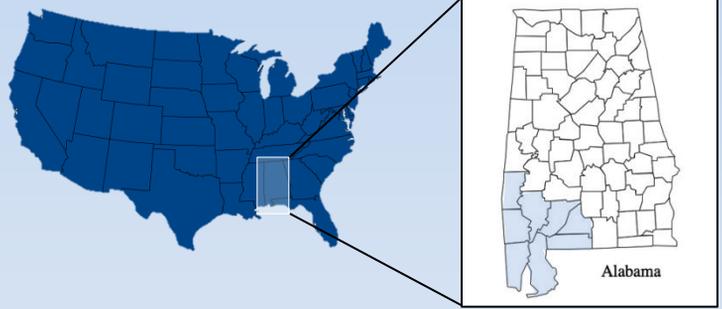


Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership

Partners for Growth in Southwest Alabama Manufacturing Community



The Community

The regional manufacturing industrial ecosystem, with shipbuilding at its core, is strong in Southwest Alabama. The region has a strong workforce, supportive business climate, outstanding education and training providers, and intermediary organizations that focus the work of the entire ecosystem. New developments in the Aerospace Manufacturing sector will add to the region's strengths in manufacturing. In 2012, Airbus announced that it was locating its first US based airplane manufacturing plant in Mobile. The first manufacturing employees are being trained currently, and production will begin in 2015 with employment of over 1,000 workers anticipated within two years.

The Vision

The future of manufacturing in the Southwest Alabama region is bright. Over the past three years, manufacturing employment has rebounded, and the region currently has the highest level of manufacturing employment it has witnessed in two decades. The region has an opportunity to leverage its strengths from the shipbuilding industry, the region's dominant manufacturing sector, to expand into aviation manufacturing with the construction of a new Airbus assembly plant in the region over the next three years. Mobile's Partners for Growth sets as its goal leveraging the region's strengths in shipbuilding and aviation to create 4,000 new jobs with average annual wages of \$40,000 over the next five years.

The Strategy

Workforce and Training: The region's linkages with employers, training providers, and workforce development intermediaries are particularly strong. Over the last two years, these partnerships have trained over 700 skilled workers for the shipbuilding industry, yet there are still over 1,300 job vacancies to be filled. Partners for Growth proposes to dramatically scale these partnerships, including expanding training programs in welding at its community colleges, growing on-the-job training for smaller manufacturers, creating mobile training labs, and offering pathway programs to help individuals build job-ready skills. In addition, the region is piloting the first ever standardized shipfitter curriculum and national credentials and has proposed expanding its apprenticeship programs by an additional 400 apprentices over the next three years.

Supplier Networks: 14 major shipbuilders are located in the Southwest Alabama region building everything from U.S. Navy vessels to tug boats. The Gulf States Shipbuilders Consortium and the Central Gulf Industrial Alliance are partnering with the local workforce system to train workers for the regional supplier base and to share best practices with smaller manufacturers.

Research and Innovation: The University of South Alabama, the Chamber of Commerce, city and county governments are closely united and actively support the USA efforts to expand their research and innovations programs. For example, the renovation at Brookley Industrial Park will include almost 20,000 square feet of space that will be used by USA and Bishop State to house student interns and research faculty at no charge to the institutions. This in turn will further enable University research to be specifically relevant and responsive to the needs of large manufacturing businesses and their suppliers locating in the area.

Infrastructure/Site Development: The region has strengths in manufacturing generally, and shipbuilding manufacturing in particular, in large part due to its location and infrastructure. The Port of Mobile is the nation's 12th largest deepwater port. Mobile's infrastructure and site development system features industrial and commercial upland and waterfront sites to support manufacturing and related value added industries. To ensure the continued viability of the port, the region is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to identify dredge material management programs to reduce the costs of dredging to maintain the port.

Trade and International Investment: When Airbus begins production, the region's exports will increase dramatically. The shipbuilding manufacturing sector has an opportunity to increase its exports, leveraging shared export infrastructure with the aviation industry, including new dedicated technical assistance for companies seeking to enter foreign trade markets for the first time.

Operational Improvements and Capital Access: Since 2010, the Mobile Division has spent over \$9 million to enhance the reliability of its distribution system through the Smart Grid Investment Grant program, focused on installing new technology and upgrading existing facilities to improve system efficiency and reliability. In addition, the Alabama Technology Network has worked with over 100 businesses to improve their operations, but the Network's efforts are currently limited by their small staff. The Partners for Growth aims to expand the Alabama Technology Network to help reach additional small manufacturers.

The Partnership

Workforce and higher education institutions: Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council, Mobile Works, AIDT Maritime Training Center, Bishop State Community College, Faulkner Community College, Mobile Area Education Foundation

Supply Chain: Alabama Technology Network, Partners for Growth, Coastal Innovation Hub, Central Gulf Industrial Alliance

Research: University of South Alabama

Infrastructure: Alabama State Port Authority, Alabama Power Company,

Others: Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, Gulf State Shipbuilding Consortium, MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians, Alabama District Export Council, Austal, Ingalls