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Local business and elected leaders participating in this trip have found it an excellent opportunity to network with their peers. Buses will leave the Chamber at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday morning. Plans are to leave Montgomery by 6:00 p.m. Bus transportation has been arranged and early reservations are strongly recommended as the bus fills up quickly. Space on the bus is assigned on a first-come basis.

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Photos by Dennis Keim

mission The mission of the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville • Madison County is to prepare, develop and promote our community for economic growth.

contact Chamber of Commerce
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Huntsville/Madison County • Chamber of Commerce

February 2006



Mike Mercier/Huntsville Times

cover story

Call to Action

Taking the Show on the Road to Arlington, Virginia

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On the Cover (l-r): TV BRAC Committee Chair Joe Ritch, Mayor Loretta Spencer, Lt. Gen. Henry A. "Trey" Obering III and Madison County Commission Chairman Mike Gillespie



A Message from the Chamber

Dear Chamber of Commerce Investors, Community Leaders and Friends:

In case you've somehow missed it in recent months, Huntsville/Madison County is in the midst of one of the most dynamic periods of economic growth in our community's history. Recently at our Chamber's annual meeting, 2005 Chairman of the Board **Jim Link** revealed that Huntsville/Madison County accounted for **over 7,000 announced jobs** just within our primary employment sectors last year, far exceeding the 5,400 jobs announced in 2004, which at that time established an all-time record for Madison County. As chairman of the Chamber last year, retired General Link was the ideal leader for our organization during a critical Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC) process which is now having a profound impact on local growth. In receiving the chairman's gavel from Jim Link, 2006 Chairman of the Board **Dave Hargrove** pledged to continue the Chamber's focus on economic development. We are indeed fortunate to have leaders like Jim and Dave as part of our organization and our community's economic growth process. You will also find the other 2006 members of the Chamber's Executive Committee and Board of Directors pictured in this edition of *Initiatives*.

This *Initiatives* also includes an article about **Jerry Toland** of Redstone Federal Credit Union. Jerry, a member of the Chamber's executive committee, was honored recently with the Chamber's annual *Distinguished Service Award*.

Also included in this publication are articles explaining the status of Bridge Street Town Centre, a large commercial development under construction in Cummings Research Park, an article about local education written by Dr. Mary Jane Caylor, an article about Dr. Paul Ruffin, an Army senior research scientist, and a review of the Chamber's recent annual meeting, which attracted some 1,250 attendees. Another article details our Chamber's annual state agenda, including a special request regarding support for the Southern Bypass project.

At the beginning of each year it is natural for any chamber of commerce to review its past year's accomplishments and to look ahead to the new year. That process is sometimes more symbolic than substantive, but in Huntsville/Madison County our economic development history and forthcoming opportunities and challenges, especially those presented by BRAC, are real. If all the economic statistics and lofty community rankings still haven't convinced you of Huntsville's growth, then take a ride through Cummings Research Park West. Numerous construction projects, most of them the future workplaces of scientists and engineers, will convince you.

As more employers and workers grow in the Huntsville area, the spotlight on our success will continue to intensify. Pay particular attention now and in the coming months to our careful strategy in presenting our community's attributes to workers in other states being offered the opportunity to relocate here.

2006 is already off to a great start! Thank you for your continued support of the Chamber and our economic development program.

Brian Hilson

President & CEO

Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County

The Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Executive Committee 2006

Executive Committee

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Jim Link, Immediate Past Chair
Evans Quinlivan, Secretary/Treasurer
Irma Tuder, Vice Chair Economic Development
Joe Ritch, Vice Chair Governmental Affairs
Charley Burruss, Vice Chair
Image Development
Gerald Toland, Vice Chair Investor Relations
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Research & Information Services
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Chairman Mike Gillespie, Chair-Appointed
Bill Gurley, Chair-Appointed
Mayor Loretta Spencer, Chair-Appointed
Brian Hilson, President/CEO

Elected Board

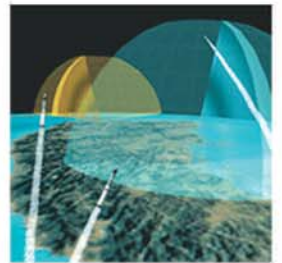
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Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama, Inc.
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Jim Owens, AmSouth Bank
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Karen Stanley, Stanley Properties, LLC
Sandra Steele, Enfinger Steele Development
Paula Steigerwald, Huntsville Botanical Garden
Herman Stubbs, Colonial Bank
Al Sullivan, COLSA Corporation
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BRIDGE STREET TOWN CENTRE
Huntsville

The earth movers are still there, but not for long.

With thousands of cubic yards of dirt still being shifted, Huntsville's Bridge Street Town Centre is about to enter another growth phase. The much anticipated project is going to sprout concrete and steel. Workers from Turner Universal Construction Co. will soon begin foundation work on the 12-story **Westin Huntsville Hotel**, as well as the rest of the 550,000 square feet of retail space that will make up Bridge Street.

In December, the developers, O & S Holdings of Los Angeles, announced the first tenants for the 100-acre development in Cummings Research Park, giving residents throughout the region a first glimpse of things to come.

One of those tenants is **Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa**, which will be located on the lobby level of the Westin Huntsville. Alex Hardy, director of business development and public policy with O & S, says landing Red Door Spa is something of a coup. "There are only something like three dozen of these in the U.S.," Hardy said. "They're either in freestanding or hotel locations. We think this is a strong reflection of how much we're putting into this to make Bridge Street a project of the highest quality."

Hardy said more than 50,000 square feet of space has been designated as restaurant space in Bridge Street, and the first three tenants have area residents salivating at the possibilities. Wildly popular China bistro **P.F. Chang's** will have its first Huntsville store in Bridge Street, as will **Sullivan's**

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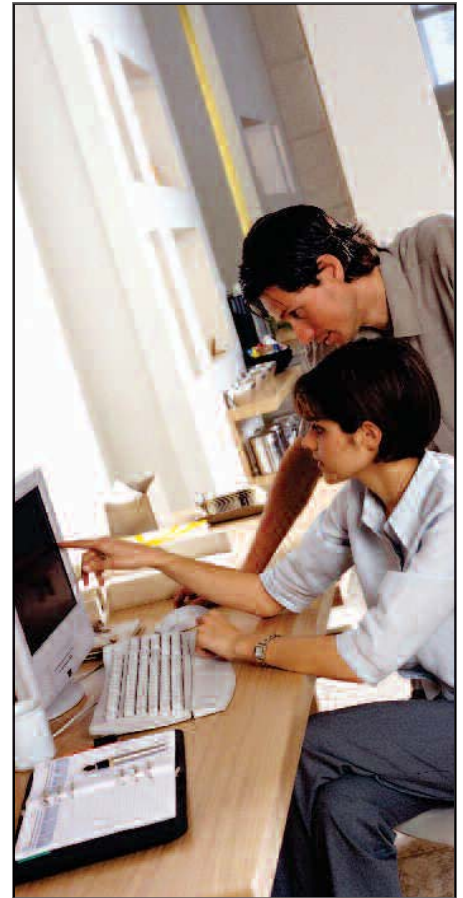
An aerial view of Bridge Street Town Centre in December 2005

Steakhouse – known for its steak, martinis and jazz theme. **Bravo Cucina**, an upscale Italian restaurant, has also revealed plans, according to Hardy.

