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New Heights Downtown

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SPOTLIGHT ON

HOUSTON COUNTY

BY LORI CHANDLER PRUITT

Houston County, in the southeast corner of the state, includes Dothan as its county seat, a hub for retail and medical services that bring in thousands of people each day. They come from a 100-mile radius that includes nearby portions of Florida and Georgia.

With a diverse economy, from peanut production to aviation, there are many opportunities for careers. Dothan offers many amenities to residents, opening new parks, walking trails and other attractions. Entrepreneurs are welcomed to incubators that help with new retail and technology businesses. Downtown is healthy and growing.

Grow Dothan is the economic development arm of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, responsible for encouraging job growth in the area. Grow Dothan is a public/private partnership for the city of Dothan, Houston County and the Wiregrass area that also helps raise money for economic development. Formerly called Dothan by Design, it has had a large impact. Over the last 20 years, there have been more than 17,000 jobs created, $1 billion in total investments and $34 million in infrastructure development. The county has nine industrial parks and is a partner in a megasite that includes 12 counties in northwest Florida and southeast Alabama.

According to the state's just-released 2016 New and Expanding Industry report, Houston County reported seven new or expanding industries for 383 jobs and a $78,472,390 total investment.

Houston County's largest overall employer is Southeast Alabama Medical Center, followed by Dothan City and Houston County schools, Flowers Hospital and the city of Dothan.

The largest manufacturing employer is Southern Nuclear, an electricity generator, followed by Michelin North America, AAA Cooper Transportation and Wayne Farms. Dothan Regional Airport recently attracted CAE, a $75 million aviation training facility.

Collaboration has been the key to development in Houston County — not only in attracting jobs but in local projects. For example, Houston County and the city of Dothan teamed to open a new E-911 center and are teaming again on a regional public safety training center.

Partnerships also are important in workforce development, as K-12 school systems work with colleges to provide students with more opportunities in career technical fields and dual enrollment, and in other projects around the county, from parks to new housing developments. The non-profit Wiregrass Foundation also has a major role in the community. As of 2016, the foundation has awarded more than 900 grants for a total of more than $39 million. The foundation invests about $4 million per year in the community.

Adding to a very strong higher education and medical sector is the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, affiliated with the Southeast Alabama Medical Center and the Houston County Health Care Authority. Opened in 2013, the first class graduated this May. ACOM recently opened the Centers for Research and Team-Based Learning in November 2016.

The Press Thornton Future Masters Golf Tournament was held in June at the Dothan Country Club.

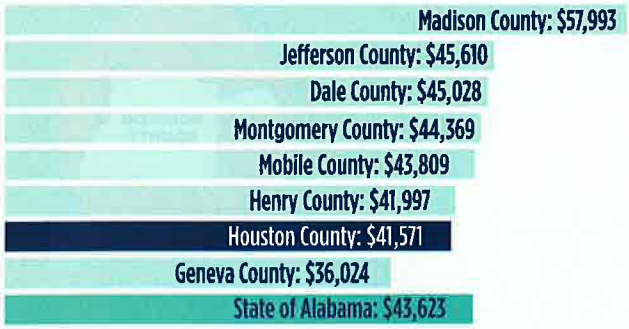
Wallace Community College recently opened its health sciences building.

Wallace Community College recently opened a 98,371-square-foot, three-story, three-wing health sciences buildings. And Health Center South, a physician practice, is building a new five-story medical office complex.

Lori Chandler Pruitt is a freelance writer for Business Alabama. *She lives in Birmingham.*

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

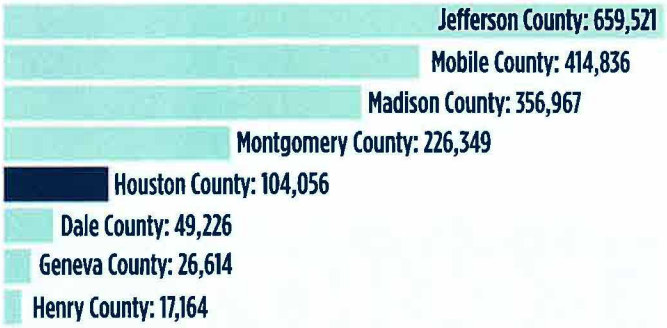
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

