

Developing Alabama



ALABAMA

A Better Place To Build A Better World

Fall 2011

Pharmaceutical Company To Employ 280 + in Opelika

When California-based Pharmavite this month announced that it had chosen the Opelika Industrial Park for its \$74 million dietary supplement facility, it was obvious that company officials had developed a sense of trust with developers here. "The professionalism and thoroughness of the economic development team in Alabama was a major factor in our decision," said Ron Pillsbury, Pharmavite's vice president of operations.

"The site selection process was very thorough and we evaluated several high-quality locations, but ultimately it was clear that Opelika, Alabama was the best fit based on the criteria we established for this location," Pillsbury said. "From the high quality work force to the strong community infrastructure, Opelika met or exceeded expectations and we're excited to be joining such a great community."

At the announcement, Governor Robert Bentley thanked the company for taking a risk on Alabama. Chief Operating Officer Mark Walsh responded by telling the governor the company didn't feel it was risky locating its newest facility in Alabama for the production of Nature Made soft gel and tablet vitamins and dietary supplements. Pharmavite, he said, had developed a high level of trust in the state.



More than 120 products are made by Pharmavite and Nature Made

Pharmavite started out looking at 50 sites in six states. That number was cut to a dozen sites and five of them were in Alabama. The company personally visited the 12 semi-finalists. In the next round of cuts, Alabama still had three sites in the running. The company was working under a fast timetable and initially set out to purchase an existing building. They would consider, however, a site with no building if a construction timetable could have the facility running by early 2013. "They had a real confidence in the local team and the State of Alabama to do what they said they would do," said Andy Mace, Cushman & Wakefield Global Business Consulting's site consultant on the project.

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Plasman Cuts Ribbon on Fort Payne Plant

Hundreds turned out on a beautiful pre-autumn day for a ribbon cutting ceremony at Plasman Corp LLC in Fort Payne. Following the ribbon cutting ceremonies, Alabama Development Office Director Greg Canfield presented Plasman Corp LLC with a certificate of congratulations from Alabama Governor Robert Bentley a for recent national recognition received by the company.

nounced that Plasman Corp LLC is one of the winners in its sixth annual Corporate Investment and Community Impact awards. The company was one of 30 selected from across the United States out of hundreds of submissions. Plasman was named a winner for the large community impact the company is expected to have.

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Trade & Industry Development magazine recently an-

FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIPS

Teamwork

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New Building

Second Phase of Robotics Park Opens in Limestone

The second phase of a one-of-a-kind technology facility opened in August on the campus of Calhoun Community College in Limestone County.

The Advanced Technology Research and Development Center is part of the three-phase Alabama Robotics Technology Park. Part I, the 52,000-square-foot Robotic Maintenance Training Center, opened last November. Currently, short-term, non-credit training classes are being taught in the facility by instructors from Alabama Industrial Development Training. Credit courses for students from Calhoun are scheduled to be taught there soon.

Gov. Robert Bentley cut the ribbon at the newest center. He was accompanied by officials from Calhoun Community College, AIDT, the Alabama state Board of Education and the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education. Attending were: Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur; Postsecondary Chancellor Freida Hill; Dr. Charles Elliott and Mary Scott Hunter, members of the Alabama state Board of Education; members of the center's executive board; Calhoun College President Marilyn Beck; AIDT Executive Director Ed Castile; and elected officials and business leaders from across the region.

The RTP's second phase is a 35,000-square-foot, \$8.3 million building featuring a test facility for companies



Officials with the state of Alabama, Calhoun Community College and the Alabama Robotics Technology Park cut the ribbon on Phase II of the robotics park. From left are Postsecondary Chancellor Freida Hill, state Board of Education members Dr. Charles Elliott and Mary Scott Hunter, State Sen. Arthur Orr, R-Decatur, and Gov. Robert Bentley.

currently in the robotics manufacturing industry. The building will be used for the research, development and testing of leading edge robotics used for military projects, space exploration, and other applications. The center will have appropriate infrastructure to support these activities with substantial outdoor areas for testing in a variety of environments.

ADO Director Says State Close to Wins

BIRMINGHAM -- The director of the Alabama Development Office said the state is close to winning projects that will bring 3,500 new and potential jobs into six counties in the state.

Greg Canfield said that project activity in the state is 12.8 percent higher than it was at the same time a year ago. He said since January, there have been 4,700 new or expansion jobs created or announced in the state. Projects working in the state range from distribution centers to missile defense systems and come from countries such as Japan, China, South Korea, Mexico, France and Germany.

