System	Lisman	$450,000
Expansion of Rural Transportation System	ATRC Region	Unknown
Four lane Highway 43	Marengo, Clarke, Counties	Unknown
Four Lane Highway 80	Marengo, Perry, Sumter Counties	Unknown
Extend Four Lane from Highway 84 to Frisco City	Monroe County	Unknown
Widen Highway 21	Monroe County	Unknown
Four Lane Highway 84	Monroe County	Unknown
Airport Improvements	Perry County	$1,250,000

Interstate Exchange Off Ramp	Sumter County	Unknown
Rural Transportation System	Vredenburgh	$450,000
Bridges on Highway 17	Washington County	$15,000,000
Passing Lanes on Highway 17	Washington County	$1,500,000
Develop Multi County Airport	Choctaw, Clarke, Marengo, Wilcox	$20,000,000
Turn lanes to major industries	Region wide	Unknown
Widen shoulders on state highways	Region wide	Unknown

RECREATION

Community Center	Camden	$350,000
Recreational Park	Castleberry	$250,000
Tennis Courts	Chatom	$200,000
Countywide Recreational Improvements	Choctaw County	Unknown
Recreational Lake	Choctaw County	$1,500,000
Water Based Recreation Park	Clarke County	$750,000
Develop Campsites	Clarke County	$500,000
Construct Boat Ramps	Clarke County	$500,000
Murder Creek Development	Conecuh County	$10,000,000
Golf Course Expansion	Craig Field	$1,500,000
Public Park	Deer Park, Fruitdale	$300,000
Improve Boat Ramps	Jackson	$200,000
Softball Fields	Jackson	$300,000
Improve Boat Ramps	Marengo County	$150,000
Develop Jogging Trail	Marengo County	$150,000
Softball Fields	Marion	$750,000
Public Boat Lunch	McIntosh	$300,000
Recreation Hall	Monroeville	$500,000
Expand Park	Pennington	Unknown
Public Park	Perry County	$300,000
Expand Recreational Facilities	Selma	$750,000
Recreational Park	Silas	$500,000
Overnight Campsite	Sumter County	$1,500,000
Equipment for Park Facilities	Thomaston	$200,000
Ball Field And Park	Vredenburgh	$275,000
Softball Fields	Vredenburgh	Unknown
Tennis Courts	Vredenburgh	Unknown
Update Recreation Plan	Washington County	$20,000

Agriculture Center with Covered Arena	Washington County	$750,000
Recreation Park	Wilcox County	$500,000
Nature Trail	York	$150,000
Softball Complex	York	$250,000
Expand Rogers Park	Butler	$350,000
Linden Recreation Complex	Linden	$1,500,000
Community Center	Silas	$600,000
Recreation Park	Valley Grande	$250,000
Recreation Park	Coffeeville	$250,000
Community Center	Pennington	$350,000
Agricultural Center	Monroeville	$3,000,000

HEALTHCARE

Public Health Clinic	Chatom	Unknown
Mobile Health Clinic	ATRC Region	Unknown
Expansion of Home Health Program	ATRC Region	Unknown
Health Clinic	Lisman	$750,000
Rural Health Program	Marengo County	$750,000
Expansion of Home Health Program	Monroe County	Unknown
Expand Rural Health Services	ATRC Region	Unknown
Health Clinic	Thomaston	$750,000
Health Clinic	Uniontown	$750,000
Health Clinic	Beatrice	$500,000
Region wide Health Care	Region wide	Unknown
Choctaw County Hospital	Butler	$750,000

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Expand Secondary Education Outreach Programs	ATRC Region	Unknown
Continuing Education Programs	ATRC Region	Unknown
Manpower Training Program	ATRC Region	Unknown
Expand Elderly Employment Slots	ATRC Region	Unknown
County School Buildings	ATRC Region	Unknown
Adult Education Program	ATRC Region	Unknown
Workforce Development Programs	ATRC Region	Unknown
Improve School Facilities	ATRC Region	Unknown
Continuing Vocation Programs	ATRC Region	Unknown

The Issues of Distressed Counties in Alabama as Presented by the Local Development Districts.

INDUSTRY

The major industry employment in this region is manufacturing, employing 34.1% of the working people in this district, followed by government employment at 19.1%, next is wholesale and retail at 17.8% and then services and miscellaneous at 15.4%. The combined employment for mining, construction, transportation and utilities and finance and real estate is 13.7%. Manufacturing and government make up half the working force in this region. (Source: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations—2000 Data)

GOVERNMENTAL FACILITIES & SERVICES

The most basic need for any community is potable water and this again must be a priority of this region. Many areas in the district have wells that dry up in the summers. There are systems that have many undersized lines to handle current customers adequately. Several counties need additional sources. To improve the quality of life of persons in the Delta, it is necessary that the regional development staff works with and assists the local governments in prioritizing the facilities and services needed and then pursuing these projects with vigor. Recent studies also indicate the continued need for sewer expansion. (Source: WAPDC Water & Sewer Facilities Survey)

HOUSING

Although housing conditions have shown improvements throughout the district with the availability of low income and elderly housing projects, there is still an evident need for more housing for those with limited income. Local governments should concentrate on dilapidated housing rehabilitation and encourage projects that will provide adequate housing for the low income and elderly/handicapped.

TRANSPORTATION

Highway improvements, airport facility upgrading, and rural transportation systems are the top priorities in improving the transportation system of the district. It will be important that the district's staff attend highway planning meetings and public hearings and be apprised of highway improvement proposals. The state will continue to promote river navigation and port development.

EDUCATION

Education, essential to any area's development, must be improved in all areas. From grade school to post-high school, education must be available to teach basic education or vocational education.

There continues to be a need for improvements in educational facilities, whether it is consolidation of school systems, new buildings, or additional teaching aide equipment. There must be proper facilities to ensure proper education. There is also a great desire to link industry and education to ensure that our students are prepared for job opportunities in the region.