On the retail side, Bridge Street an-

nounced the following stores: **Ann Taylor Loft**, **Coldwater Creek**, **Chico's**, **Soma**, **White House/Black Market**, **Brighton Collectibles**, **J. Jill**, and **Francesca's**. "That's

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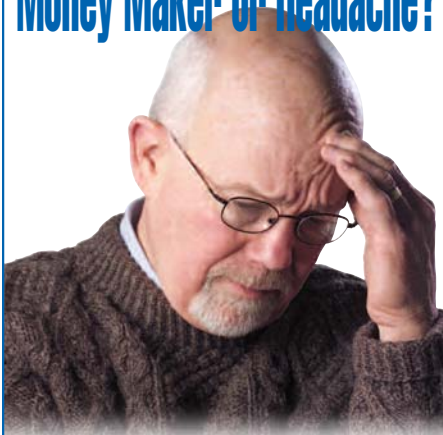
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roughly a dozen out of about 75 total," Hardy said. "And there's a long list that we're still in negotiations with." The retail stores will be built across a 10-acre lake, complete with passenger boats that shoppers can use to navigate from one end of the development to another. Sprinkled throughout the paths and corridors will be multiple water features, including programmed water fountains complete with music and light displays.

At the Westin, travelers in the hotel's 208 rooms will share the hotel space with residents who will live on the hotel's top five floors. O & S will build 74 condominiums at the Westin, ranging in size from 1,200 square feet up to 3,600 square feet. "On the top floor, there will be two 4,000 square foot penthouse condos," Hardy said. He declined to name a price for the two penthouse units, but comparable units elsewhere typically sell for more than \$1 million.

"Right now we have a document called an 'expression of interest' which is non-binding," Hardy said. "That list has more than 80 people on it, who have said they have interest in what we're doing. Later this month we'll go to that list and tell people, 'Now is the time to decide to put down deposits' on the property."

Hardy said O & S has not yet marketed

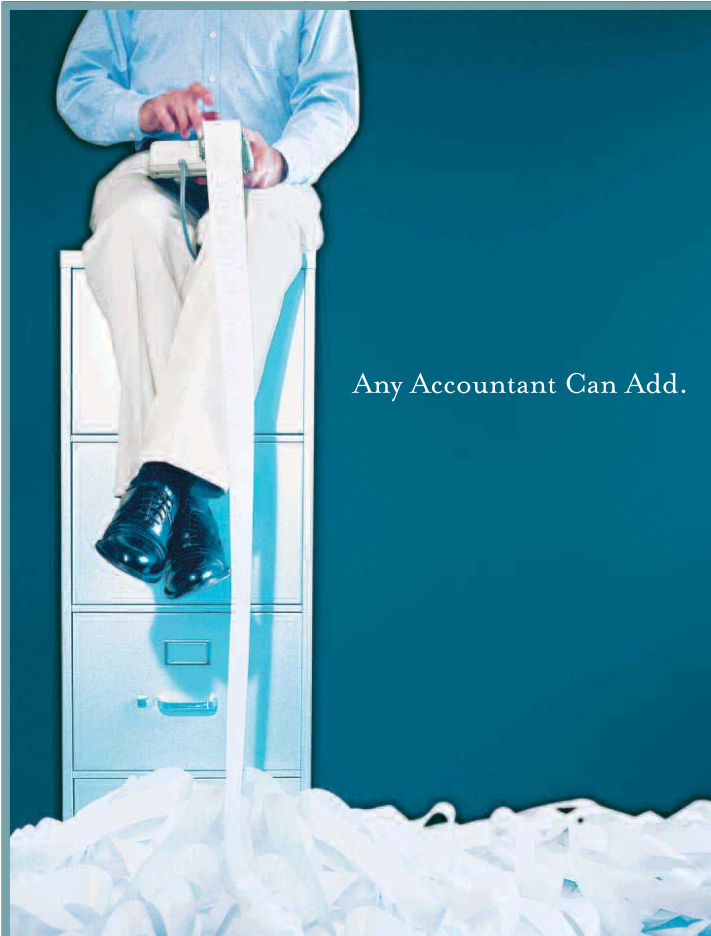
the condominiums to corporate customers, saying the response from private individuals was so strong that the original design was changed from 42 units to 74 units. Grand opening of the Westin Huntsville and the first retail outlets is tentatively scheduled for spring 2007.

Also under construction will be the first of three planned office towers in the development. Each building will be six stories high, containing approximately 150,000 square feet of office space. "We're under construction on one now," Hardy said. "The other two will be based on market demand. If the demand is strong enough, we can go higher, to seven or eight floors."

Bridge Street will be complete within two years; Hardy said the developers will then turn their attention to the final phase of the project, an area on the western side of the site that was originally marked for residential development. That may still happen, Hardy said, "But there will be some analysis done about what's best for the project overall. It may be more residential, which would be less expensive condos, or it may be more retail or office."

For now, all eyes will be on the horizon around Cummings Research Park, to see how the skyline changes over the next 18 months.

• Rick Davis



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Small World, Big Contributions

Missile Defense Industry Profile: *Paul Ruffin*

Dr. Paul B. Ruffin's world keeps getting smaller, but his ideas continue to grow.

The Army senior research scientist started his career in 1977, working with optics used in missiles. Since then he has moved on to fiber optics, microelectromechanical systems and, most recently, nanotechnology, which uses particles that are about 1/80,000th the width of a human hair. Only the most powerful microscopes can be used to see nano-sized particles.

But while Ruffin's subject is invisible to the naked eye, his accomplishments are clearly visible in the field of missile guidance and would take several pages to list.

Ruffin holds master's (1982) and doctorate (1986) degrees in physics from UAH. He has six patents under his belt and is working on another. He has published or presented more than 100 technical papers, served on numerous boards and counsels related to optics technology in the military, and serves on graduate students' advisory committees at UAH and Alabama A&M University, where he earned his bachelor's in physics in 1977.

In 2003 he won the top award for a civilian Army researcher, the Army Research and Development Achievement Award. The same year he was one of seven people tapped for an Alumni of Achievement Award by the UAH Alumni Association. Earlier this year, Ruffin was the recipient of the UAH College of Science Distinguished Alumnus Award and the Alabama A&M William Hooper Council Alumni Award, as well as being inducted in the Alabama A&M Alumni Hall of Fame in Science.

All of this, and he's only 50 and still going strong, constantly thinking up ways to use new technology.

"I've had good work. I don't get bored, I just followed the technology," Ruffin said. "It's rewarding to know that even at my age I'm able to (keep learning). I'm able to make a contribution to aid soldiers and humanity."

Ruffin, who lives in Toney, works at Redstone Arsenal in the Applied Sensors Guidance and Electronics Directorate at the Aviation and Missile Research, Development & Engineering Center, which is part of the Army Research, Development, and Engineering Command (RDECOM). He has been promoted to Senior Research Scientist for micro-sensors and systems, the "top of the technical route for scientists in the government."

He has focused his career on missile guidance research, both at his first job at Dynetics and at the Arsenal, where he has worked since 1982. His six patents are related to missile guidance, as is an invention that he considers his greatest professional accomplishment. That invention, on how to

wind fiber optic wires in a gyroscope, solved a longstanding problem with accurately steering missiles after they have been launched. For that, he won the Black Engineer of the Year Special Recognition Award in 1998.

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L to R: Vernon Bice, Stan Bailey, Mayor Loretta Spencer and Jim Link.