"When you take over as ADO director, you can't just wade in, you must dive in," Canfield said. "Today, when you talk about who do we compete against for economic development opportunities in the state of Alabama, the answer is we compete against the rest of the world."

Canfield said the state is competitive and relies on some of the same tools as others, to include incentives, infrastructure, and prepared sites and properties. He said the state has other incentives like the AIDT worker training program, the Alabama Technology Network, the Community College System and the Robotics Technology Park.



But Alabama's secret weapon is **Greg Canfield** the teamwork of economic developers from the state, regional and local levels and the top-notch staff at ADO, Canfield said. Canfield said for years, ADO has enjoyed competitive advantages against other states, but they are now rapidly catching up, forcing Alabama to do more. "We can no longer sit back and enjoy doing things the way we've always done them," Canfield said.

BUSINESS NEWS

Lakeside To Add 80 Thomasville Jobs

Lakeside Steel has announced a third phase of its project in Thomasville, bumping employment to 280 and total investment to \$57.5 million. The Canadian firm makes pipe for oil and gas drillers. Last year, Lakeside announced a \$40 million, 120-job pipe mill south of downtown Thomasville.

In March, the Welland, Ontario, firm said it would build a \$7.5 million, 80-job facility in Linden to harden pipe and shape and machine its ends. The firm says it will also spend \$10 million to add similar hardening and end-finishing capacity for pipe casing.

CEO Ron Bedard said that expanding its pipe finishing capacity, instead of relying on third parties for processing, would be attractive to customers. "The new end-finishing and heat treatment facilities, when online, will provide increased security of supply to our customer base and will significantly enhance the company's margin," Bedard said.

New Toyota Production Set To Begin

HUNTSVILLE -- Production on a new four-cylinder engine line at Toyota's truck and SUV engine plant in Huntsville will start soon, and the company will mark the debut of this latest product at a ceremony Thursday morning. With the launch of the four-cylinder line, the plant is supplying engines for eight different Toyota vehicles, said Jim Bolte, the plant's president.

Four-cylinder engines built at the north Huntsville plant, called Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama, will be installed in the 2012 Camry, Highlander, RAV4, Sienna and Venza vehicles. The plant already produces V-6 and V-8 engines for Tacoma and Tundra pickup trucks and Sequoia sport utility vehicles.

GE Symposium To Be Held

The Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority (TCIDA) and GE Aviation (GEA), are inviting businesses to participate in the GE Aviation Business Supplier Symposium, on September 29th, 2011, at the Bryant Conference Center in Tuscaloosa.

The symposium will offer small and midsized businesses a chance to connect directly with GE Aviation, GE's regional Tier 1 suppliers, and Alabama buyers.



The TCIDA is facilitating the symposium to stimulate market opportunities for companies and others across Alabama. Its purpose is to match small business interests with large corporations and defense contractors that offer contract opportunities. Small businesses and buyers can make private, one-on-one appointments, and are expected to generate new public and private contract leads.

At the event there will be an opportunity to request an appointment with a company's commodity focus. The one-on-one appointments will create a structured environment to maximize time. Each buyer will also have an exhibit area for additional networking opportunities to meet various commodity focal points for GE Aviation and their Tier 1's.

Registration, which includes lunch, is \$25 per person to be paid in cash at check-in with no more than two representatives per business. Register online at www.TuscaloosaAerospace.com. Registrations are limited by capacity.

For more information, contact Andy Jocham, Director - Industrial Recruitment and Retention, TCIDA at phone: 205.349.1414 or via e-mail at andy.jocham@tcida.com.

Auburn Company To Expand

AUBURN -- Automotive parts manufacturer Seung Chang Airtech, Inc. has added more than 95,000 square feet to its operation in Auburn Technology Park North.

Now at 214,800 square feet, the expansion was needed at the large manufacturing facility to help the company respond to a growing demand for its products, company officials said.

In a second announcement, SCA said it has already moved into a 20,000-square-foot facility where it will produce vibration and noise-dampening materials used in the automotive, industrial and construction industries. With these two projects SCA will have invested \$16.8 million and will have created approximately 200 additional jobs in Auburn.

FOCUS ON GROWTH

HudsonAlpha Leading Biotechnology Innovation

Alabama's HudsonAlpha Institute is among those leading a wave of biotechnology innovation that could rival the information technology wave of the past several decades, an institute official said at a meeting of economic developers.