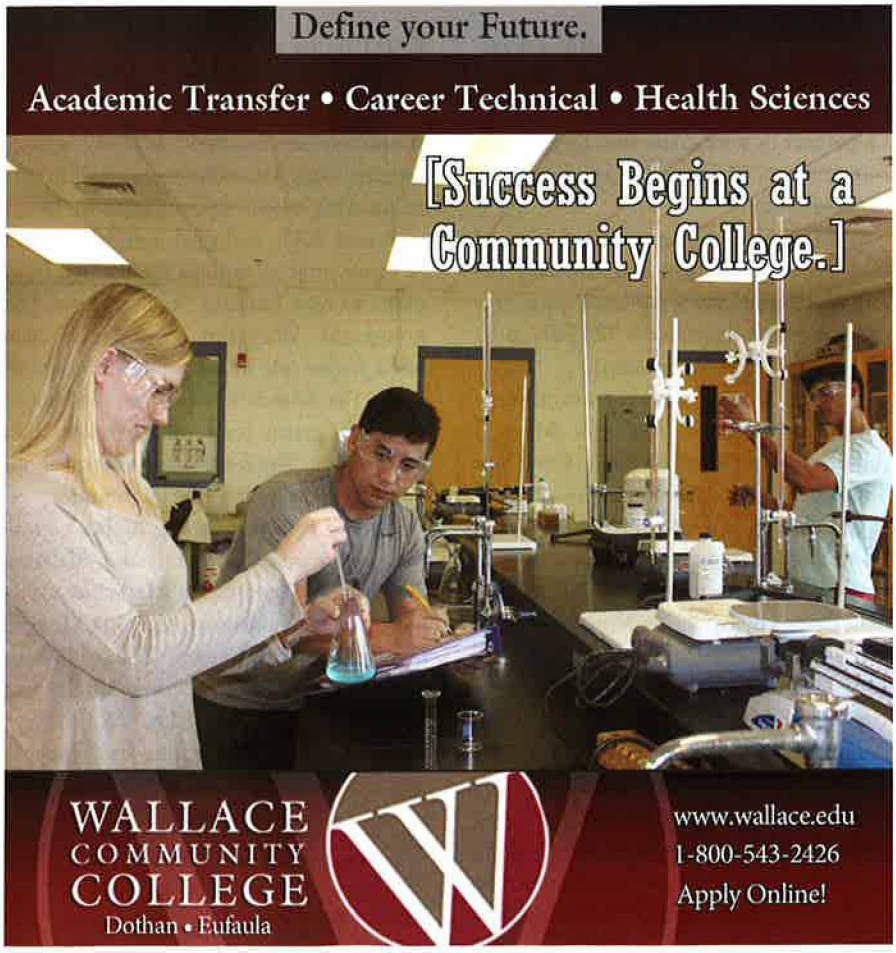


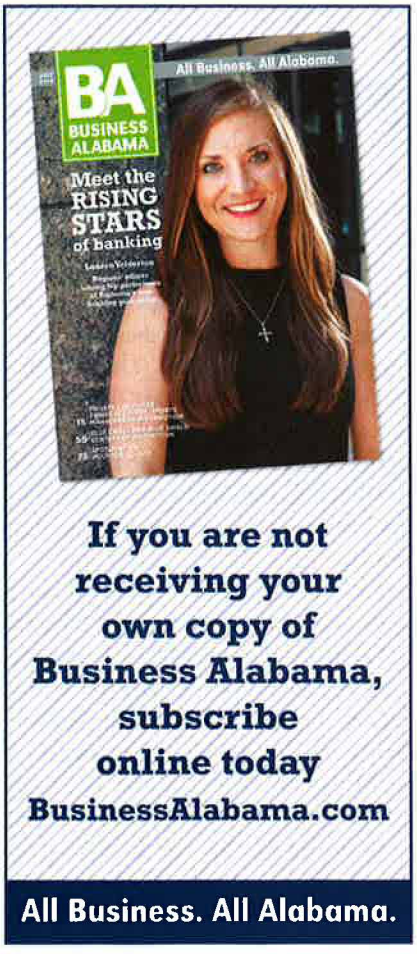
POPULATION

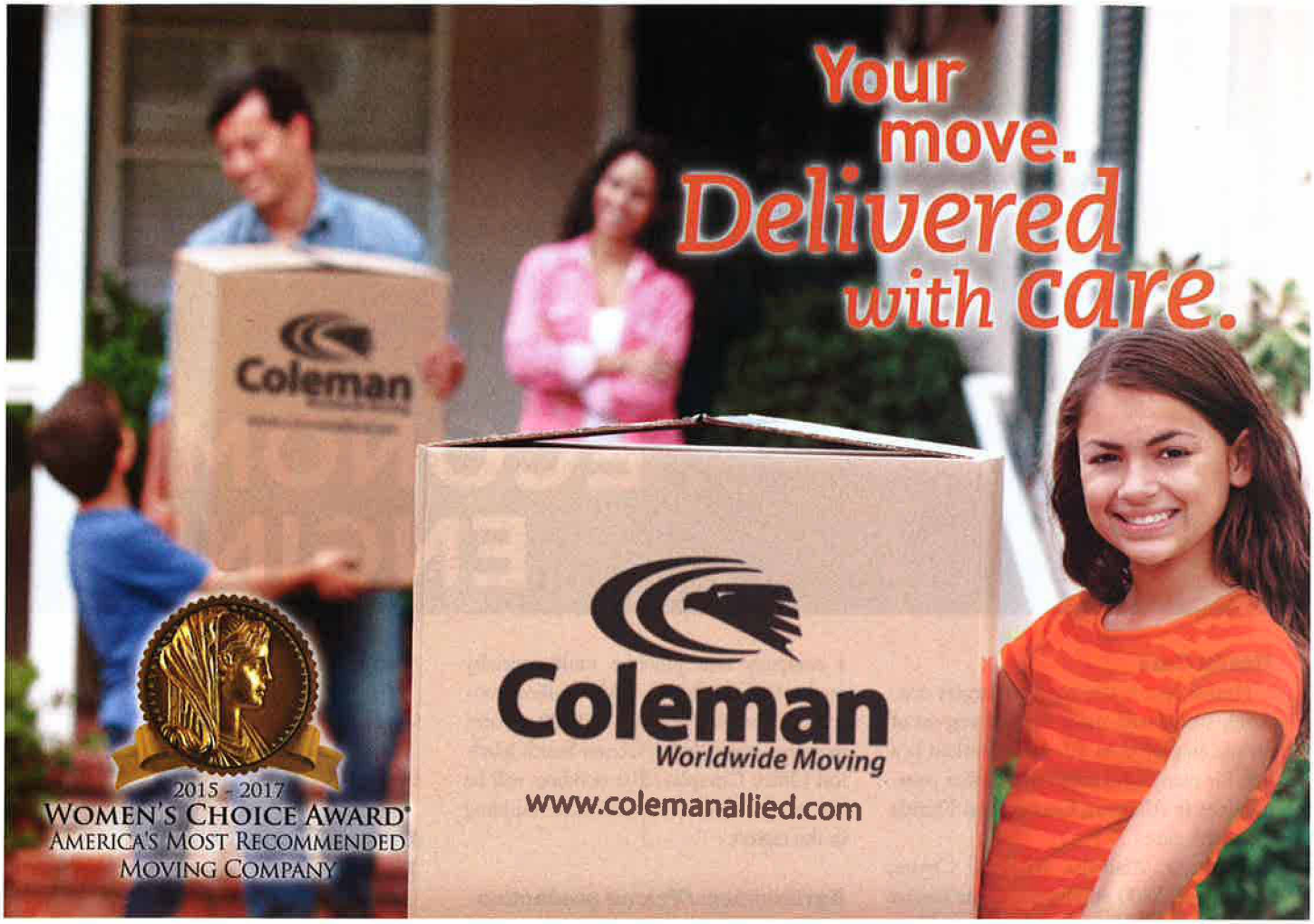
Total Alabama population: 4,863,300

Source: U.S. Census Bureau









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ECONOMIC ENGINES

Health Care

Health care is the county's largest economic sector, with more than 20 percent of people employed in this area. Dothan is a hub for many who come from other communities in Alabama, Georgia and Florida for health care.

Southeast Alabama Medical Center, with about 2,800 employees, is the largest employer in the county, and Flowers Hospital is third with about 1,300, according to the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce. In addition to the hospitals are clinics, support services, long-term care facilities and other health-care related businesses.

The region also has a HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital in Dothan, and a Noland Health rehab facility in SAMC.

Other health care facilities also are expanding. In May, Health Center South, a company that provides multi-specialty medical offices, began a $20 million construction project for a new 200,000-square-foot, five-story Health Center South Medical Office Complex. The building will be the largest leasable medical office building in the region.

Agribusiness/Peanut production

Houston County produces diverse agricultural crops, including peanuts, cotton, corn, soybeans, hay, wheat, pecans, beef cattle, dairy products, poultry and egg products, catfish and hogs.

In 2014, the county ranked first in the state in peanut production, with 98.7 million pounds. In fact, about half of all the peanuts grown in the U.S. are grown within a 100-mile radius of Dothan, according to the Alabama Peanut Producers Association.

The county's second largest commodity is cotton.

Companies in agribusiness rank among the county's largest employers.

Dothan Regional Airport/ Aviation

Dothan is located on South Alabama's Aviation Business Corridor and is close to Fort Rucker, which has at least a billion-dollar economic impact on the Wiregrass region. Its airport has been able to attract related companies that have a large impact.

In March, the airport welcomed the

The new $75 million CAE Dothan Training Center will train Army and Air Force personnel to fly the C-12 aircraft. *Photo by Art Morris III*

BUSINESS BRIEFS

May 2017: Poultry producer Wayne Farms continues its $90 million expansion project, which started two years ago, adding more than 600 jobs for a total of nearly 1,000 jobs.

May 2017: Health Center South breaks ground for a medical office building. The 200,000-square-foot, five-story building is expected to cost up to $25 million. It will be the largest leasable medical office building in the region, with 100-gigabyte fiber optic internet connectivity.

May 2017: Wallace Community College dedicates a 98,371-square-foot, three-story, three-wing Health Sciences Building, which will house the college's nursing and allied health programs.

May 2017: Wesley Place, a senior care facility, unveils its completed $9 million construction and renovation project, and a transition to Household Model care, which provides a more home-like environment.

