

***Huntsville / Madison County
Chamber of Commerce***



**December 19, 2007
DRAFT**

**Strategic Investment Plan
2008 – 2012**

***Huntsville / Madison County
Chamber of Commerce***

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Strategic Plan 2008 - 2012

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Strategic Planning Committee

Purpose is to develop and update at least annually an economic development 5-year strategy to make the vision a reality. The work of this committee will directly influence the development of the Chamber's annual plan of work and budget.

Strategic Planning Committee Members:

Chair: Irma Tudor – Analytical Services, Inc.
Joe Alexander – Camber Corporation
Tommy Beason – Beason and Nalley, PC
Everett Brooks – Avocent Corporation
Dr. Ron Greenwood – University of Alabama in Huntsville
Brian Hilson – Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County
Tharon Honeycutt – MSB Analytics, Inc.
Marc Jacobson - SAIC
Ron Klein - Belzon
Robert Mayes – Blue Creek Investment Partners
Elizabeth Morard – Qualis Corporation
Ron Poteat – Regions Bank
Evans Quinlivan – First American Bank
Greg Smith – Alabama A&M University
Rick Tucker – Airport Authority

Chamber Staff:

Lucia Cape
Ken Smith
Loren Traylor
Mike Ward

The Chamber's Vision

The Huntsville Regional Economic Growth Initiative, under the stewardship of the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce, will establish Huntsville/Madison County as a stronger and more visible community in nationwide competition for economic growth. The Initiative's overarching vision is for our community to become a center of technology in the South. Investors and participants in the Chamber's plan will measure the community's economic performance against industry accepted economic development criteria and will be able to achieve relevant return on investment. The Economic Growth Initiative will position the Huntsville area as one of the leading economic growth centers in the Southeast, comparing consistently and favorably with Austin, Raleigh- Durham, Charlotte, and other peer technology-based US Cities.

The Chamber's Mission

The Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County is an organization of business professionals and local leaders working to ensure a sustainable and sound economic future for the Huntsville region. The Chamber's mission is to prepare, develop, and promote our community for economic growth. Meeting our goals and objectives is made possible through the investment of our private and public sector partners and the dedicated efforts of Chamber volunteers, community leaders, and a talented Chamber staff focused on advancing the economic development growth of our community.

Every aspect of the Chamber's work supports the primary objective of the organization—growing and improving our local economy and directly influencing an enhanced quality of life for all citizens in the Huntsville region.

The Huntsville Region

The economic trade area surrounding Huntsville can be defined as the distance that employees and consumers drive into and through to work, shop, and be entertained. As economic trade defines this area of North Alabama, so should the economic development vision and planning efforts.

A Solid Foundation & an Exciting Future

Huntsville's commitment to grow and maintain an exceptional local economy was made clear over 50 years ago when community leaders recognized the need to attract quality jobs and therefore put in place an aggressive economic development program. Formed in 1942, it was called the Huntsville Industrial Expansion Committee. At that time, responsibility for traditional industrial development was maintained by the HIEC, created as a sister organization of the Chamber. Until their merger in 1981, the Chamber and the HIEC continued as separate entities, but worked closely together. Today, a unified economic development effort led by the Chamber of Commerce embraces the traditional standards of Huntsville's early years, while emphasizing a comprehensive effort aimed at new challenges.

Many community leaders participated in Huntsville's industrial recruitment and expansion efforts of 40 years ago. The City of Huntsville, the Madison County Commission, the Industrial Development Board of the City of Huntsville, the University of Alabama Huntsville Foundation, the Huntsville/Madison County Airport Authority, and Huntsville Utilities played strategic roles in Huntsville's many successes. By 1970, Huntsville's industrial development achievements included the creation of what is now known as Cummings Research Park, Jetplex, Lowe and Chase Industrial Parks, and other strategic locations.

As the community's lead organization for economic development, the Chamber of Commerce continues to focus its programs and resources on the best methods for growing and improving the economy through the attraction of new targeted businesses, local business expansion, and programs to support and stimulate key federal government activities.