4 Just as sequences of ones and zeros were the basis of a wave of computer and information technology innovation, it's genes and DNA that will form the foundation of the coming wave, said O'Neal Smitherman, executive vice president of HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in Huntsville.

"This is our opportunity to be in on the next new wave of knowledge revolution for humanity," Smitherman said.

It's already happening at HudsonAlpha. Built just three years ago, the biotechnology research and commercialization center is home to 20 associated companies, including 16 for-profit biotechnology companies, Smitherman said. He said two companies have been bought out by larger ones and a third one has been bought out twice.

HudsonAlpha even has a patent pending for a prostate cancer screening process using human genome mapping. Smitherman said HudsonAlpha scientists have isolated 63 markers on prostate cancer genes that help differentiate the prostate cancer that requires immediate treatment from the 80 percent of prostate cancer cases that may not need any treatment.

Smitherman said that is exactly what makes the genome mapping research being done at HudsonAlpha so important: Future treatment for disease can be tailored to the form of the disease a person has with the medicines known to target that form. It's already being done in breast cancer patients and a company



at HudsonAlpha is working on matching drugs with diseases based on the genome.

It's an area that is going to grow, and grow quickly, Smitherman said. He said the first IBM computer was introduced in 1981, prompting a revolution that has led to the ability to carry a computer in your pocket that is 100-times more powerful and able to link to everything man has ever known.

It took 13 years, billions of dollars and scientists from all over the world to complete the original human genome mapping project in 2003. Today, Smitherman said it can be done in one lab in one day at a cost of less than \$15,000. Smitherman said when it gets to the \$1,000 level, there will be an explosion with individuals getting their genes mapped so the treatments and medications can be targeted to them.

HudsonAlpha works with numerous universities, including UAB, and is studying everything from obesity to Parkinson's, tackling diseases from cancer to neurological disorders.

Pharmavite To Locate New Facility in Opelika

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Pharmavite also did not want to juggle construction while trying to hire and train 280 workers. This is where AIDT, the state's worker training program, became a selling point. AIDT will handle the advertising, application screening and worker training and have workers ready for Pharmavite to hire. The company expects to employ about 280 people in the first year of operations.

The project was a team effort of state and local officials, including Gary Faulker, Alabama Development Office,

Lee Lawson of PowerSouth, Gary Weaver of AIDT, Lori Huguley and Alison Mueller of Opelika Economic Development, ADO Director Greg Canfield and Alabama Governor Robert Bentley. Mark Byers and Deborah McGill of Birmingham's EGS Commercial Real Estate Inc., were also key members of the team, offering several sites in the state through the firm's alliance with Cushman & Wakefield. John Minervini of Cushman & Wakefield's Los Angeles office also represented Pharmavite in its search.

Alabama One of Top Three States for Business

MONTGOMERY-- Governor Robert Bentley announced that Alabama is one of the top three states for doing business, according to a survey of site selection consultants released in late September.

Area Development, a leading publication covering site selection and facility planning, announced the results of its 2011 Top States for Doing Business survey. Alabama was the number three site selection choice. The state also tied for first place in incentive programs and was number two for labor costs and workforce development programs.

According to the results, the top ten states for doing business are Texas, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Indiana, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi, and California, in that order. "Alabama has a unique blend of excellent sites, quality infrastructure and incentives that make us attractive to companies throughout the world," said Gov. Bentley.

Consultants were asked to name their top-5 state choices in 12 site selection categories, as follows:

Business environment:

1. Overall cost of doing business
2. Incentives programs
3. Business friendliness
4. Corporate tax environment

Labor climate

1. Labor availability

2. Labor costs
3. Work force development programs

Infrastructure/global access

1. Rail & highway accessibility
2. Certified sites & shovel-ready programs
3. Competitive utility rates
4. Access to global markets

Economy

1. Leading in the economic recovery

Alabama Development Office (ADO) Director Greg Canfield said consultants are currently looking at sites across Alabama for potentially large and smaller projects. He said several are on the cusp of being announced. "Today, it is more critical than ever to have all of the issues surrounding a site tied up and ready to go before the consultant calls you. We can't be successful without preparation, vision and teamwork. Our partnerships with economic development groups at the state, county, and local levels give us a strategic advantage to compete for these projects," he said.

A full review of this year's Top States for Doing Business is presented in the Fall 2011 issue of *Area Development* and is posted online at <http://www.areadevelopment.com/top-states>.