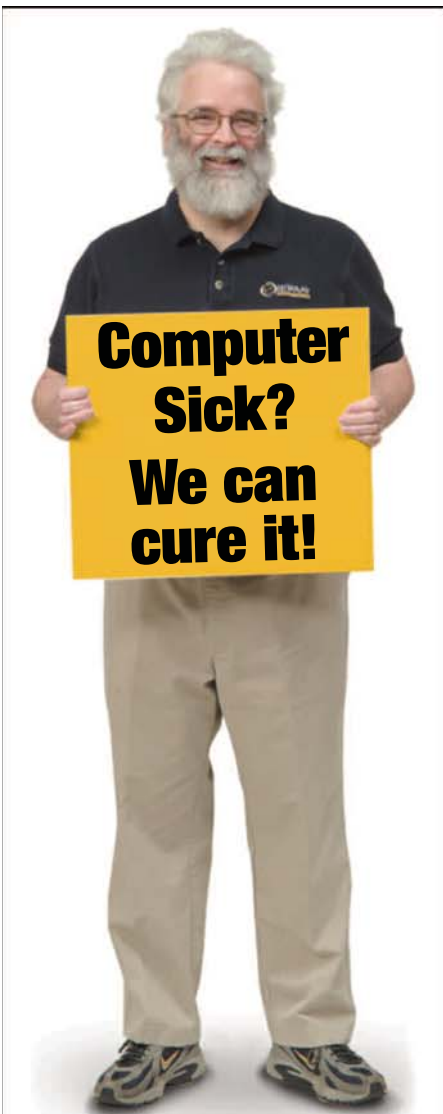
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continued from page 13

Ruffin talks easily about his successes, but says there are others around him even smarter. He credits good bosses for the accolades he has received over the years, saying they recognized his talents and accomplishments and submitted his name for national awards.

With the latest nanotechnology, Ruffin is coming up with new ideas for inventions that can utilize its tiny size. Researchers are using it to test the environment for harmful chemical and biological agents, to coat missile parts so they will be lighter and stronger, and to make missiles burn fuel more efficiently.

Ruffin also sees non-military potential for nanotechnology. He is working on an invention that might be used to treat cancerous and other tumors.

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north Alabama in the mid-1970s. He grew up in Gilbertown, in south Alabama's Choctaw County. Baling hay, loading pulpwood logs and plowing behind mules in the shirt-soaking humidity was not to his taste. He told his preacher/farmer father that he was going to college.

As a high school student he did well in physics classes and had a natural curiosity for why things happen the way they do. "I enjoy physics, it was easy for me," he said.

While attending Mobile College (now the University of Mobile), a friend convinced Ruffin's mother that he would be more successful at the smaller Alabama A&M University. The small classes and personal attention from professors made him a competitive student before he went on to graduate school at UAH, Ruffin said.

Outside of work, Ruffin shares his work experience, his life experience and his beliefs with people of all ages. As Director of Education of the Huntsville Association of Technical Societies he gives seed grants to teachers to do science projects in schools, then visits the students to explain how what they are doing is applied in the "real world."

He mentors high school students through the U.S. Army RDECOM's Summer Science and Engineering Apprentice Program; touts the rewards of science and

engineering careers to students through the AMCOM Minority Science and Engineering Committee; and talks to young men from churches throughout the state about money management, work ethics, leadership skills and goal setting.

As well as preaching at the Forge Temple Church of God in Christ in Birmingham, Alabama (where he serves as pastor), Ruffin is a radio minister with a show at 1 p.m. Sundays on WEUP-AM 1700.

His greatest accomplishment outside of work and church, he said, was celebrating his 25th wedding anniversary in 2002 with his wife, Vetrea Slack Ruffin. The couple has

two daughters, Loretta Ruffin Conaway and Angelica Denise Ruffin.

Ruffin sees a common thread to his accomplishments, whether it's working on a cancer treatment, developing more accurate missiles for soldiers or hearing how students he has mentored have become successful in their field.

Life's reward, he said, is "When you're making life better for people."

• Deborah Bennick

This article previously appeared in an issue of UAH Alumni News.



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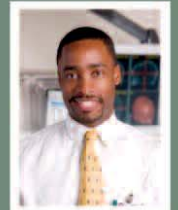
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Community profile

	Madison County	City of Huntsville	City of Madison	Huntsville Metro Area
Population				
2000 Census	276,700	158,216	29,329	342,376
2004 Estimate	293,072	164,146	35,012	362,459
Households				
2000 Census	109,955	66,742	11,143	134,643
Income & Age				
Avg. Household Income	\$57,220	\$55,856	\$72,432	\$55,343
Per Capita Income	\$23,091	\$24,015	\$27,821	\$22,073

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)



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TOP 10 EMPLOYERS

U.S. Army/Redstone Arsenal	14,599
Huntsville Hospital System	4,320
The Boeing Company	3,092
Huntsville City Schools	2,700
NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center	2,676
Wal-Mart Stores	2,300
CINRAM	2,200
Intergraph Corporation	2,097
Madison County Schools	2,033
SAIC	2,031

Source: Chamber of Commerce

Aerospace & Defense

Huntsville/Madison County is home to the U.S. Army Redstone Arsenal and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center which combine to drive a thriving aerospace and defense technology industry. Nearly 15,000 direct DoD and 2,700 NASA employees manage some of the country's most important and sophisticated technology programs including missiles, aviation and space exploration. More than 250 companies employing an additional 27,000 workers support the local aerospace and defense industries.

Research & Technology

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When Making the Grade means Making a Move

With thousands of BRAC-affected federal workers contemplating changes in location, evaluating vocation and perhaps adjusting attitude, Alabama schools – particularly those in Huntsville and Madison County – are being closely scrutinized. In January, Dr. Mary Jane Caylor, a member of the Alabama State Board of Education who represents five North Alabama counties including Madison County, proudly stepped to the podium in Arlington, Virginia, to reassure potential transferees with the Missile Defense Command and the U.S. Army Space & Missile Defense Command that Alabama schools are up to the test.

As Caylor prepared her remarks for Arlington, she also offered **Initiatives** her insight to why she believes Alabama's move up in education will mean more transferees moving in.

A unique concept was established in the Huntsville City Schools during the mid-1980s. Magnet schools were created in

two elementary schools and two high schools. By emphasizing arts, pre-engineering, foreign languages, math and science, education leaders enhanced opportunities for students to focus their energies.

Locating teaching personnel trained in the pre-engineering and foreign language programs was a major undertaking. Permission was sought from the Alabama State Department of Education to employ persons with the ability to teach pre-engineering and Japanese who did not hold teaching credentials. Programs were successfully taught and opportunities developed for students to matriculate from elementary and middle schools to the high schools with an expectation of mastering skills in an atmosphere previously unknown in Huntsville.

Programs for the arts flourished in the Academy for Academics and Arts and in what became known as the Lee High Performing Arts program. The Academy for

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Dennis Keim

At the Academy for Science and Foreign Language (ASFL), students in grades K-8 are guided by mentors in hands-on science laboratory activities.

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Science and Mathematics attracted students from across the city.

A Saturday program for Japanese children was established. This program, established 20 years ago, continues to meet the

needs of Japanese children in our community, enabling them to continue studies in their native language and culture. Indeed, schools in our area now have the reputation of meeting the needs of our community in the arts, foreign languages, math and science education based on our efforts two decades ago.

The Huntsville City Schools required instruction in four major disciplines – math, science, language arts and social studies – before the State Department of Education required four-by-four curriculum in all Alabama schools. Since our four-by-four curriculum was introduced to high school classrooms statewide, average student achievement has increased every year. The Thomas Fordham Institute ranked Alabama among the top states in the nation with the best U.S. history state academic standards; one of the top five states for its English standards; and one of the top six for math standards. Alabama is the only state holding teacher education programs in colleges and universities accountable for on-the-job performance of their graduates with oversight by the Alabama State Board of Education.