Adult education and continuing education centers must be assisted and utilized to prepare the people of the Delta so they will be a competitive work force.

HEALTH CARE

The two most pressing health-related problems in this region are the lack of rural health facilities and the need for additional physicians, dentists, and medical specialists.

With a need for more health facilities and professional health personnel comes the need for an expanded home health care program. State Agencies working together continue to expand their programs addressing this serious need.

RECREATION

The main priority in recreation will be assisting our local governments in acquiring funds for the purpose of recreational expansion and improvement. Inadequate recreation continues to plague much of the Delta Region in Alabama.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The continuation and expansion of the state working with the local LDDs and the Council on Aging are top priorities in the social service area. ADECA is committed to working with the elderly and economically or physically disadvantaged in order that their lives may be improved as to the quality and substance of their surroundings.

AGRICULTURE

Although declining in past years, agriculture continues to be a very important economic force in the Alabama Tombigbee and other Delta Regions. Many factors have brought on the decline in agriculture, but perhaps none as evident as the decline in the price farmers receive for their products and the increase in the cost of production. Farming today has become big business and the small family farm is fast becoming a thing of the past.

FORESTRY

As agriculture has fallen, forestry has gained, and the forest industry in southwest Alabama is now the leading industry. Seven of the fifteen paper and pulp mills in Alabama are in the Alabama Tombigbee district, the largest Delta District in Alabama. This is not to say that the decline in agriculture is solely responsible for the vast forest acres in the region, but as agriculture declines, the forestry industry takes on more importance. Forest acres command the greatest land use in the region with 72% of the total land in forest cover. The forest industry in this region must thrive in order for the local economics to thrive since so much of our business is related to the timber industry. (Source: Auburn University Forestry & Wildlife Sciences)

DEVELOPMENT PARKS		
County	Number of Parks City and County	Development Professional
Choctaw	3	None
Clarke	5	1 (County)
Conecuh	3	1 (County)
Dallas	3	2 (County)
Marengo	3	1 (County)
Monroe	4	1 (County)
Perry	4	None
Sumter	5	1 (County)
Washington	3	None
Wilcox	3	1 (County)

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs will maintain its contacts with the Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA), the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA), federal agencies, state agencies, and local governments in an overall effort to promote economic growth and improve the quality of life for Delta Region residents.

1. **Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA)**

   EDAA is not-for-profit organization established to advance the economic development of Alabama and to foster a closer working relationship among the various individuals and groups engaged in economic development in the state.

2. **Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA)**

   The EDPA is an alliance of 67 businesses and industries committed to supporting quality economic growth in the state.

3. **Alabama Development Office (ADO)**

   A State Agency, the ADO enhances the economic well being of citizens by creating jobs through the active recruitment of new industry, support of existing industry expansion in the state, and the promotion of trade with other countries.

4. **Alabama Commerce Commission**

   Created by Executive Order in 1999, the purpose of the Commission is to develop, monitor and implement a long-range strategic plan for economic development for Alabama.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The State of Alabama, along with the Local Development Districts, has placed a major emphasis on economic development projects in the past and renews this effort with ambitious strategies and goals for the future. These regional goals will complement all of the goals and objectives identified for each county in the region.

- To expand the local infrastructure of the region, including transportation, recreation, industrial parks, water and sewer, and other public facilities.

- To assist local governments in economic development activities. This will include continuing efforts to have all agencies and governments in the region work together.

- To assist industry with training and vocational education programs in order to maintain or improve their employment levels.

- To promote tourism as an industry in order to broaden the base of the region's economy.

- To be involved in the promotion of the area as well as educating local officials about how industry makes decisions for expansion and new locations.

- To seek out and encourage public/private partnerships in economic development projects.

- To work with banks and other lending institutions to make capital readily available for business and economic development projects.

- The state's strategy for building entrepreneurial economies will include, but not limited to, projects that:

    - Build awareness and advocate creating entrepreneurial economies with communities and policy makers at the state and/or local level.

    - Promote the integration of the elements of an entrepreneurial system at the state or regional level.

    - Address identified gaps in and build the institutional capacity of any or all five key elements of an entrepreneurial economy: access to capital and financial assistance; technical and managerial assistance; technology transfer; entrepreneurial education and training; and entrepreneurial networks.

STATE POLICIES

The State of Alabama will focus primarily on areas of highest need, depressed areas, areas hardest hit economically, areas with health hazards, areas where projects will have the greatest impact, and areas that are not able to help themselves. In conjunction with a focus on economic growth, the State of Alabama will support efforts to improve education, train the workforce, increase entrepreneurs, provide physical infrastructure, including telecommunications, and increase healthcare in the Delta Region. The state will work closely with the Alabama Development Office, as well as other trade multipliers, in efforts to increase trade in Delta Alabama. The State of Alabama will support programs that will increase export trade and growth in Delta Alabama.

In addition, each project request during this round of funding for DRA assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Under certain circumstances, the state may waive the state policy maximum per project and reserve the right to

reduce the project amounts when needed. The state will target areas of greatest need and 2will respond with DRA dollars in cases of emergency and wherever special development opportunities arise. Proposals for funding under the regional initiative for entrepreneurship must be supported by a demonstration that they will contribute to the achievement of the regional initiative goal. Business establishments that are not locally owned and are part of a larger non-locally based organization, i.e., branch plants, are ineligible for assistance under this initiative. State threshold for "distressed counties" will be established during a working planning session with LDDs, the public, and advisory council, and members collaborating from other agencies, including the Alabama Development Office, to establish binding thresholds. Examples of thresholds to be considered are as follows:

State thresholds for Local Development Districts (LDDs) for Administrative Cost will be based on the total amount allocated each year and will be distributed among the six regions on a percentage basis, established during the advisory council's work session with the State's (LDDs) for the Delta Region. The State of Alabama will adhere to the funding provider of the DRA during this round of funding grants with transportation and infrastructure projects receiving at least 50 percent of the appropriated funds.