Task Force: Use Trinity Site for Research Facility

BIRMINGHAM -- Trinity Hospital's 120-acre Montclair Road campus should be turned into a federal medical and research facility, if Trinity succeeds in its effort to relocate to U.S. 280, a task force has recommended.

In a report to Mayor William Bell, the Montclair Redevelopment Task Force outlined its work between November 2010 and May 2011, settling on two main recommendations. In its most ambitious recommendation, the task force encouraged the city to pursue possible government uses, saying "the property is ideal for a multitude of federal uses, including, but not limited to, federal medical and research facilities."

Members of the task force met with representatives of the offices of the congressional delegation to push the Montclair campus for specific uses, according to the report, by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense -- possibly as a Southern branch of a military medical center -- as well as the National



The new Trinity Medical Center rendering.

Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as other agencies.

The task force's other recommendation calls for bringing a team from the Counselors of Real Estate, national commercial real estate experts, to help formulate a master plan for the property. The CRE's Consulting Corps. is expected to come to Birmingham this fall for an intensive, week-long study of the Montclair property and provide a comprehensive redevelopment plan.

Plasman Cuts Ribbon on Fort Payne Plant

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“Not only do the CiCi awards highlight the largest corporate investment projects, but they also recognize projects that have the most notable impacts on communities,” said Canfield. “Plasman Corp LLC was selected because of the impact the company will have on Fort Payne and the DeKalb County area. We appreciate the investment this company is making in Alabama and look forward to their growth and prosperity in the state.”

Plasman, an automotive parts supplier based in Canada, selected Fort Payne as its first U.S. manufacturing facility.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, Fort Payne Mayor Bill Jordan noted the plant, which will employ 150 people, represents an investment of \$20 million.

The focus of the plant will be plastic-injection molding, painting and assembly of automotive exterior parts and tool repair. The company is a first-tier supplier that works directly with several automakers, including Toyota, Honda and General Motors.

Plasman President and Chief Executive Dave Wiskel said the decision to locate a plant in Fort Payne was “directly related to all the tremendous support and assistance” received from state and local agencies. He specifically named DeKalb County Economic Development Agency Director Jimmy Durham as a key factor in bringing the Plasman plant to Fort Payne. “Locating in Alabama is aligned with our focus to expand our customer footprint to include customers in the south,” he said. “We are pleased with our decision to locate here, and we are proud to be part of this community.”

New Industry Coming to Fort Payne; 120 Jobs

A new industry locating in Fort Payne is expected to bring a total of 120 new jobs, according to Jimmy Durham, director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Authority.

Axiom Business Strategies, which Durham said manufactures and retrofits ATMs, would make an initial investment of \$357,000 in building and

equipment and initially create 70 jobs.

Joshua Saucier, vice-president of Axiom, said the plant should be fully operational this fall. He said there are plans to expand during the first year of operation, creating an additional 50 jobs. He said the industry manufactures handicap accessible ATMs.

UAH Prepares Workforce with High-Tech Skills

HUNTSVILLE -- With Huntsville's past linked to missile and rocket development and its future leaning on high-tech research and a growing Army missile presence, the University of Alabama in Huntsville is offering a certification program on a major weapons program.

The Aegis Combat System Certificate program is designed to provide both a broad understanding of the system, its history and missions, and a high-level study of its design, engineering and technical features, according to Jo Ann Jones, director of the university's Professional Development division. It is targeted for students, as well as contractors and government agencies.

“In challenging economic times, building on existing strengths, such as Huntsville's rich history of missile, radar, aviation, and systems design and development, prepares an already well-equipped workforce for new opportunities,” she said.

In March 2011, the United States announced the

deployment of the USS Monterey, a Ticonderoga Class Aegis Cruiser, to the Mediterranean to begin a sustained deployment of Aegis BMD-capable ships in support of the European Phased Adaptive Approach.

With the Missile Defense Agency relocating some operations to Huntsville and numerous MDA contractors already having a Huntsville presence, there is local interest in support of Aegis Weapon System elements.

The program will be led by instructors who are Aegis subject experts. Aegis Combat System Certificate offers the opportunity to learn from respected industry leaders, Jones said. The program consists of four courses, which provide a resource to establish a foundation in Naval language, Aegis Systems engineering, weapon and combat system elements and future strategies.

The program begins Sept. 28. Course content is non-classified; however, U.S. citizenship is required to attend. For complete course and registration information, visit www.pcs.uah.edu/Aegis or call 256-824-6372.