May 2017: Forbes names AAA Cooper Transportation of Dothan as one of the best midsized employers in the U.S. Family-owned AAA Cooper is one of the area's largest employers.

May 2017: HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Dothan announces it has received top recognition from Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation for the eighth year. UDSMR is a nonprofit group that evaluates rehab hospitals for delivery of quality care.

CAE Dothan Training Center. The $75 million center at the Dothan Regional Airport has simulators that train Army and Air Force fixed-wing candidate flyers to fly the C-12. The company estimates about 600 students will go through the course each year. The center employs about 100 people.

"CAE makes a flight simulator that allows you to unplug from one program and plug into another to create an entirely different aircraft to simulate, and they're the only company that makes these," says Art Harris III, airport director. The airport is rehabilitating the former Flight Safety International buildings for CAE, to be used this summer, he says.

The airport also replaced 16 acres of pavement and improved access to 12 hangars that were recently rehabilitated, Harris says. It will do more of that this year in the heavy aircraft parking area.

Retail

Dothan is a retail hub, located almost equal distance from Montgomery; Albany, Georgia, and Tallahassee, Florida. In addition to serving local residents, the retail is patronized by those coming from out of town for medical care and shopping. City officials estimate that some 180,000 people a day use medical facilities and shop. New hotels mean more places to stay, and new restaurants offer more choices as well. Retail/wholesale trade accounts for about 18 percent of employment in the Dothan MSA; while hotel and food services add another 10.6 percent to the workforce.

Manufacturing/Distribution/ Transportation/Timber

The area has several industrial and business parks and has attracted a diverse group of manufacturers and distribution centers. Houston County has a business park that is ideal for distribution and call center use. Other strong manufacturing sectors include tire production, food products, wood and paper products and electric generation.

Trucking companies, many located in the county's distribution park, have helped with distribution center recruitment. AAA Cooper Transportation is the largest motor freight employer.

Finance/Banking

Dothan also serves as a regional financial hub for parts of three states, and there are more than 20 local banks here. This sector accounts for about 4 percent of all employment in southeast Alabama, according to the chamber of commerce.

Higher Education

The county's colleges and universities fill the educational and career tech needs of its residents, as well as surrounding counties.

Wallace Community College has offered academics and workforce training since 1949. With campuses in Dothan and Eufaula, Wallace has a total enrollment of 4,219 and 487 employees. In May, WCC dedicated a 98,371-square-foot Health Sciences Building, which will house the college's nursing and allied health programs.

Troy University also has a campus in Houston County, with more than 1,500 students and another 1,000 taking classes online.

The newest school in the county, the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, opened in 2013 and celebrated its first graduating class this May. It is the first osteopathic medical college to open in Alabama. It shares a campus and is affiliated with Southeast Alabama Medical Center in Dothan. ACOM already has expanded with its Centers for Research and Team-Based Learning.

Workforce Development

Both school systems in the county have career technology centers and participate in dual enrollment with higher education. The Houston County school system serves five high schools at the Houston County Career Academy. In February, it was named among the top career technical facilities in the state.

Taxes

PROPERTY TAX

Houston County: 13.0 mills
not including municipalities

State of Alabama: 6.5 mills

SALES TAX

Houston County: 1 percent
Cities within the county:
Ashford: 4 percent
Columbia: 3 percent
Cowarts: 2 percent
Dothan: 4 percent
Gordon: 4 percent
Kinsey: 4 percent
Rehobeth: 3 percent
Taylor: 4 percent
Webb: 3 percent

State of Alabama: 4 percent

Source: Alabama Department of Revenue

May 2017: Dothan Industrial Park will be home to a new 140,000-square-foot tire distribution warehouse, to be built on 17.8 acres along Technology Drive. Dunlap and Kyle Tire Co. will operate the center.

March 2017: The CAE Dothan Training Center opens. The $75 million center at Dothan Regional Airport has simulators to train Army and Air Force fixed-wing candidate flyers to fly the C-12.

March 2017: Next Level Apparel, a California-based company that located in Ashford a year ago, announces an expansion that will add up to 100 jobs and a 125,000-square-foot distribution center that will serve the East Coast. The company makes fashion blank T-shirts.

November 2016: E&H Steel Co. is awarded the structural steel contract for the St. Nicholas National Shrine in New York City at Ground Zero.

October 2016: McLane Dothan, a grocery distribution center in Houston County Industrial Park, announces a $17 million expansion that will add 50 jobs at its distribution center near Cottonwood. It should be finished by December 2017.

September 2016: Glasstream Powerboats is in phase two of its expansion, adding 15,000 square feet to its plant. Glasstream makes boats for the domestic market and for the U.S. Coast Guard.

HOUSTON COUNTY

There are nine career programs available, and two new programs — EMT and medical assistant — will be added in the fall, says Glenn Maloy, principal of the career technical academy. Houston County also has a simulated workplace program.

Dothan city schools offer 15 career technical programs in the system's Dothan Technology Center, says Joey Meigs, career technical director. The system will be adding a simulated workplace and more programs, he says.

The Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce participates in workforce development at all levels. And Wiregrass Works, a program of the Workforce Development Council of Alabama, Region 6, brings thousands of eighth grade students from Alabama, Georgia and Florida to the National Peanut Festival in Dothan to introduce them to different career opportunities.