While Huntsville continues to offer strategic advantages leading to economic growth, the community still maintains the most important tradition, which sets it apart—a strong commitment to compete aggressively for jobs and investment. Ensuring the success of Huntsville's core economic base has created a residual economic impact felt throughout the Huntsville region. As a result, Huntsville is also a major economic asset to the state of Alabama. The community's positive attitude and attractive environment for business development have made Huntsville highly prosperous and have positioned the Huntsville area for many more years of economic success and even greater quality of life for its communities.

Investment Goal #1:

Grow & Preserve the Huntsville Region's Existing Economic Base, Business Climate, and Business Culture.

Investment Strategies

Strategies and Execution:

- 1. Initiate Chamber Economic Development Envoys volunteer program**
 - a. Maintain a group of 10 or more community leaders who are trained and actively involved with Chamber staff in economic development marketing activities.
 - b. Maintain a system of presentation materials and talking points for use by volunteers in marketing activities.

- 2. Work with local companies to support local expansion.**
 - a. Conduct 120 local member calls each year to achieve expansion by local employers. Chamber economic development staff should conduct annual meetings with at least 120 local industrial, technology and major office employers to determine each company's needs, issues and possible expansion plans.
 - b. Maintain a system of aggregated information on existing companies' needs, issues and plans in order to identify and better understand trends
 - c. Develop and maintain a system of identifying local companies' needs for goods and services in order to determine the potential for increased local purchases.
 - d. Implement a corporate headquarters contact program directed toward local companies.
 - e. Develop a database of businesses operating in our service area whose corporate headquarters are outside the service area.
 - f. Conduct at least 25 personal visits with non-local headquarters executives each year, with emphasis on large employers.
 - g. Where possible, include Chamber envoys in headquarters visits.

- 3. Recognize local employer successes / achievements.**
 - a. Develop a method for identifying an "Industry of the Year" and recognize the awardees at a major annual Chamber event.
 - b. Conduct an annual Small Business awards dinner to recognize the Small Businesses of the Year.
 - c. Utilize publications, media information, and product displays to recognize employer achievements.
 - d. Continue and enhance other industry appreciation and recognition events.
 - e. Develop a marketing philosophy and plan with local media to cast a favorable light on business and promote successes.

- 4. Emphasize the critical role of Small Business to our economy.**
 - a. Develop and market a summary of resources, services, and assets that can help the growth of existing small business.
 - b. Continue to support the Small Business Council.

- 5. Identify Entrepreneurial Venture Opportunities and Support Efforts**
 - a. Identify barriers to entrepreneur growth in Madison County.
 - b. Identify new business opportunities for local small businesses.
 - c. Identify and/or develop new methods and resources for supporting the growth of local small businesses, including venture capital and financial assistance.
 - d. Partner with universities to develop and expand business programs, including entrepreneurship programs.
 - e. Work with colleges and universities to develop or expand entrepreneur courses and programs.

- 6. Work in partnership with Local, State and Federal elected officials to remove barriers to business development.**
 - a. Define a Federal government lobbying agenda by the 4th quarter of each year.
 - i. Conduct an annual chamber lobbying trip to Washington DC for Chamber leadership only.
 - ii. Conduct an annual chamber lobbying trip to Washington DC for Chamber members. As possible, assign members to visit key constituents with the Chamber's lobbying agenda and/or economic development agenda.
 - b. Define a State government lobbying agenda by January of each year.
 - i. Conduct an annual chamber lobbying trip to Montgomery for Chamber leadership only.
 - ii. Conduct an annual chamber lobbying trip to Montgomery for Chamber members.
 - iii. Evaluate partnership potential with the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama and the Business Council of Alabama.
 - c. Create a recurring roundtable of regional local elected officials to discuss economic development.

- 7. Partner with Local Research Universities to Promote Regional Technology-based Reputation**
 - a. Promote local companies partnering or sponsoring university participation in technology-related programs and conferences.
 - b. Recognize local colleges and universities and their student bodies as integral parts of the Chamber's image promotion activities.

- 8. Support the growth of University Research Capabilities**
 - a. Encourage companies to partner with local universities by steering them towards community programs that support commercialization of research and development projects that may spin-off technologies into the business market.
 - b. Leverage university talent in economic initiatives and feasibility studies. Create an index of university R&D projects to identify and leverage opportunities.
 - c. Support universities' efforts to attract top quality faculty and researchers.
 - d. Proactively assist and support university efforts to obtain major Federal research programs in strategically targeted areas.