1. The funding limitations under section 382D (b) shall not apply to a project providing transportation or basic public services to residents of one or more distressed counties or isolated areas of distress in the region.

2. At least 50 percent of any funds made available to the state under section 328M for transportation and basic public infrastructure projects must be used in accordance with the comprehensive plan designed by the Delta Regional Authority.

3. Program Development Criteria:

In considering programs and projects to be provided under this subtitle, and in establishing a priority ranking of the requests for assistance provided by the Authority, the Authority shall follow procedures that ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, consideration of:

1. The relationship of the projects to overall regional development;

2. The per capita income and poverty and unemployment rates in an area;

3. The financial resources available to the applicants for assistance seeking to carry out the project, with emphasis on ensuring that

projects are adequately financed to maximize the probability of successful economic development;

4. The importance of the project or class of projects in relation to other projects or classes of projects that may be in competition for the same funds;

5. The prospects that the project for which assistance is sought will improve, on a continuing rather than a temporary basis, the opportunities for employment, the average level of income, or the economic development of the area served by the project; and,

6. The extent to which the project design provides for detailed outcome measurements by which grant expenditures and the results may be evaluated.

This round of the funding will be based on the following criteria:

1. Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress;

2. Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development;

3. Business development with emphasis on entrepreneurship;

4. Job training or employment-related education, with emphasis on use of existing public education institutions located in the region.

Each application will be reviewed and ranked accordingly with standards set by the Delta Regional Authority.

Annual Implementation Strategy with LDDs for FY 2009

PURPOSE

The Statewide/Regional Strategic Plan is an effort by the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to facilitate the identification and prioritization of economic development, community development and community planning needs for communities, counties and regions within the State of Alabama. To achieve

this, each region worked with their respective municipal and county governments, economic development professionals, industrial development boards, chambers of commerce, civic groups and citizens. The process enabled the communities, counties, and regions to develop issues, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, which led to the establishment of goals, objectives, strategies, and policies to address those needs. An important part of this strategic planning process was to build solution-based strategies, foster cooperation on all levels, and provide education on local, state, and federal programs and resources to assist in meeting the identified community needs.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

An initial start-up was held to review the scope of work for the project and create the AARC Statewide Strategic Planning Team. The team met numerous times during the course of the statewide strategic planning process to ensure that the plan was coordinated with the Alabama Commerce Commission report and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) guidelines. Other work items for the team included the development and maintenance of a statewide geographical information system (GIS) database, preparing narrative descriptions of public input, devising a process for discussing the appropriate agency programs at public meetings, the creation of advisory groups for each region, development of regional plans, initial, mapping depictions, report format, surveying, and other input collection methodology. The team concluded during the course of these meetings to use the latest 2002 Census figures as they were released after initially using TIGER census data and to depict population and income shifts, house without vehicles, and plumbing and housing units in a GIS format in the report. This effort involved a significant amount of data collection and organizing into the mapping system for depiction.

Because the Alabama Commerce Commission recognized the importance of regional based economic and community development strategies in the context of statewide planning coordination and the value of guiding communities and regions on available planning assistance and training, the AARC created the Statewide Strategic Plan initiative to achieve this for the State of Alabama. The development of this plan compliments the efforts of the Alabama Commerce Commission and will mirror the objectives set forth in the long-term strategic economic development plan. Community input and initiatives derived from the panel's public participation process is incorporated into the AARC Statewide Strategic Plan's goals and strategies. Additionally, it will satisfy the requirements for regional planning councils to update their Overall Economic Development Plans (OEDPs) and develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Also, a desired output of the plan is to increase the number of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications due to increased public awareness and identified potential projects. The project was managed by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) with plan

development support from the remaining eleven regions and was made possible by funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA).

PLAN LAYOUT

The plan is developed to provide statewide and regional assessments with implementation recommendations. The implementation issues address economic development, infrastructure, and transportation, education, quality of life, and environmental, to name a few. They were derived from existing plans, programs, and new approaches to carrying out policies and initiatives. It provides a framework for Alabama to identify through various actions, an ongoing planning process to enhance itself economically, socially, and culturally. The process leading up to the development of statewide strategies includes the identification of issues and needs on a regional level. This was done throughout the twelve regional councils by gathering public input to develop the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for an area. This process commonly referred to as a SWOT analysis, can be used to develop issues, goals, objectives, and policies for a region. This process was used to further identify statewide needs built into the Statewide Implementation Report. Understanding technical resources that are important to further assessing regional SWOT issues is paramount. Demographics such as population, education, employment, and their accompanying trends are key to the planning needs of a region and consequently needs of the state. The plan contains county level demographic profiles and depicted geographic information system data relevant to assessing economic social, and cultural conditions. The plan also contains region-wide profiles as well as a statewide profile. This is important so one can do county-to-county comparisons and region-to-region comparisons to build on strengths, work jointly to correct weaknesses, expand opportunities, and eliminate threats.

The plan's intent is to serve as a working tool to implement planning projects that will continue to direct Alabama in developing policies that recognize economic growth, education enhancement, and workforce development, smart growth, environmental protection, and coordinated region and statewide cooperation. By recognizing and putting it into action, Alabama will be placed in a positive light that will put forth resistance to diminish.

STATEWIDE ISSUES, WITH STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ISSUE: Economic Development

Public Finance Strategies

- Work with ADECA to create a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) planning initiative at the state level to encourage cities and counties to prioritize their needs based upon annual budgets.

- Provide alternative local public financing strategies to aid local communities in economic development planning with initiative recommendations to be coordinated with ADO, ADECA, EDPA, and the State Finance Department.

- Change infrastructure grant requirements to allow communities with a strategic growth policy plan to be eligible for funds without an agreement from an industry to locate in the area.