Praised by President Bush, the *Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI)* is a model for other states and earned the *State Innovation Award from the Education Commission of the States*. Additionally, students in ARI schools and those participating in the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) consistently show gains over schools without these programs. Dr. Steve Ricks, director of AMSTI in the Alabama State

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Department of Education related that ... "business and education leaders from across the nation identify math, science, and technology skills as crucial for preparing students to compete in the twenty-first century."

Several years ago I was invited by Mark McDaniel, a prominent Huntsville attorney, to discuss how our schools could enhance offerings in math and science. Mark was appointed by President Clinton to serve on NASA's Advisory Board. During our visit I related that the state board had commissioned a blue-ribbon committee of kindergarten through 12th grade educators, higher education representatives and business leaders to complete an extensive review of what was needed to provide students with a world class education in math and science. At that time, AMSTI had been created and approved. Recently Dr. Ricks stated in an article that ... "this major initiative seeks to help all students in grades k-12 develop the math, science and technology skills necessary for success in postsecondary studies and in the workforce." He further stated, "AMSTI is designed to significantly raise student achievement by providing Alabama's students with a solid background in these core subjects." Funding had not been provided initially by the Alabama Legislature,

so Mark talked with Congressman Bud Cramer and obtained funding for the implementation of the program in the North Alabama area. The University of Alabama in Huntsville was identified as the training site for educators and the program was implemented. AMSTI programs in South Alabama were established with funding from the national program No Child Left Behind on a limited basis. Today, funding is provided in Alabama to implement AMSTI in other areas of the state; however the program is still not fully funded in the entire state.

The Alabama State Board of Education's Education Ruler: *Making & Measuring*

Progress Grade by Grade has four key components every student in Alabama should have. These include:

- Safe & disciplined schools
- Quality teachers
- Challenging curricula
- Effective school leaders


These criteria prepare students for college, work and adulthood.

Huntsville will continue to have sound economic development and growth with sound educational opportunities for our students. Two decades ago much was originated which today and tomorrow will bear fruit.

• Dr. Mary Jane Caylor

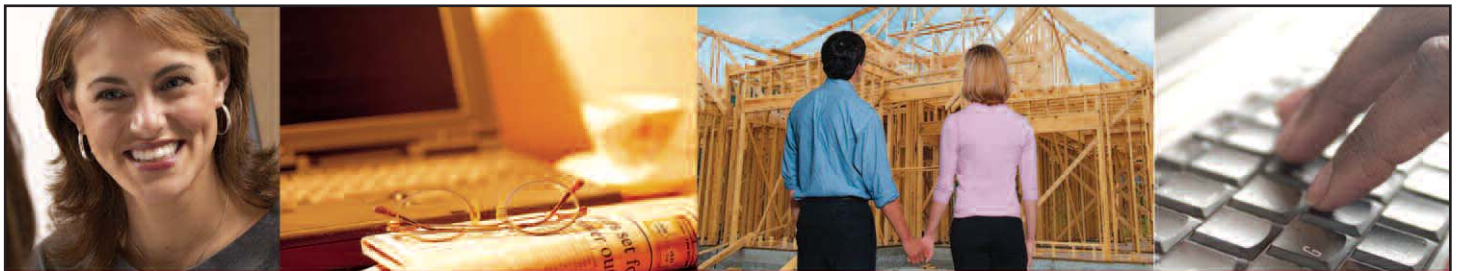
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Call to Action: Taking the Show

"The Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce has done a good job of making information about our area available to the families considering the move to North Alabama," said Congressman Robert Aderholt. "I was happy to join them this week at the event in Washington, and will do what I can to make their transition as smooth as possible." Senator Jeff Sessions also visited with the North Alabama delegation during the BRAC recruiting trip. Pictured left to right, Congressman Aderholt with Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/ Madison County President Brian Hilson.

Shorter commutes and more personal time. Home prices. Golf fees. Mountains and lakes. And a wide variety of other perks and benefits of the Tennessee Valley were being extolled to avid listeners whose jobs could be moving to Redstone Arsenal. Officials and representatives from communities under the umbrella of the Tennessee Valley BRAC Committee journeyed to Arlington, Virginia in early January for two days of town hall meetings with U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) workers – mostly from the DoD's Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and some from the U.S. Army Space & Missile Defense Command (SMDC).

Some have already made a decision. "They asked for volunteers and I asked if Monday was too soon," said Norman Dion. Dion explained that Lt. Gen. Larry J. Dodgen, commander of SMDC, had briefed employees about two weeks previously. While he doesn't know when he'll be tapped, he will be among the first to move. Among his reasons; "It's cheaper to own in Huntsville than to rent in Crystal City," plus he said Huntsville has a higher locality pay than other locations of interest. Notably, the cost of living in the Washington, D.C. area is 146 percent of the national average; the cost of living in the Tennessee Valley is 92 percent of the national average.

Dave Hargrove, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County and the Tennessee Valley BRAC Committee spokesperson, emceed four

presentations over the two-day period. "I'm confident that we tipped the scale for some who were only casually considering a move, and convinced a few who weren't previously interested, in having another look," said Hargrove.

The chamber is also encouraging local defense contractors to expand operations in response to the new commands moving into the area and several contractor personnel, at the invitation of DoD, attended the Arlington sessions, as well.

According to Pat Craver, MDA human resources liaison and recent Tennessee Valley resident (yes, she moved from her home in Maryland), some high-powered e-mails hit immediately following the first session. The first, from an MDA workforce management official, noted:

I just came back from the Huntsville community presentations at the Sheraton Hotel. The information was fantastic and presented in a very professional manner. Please encourage your folks to attend. The Tennessee Valley group went through a considerable effort to tell their story; I want them to know what wonderful employees we have at MDA and the questions they may have.

A follow-up e-mail, from Lt. Gen. Henry A. "Trey" Obering III, director of MDA, soon followed:

I echo Janice's assessment. You need to have all the information you can get to make the right decision for you and your families. This is a unique opportunity to have the entire North Alabama community provide information on education, housing, quality of life, medical, etc. They have put a tremendous amount of effort into this – you should take advantage of it.

The town hall meetings included an hour-long presentation featuring videos and speakers, as well as exposition-style displays provided by communities from throughout the Tennessee Valley. More than four dozen representatives from southern Tennessee and North Alabama fielded questions from curious defense workers.





Lynn Kilgore, right, of the Huntsville/Madison County Builders Association, discusses housing options with MDA employee Carmen Eldridge.

On the Road

Bill Congo, public affairs chief for SMDC with offices already at Redstone, emphasized the importance of the cooperation between all the communities participating in the town hall meetings. "Because of the teamwork involved, I'd say they [potential transferees] heard 90 percent of what they wanted to hear. I was pleased to be part of the operation."

A question and answer session concluded each formal presentation. Inquiries from the audience ranged from sewage to nightlife. Among the more frequent questions from the audience:

Are [housing] prices already increasing because of BRAC?

Steve Perkins of the Huntsville Area Association of Realtors, offered, "We aren't seeing anything like that. Increases in building costs are resulting from price increases for building materials and some of that can be attributed to Hurricane Katrina. We can't predict local or national prices." While housing cost comparisons between regions can be difficult, it was readily apparent to the audience that their dollars would go much further in the Tennessee Valley. Craver also commented that she got twice the house for half the money when she made the move.

In regard to education and rankings, several MDA employees questioned the current status of the public school system.