Grow & Preserve the Huntsville Region's Existing Economic Base, Business Climate, and Business Culture

BENCHMARK CITIES:

Austin, Texas
San Antonio, Texas

Investment Goal #2: **Recruit Targeted Businesses**

Investment Strategies

Strategies and Execution:

- 1. Regionalism – Develop and implement a strategy of regional partnership in pursuit of economic development opportunities.**
 - a. Define the “Region”
 - i. Geographic Definition
 - ii. What communities / entities are willing to participate and fund
 - b. Develop and implement a strategy to align the economic development goals of Huntsville/Madison County with the goals and resources of the state. This includes the use of non-statutory incentives for recruitment and expansion projects.
- 2. Continue the marketing campaign for business location consultants and update each February.**
 - a. Implement and maintain an aggressive and highly focused marketing campaign aimed at business site location consultants.
 - b. Develop an information package to ensure our community’s best possible location cases are prepared, presented, and provided in every recruitment effort.
 - c. Develop a script of talking points for the Chamber Economic Development Envoy volunteers.
 - d. Continuously update and upgrade www.HuntsvilleAlabamaUSA.com to be inclusive of those elements required by location consultants.
- 3. Implement a strong prospect generation plan updated by January of each year.**
 - a. Continue to develop a diverse workforce base that compliments existing strengths. Primary targets should be the industry sectors identified in the WDG study: aerospace and defense, distribution and logistics, life sciences and administrative offices.
 - b. Implement an aggressive new business marketing campaign aimed at corporate decision-makers at the headquarters level of targeted companies. Conduct a minimum of one city call per quarter with at least ten targets visited per trip. Include HREGI investors in the trips.
 - c. Identify and recruit companies targeted for relocation as a result of BRAC realignments.
 - d. Conduct a minimum of one city benchmarking / research trip each year with HREGI Investors.
 - e. Develop a consistent message / script to be used by all volunteers on calls.
 - f. Enhance our multi-media capability at the Huntsville/Madison County Economic Development Center to achieve state-of-the-art technology to facilitate persuasive presentations to new and expanding companies in our market area in order to effectively compete with peer cities.
 - g. Emphasize the diversity of our community and demonstrate its competitive advantage.
 - h. Partner with universities to identify and market to alumni business opportunities in Huntsville/Madison County.

- 4. Increase business relocation and expansion project interest and opportunities.**
 - a. Maintain our Huntsville Regional Economic Development website.
 - b. Work in partnership with Local, State and Federal elected officials to facilitate business development.
 - c. Expand our economic development research and information program that supports the organization's marketing needs and simultaneously responds to the information requirements of local businesses and the general public.
 - d. Identify other websites presenting economic development data on Madison County and offer consulting update service to coordinate information.
 - e. Produce and provide quality printed marketing publications that are required to properly introduce the Huntsville area economy and its most marketable assets to target audiences.
 - f. Develop a portable marketing "board" specific to the assets of Huntsville / Madison County to be used and displayed by local companies who have booths at tradeshow, conferences, etc.

- 5. Update business plan to market our Research and Industrial Parks, coordinating with other business and industrial properties beginning in January of each year.**
 - a. Continue and expand the marketing of Cummings Research Park, Jetplex Industrial Park, and other available business and industrial properties.
 - b. Market properties on the Chamber Website.

- 6. Work in partnership with local, state and federal elected officials to facilitate business development.**

- 7. Engage Universities and Colleges in the Chamber's Mission of Economic Development**
 - a. Engage college and university officials in Chamber initiatives and recruiting/lobbying trips.
 - b. Leverage university talent in economic initiatives and feasibility studies. Create an index of university R&D projects to identify and leverage opportunities.