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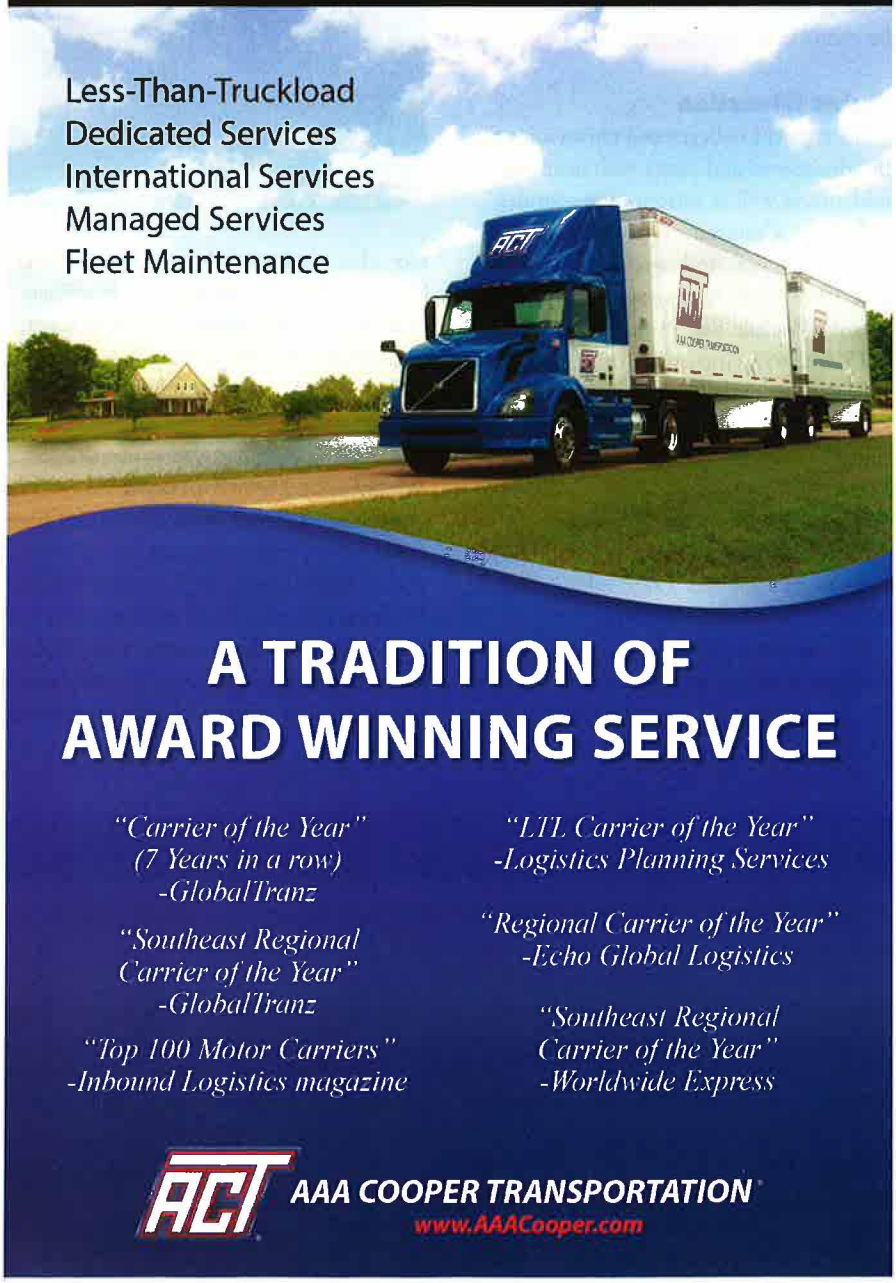
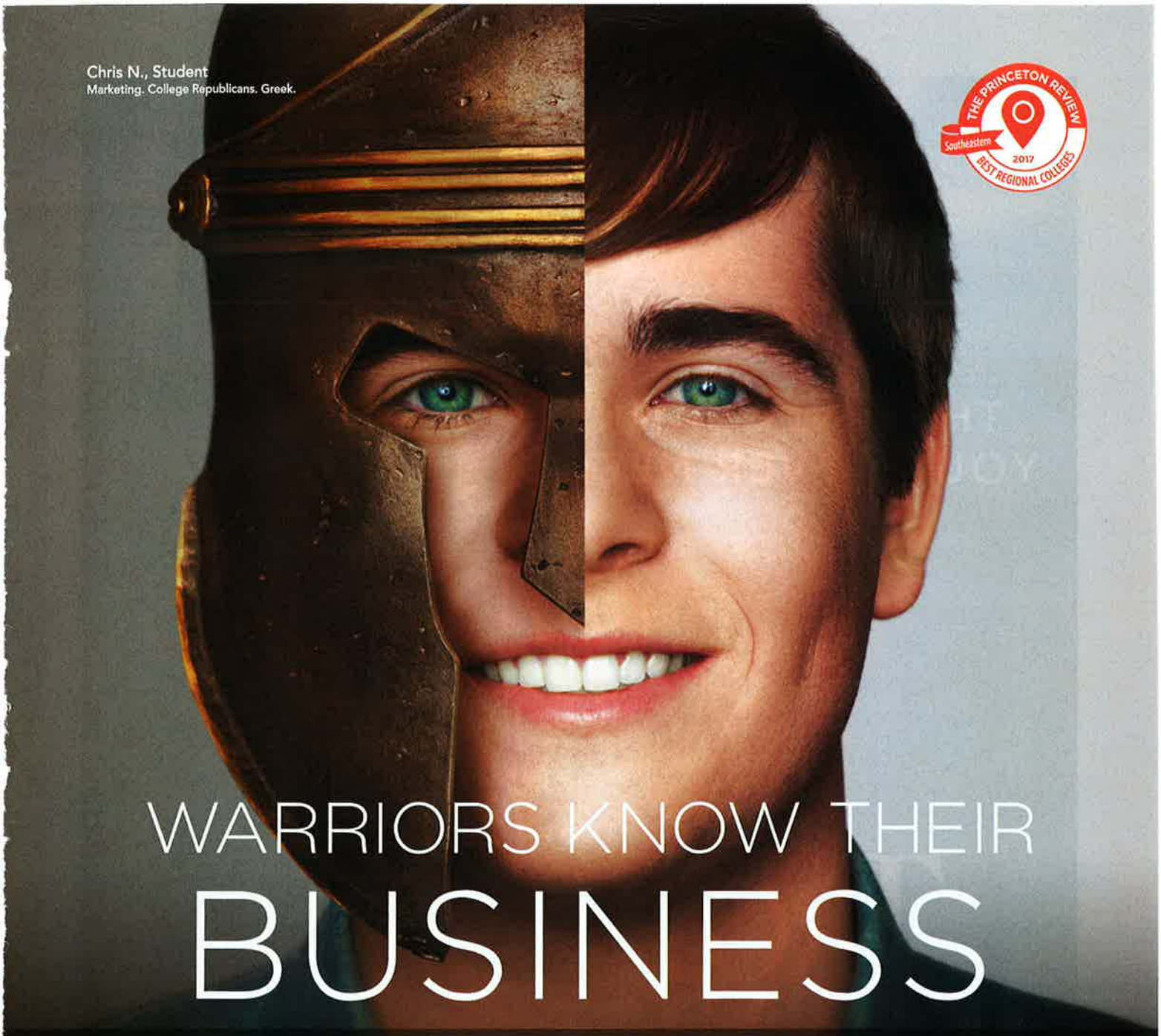


LARGEST INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS

HOUSTON COUNTY

SOUTHERN NUCLEAR (FARLEY)	Dothan
Electricity generation	950 employees
MICHELIN NORTH AMERICA INC.	Dothan
Tire production	550 employees
AAA COOPER TRANSPORTATION	Dothan
Motor freight	425 employees
WAYNE FARMS	Dothan
Chicken processing	356 employees
TWITCHELL TECHNICAL PRODUCTS LLC	Dothan
Textile manufacturing	350 employees
COMFORT SYSTEMS USA SOUTHEAST	Dothan
Mechanical contractors	260 employees
TREEHOUSE FOODS	Dothan
Food products	250 employees
ALABAMA MOTOR EXPRESS	Ashford
Motor freight	250 employees