"Alabama has improved exponentially," responded Mary Jane Caylor, member of the Alabama State School Board. She cited a recent national report in *Education Week* that ranked states, and Alabama fared "very well" according to the educator. "Alabama has the toughest high school graduation exam," she added. Caylor provided detailed information with Web sites for follow-up investigation.

Public transportation was also questioned. Many in the D.C. area are heavily dependent on public transportation and were eager for Mayor Spencer's comment. She noted the city has many fine routes, plus the availability of Handi-Ride for those with disabilities. The mayor told the audience she is open to sugges-

tions on how the city can better work with the base in addressing the issue of public transportation.

Col. John Olshefski, garrison commander of Redstone Arsenal, fielded a number of questions regarding services provided on Redstone, such as healthcare, daycare and recreational opportunities. "By the next go-around, I'll be an expert on Tricare," nodded Olshefski. (Tricare is a DoD standardized healthcare plan.) During the town hall meetings, Olshefski repeatedly reported the daycare service was at 90 percent capacity, while also noting a number of plans for expansion and improvements to services in general were in various stages of development.

Regarding daycare on post, it was announced in November that U.S. Representative Bud Cramer secured \$5.1 million for the construction of a new School Age Services (SAS) facility at Redstone Arsenal as part of the Fiscal Year 2006 Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill. The SAS facility will include a separate space for kindergarten-age children, a dining area and a computer lab. It will also contain important safety features such as video surveillance.

"With the BRAC process finally behind us, our community can now prepare for the new workers and their families that will be moving into our area," said Cramer. "This facility will help ensure the children of families working at Redstone receive the care they deserve, in a



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first class facility. As our community continues to grow, new facilities such as this will help ensure that North Alabama remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family.”

With additional high ranking officers coming to Redstone, Olshefski is in great hopes of an expedited execution phase for these and other plans.

Carmen Eldridge, a Washington, D.C. area MDA worker, talked at length with Lynn Kilgore of the Huntsville/Madison County Builders Association. She is especially interested in living where there is a “small town feel.” She currently commutes

to her job from Charles County, Maryland and is very interested in evaluating benefits of relocating. Eldridge’s husband is originally from Knoxville and is similarly interested in getting more acquainted with the Huntsville area. Like many who came by the community booths, Eldridge was mostly interested in schools and housing options.

She grinned when she said the Tennessee Valley presentation comes off as, “almost too perfect.”

A quick survey of those manning the higher education table during one of the afternoon sessions – Jason McCracken of Oakwood College, Dr. Denver Betts of

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Athens State University, Ben Kavanaugh of the University of Alabama in Huntsville and Antonio Boyle of Alabama A&M University – revealed passersby were checking the validity of housing prices and availability with the table's "neutral parties." "We let them know it's true," smiled Kavanaugh. McCracken and Boyle – both African American – added they received a few questions about the racial climate and views on mixed marriages. "I'm here, and it's a great place to be," Boyle enthused.

Two representatives of the Defense Information Systems Agency who toured through the community showcase, Sheryl Robertson and Tannikka Richardson, weren't interested in moving to the Tennessee Valley. They were checking out the presentation and booths to get a few pointers in putting together a presentation for their organization. "We're looking for ideas because we have offices moving to Ft. Mead," explained Robertson. Both young women agreed the testimonials offered by young professionals who currently live in Huntsville were particularly effective. Davion Walker, events coordinator for the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce and Giselle Bodin, public affairs specialist for SMDC (she moved from the D.C. area four years ago), informed their audiences that the area offers

excellent choices of entertainment – not as many as D.C., but certainly enough to keep their attention.

Recruiting federal workers from the National Capitol Region can be especially challenging given the large number of federal employment opportunities available to workers in that region. "It's important that we let those facing this transfer know that there are over 60 federal agencies and military organizations operating at Redstone," noted Mike Ward, chamber vice president for government affairs. "That's important for some trailing spouses who may also work for the federal government," he continued.

MDA spokesperson Rick Lehner, in an interview with *Defense Communities 360*, noted that officials from the Tennessee Valley are not the only ones trying to persuade DoD workers and support contractors to transfer with their jobs. "There will be a lot of incentives, a lot of encouragement for people to move down there," said Lehner. The agency would pay the moving expenses and help spouses find jobs, he said. His agency is also considering sending employees on familiarization trips, as well.

The Tennessee Valley BRAC Committee anticipates another "road show" this summer – this time at the invitation of the U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC). •

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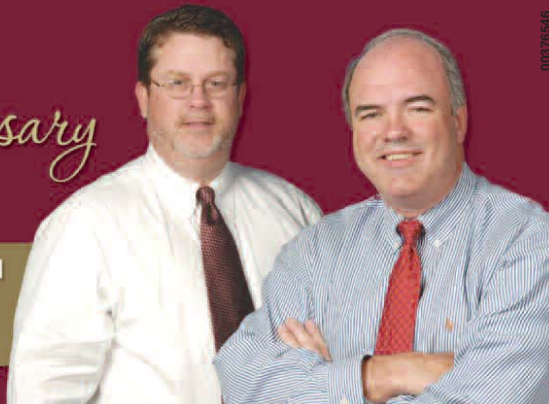
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Chamber Sets State Priorities for 2006

Each year the Chamber of Commerce develops a list of priority concerns to present to the governor and legislature, outlining critical state issues facing the region. Heading into the January 10 start of the Alabama legislative session, the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County gave its approval to the 2006 State Agenda at its December meeting.

Given the local impact of federal space and defense programs, Huntsville has tended to direct more of its governmental attention to Washington D.C. Wernher von Braun once stated in an address to a joint session of the Alabama Legislature that it was his privilege to know a number of legislators but, "I'm sure that if the appropriations for the Marshall Space Flight Center came directly from the Legislature of Alabama instead of the Congress, I would know many more of you."

State government is very important to the region's success and that fact wasn't lost on von Braun. Following his remarks, the legislature unanimously approved funding for the research institute that would eventually become the research arm of UAH.

"The state is an essential partner in the Chamber's efforts to prepare, develop and promote our community for economic growth," said Chamber State Government Committee Chairman Ken Tucker. "There are many important opportunities and threats facing our region that require state support and leadership" said Tucker, who is with The Boeing Company.

The Chamber's state agenda is focused on a handful of issues that can produce near term results. "We continue to monitor and support a broad range of issues in Montgomery that affect the state's business environment, but we leave the leadership responsibility for those issues to other organizations such as the Business Council of Alabama," Tucker said. "Our efforts are focused on the things state government can do that directly and uniquely impact our region."

This year's agenda concentrates on six primary areas of interest: BRAC; infrastructure; education/workforce development; aerospace manufacturing; research and

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development university support; taxation; county planning and zoning and the state's site preparation grant program.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

BRAC is a top issue for the Chamber in 2006, as it has been for the last several years. Continued direct state support of the regional Tennessee Valley BRAC efforts will be critical as the military consolidates over 4,700 new jobs to Redstone Arsenal. Regional efforts will focus on attracting the current workforce to North Alabama and working with the affected commands and our Congressional delegation to expedite the moves where possible.

"State support for our BRAC efforts over the course of the last five years has been essential in allowing us to get to this point," Joe Ritch, Chamber vice chair of govern-



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ment affairs and Tennessee Valley BRAC co-chair said. "It's allowed us to hire experts in Washington D.C. to keep us informed of threats and opportunities facing Redstone. State support has also allowed us to keep a regional focus on our effort," Ritch added.