Recruitment of Targeted Businesses

BENCHMARK CITIES:

Austin, Texas

San Antonio, Texas

Raleigh, North Carolina

Durham, North Carolina

Columbus, Georgia

Investment Goal #3:

Grow the Community's Defense & Space Industries & Assets

Investment Strategies

Strategies and Execution:

- 1. Help protect and grow the roles and missions of local federal activities.**
 - a. Resist efforts to transfer responsibility for mission support away from Redstone.
 - b. Build on Redstone capabilities to attract additional work to the installation.

- 2. Work with members of the Congressional Delegation, Tennessee Valley communities and affected military operations to successfully implement BRAC 2005 Redstone realignments.**
 - a. Monitor BRAC implementation timelines.
 - b. Monitor BRAC construction funding.
 - c. Work with State and local governments to support BRAC relocation efforts.
 - d. Support BRAC related regional planning efforts.

- 3. Position Redstone Arsenal as critical to the DoD's transformation initiatives by leveraging existing capabilities and competencies, and by building on that baseline with new and related activities for the future.**
 - a. Support efforts to attract Future Combat System work to Redstone and Huntsville/Madison County.
 - b. Position Huntsville/Redstone as the nation's Missile Defense Center of Excellence.
 - c. Update marketing materials, media contacts and key customer / government / decision maker contacts to be used in advocating North Alabama's federal government assets as a key strategic resource for National Security.
 - d. Actively work to bring a major aerospace company headquarters, operating division or business unit with profit/loss responsibility to the region.

- 4. Leverage NASA Marshall Space Flight Center people and facilities to expand the roles and missions of the Center in the execution of the space exploration vision.**
 - a. Support efforts to host an annual national space conference in Huntsville.
 - b. Engage the State in efforts to grow and protect the space industry in the region.
 - c. Support NASA MSFC exploration program roles and missions. Work with MSFC to identify potential opportunities to attract business related to the exploration program.
 - d. Work with the NASA Administrator in helping to shape the future for MSFC through a planned program of high level elected and volunteer official visits to understand the plans for the future, the needs for the future, and Huntsville's potential role. This should result in a continuous feedback loop of exploratory conversations that can shape plans for action.
 - e. Support Marshall in creating and distributing marketing materials that highlight the innovations, new ideas, program successes and community involvement in space activities. The message will be that the community is investing in and supporting America's space program through innovative programs, people and application of resources.
 - f. Develop relationships with key Air Force allies involved with the development of space craft leveraging both NASA and Air Force interests.
 - g. Attract commercial space activities and enterprises.
 - h. Revitalize the Chamber's MSFC committee – Center for Space and Innovation.

- 5. Position our community as a key resource and/or location for the new federal Department of Homeland Security's Office of Science and Technology Assessment.**
 - a. Position Huntsville to assume a lead role in Alabama's Homeland Security Initiatives. Work with Alabama's Director of Science and Technology for the Alabama Department of Homeland Security to define a partnership plan to leverage this opportunity.
 - b. Make known to appropriate government, civic and corporate officials that Huntsville, Madison County, and Redstone Arsenal have resources in place now that can be used to support the new federal Department of Homeland Security in its work.
 - c. Encourage DHS to use our region for demonstration projects and as a test bed for new DHS technologies.
 - d. Establish a plan to pursue the creation of an Intelligence and Technology Center of Excellence for Homeland Security.

- 6. Develop an annual Chamber of Commerce Federal Agenda which details the community's space and defense priorities as determined by a National Government committee. Formally present the Federal Agenda to the Congressional delegation. (See Goal #1, Strategy and Execution 6).**

Defense & Space Industry Growth

BENCHMARK CITIES:

Colorado Springs, Colorado
Denver, Colorado
El Segundo, CA
Clear Lake, TX
Cocoa Beach, FL
Albuquerque, NM
Phoenix, AZ

Investment Goal #4:

Support efforts to ensure there is adequate quality and quantity of workforce to meet employer needs.

Investment Strategies

Strategies and Execution:

1. Assist local companies in attracting employees with needed skills to live and work in the Huntsville area.

- a. Market the community as “A Smart Place” to live, work and play. Make “A Smart Place” marketing materials available to companies to use in their recruiting efforts.
- b. Identify five national markets* to concentrate advertising of the Chamber’s recruiting website.
- c. Plan and implement 10 national recruiting events* for the Chamber.
- d. Sponsor a national conference or consortium to bring in professionals with needed skills.
- e. Establish relationships with key military transition offices.*
- f. Develop additional marketing materials to publicize the Chamber’s recruiting site.
- g. Use the Chamber’s Workforce Council as a sounding board for recruiting and workforce development issues.
- h. Finalize/maintain the Chamber’s job search site and make improvements as needed.