Source: Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce



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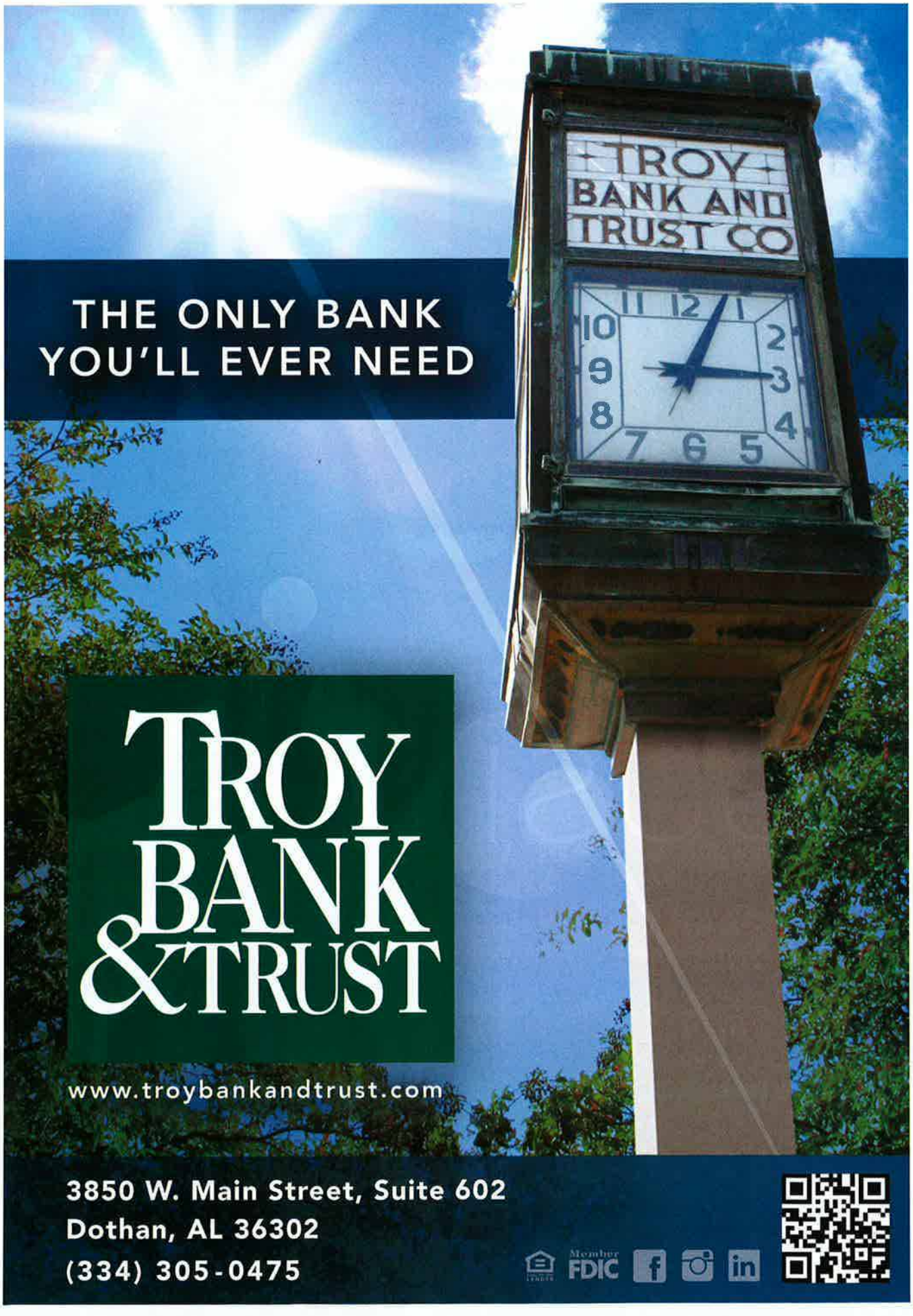
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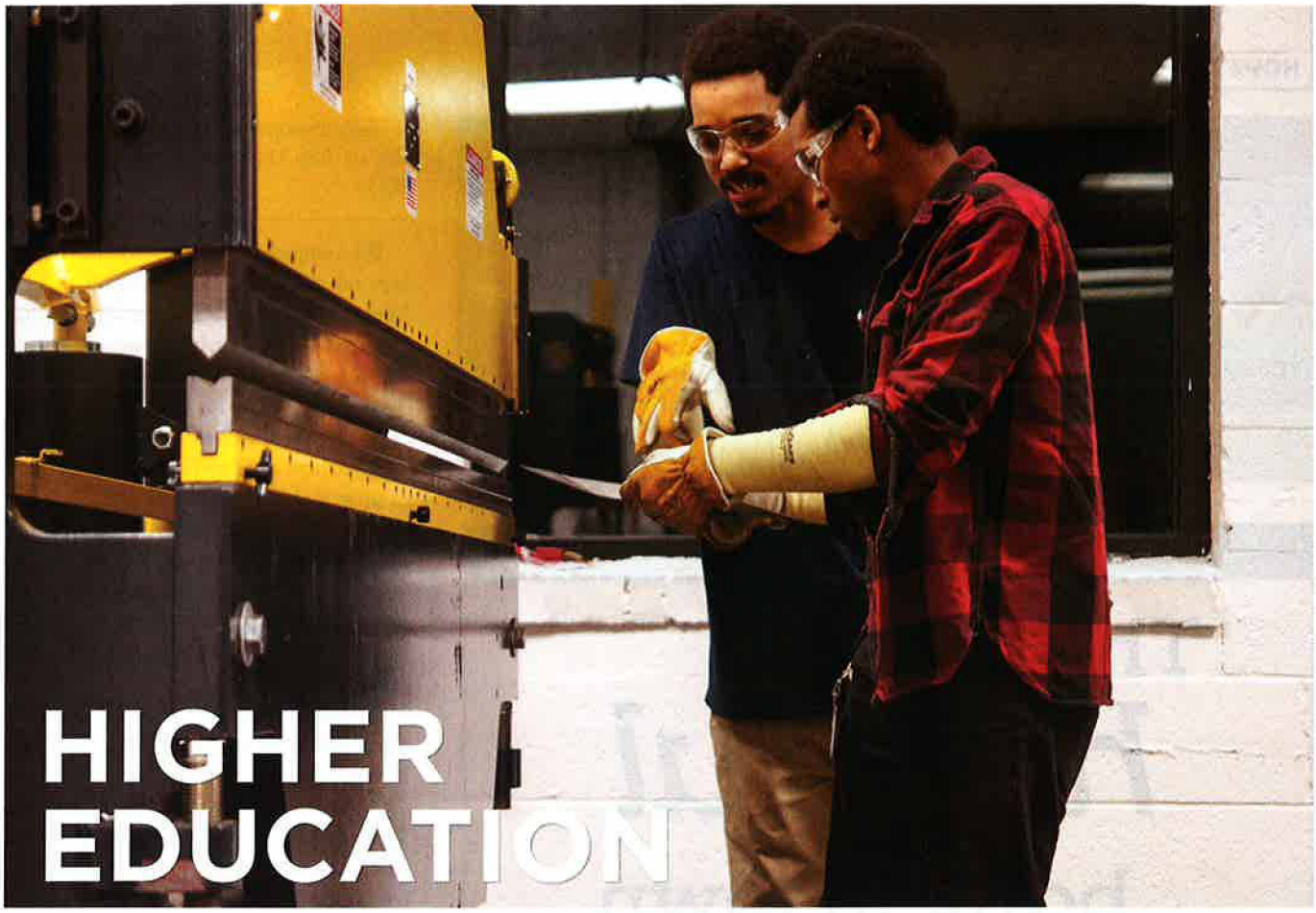

HIGHER EDUCATION

Wallace Community College

Wallace Community College, based in Dothan, has a total enrollment of 4,219 students, including nearly 400 on its Sparks campus in Eufaula. The school also has 633 dual enrollment students from area high schools. There are 487 full-time and part-time faculty and staff.

More than 40 percent of Wallace students are health science or pre-health science majors, followed by 24.6 percent in academic transfer programs. Nearly 20 percent are enrolled in career technical programs and 15 percent are in dual enrollment.