Infrastructure

Huntsville and Madison County face a number of vitally important highway projects that will have a major impact on the region's ability to accommodate continued growth.

The Chamber's highest priority project is the construction of the Southern Bypass. The bypass will greatly improve access to Redstone Arsenal and is an essential link in the development of the Memphis Huntsville Atlanta corridor. It will also relieve some of



Spencer

the congestion on the over-capacity Memorial Parkway.

"The Southern Bypass has always been a priority, and with the upcoming moves into our area as a result of BRAC, that priority is even greater. Getting people to and from work in a timely manner is of great importance to the City of

Huntsville," said Huntsville Mayor Loretta Spencer.

This highway was redesigned following the attacks of 9/11 to address increased security concerns by Redstone planners. While the number of interchanges on Redstone has been decreased from seven to three, the road will still greatly improve access for the arsenal, which will be important as the post continues to grow.

As the areas surrounding Huntsville continue to grow, improving access to the city, which is the economic engine for the region, becomes increasingly important. Approximately 30,000 people from surrounding counties drive to their jobs in Huntsville/Madison County.

Growth has been very strong in the unincorporated areas to the northwest and northeast of the city, making it important to accelerate widening of Highway 53 to four lanes and Winchester Road to five lanes. To improve access to the city from the east and west, planning is needed to widen US 72 to seven lanes between Huntsville and Athens and upgrade the highway from Huntsville to Jackson County to a limited access expressway.

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bypass system – would offer greater efficiency. Research Park Boulevard forms the western leg of a bypass that will eventually make a loop around the city. Plans currently call for the extension of Research Park Boulevard to Highway 431/231, which includes the area near Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama. The Chamber agenda includes requests for funding of these important projects.

Education/ Workforce Development

The defense and aerospace sectors continue to be a primary target for our local economic development efforts. Competition between states for these businesses and their employees is fierce. In order to capture a greater share of this industry, state investments in education and workforce development are necessities.



Tucker

“Workforce development is a key issue for Huntsville and Madison County, especially in light of the BRAC moves and potential retirements in local industry and government agencies. A well-trained and talented workforce will be needed if we are to maintain our economic development momentum,” said Ken Tucker, who is also chairman of the Alabama Workforce Investment Board.

In order to meet this workforce need, the Chamber proposes two study efforts to examine the appropriate educational approaches at both the high school and post high school levels.

The Chamber endorses the creation of a commission to study the establishment of a state high school with a curriculum that focuses on engineering and technology disciplines. The Chamber also urges the creation of a commission to study aerospace workforce development challenges and to make recommendations for two- and four-year programs that will make Alabama more attractive to aerospace companies.

Alabama Aerospace Manufacturing Initiative

As the federal space and defense agencies in North Alabama expand their oversight responsibilities for significant aerospace manufacturing contracts, the region and state will become increasingly attractive to contractors as a potential site for more manufacturing work.

“It’s a well known fact that Alabama captures a relatively small percentage of the dollars flowing through Redstone,”

continued on page 28

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continued from page 27

observed Brian Hilson, Chamber president and chief executive officer. "Of the approximately \$27 billion in federal budget managed on Redstone, less than 20 percent remains in the state. We can do better," Hilson said.

To help the state capitalize on these new opportunities, the Chamber recommends the Alabama Development Office (ADO) should proactively pursue aerospace engineering and manufacturing opportunities. ADO should continue to work with local and federal entities to assess space and defense manufacturing facility capabilities within Alabama and develop a strategic investment plan to enhance these resources.

Local R&D Universities

As previously mentioned, the "punch line" to Dr. von Braun's address to the Alabama legislature in 1961 was a request for funding for a research institute. In framing his request von Braun said:



Dr. von Braun

Let's be honest with ourselves about it: It's not water or real estate, or labor or power, or cheap taxes that brings industry to a

state or city. It's brainpower. Nowadays, brainpower dumped in a desert will make it rich. Right now you could run a profitable electronics firm on the moon, if the company liked the climate. Educational climate, that is.

Without question, such a climate is the most important, single resource in attracting new people and new ideas. It's a self-generating process. Once you get it started, it snowballs...

The State of Alabama ... in this case, you ... has a very real responsibility to promote the advancement of science and higher education. In short, it's up to you to create the right climate.

In Huntsville we are trying to create a vigorous and varied educational and research climate. The seed is sown with the University Center and the infant Research Institute [the predecessors to UAH]. But the seed is starving. It needs something green ... Money.

The agenda identifies several opportunities for the state to support and fund new initiatives by local research and development universities that will expand the region's critical presence as a center of defense and space technology for the nation and further develop the climate described by von Braun.

The Chamber supports Alabama A&M University's efforts to commercialize technologies through the establishment of a "Technology Integration and Application Facility," including an enterprise incubator to nurture commercialization of related technology.

The Chamber also supports full funding of the UAH budget request submitted by the UA System Board of Trustees, and additional funding to support competitive research initiatives at UAH.

BRAC 2005 will place incredible demands on the community's workforce and its ability to support the consolidation of military jobs to the region. Understanding these demands now can help the community prepare future Redstone employees. State funding to support the new workforce development initiatives resulting from BRAC are being sought.

Taxation

The state's tax policies have an impact on the types of companies that are attracted to the region. Alabama's tax structure has previously been tailored to attract low tech, low wage, and capital-intensive industry. In order to make our state more attractive to high technology industry, the Chamber supports efforts to create a research and development tax credit for such work performed in the state.

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The Chamber also supports double weighting the sales factor in apportioning a company's revenues. According to the BCA, the inclusion of that provision in the tax structure will be an incentive for the retention of businesses in Alabama as well as for the attraction of others, especially manufacturers, looking to make valuable economic commitments in our state.

County Planning and Zoning

When Alabama's current constitution was passed in 1905, every effort was made to consolidate power in Montgomery, where large landowners could better exercise control. One of the vestiges of that system is that counties have no control over planning and zoning within their jurisdictions. To provide for better planning in unincorporated areas, Madison County desperately needs the authority to institute a system for planning and zoning. This is often referred to as "home rule." The Chamber supports greater home rule for Madison County.

Site Preparation Grant Program

One important ingredient in Alabama's economic development effort is the site grant program. Unfortunately, this economic development incentive has put the state's

reputation for honoring its commitments in jeopardy.

"Many of our companies have committed to grow their workforce after having received assurance from the State of Alabama that a qualified portion of their site preparation costs would be covered via a state grant" said Steve Finnell, director of industrial development for the Chamber.

Today, there are more than 65 companies in Alabama that are owed a total of \$4,145,772.52 in unfunded site grants. These companies have brought over 7,000 jobs to Alabama and invested over \$763 million in capital improvements. In

Madison County alone, the state owes more than \$469,000 to companies that have invested \$72 million and created 1,044 jobs.

"Many of these companies are small in nature and these grants mean a lot to the success of their company. All companies have met their commitment to the State by employing more Alabama citizens. It's time for the state to fulfill its commitments to these companies by funding this program. Many of the commitments were made as long as six years ago," Finnell explained.