- Encourage ADO, ADECA, and EDPA to work with private foundations to establish an endowment funded grant-making organization modeled after CREATE in Northeastern Mississippi.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- Encourage and support the expansion of the state's existing industry program by enhancing communication through coordination with the Regional Councils/Economic Development Districts (EDDs), Chambers of Commerce Association of Alabama (CCAA), and Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

- Through the appropriate office, explore the development of targeted financial assistance programs for businesses seeking to expand—to include physical plants, infrastructure upgrades, etc.--through ADO, ADECA, and ALDOT industrial access programs.

- Support small business development and start-ups through the CCAA, SBDC, and the use of business incubators and other training centers.

- Along with the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC), develop a way to further the main street development model as part of local development plans to promote economic development in town centers and communities.

- Utilize more flexibility in existing programs at ADECA, ALDOT, DCNR, and USDA that fund quality of life infrastructure projects (e.g., senior centers, community centers, playgrounds, and highway beautification and gateway improvements) to enhance appeal of local communities and make them more attractive for growth and economic development.

- Provide a balance between the development of advanced telecommunications infrastructure and the protection of rural and scenic resources (e.g., cell towers, antennas, above ground utility lines, etc.) This could be achieved by developing telecommunication plans, coordinated telecommunication ordinances for municipalities in a county and through needs assessment surveys.

- Coordinate with the Commerce Commission to develop a target industry analysis study for the state while concurrently monitoring developing economic clusters in the state and using local strategic plans to highlight which industries are best suited for the different regions of the state.

- Encourage redevelopment of Brownfield's in the state by inventorying existing sites and issuing development guidelines. Initiate a team of EDAA/AARC representatives to create reuse/redevelopment plans.

- Work with state government through ADECA's Science, Technology, and Energy Division (STED) to develop a statewide energy conservation plan and establish a state energy office to monitor the energy market closely to aid industry.

Workforce Development Strategies

- Utilize programs to link education (K-12) and industries to ensure that students are equipped with the basic skills needed in today's workforce.

- Ensure that all educational facilities are equipped with technology necessary to enhance basic competitive skills.

- Research home occupations that the unemployed/underemployed workforce could perform with a computer

- Support small business development and start-ups through the CCAA ad the use of business incubators and other training centers, coordinate with the Alabama Incubators Network.

- Work with community colleges and others throughout the state to provide distance learning training to companies and teachers.

- Work with ADECA to provide financial assistance to vocational schools, colleges and universities to provide new skills training to supply new industries with qualified employees.

- Work with ADECA and Workforce Investment Boards to provide financial assistance to industries for retraining dislocated workers and for advanced skills training to help existing industries modernize their production process.

- Encourage the formation of regionally coordinated public transportation systems to provide employee access to jobs.

Global Economy Strategies

- Businesses and industries need to work together with the education system to prepare today's students for a global economy by requiring foreign language courses and physical and cultural geography courses.

- Continue to improve the state doc facilities in Alabama and market the Port of Mobile, Alabama-Tombigbee Waterway, and Tennessee River globally to strengthen Alabama's position as a leading import-export shipping center on the Gulf Coast.

- Solidify Alabama's position in the global marketplace by aggressively developing a marketing plan for empowerment and foreign trade zone initiatives to include air and shipping.

- Develop a stronger relationship between International Trade Center and local economic development programs.

Tourism Strategies

- Support implementation and funding of the Alabama Scenic Byways Program as created by state legislation to develop standards and guidelines to establish a scenic byways system and work with affected governments to develop/initiate corridor management plans as required.

- Increase the marketing of Alabama's recreational opportunities (including state parks, beaches, historic sites, trails, lakes, and rivers) in-state, nationally, and internationally.

- Support, promote, and provide incentives for ecotourism in Alabama that improves access to natural features while minimizing the human impact on the environment.

- Utilize Alabama Historical Commission's (AHC) Mainstreet Model to promote tourism opportunities.

- Support and fund trail plans and construction at the state, regional, county, and municipal levels to provide an alternative, multimodal transportation system for recreational purposes.

- Work with the Alabama Tourism Bureau to support and initiate regional tourism alliances by assisting local alliances in attending national tourism and planning conferences.

- Continue to support the efforts of the Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA) to market and promote the "Golf Trail" nationally and internationally and expand the use of the similar "Bass Fishing Trail."

- Provide a balance between the development of advanced telecommunications infrastructure and the protection of rural and scenic resources (e.g., cell towers, antennas, above ground utility lines, etc.) This could be achieved by developing telecommunications plans, coordinated telecommunications ordinances for municipalities in a county, and through needs assessment surveys.

- Provide a balance between commercial advertising needs and the protection of rural and scenic resources.

- Plan for protection of natural resources that support tourism and recreational businesses.

ISSUE: INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Finance Strategies

- Work with state agencies to change match requirements on grants to a sliding scale based on community revenue to improve rural communities' and counties' ability to obtain funding for infrastructure improvements.

- Change infrastructure grant requirements to allow communities with a strategic growth policy plan to be eligible for funding without an agreement from an industry to locate in the area.

- Organize the sixteen Alabama counties included in the Delta Regional Authority to coordinate efforts to increase project approval, funding amounts and expanded benefits and continue such coordination with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and a possible coastal commission.

- Utilize more flexibility with existing programs at ADECA, ALDOT, and USDA that fund quality of life infrastructure projects to enhance the appeal of local communities and make them more attractive for growth and economic development, (e.g., senior centers, community centers, parks, playgrounds, and highway beautification and gateway improvements).

Transportation Strategies

- Work with the Alabama legislature and the ALDOT to form Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) to address rural transportation issues in the state.

- Develop a statewide plan for the expansion of multimodal transportation facilities.

- Encourage the formation of regionally coordinated public transportation systems.