2. Support the expansion of young professionals in Huntsville/Madison County that will aid in recruiting and retaining this demographic sector.

- a. Continue to support the Chamber’s EmYrge Council.
- b. Continue/expand the Bridges program for co-ops, interns and recent college graduates.
- c. Attend recruiting events at 10 universities*.
- d. Work with government agencies to allow industry to use entry level positions and local companies to create such positions.

3. Continue the Chamber’s comprehensive workforce development program to ensure a steady pipeline of workers for our community’s high-growth careers.

- a. Continue to support the Chamber’s partnership with Junior Achievement through board membership, recruiting of volunteers from member companies, and collaboration on emerging opportunities to extend JA’s impact on K-12 students.
- b. Expand the membership in the Chamber’s Workforce Coalition to better represent members, academic partners and community organizations. Continue to identify and address gaps in K-12 career awareness, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills development, and overall academic achievement.
- c. Support state and local K-12 initiatives that directly impact the high-growth careers for our community, such as AMSTI, the Engineering Academy Initiative for Alabama, and job shadowing programs.
- d. Support the Valley Innovation Alliance (VIA), the Department of Labor’s regional initiative to connect workforce development and economic development, through representation on the VIA Executive Committee and participation in subcommittees. Work with partners to develop proposals for VIA funding, and apply for funding when appropriate to implement Chamber priorities.
- e. Support local post-secondary institutions in recruiting, retention and placement of their students in local businesses.

- f. Develop an outreach program that promotes and partners with organizations that support the retention of employable retirees.

4. Continue to support Tennessee Valley BRAC workforce efforts.

- a. Continue to support the Redstone Executive Workforce Committee through representation and implementation of the identified community strategies: maximize transfers of BRAC personnel, recruit nationally to fill vacancies, and increase the pool of qualified entry-level personnel. Use this forum to address member workforce concerns (i.e., co-op issues, wage/benefit impacts, procurement concerns).
- b. Facilitate frequent communication with BRAC-impacted personnel and the Army Materiel Command (AMC) and Missile Defense Agency (MDA) transition offices through 2011.
- c. Organize community efforts to support Commands that will be relocating to Redstone Arsenal due to BRAC 2005 recommendations.
- d. Conduct town hall meetings as requested by AMC, United States Army Security Assistance Command (USASAC), MDA, Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM) and the Second Recruiting Brigade to encourage employees to transfer with their jobs to the Huntsville region.
- e. Update BRAC relocation marketing tools such as the website and printed materials.
- f. Update materials to support relocation efforts.
- g. Develop outreach efforts to make those transferring to the Huntsville region feel welcome.

5. Support the expansion of the Available Technology Workforce

- a. Work with MDA, AMC, AMCOM, Research Development and Engineering Center (RDEC), Space and Missile Defense Command (SMDC), NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, other federal agencies and local industry to expand co-op programs, internships, fellowships and endowed scholarships.
- b. Assist in marketing the Huntsville/Madison County region as a center for higher education in leading technologies.
- c. Highlight the presence of Universities and Colleges on recruitment trips.

Investment Goal #5:
Enhance the Community's Image.

Investment Strategies

Strategies and Execution:

- 1. Complete and implement a full image promotion strategy updated in May annually.**
 - a. Define and assess the current targeted audience perceptions of Huntsville / Madison County and identify strategies that will effectively promote our messages.
 - b. Develop plan to expand distribution of marketing materials and publications to target audiences.
 - c. Promote the Huntsville community through media editorial placements dedicated solely to the promotion of communities for economic development purposes.
 - d. Fund a consistent promotional strategy through which Huntsville's image will be expanded, resulting in *favorable comparison* opportunities with other cities.
 - e. Utilize media promotions focused on local and in-state contacts in order to generate positive awareness.
 - f. Present Huntsville's unique technological assets in a convincing manner so that everyone from local citizens to state and national leaders will understand and appreciate our community's strategic advantages.
 - g. Aggressively market through www.HuntsvilleAlabamaUSA.com and www.asmartplace.com to significantly increase business recruitment and workforce growth opportunities.
 - h. Produce quality printed marketing publications to introduce the Huntsville area economy and its marketable assets to target audiences, including both prospective business and workforce candidates.
 - i. Coordinate advertising strategies with local universities and colleges for image enhancement initiatives.
- 2. Conduct annual survey with targeted prospect groups to determine perception of key aspects of the Huntsville Region.**
 - a. Annual survey results over multiple years will reflect improvement in the perceptions regarding Huntsville of targeted prospect groups.
- 3. Increase frequency of inclusion of Huntsville in industry studies of technology-based communities.**
- 4. Review branding to ensure that it accurately reflects community strengths.**
- 5. Market the community as "A Smart Place" to live, work and play. (See Goal # 4, Strategy and Execution #1a).**

Investment Goal #6:

Develop the Community's Capacity for New & Sustained Economic Growth.

Investment Strategies

Strategies and Execution:

- 1. Maintain a model for optimum year-by-year funding of economic development programs and activities through both public and private sources.**
 - a. Compare the Chamber's funding model with economic development programs in peer cities.

- 2. Develop a Chamber endowment as a long-term solution to fund the economic development responsibilities of the Chamber.**
 - a. Work with the Senior Council to establish an endowment.

- 3. Integrate key elements of the HREGI Investment Strategy into the annual Chamber program of work and budget to be approved by the Chamber Board of Directors.**
 - a. Maintain a Strategic Planning Committee to annually update and revise the HREGI strategies.
 - b. Present a final draft of the Strategic Plan to the Chamber Executive Committee by the end of each year.

- 4. Work with local, state, regional and federal economic development allies to develop and communicate a partnership for political advocacy.**
 - a. Conduct periodic meetings with political representatives to maintain lines of communication and support.

- 5. The Chamber will act as a conduit of information, facilitation, and accountability for those identified tasks that are assigned to Partners.**

- 6. The Chamber of Commerce will work to maintain a constant state of review and evaluation of our community's infrastructure (land availability, transportation, education, healthcare, etc.) to ensure readiness and responsiveness for successful economic development.**
 - a. Address priority issues through the Chamber's annual federal and state agendas and/or any appropriate government officials.

Investment Goal #7:

Be Accountable to Our Investors.

Goals and Metrics:

- 1. Collect relevant financial, commercial and industrial real estate and demographic data for the Huntsville / Madison County region and identified benchmark cities. Those data will be updated annually in July.**
- 2. Create an average net new job growth of 2500 new jobs per year in our targeted industry sectors for a five-year total of 12,500 jobs. Announce a minimum of 400 new primary jobs each year from new employers. Announce a minimum of 2,100 high profile jobs from expanding employers.**
- 3. Demonstrate per capita income growth trend line sufficient to result in Huntsville leading peer cities within 10 years (by 2015).**
- 4. Demonstrate Metro Product Growth trend line sufficient to result in leading our peer cities within 10 years (by 2015).**
- 5. Demonstrate Commercial Capital Investment growth trend line sufficient to achieve \$150 million a year in 5 years (by 2010). Measure by increases in property tax revenues.**
- 6. Increase industrial and technology-based capital investment to \$150 million per year in the region.**
- 7. Conduct 120 local member calls each year and achieve 12 announced expansion plans by local employers each year.**
- 8. Create a balanced industry mix which consists of primary target business sectors for new and expanding companies, as identified in the WDG study, including: aerospace and defense, distribution and logistics, life sciences and administrative offices.**
- 9. Create a scorecard of the trended data listed above for report to the Board of Directors and the HREGI Investors, and conduct periodic review meetings with the Board and investors.**
- 10. Workforce growth rate should exceed the number of new jobs announced.**
- 11. Population growth rate should match or exceed technology-based cities.**
- 12. Employment growth rate should match or exceed technology-based cities.**
- 13. Develop an integrated Investors accountability and communications plan to be updated the first quarter of each year.**