• Mike Ward



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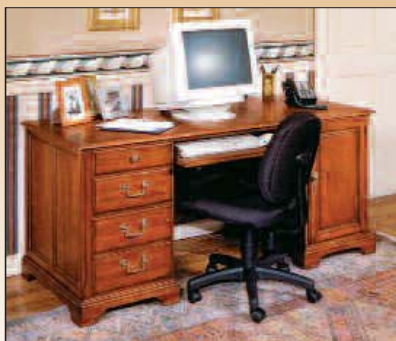
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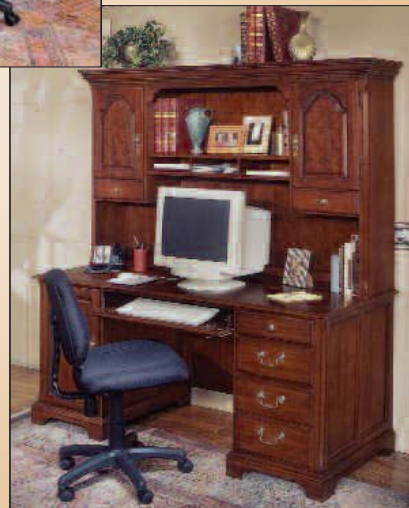
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Answering the Call

An open letter to chamber members and concerned citizens

Several of the most pressing state issues facing the Huntsville region are described in the previous article. None, however, is more important than development of the Southern Bypass. It's time we impress upon our elected leadership in Montgomery the sheer necessity of this project for the continued and logical growth of our great community.

The Southern Bypass will greatly improve access to Redstone Arsenal. It will also alleviate congestion on the Memorial Parkway, a thoroughfare operating at levels exceeding its designed capacity. More than 30,000 people work on the arsenal and that number will grow by over 16 percent in the next five years due to BRAC. The Marshall Space Flight Center is also poised for growth. Add in expansion from a number of other economic sectors and a serious situation morphs to grave levels.

The combined effect of having all the new missions and especially command headquarters located at Redstone is certain to attract additional people and missions to the base. In much the same way that a star's gravitational pull tends to draw things to it, our new "stars" on Redstone will have a strong attraction. New missions, new roles and new people will see a potential home in the Tennessee Valley. BUT the area will continue to attract these new opportunities only as long as we can provide a quality of life that is attractive to those people, businesses and agencies who will be asked to move here from wherever their home is today.

Given the future growth that Huntsville can expect, state investment is imperative now; now, before a bad situation chokes future growth. This highway is important to Alabama, the military and many of the 30,000 people who commute into Madison County every workday.

Plans for this highway go back to 1986 when the road was first included in the city's major street plan. Governor Hunt committed state support for the project in 1991 and planning began that year. The project was approved by the Federal Highway Authority on July 19, 1996. Since then, Alabama has been stuck in a cycle of design and redesign that recently concluded in 2005. In fairness, some of the redesign issues were not the state's fault as Redstone planners made adjustments in light of security issues following 9/11. However, there has been valid concern about state heel-dragging.

At long last, the project is ready for final design and construction. Phase I, which would cut across Redstone Arsenal from I-565 to Martin Road, is estimated to cost approximately \$200 million. Unfortunately, the state has changed its position on the project and



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now says it won't invest more than \$10 million per year. At that rate, it would take 20 years to build the first phase!

This region can't afford to wait 30 to 40 years to build this road. A more reasonable timeframe would put \$40 million per year into this development effort. We need to make sure Governor Riley understands these investments in the region pay tremendous dividends for the entire state.

Please write a letter to Governor Riley at the following address, letting him know you think this project deserves his highest priority:

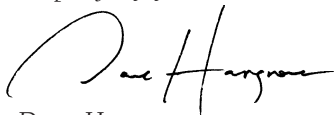
The Honorable Bob Riley
 Governor, State of Alabama
 State Capitol N-104
 600 Dexter Avenue
 Montgomery, AL 36130-2751

Additionally, seek support from members of the Madison County legislative delegation by forwarding a copy of your letter to Becky Cotton at 100 Saint Clair Ave., Huntsville, AL 35801. In a cover letter, ask her to give copies of the accompanying Governor Riley letter to the members of the delegation:

- Sen. Tom Butler
- Sen. Lowell Barron
- Sen. Hinton Mitchem
- Sen. Tommy Ed Roberts
- Sen. Jeff Enfinger
- Rep. Howard Sanderford
- Rep. Ray Garner
- Rep. Randy Hinshaw
- Rep. Laura Hall
- Rep. Albert Hall
- Rep. Mike Ball
- Rep. Sue Schmitz

It is my sincere hope you will answer this call to action on behalf of fellow residents, the citizens of Alabama and those who will soon join our ranks.

Respectfully yours,



Dave Hargrove
 Chairman of the Board
 Chamber of Commerce
 of Huntsville/Madison County



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– Jim Link, 2005 Chairman



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Huntsville Mayor Visits AMC

Spencer tours facility, answers questions

Mayor Spencer took full advantage of her time in the Washington D.C. area. Under the invitation of Gen. Benjamin S. Griffin, commanding general, AMC, Mayor Spencer visited Fort Belvoir. Kathryn T. H. Szymanski, acting executive deputy to the commanding general, hosted the event.

Mayor Spencer's visit began with a tour of the AMC Technology Gallery followed by a courtesy call with Lt. Gen. William E. Mortensen. The mayor was also given a com-

mand briefing and a tour of the Miller Operations Center before holding a town hall meeting with AMC employees.

Approximately 100 AMC employees gathered to hear the mayor speak and numerous others tuned in to the presentation via their desktop viewers. The town hall was designed to inform AMC employees about the Huntsville community and answer their concerns. The 2005 BRAC announcement has relocated AMC to Huntsville.

Tom Vajentic, chief, AMC transformation

team, noted that Mayor Spencer likely received more attention than she expected. "Through the network, she could have had an audience in excess of 1,000," he asserted.

"This is only the beginning, the first step. I want to put your minds at ease on what Huntsville is," said Spencer during her address.

The mayor showed a promotional DVD highlighting the city's reasonable cost of living, education system, medical facilities, outdoor entertainment and Redstone Arsenal.

Spencer stressed that although Huntsville is small in numbers, the city's background is diverse with countries from all over the world represented. She continued to discuss the benefits of the city before taking questions. Employees discussed topics from housing costs and special needs, to spouse relocation assistance and car registration.

Spencer concluded the town hall meeting by stressing her commitment to serving the needs of AMC employees during their transition.

The mayor's visit is one of many events planned to assist AMC employees in making their decision to move with the command to Huntsville.

• Beth E. Musselman



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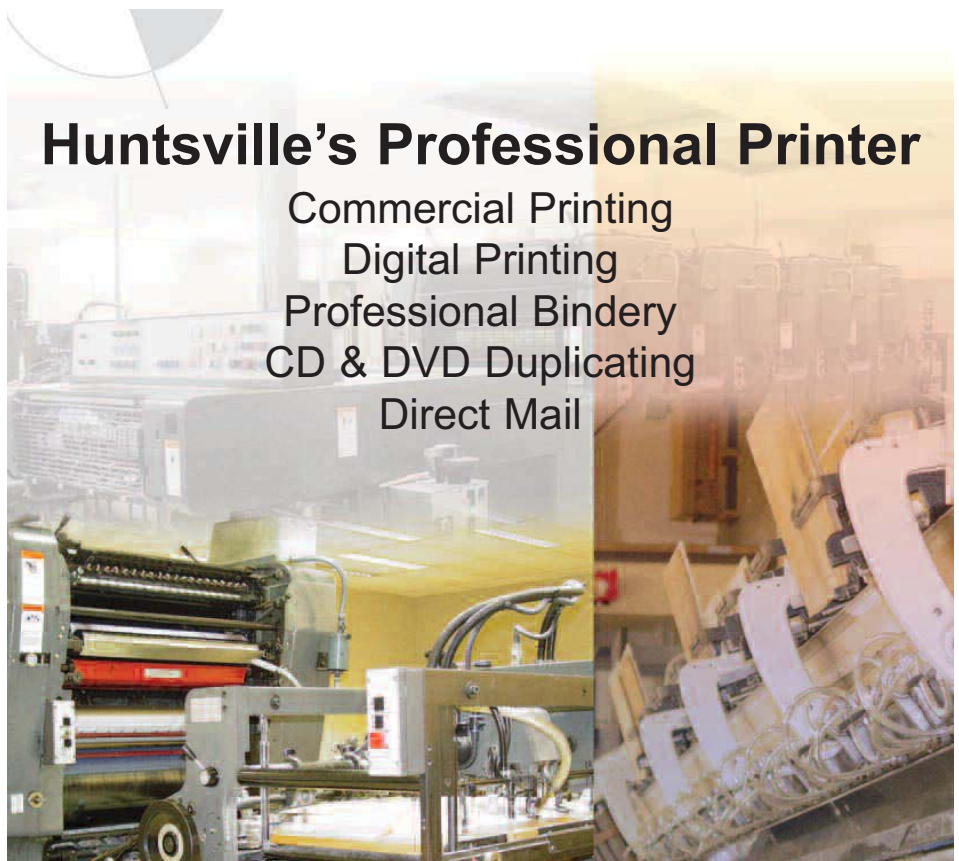
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Gerald Toland Receives Chamber's Distinguished Service Award