- Pursue the development of high speed rail corridors in Alabama by supporting related initiatives such as the Southern Rapid Rail Transit Commission and the New Orleans International Airport.

- Work with the FHWA, ALDOT, MPOs, and RPOs to ensure construction of proposed highway corridor expansions and extensions throughout the state.

- Keep local governments and the public apprised of the status of road and bridge projects and programs (e.g., Amendment 1).

- Support the environmental justice policy of the FHWA and their efforts to work with ALDOT and local MPOs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations; to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and to prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations in Alabama.

- Support the implementation and funding of the Alabama Scenic Byways Program as created by state legislation to develop standard and guidelines to establish a scenic byways system and work with affected local governments to develop corridor management plans as required.

- Support and fund trail plans and construction at the state, regional, county, and municipal levels to provide an alternative, multimodal transportation system to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

- Support the concept of walkable neighborhoods and communities including sidewalks, etc.

Water and Sewer Strategies

- Promote the financial benefits of forming cooperative water and sewer systems to counties and municipalities by conducting water asset plans coordinated with providers and ADECA.

- Encourage innovative and alternative sewer systems consistent with EPA/ADEM requests.

- Develop regional or statewide contingency plans to provide water to areas that have been severely impacted by natural disasters such as flooding, drought, and hurricanes and to prevent such problems from occurring. Ensure the development of countywide hazard mitigation plans.

Telecommunications Strategies

- Ensure that each county has broadband access for distance learning opportunities for workforce training and education and support the technology industry development. A program coordinated through ADO, EDAA, ACES, and AARC should be created for consistent policy and guidelines. Assure that systems include government, businesses, and educational stakeholders.

- Enhance long-distance phone service and internet access in under-served, rural areas of the state.

- Provide a balance between the development of advanced telecommunications infrastructure and the protection of rural and scenic resources (e.g., cell towers, antennas, above ground utility lines, etc.) This could be achieved by developing telecommunications plans, coordinated telecommunications ordinances for municipalities in a county and through needs assessment surveys.

ISSUE: EDUCATION

Public Finance Strategies

- Pursue equitable tax reform through State Legislature to provide adequate funding for the public education system.

- Develop both a capital improvements and resource expenditures plan to address near-, mid-, and long-term education needs.

Elementary and Secondary School Strategies

- Improve the perception of the Alabama Public School System locally and nationally through increased funding, improved facilities, and a modernized curriculum.
- Encourage the coordination and participation of the State Board of Education and the Public Safety Commission to develop school safety practices, policies, and develop action plans for antiviolence institutions.

- Utilize programs to link education (K-12) and industries to ensure that students are equipped with the basic skills needed in today's workforce.

- Continue to seek increased opportunities for businesses and industries to work together with the education system to prepare today's students for a global economy by requiring foreign language courses and physical and cultural geography courses.

- Ensure that all educational facilities are equipped with technology needed to enhance basic comprehensive skills and encourage engaging interaction between urban and rural schools for cultural enrichment.

- Work community colleges and others throughout the state to provide distance learning training to companies and teachers.

Workforce Development Strategies

- Support small business development and start-ups through the use of business incubators and other training centers

- Work with the Commerce Commission to provide financial assistance to vocational schools, colleges, and universities to provide new skills training to supply industries with qualified employees.

- Work with the Commerce Commission/ADO/EDAA/ADECA to provide financial assistance to industries for retraining dislocated workers and for advanced skills training to help existing industries modernize their production process.

Telecommunications Strategies

- Ensure that each county has broadband access for distance learning opportunities for workforce training and education. A program coordinated

through ADO, EDAA, ACES, and AARC should be created for consistent policy and guidelines.

- Continue to seek ways to deliver entrepreneurial training programs to elementary, high schools, and college students and training programs for handicapped persons via distance learning.

- Connect vocational high schools, vocational colleges, community colleges, universities, incubators, and training centers such as the ones at the Honda and Mercedes Plans with distance learning.

- Enhance long-distance phone service and internet access in underserved, rural areas of the state.

ISSUE: LAND USE, PLANNING, AND ZONING

Legislative Strategies

- Support countywide home rule (AARC/ACCA policy).

- Support AARC/ACCA policies on planning and zoning.

- Update enabling legislation for master plans contained in the Code of Alabama (AARC/ALAPA policies).

- Work with the state legislature to establish funding for and create a fully staffed statewide planning agency. The agency could work with AARC/EDAA/ALAPA to coordinate planning on a regional and district basis.

- Reinstitute a state clearinghouse function to assure coordination of funding with plans and avoid duplication.

Land Use Planning Strategies

- Prepare and adopt policy driven county plans that are cognizant of economic impacts and work with the Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and the regional councils to gain their support and to utilize their expertise in implementing these plans.

- Improve and enforce subdivision regulation standards, including design recommendations, in all counties through a coordinated effort with the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA).

- Support the efforts and maintain the funding of the Alabama Scenic Byways Program as created by state legislation to develop standards and guidelines to establish a scenic byways system and work with affected local governments to develop corridor management plans as required.

- Encourage local planning efforts by changing grant requirements to award bonus points to communities with a strategic growth policy plan or comprehensive plan, as applicable.

- Support the efforts of the "Your Town Program" to provide training on planning, resources, and design to local elected officials, planning commissions, citizen activists, and planners.

- Ensure that a leadership or group initiative is developed to oversee the implementation of the thirteen categories into action items for the Regional Solutions 2000: Striving for Regional Excellence report. A regional and statewide coordination action plan should be developed to apply best practices. This would entail coordination between the regional planning commissions, economic development districts, chambers of commerce, visionary organizations, and others identified in the development of a project scope.

- Implement the Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) Program as developed to provide communities across Alabama with a comprehensive community development program, which ensures long-term sustainability by offering ongoing support and incentives to be coordinated with the CLEO Program and formal Prepared Cities Program.