In May, the American Association of Community Colleges named WCC Dothan the No. 1 community college in the nation for student success. WCC Dothan was named one of five innovative community colleges as Awards of Excellence winners. The school was recognized for its I-CAN (Improvement, Constant and Never Ending) instructional initiative to help close the socioeconomic gap and increase school completion rates.

This spring, WCC opened a new Health Science building on campus. The 98,371-square-foot, three-story building houses the college's allied health and nursing programs. Equipment includes health science simulators, which help train students by showing symptoms and talking. Recently, CAE Healthcare donated a Lucina Childbirth Simulator to the college. CAE also makes aviation simulators and has a new training center at the Dothan Regional Airport.

Wallace does extensive workforce training. Between October 2015 and September 2016, Wallace trained 266 students in short-certificate programs, where students can enter the job market quickly; delivered online training to 64 students; provided training to 206 workers at local business and industry; trained 32 people through the Ready to Work job skills readiness training program; provided continuing education credits to 324 workers within health care professions and provided WorkKeys training and testing services to 854 people.

Off campus, Wallace collaborates with local career centers and high schools to offer career technical dual enrollment and several career technical programs, including highly skilled welding, HVAC, electrical technology and other in-demand careers. Other Fast-Track career programs include certified nursing assistant, dental assistant, ophthalmic assistant, pre-apprentice electrical lineworker and professional medical coding. Wallace's adult education offers literacy instruction, GED classes, adult education and English as a Second Language.

WCC recently entered into an agreement with the United Association of Plumbers, Fitters, Welders and Service Tech Representatives that will give students the option of obtaining credit through the five-year apprenticeship program with the union, which can lead to pay increases.

Troy University Dothan

Troy University's Dothan campus has more than 1,500 students, with another 1,000 Dothan students taking Troy classes online. Troy Dothan offers more than 47 graduate and undergraduate degree programs through five academic colleges — Arts and Sciences, Communication and Fine Arts, Business, Education and Health and Human Services.

The Dothan campus employs 105 full-time faculty and staff members, with 74 part-time employees and adjunct faculty.

As part of its workforce training programs, Wallace Community College offers a sheet metal technician course that teaches the fundamentals of sheet metal shop operations.

R. Terry Everett Hall on the Dothan campus of Troy University was dedicated in 2013.

The campus has three academic buildings on more than 400 acres off of U.S. Highway 231. Troy's Dothan campus has 130 forested acres with a two-acre pond and a freshwater stream that provide an outdoor classroom for biology majors and other science students.

Some new developments at the Dothan campus include:

- A master's in management through the Sorrell College of Business.
- A bachelor of science in nursing programs, so that the campus now offers BSN, RN-BSN, MSN and DNP programs.
- Youth Business Summit, allowing about 200 Wiregrass high school students to experience the business world.
- An articulation agreement between Troy and Houston County schools that allows some students at the county's career academy to receive Troy college credit through its education-in-training program.
- Partnership with two Dothan childcare centers to help 4-year-olds better transition into kindergarten. Project Pre-K to K Transition will provide teaching assistance to the childcare centers.

Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine

The first class of physicians graduated in May from the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine (ACOM), Alabama's first four-year osteopathic medical college. ACOM is the academic division of the Houston County Health Care Authority and is affiliated with Southeast Alabama Medical Center (SAMC) in Dothan, which serves patients in Alabama, Georgia and the Florida panhandle.

ACOM's first campus expansion — its Centers for Research and Team-Based Learning — opened in November 2016. The facility was made possible with donor gifts and other sources during a capital campaign. It features a 3,823-square-foot research center and an 11,840-square-foot team-based learning center, including a tech-outfitted event room that can accommodate more than 600 people.

In April, ACOM was granted full accreditation status by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Houston County, working with the city of Dothan, completed a new 911 communications center that includes offices for the EMA — just one of the partnerships that Houston County Commission Chairman Mark Culver celebrates.

"We focus on working together with other towns and counties, and that gets a lot more done," Culver says. The county's dispatchers have moved into the 911 center, and the city of Dothan's will follow soon, he says. Long-term plans include combining all of the 911 response into one entity.

"I'm grateful we have a 21st century building that is safe for E911 and other personnel," says Dothan Mayor Mike Schmitz.

Also, the county and city of Dothan, along with other agencies, have partnered with the Wiregrass Foundation, a privately funded charitable organization, for a $25 million training facility for rescue personnel and first responders, Culver says. Ground was broken in June for the facility that was funded with $20 million from the foundation and the balance from participating partners.

"It will include police and fire training, and we expect it to become a regional center," Culver says of that facility now being built on 23 acres of city land.

Also in the city of Dothan, residents this year welcomed the new James Oates Park in south Dothan. It features a six-field baseball complex and a six-field softball complex, both with concessions, parking and press box. The park also includes a pavilion, playground, walking trails and community activity center.

"We are a youth sports tourism destination, and we are so glad to offer a world-class facility that we can be proud of," Schmitz says.

The city also completed 10 miles of walking, hiking and bike trails on the Forever Wild property in Dothan between Flowers Chapel Road and Fortner Street. Wood bridges connect the trails over water. "The nice thing about this is that it'll always be natural," Schmitz says. "We have already seen more than 27,000 people visit."

The city has added two new hotels and another is under construction.

Dothan is known as a retail and medical regional hub. "We are a community of 70,000, and every day there are about 180,000 people here," Schmitz says. "We work to have all the infrastructure and services available to meet the need."

The city also will open a $3.5 million wellness pool at Westgate Park.

In downtown Dothan, Jamie Dienvenu, new executive director of Dothan Downtown Redevelopment Authority, says the Nest on Foster, a retail incubator, is full, and

Dothan's extensive sports fields allowed it to attract the Alabama State Games in June. *Photo courtesy of Dothan Area Convention & Visitors Bureau*

During the Houston County Career Academy, students wear required company uniforms, learn how to work as a team and many other basic workplace skills.

a new technology incubator, The Hub on Troy, began recently.

The DDRA is renovating the old Porter hardware store into a museum that pays homage to the original hardware store there, along with a satellite office of the Dothan Convention and Visitors Bureau and the DDRA home office, Dienvenu says. It should be finished by the end of the year. The DDRA has acquired other buildings that will be redeveloped as well. The DDRA also finished the Peggi Crawford James Park downtown.

Plans are still in the works to redevelop the former Howell School into a senior living facility for low-income adults, Dienvenu says, as soon as developers can line up state historic tax credits and other work. The DDRA also sponsors many downtown events.

The Dothan Education Foundation is continuing its successful teacher grant program, with grants up to $2,500 for individual classrooms, and is adding grants that can be awarded to an entire school, up to $5,000, says Meagan Dorsey, communications director. With a new director, Gindi Prutzman, the foundation is revamping its website and moving toward using all community resources available to benefit schools, Dorsey says.

"As part of our additional focus on the community, we are very interested in what the community's concerns are, and we want to be the bridge between the public and the board of education," Dorsey says.