Gerald Toland, president and chief executive officer of Redstone Federal Credit Union, one of the largest credit unions in the nation, was presented the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County Distinguished Service Award during the chamber's annual meeting held January 6, 2006. Jim Link, 2005 chamber chairman of the board, made the presentation. "What makes this person special is how he defines family," announced Link. Toland was lauded for his community stewardship, particularly for his work to support children. He served as vice chair for small business for the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County in 2005 and will serve as the organization's vice chair of investor relations in 2006. A New Jersey native, Gerald Toland began his finance career in the 1960s after completing duties in the U.S. Marine Corps. He joined Redstone Federal Credit Union and moved to the Huntsville community in 1991.

Chamber Annual Meeting Breaks Attendance Records; 7,000+ New Jobs Announced

The Von Braun Center North Hall was filled to capacity for the 70th Annual Membership Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County. "It's my pleasure to thank each of you for being part of the largest audience in chamber annual meeting history," declared Jim Link, 2005 chairman of the chamber. About 1,250 members attended the event.

Among meeting highlights was Link's statement, "Ladies and gentlemen, our 2005 total of announced jobs will exceed 7,000, including 4,700 from BRAC which will be moving to Redstone Arsenal and the Tennessee Valley over the next few years." Announced jobs in 2004 – a best year ever in economic development for the community – was over 5,400.

A review of the past year's highlights included national, international and local headlines reflecting Huntsville's/Madison County's excellent quality of life, affordability, business accomplishments and top-notch workforce. Expansion of the Huntsville Regional Economic Growth Initiative (HREGI) financial goal was introduced, the Distinguished Service Award was presented and the 2005 and 2006 board members were saluted. NASA Administrator Mike Griffin was the keynote speaker.

During the meeting, Link "turned over the gavel" to incoming board chairman Dave Hargrove. Hargrove affirmed, "I want to reassure you that this chamber is firmly committed to the economic devel-

opment initiatives we've established. We'll continue to be a responsible steward of your trust, confidence and the financial and time investments you're making."



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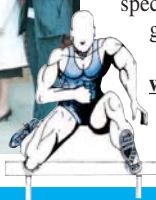
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Huntsville, Alabama 35801
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Names front L to R: Joe Hawley, Louise Lewis, Dr. Donald Bruce Irwin, Randy Johansen, and Lonnie Vowels. Names back L to R: Carey Busin, William Talley, Brad Ingle, Mark Hallmark, and Gwen Dwyer.

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Detecting the Invader

The fight against cancer in the Tennessee Valley has a new generation of imaging technology tools. Oncologists at the Comprehensive Cancer Institute (CCI) can view exquisitely detailed pictures of various tissues, organs and other anatomy by using the PET/CT scan. This state-of-the-art technology provides two- and three-dimensional images that help physicians determine if disease is present, the location and extent of the disease and how to develop and manage a treatment plan.

Patients undergoing PET/CT are injected with a radiopharmaceutical tracer called FDG which is absorbed by malignant tumors. Position emission tomography (PET) finds the "hot spots" while computerized tomography (CT) maps anatomical location. Tumor cells light up, allowing early detection of tumors as small as a pencil eraser.

Cancer is not the only disease this imaging tool may detect in the future. "This is really just the tip of the iceberg for what is imminent in the way of diagnostic and future disease detectors," said Marshall Schreeder, oncologist at CCI.

The Imaging Center at the Comprehensive Cancer Institute already provides PET/CT scans from referring physicians treating patients with dementia and established or suspected malignancies.

"We have chosen to be a leader in the imaging revolution ... our patients deserve nothing less," said Dr. Schreeder.

In the United States alone, one in three will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. However, other diseases such as Alzheimer's, rheumatoid arthritis or early strokes may benefit from future imaging technology.

CCI is a member of national and international clinical research groups. Currently, there are more than 25 different clinical trials available through CCI. These clinical trials include treatment for a variety of cancer types, including brain, breast, lung, head and neck, cervical, ovarian, prostate, colon, rectal and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

CCI has the most advanced cancer treatment facility in the region and occupies more than 16,000 square feet in the Blackwell Medical Tower on the campus of Huntsville Hospital.

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PET/CT scanner



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Key Engineering, Inc. Celebrated its move to a new location at 287 Woodall Road with a ribbon cutting ceremony and an open house. Key Engineering, Inc. is a full service, multi-discipline consulting engineering firm. Services offered include Mechanical, HVAC, Piping, Electrical, Instrumentation & Controls, Civil/Structural, IT Network, Staff Augmentation and Project/Construction Management. For more information on Key's comprehensive services, go to www.key-eng.com or call 256.351.1350

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FPMI Solutions, is a professional services company providing Human Capital and Integrated Training Solutions to federal, military and commercial clients. The new Huntsville, AL facility represents one of FPMI's principal offices. Other locations include Alexandria, VA; Orlando, FL; and San Antonio, TX.

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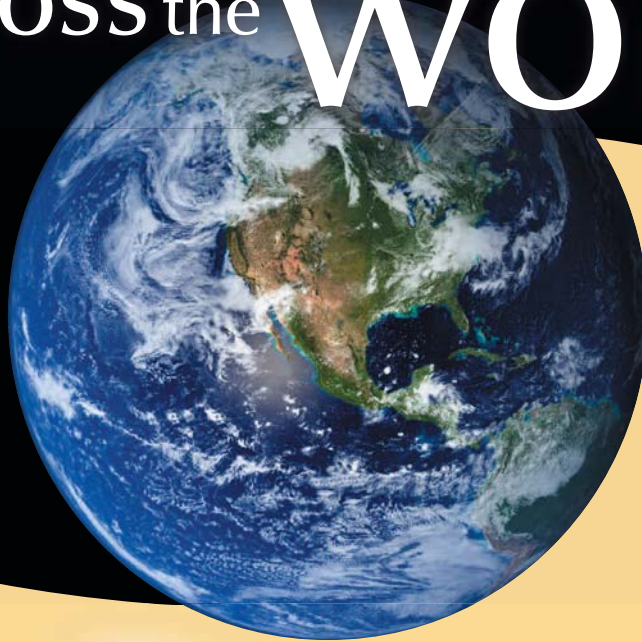
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