- Develop a technical support group consisting of Regional Planning Commissions, Economic Development Districts, American Planning Association and universities. The technical support group would develop implementation methods for Smart Growth Initiatives. Tasks would include the preparation of text and graphic detail, database coordination, and subsequent report development.

- Offer incentive, such as grant points, for communities to perform cost/benefit analysis studies to measure and control growth while encouraging job and revenue creation. (Commerce Commission, AAMU, JSU, Environmental Commission, and Commission on Smart Growth.)

- Utilize the Alabama Historical Commission's (AHC) Mainstreet Development Model to incorporate into local development plans to promote economic development in town centers.

- Encourage redevelopment of Brownfield's in the state by inventorying existing sites and issuing redevelopment guidelines utilizing the state's new Brownfield Legislation.

- Support the efforts of the "Your Town Program" to provide training on planning, resources, and design to local elected officials, planning commissions, citizen activists, and planners.

Public Involvement Strategies

- Continue public education on planning issues through the American Planning Association (APA) to include taking the plans to the schools, lecturing on planning and development and expanding leadership development programs.

- Promote increasingly full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.

- Promote leadership development programs throughout the state.

- Introduce more innovative technologies such as role-laying and task assignments into public involvement meetings.

- Use the media to publicize local accomplishments and efforts in planning.

- Establish structures to assure greater civic and business organizations participation in planning activities.

- Encourage greater use of public forums and "town hall" meetings on planning issues and develop a schedule for issues to be addressed.

- Support the environmental justice policy of the FHWA and their efforts to work with ALDOT and local MPOs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations; to ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and to prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

- Create organizations/groups such as: Community Development Corporations to enhance the capacity of local community groups.

- Support the efforts of the "Your Town Program" to provide training on planning, resources, and design to local elected officials, planning commissions, citizen activist, and planners.

ISSUE: QUALITY OF LIFE

Healthcare Strategies

- Support and expand rural health care programs in Alabama.
- Increase funding levels for the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and county health departments to enable them to increase enforcement of health and environmental regulations.
- Continue to provide improved healthcare service to Alabama's senior citizens.
- Increase opportunities for telemedicine services, especially in underserved, rural areas.
- Work with medical schools and hospitals to recruit healthcare staff to underserved areas and provide incentives for staff retention (e.g., bonus points for grants, eligibility for local or state insurance and retirement benefits, etc.)
- Work with the State Health Department to promote rural health care and general family practice medicine in medical school curriculums, expand state health resource, identify healthcare needs, and develop preventative healthcare programs.
- Encourage the implementation of an ongoing public information clearinghouse for health information through state, regional, and local agencies.

Public Safety Strategies

- Support the provision of adequate funding and staffing for state highway patrol officers and local sheriffs, police, and fire departments.
- Support efforts to increase school safety by identifying and counseling children who are at high risk to commit violent crimes and by implementing programs such as peer counseling and D.A.R.E.
- Coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), ensure that counties have prepared and adopted Hazard Mitigation Plans as a requirement for requesting FEMA funding.

- Work with state agencies to change match requirements on grants to a sliding scale based on community revenue and effort to improve rural communities' and counties' ability to obtain funding for public safety improvements.

Recreation Strategies

- Support the completion of State Park upgrades and keep local governments and public apprised of the status of State Park improvements and Amendment 1.

- Support the implementation and funding of the Alabama Scenic Byways Program as created by state legislation to develop standards and guidelines to establish a scenic byways system and work with affected local governments to develop corridor management plans as required.

- Utilize greater flexibility in existing programs at ADECA, ALDOT, and USDA that fund quality of life infrastructure projects to enhance appeal of local communities and make them more attractive (e.g., senior centers, community centers, parks, playgrounds, and highway beautification and gateway improvements.)

- Support the increased marketing of Alabama's diverse recreational opportunities (including state parks, beaches, historic sites, trails, lakes, and rivers) in-state, nationally, and internationally.

- Support and fund trail plans and construction at the state, regional, county, and municipal levels to provide an alternative, multimodal transportation system for recreational purposes.

- Work with state agencies to change match requirements on grants to a sliding scale based on community revenue and effort to improve the ability to obtain funding for recreational improvements in rural communities and counties.

Environmental Strategies

- Implement the recommendations forwarded by the Governor's Commission on Environmental Initiatives, to be applied and coordinated through local, regional, and statewide planning efforts.

- Work with the Environmental Commission to promote increased county garbage collection.

- Increase environmental education efforts in Alabama by supporting the Environmental Commission, Legacy, The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), HRCS, and soil and conservation districts.

- Provide a balance between the development of advanced telecommunications infrastructure and the protection of rural and scenic resources (e.g., cell towers, antennas, above-ground utility lines, etc.)

- Support ADEM's Clean Water Partnership Program.

- Support the education efforts of the Nonpoint Education for Elected Officials (NEMO) to address nonpoint water quality issues.

- Encourage redevelopment of brown fields in the state by inventorying existing sites and redevelopment guidelines.

- Provide greater incentives for ecotourism in Alabama that improves access to natural features while minimizing the human impact on the environment.

- Support and fund trail plans and construction at the state, regional, county, and municipal levels to provide alternative, multimodal transportation system to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

- Support the environmental justice policy of the FHWA and their efforts to work with ALDOT and local MPOs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.

- Increase funding levels for the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and County Health Departments to enable them to increase enforcement of health and environmental regulations.

- Provide a balance between commercial advertising needs and the protection of rural and scenic resources.

Affordable Housing Strategies

- Support statewide and regional affordable housing initiatives by encouraging greater use of cash and volunteer resources.

- Coordinate the numerous housing initiatives to promote housing improvements and neighborhood revitalization in the context of programs such as Habitat for Humanity, HUD, local CDBG, the Alabama Housing Finance Authority, and private investment.

APPENDIX

SPECIAL THANKS.....