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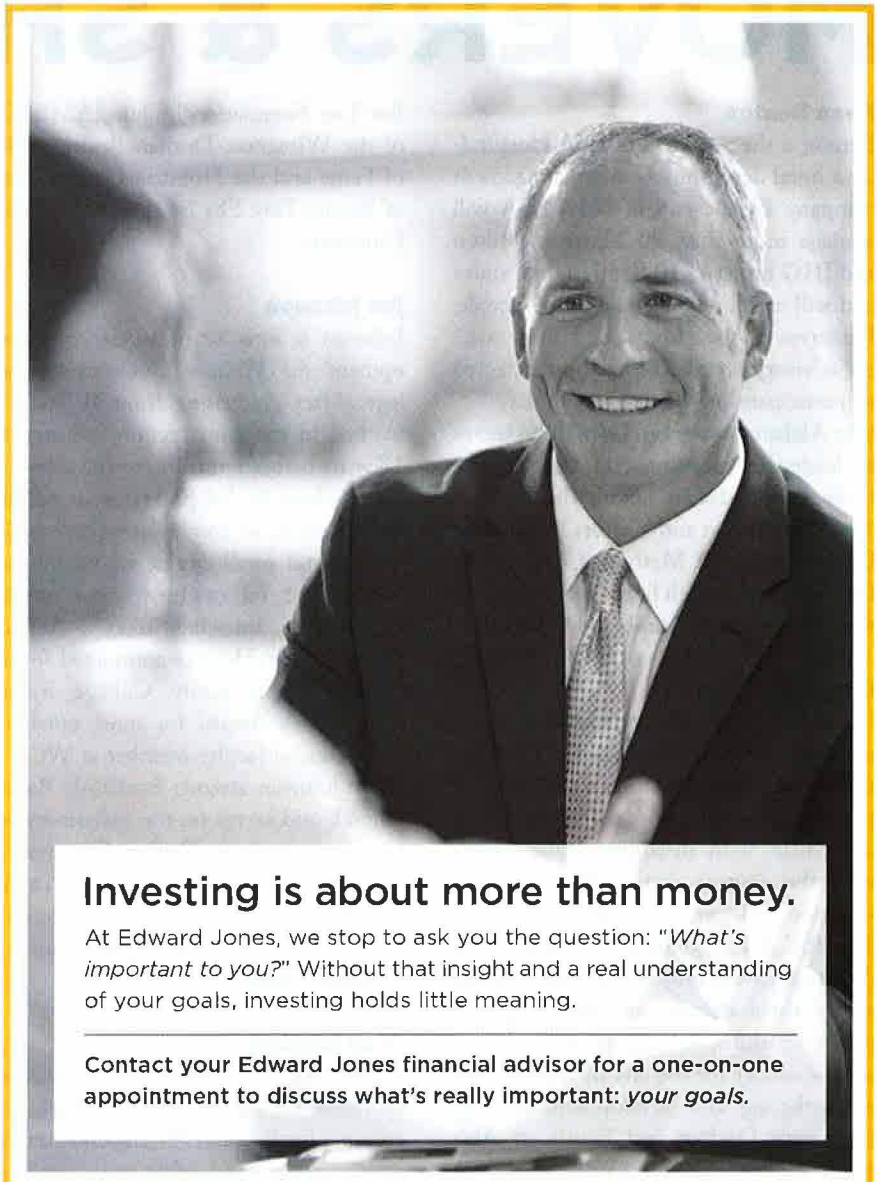

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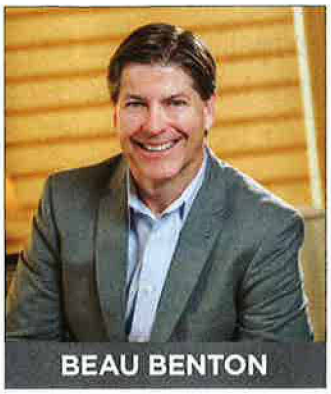
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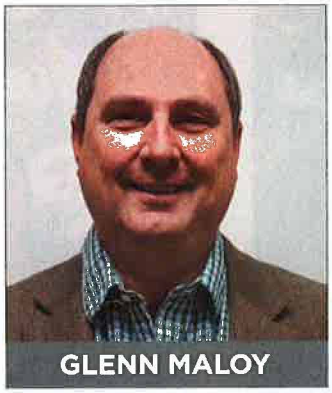
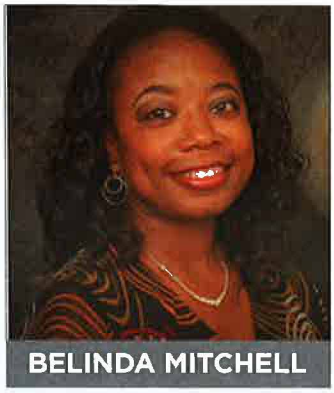

GLENN MALOY


BELINDA MITCHELL

MOVERS & SHAPERS

Beau Benton

Benton is the president of LBA Hospitality, a hotel development and management company. By the end of 2017, LBA will manage more than 70 Marriott, Hilton and IHG hotels in 10 Southeastern states and will employ more than 2,000 people. He serves on the Home2 by Hilton owners' advisory board. He has been selected to participate in the 2017-2018 Leadership Alabama program. Locally, he serves in leadership positions on the Wallace College Foundation board, the Dothan Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and Covenant United Methodist Church. In October, Benton will become chairman of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Cynthia Green

Green has served as director of development since 2008 at Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center Inc., a nonprofit organization providing training and employment for individuals with disabilities. She supervises the center's secure document destruction division, adult care centers and The R.E.A.L. (Refurbished Equipment Assisting Lives) Project. Her career spans nearly three decades in marketing and public relations, serving as public information officer for the city of Dothan and in marketing and development at Troy University Dothan and Southeast Alabama Medical Center. Green serves on the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce board and is secretary of the Dothan Rotary Club. She is a Leadership Dothan graduate, past president of the Southeast Alabama Advertising Federation Dothan Chapter, and volunteers for the Wiregrass Area United Way, Wiregrass Works, the Jon Lee Foundation/JonJam, AMBUCS of the Wiregrass, Dothan Business Hall of Fame and the Houston County Spirit of Service Day. She is a graduate of Troy University.

Joe Johnson

Johnson is director of workforce development for Wallace Community College. After graduating from Wallace, he worked in the construction industry for 17 years before returning to the school in 2010, where he led programs in welding technologies, air conditioning and refrigeration and small engine repair. Johnson has worked on multiple grant projects for Wallace, bringing in approximately $10.5 million. He was nominated for the Alabama Community College System Chancellor's Award for most outstanding technical faculty member at WCC in 2014. Johnson attends Southside Baptist Church and serves on the executive advisory committees for Dothan City Schools and Eufaula High School. He is an active member of the Wiregrass Works committee that helps introduce eighth graders to technical careers.

Brad Kimbro

Kimbro is COO of Wiregrass Electric, responsible for the cooperative's marketing, communications and PR, customer service, energy services and safety and compliance departments. Kimbro is a graduate of Troy University, with industry credentials from the National Rural Electric Cooperatives management internship and certified key account executive programs. He serves on the boards of Dothan Area Botanical Gardens, Dothan-Houston County Library and Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and is immediate past chairman of Wiregrass Habitat for Humanity. Kimbro also is secretary of the Dothan-Tuesday Rotary Club and a member of Dothan's Memphis Baptist Church. Kimbro and his wife own The Courtyard Gift Shop/Boutique in downtown Ashford.