Bea Forniss, the Director of the Governor's Resources for Economic Assistance Programs and the alternate for the Delta Regional Authority Program, wishes to express special thanks to the following individuals for assisting with the preparation of this state plan for the year 2009:

Ms. Bonnie Durham, Program Manager for ARC, State of Alabama

Bonnie was instrumental in assisting with the completion of the "mirror" ARC/DRA program model. She was also instrumental in matching the Delta's goals with the goals of the ARC. As author of the ARC State Plan, Bonnie gave written permission for the usage of the ARC State Plan as a guide for the Delta Regional Program. Excerpts are used from various sections of the ARC Plan.

The Regional Districts

The Regional Districts were most helpful in developing strategies. The Alabama Association of Regional Councils provided the State with their Statewide/Regional Strategic Plan and allowed the State to use sections as needed.

Delta Regional Authority: Alabama Local Development Districts
20 Counties in 6 Planning and Development Districts

Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission
10 Counties: Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington, Wilcox
Executive Director: John Clyde Riggs
107 Broad Street Camden, Alabama 36726
334-682-4234
FAX: 334-682-4205
Jcriggs@hotmail.com
www.alarc.org/atrc/index.htm

South Central Alabama Development Commission
3 Counties: Bullock, Lowndes, Macon
Executive Director: Tyson Howard
5900 Carmichael Place
Montgomery, Alabama 36117
334-244-6903
FAX: 334-270-0038
Lpowell@adss.state.al.us
www.alarc.org/scadc/index.htm

West Alabama Planning and Development Council
3 Counties: Greene, Hale, Pickens
Executive Director: Bob Lake
4200 Highway 69 North, Suite 1
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Lee-Russell Council of Governments
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Ex. Director: Suzanne G. Burnette
2207 Gateway Drive
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Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
2 Counties: Barbour, Butler
Executive Director: Tom Solomon
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Dothan, Alabama 36302
334-794-4093, ext. 1417
FAX: 334-794-3288
tsolomon@searpdc.org
www.sanman.net

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
1 County: Escambia
Ex. Director: Russell J. Wimberly
Post Office Box 1665
651 Church Street
Mobile, Alabama 36633
334-433-6541
FAX: 334-433-6009
russwimberly@sarpc.org
www.sarpc.org

Alabama Association
of Regional Councils
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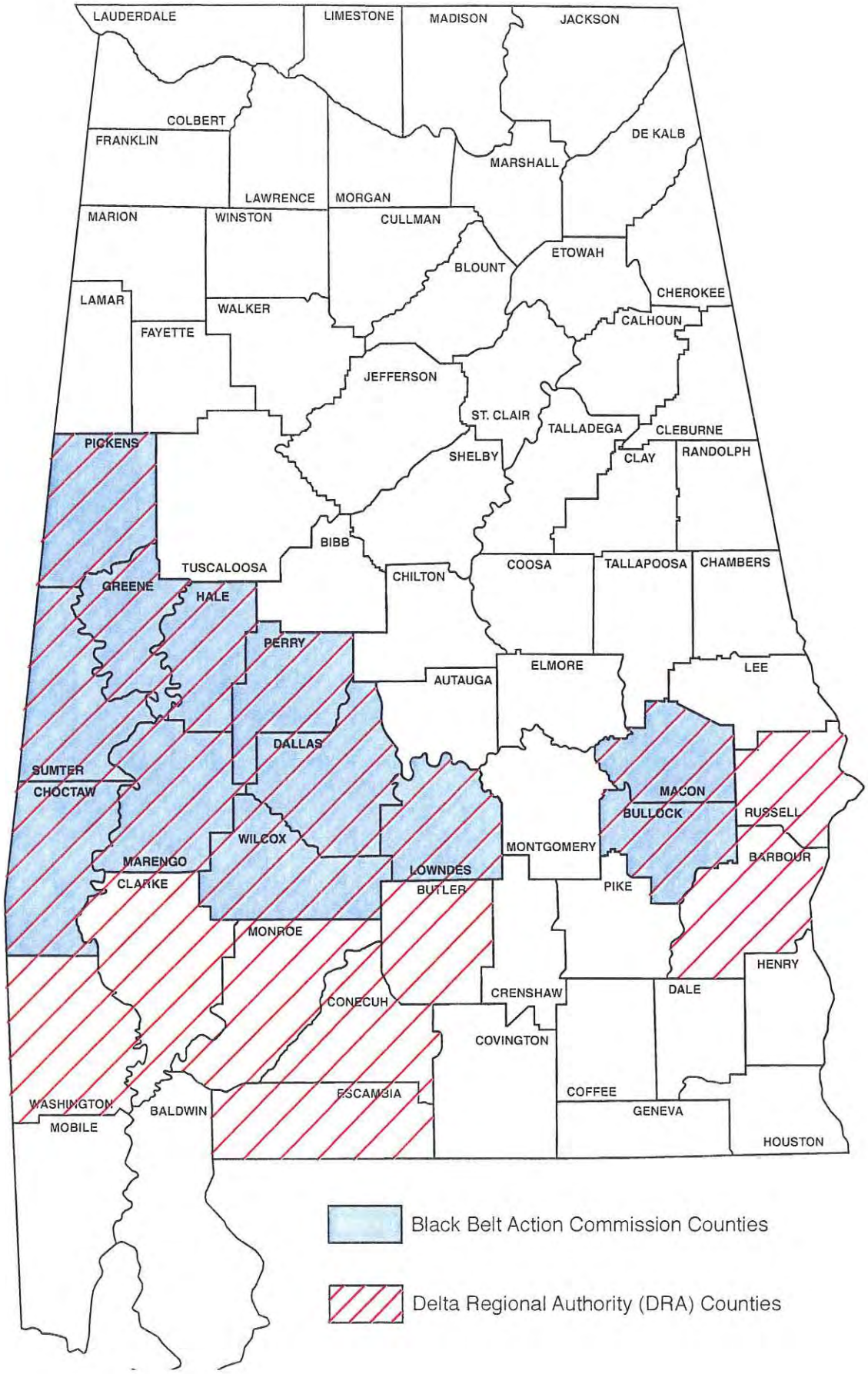
Miles
20 10 0 20 40 60 80 100 Kilometers
Pickens
Greene
Hale
Sumter
Perry
Dallas
Marengo
Choctaw
Wilcox
Clarke
Washington
Wilcox
Conecuh
Escambia
Lowndes
Butler
Macon
Russelll
Bullock
Barbour

ALABAMA

Black Belt Action Commission and Delta Regional Authority

Counties



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

Governor

Alabama Legislature

Public

Alabama Development Office

- Alabama Dept. of Economic & Community
- Alabama Dept. of Environmental
- Alabama State Docks
- Alabama Dept. of Education
- Alabama Bureau of Tourism
- Retirement Systems of Alabama
- Regional Council of Governments
- Small Business Development Center
- City Councils & County Commissions
- City & County Industrial Development Boards
- City & County Utility Boards

- Alabama Industrial Development Training
- Alabama Dept. of Transportation
- Alabama Dept. of Revenue
- Alabama Dept. of Finance
- Universities & Colleges
- Center for Business & Economic Research
- Center for Government Studies
- Community Colleges
- Regional & Municipal Airports

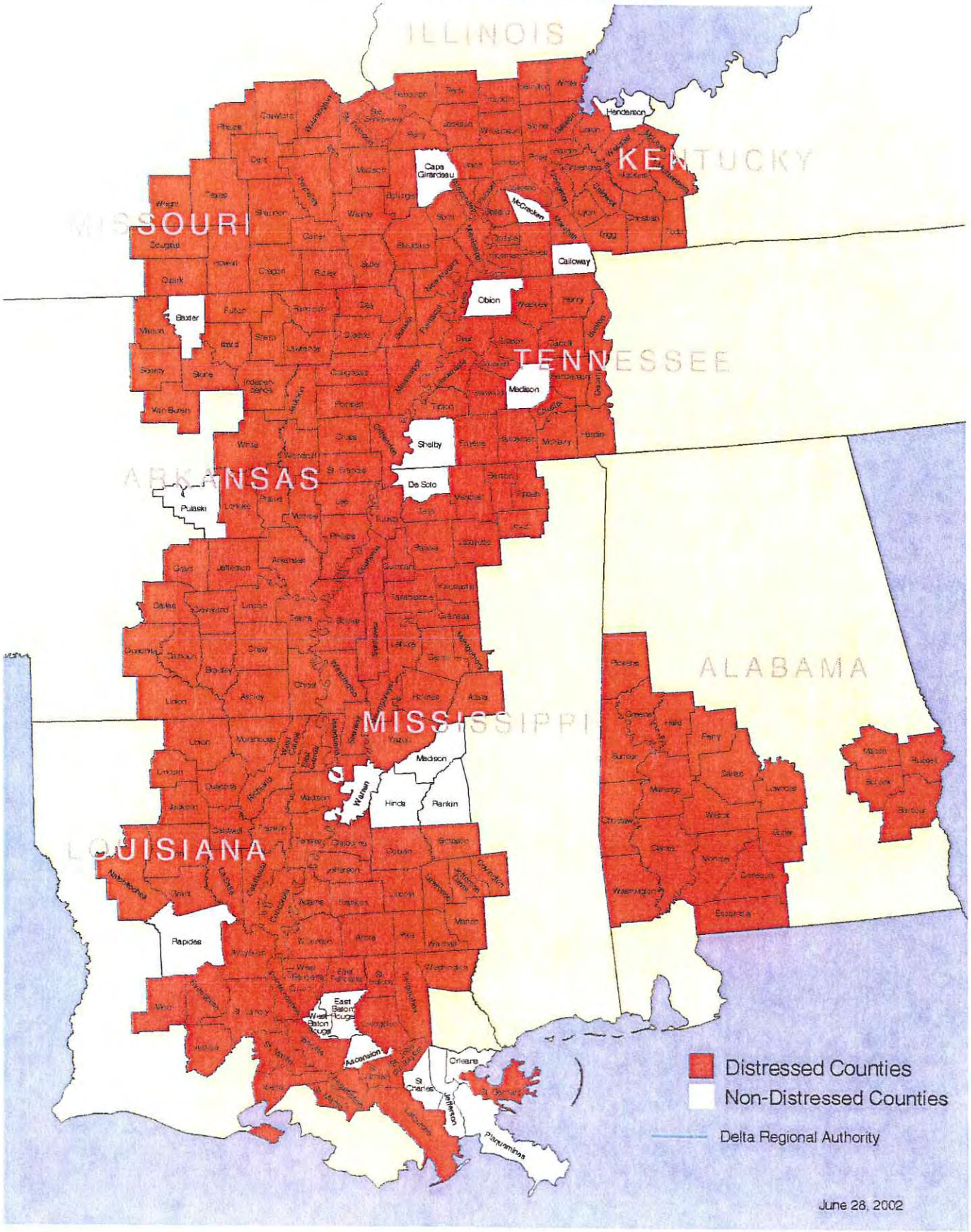
Private

- Economic Development Partnership of Alabama
- World Business Alabama
- Alabama Technology Network
- Emerging Technology Partners
- Business Council of Alabama
- Alabama Manufacturing Association
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic & Industrial Development Authorities
- Area & Regional Business Incubators

- Utility Companies
- Railroads
- Commercial & Investment Bankers
- Engineering & Construction Firms
- Commercial Realtors & Developers
- Law Firms
- North Alabama Industrial Development Association
- South East Alabama Council for Economic

Economic Developers Association of Alabama

○ Statewide
○ Regional
○ Local

Delta Regional Authority

Distressed Counties and Parishes