Glenn Maloy

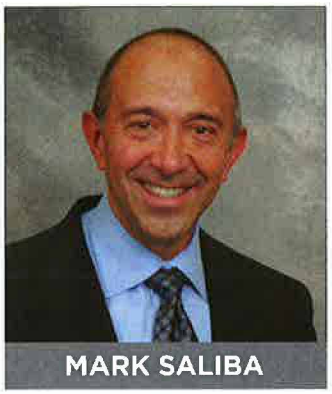
Maloy is career and technical director for the Houston County School System. Earlier in his 25-year career with Houston County Schools, he was an agriscience teacher, baseball coach and principal. In 2012, Maloy was selected to serve on the governor's commission to improve workforce development and education in Alabama. He has also served as state president of the Alabama Career Technical Directors Association. Maloy oversaw development of the Houston County Career Academy, already recognized as one of 14 best practice sites in the state. Maloy has implemented the simulated workplace model in all programs to help better prepare students for the workforce. He also serves as chairman for the Houston County Farm City committee and is a member of the Southeast Alabama Wiregrass Works planning committee.

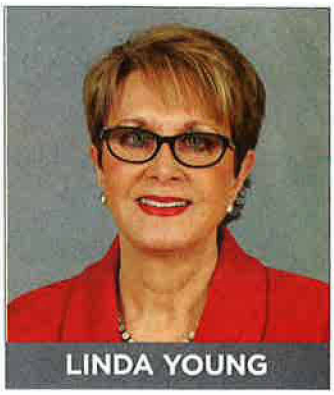
Belinda Mitchell

Mitchell is executive director for the Alfred Saliba Family Services Center in Dothan, which is Alabama's first and largest Family Services Center, where she has been employed for 23 years. She has also worked with the Montgomery Mental Health Authority, the Dothan City Schools Systems and the U.S. Army

HARRISON MORRIS

HEATH PHILLIPS


MARK SALIBA


LINDA YOUNG

in West Germany. She attended Alabama State University, Auburn University at Montgomery, Minnesota Graduate School of Theology and Bethany Seminary. She is a Certified Family Life Educator. She was appointed by former Gov. Robert Bentley to serve as an examiner on the Alabama State Board for Marriage & Family Therapists. She also is author of a book "Xandy's Choice," promoting healthy relationship choices.

Harrison Morris

Morris is president and CEO of ServisFirst Bank Dothan, which has the leading bank deposit market share for Houston County. Morris has nearly 20 years of banking experience, with more than 10 years in the Dothan community. He serves as chairman of the Wallace Community College Foundation, trustee of the Dothan-Houston County Library System, trustee of Houston Academy, board member of the Houston County Industrial Development Authority and board member of the Wiregrass United Way, where he is past chairman and past campaign chairman.

Heath Phillips

Phillips is CEO of Flowers Hospital and also has served as CEO and COO at other hospitals and rehabilitation centers in Alabama and Florida, most recently serving as CEO of Medical Center Enterprise. In his previous role as COO at Flowers Hospital in 2014 and 2015, Phillips helped establish Flowers Medical Group and supported the recruitment of more than 20 physicians to the community and medical staff. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama and a master's degree in health administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He serves on the board of the Alabama Head Injury Foundation and Wiregrass United Way and is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Mary Beth Reynolds

Reynolds is senior executive vice president at Personnel Resources, where she has spent more than 20 years helping companies devise staffing and recruiting strategies. At 19, she was the president of her hometown chamber of commerce, is the current treasurer for the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and also is a two-time nominee for Small Business Person of the Year. Reynolds is president of Dothan Rotary Club, a former board chair for the Wiregrass Area United Way, serves on the Cooperative District for ACOM and is the treasurer for Southeast Alabama Works.

Mark Saliba

Saliba is a builder with his family business, Alfred Saliba Corp. He is active in the National Association of Home Builders and in local building associations, and in 2012 was inducted into the Alabama Building Industry Hall of Fame. He is past chairman of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and chairman of Grow Dothan and Crimestoppers for Houston and Henry counties. His company has supported the Adopt-a-School program, the Bright Key Initiative and is a Dothan Technology Advisory Board member. He is chair of the United Methodist Children's Home board, is a Leadership Alabama graduate, and is the campaign chair for the 2016-17 Wiregrass United Way. He is a University of Alabama graduate and a member of First United Methodist Church in Dothan.

Phillip Santora

Santora is a professional engineer and professional land surveyor. He graduated from the University of South Alabama in 1993 with a bachelor of science in civil engineering. In 1998, Santora opened Northstar Engineering Services Inc., a civil engineering and surveying firm in Dothan, and serves as president. In 2014, he purchased AllMetal Roofing and Siding and AllMetal Building Systems and recently purchased Coastal Metal Roofing in Panama City, Florida — steel-fabrication companies providing pre-engineered buildings, metal roofs, structural steel and accessories for commercial and residential building. He is a board member of CB&T Bank and the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Alabama Society of Professional Land Surveyors and New Hinson Baptist Church. He is a former chair of the Alabama Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.

Linda Young

Young is president of Wallace Community College. A product of the community college system, she earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Troy University and her doctorate from Auburn University. Some of her major accomplishments include developing special education programs for adult women, which have been designated as exemplary models nationally. Under her leadership and in conjunction with the Wallace Community College Foundation, the first-ever major gifts campaign was held, raising more than $4.3 million for scholarships and programs. The college also has gained national recognition for instructional programs and initiatives. Active in civic and professional groups, she is on the board of Leadership Alabama.

Southeast Alabama Medical Center

Southeast Alabama Medical Center in Dothan is a nonprofit, 420-bed regional referral center. It is the county's largest employer, with about 2,800 employees.

SAMC offers a complete array of services, from its cancer center to pain management to inpatient and outpatient surgery, heart and vascular, emergency medicine, wound care, orthopedic services, rehab and women's services.

In May 2016, SAMC welcomed a new CEO of the hospital and president of the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, Richard Sutton. He also has oversight of the SAMC Foundation and Medical Center Barbour. A Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, Sutton has more than 30 years of experience leading hospitals ranked in the top 100 nationally for quality, safety and patient satisfaction. Before coming to Dothan, he was CEO for three Banner Health Northern Colorado hospitals.

Recently, SAMC upgraded its radiation equipment to the TrueBeam Radiotherapy System, recognized for its accuracy, speed and enhanced patient comfort.

SAMC physician Dr. John M. Whapham recently performed the area's first ever blood clot retrieval procedure, and the hospital recently opened a specialized Neurocritical Care Unit for brain and spine patients.

Flowers Hospital

Flowers Hospital, with 235 beds, has served the Wiregrass for more than 60 years and is a major tertiary referral facility for south Alabama, southwest Georgia and northwest Florida. There are about 1,300 employees, making it one of the largest employers in Houston County.

In March, Flowers opened a new neonatal intensive care unit, staffed by full-time neonatal physicians and a neonatal nurse practitioner.

Heath Phillips was named CEO of Flowers in May, coming to the hospital from a term as CEO of Medical Center Enterprise. The hospital has recruited and employed nearly 30 health care providers to Flowers Medical Group, which offers eight specialties, as well as nearly 15 physicians to the Wiregrass area in other specialties.

Flowers received the 2016 Platinum Performance Achievement Award from the National Cardiovascular Data Registry for the ACTION Registry-GWTG. Flowers Hospital was the only hospital in the state of Alabama to receive this award. It is given to hospitals that consistently demonstrate performance measures in heart attack treatment.

The hospital has received numerous other awards, accreditations and distinctions for patient care, including Top Performers on Key Quality Measures by The Joint Commission.

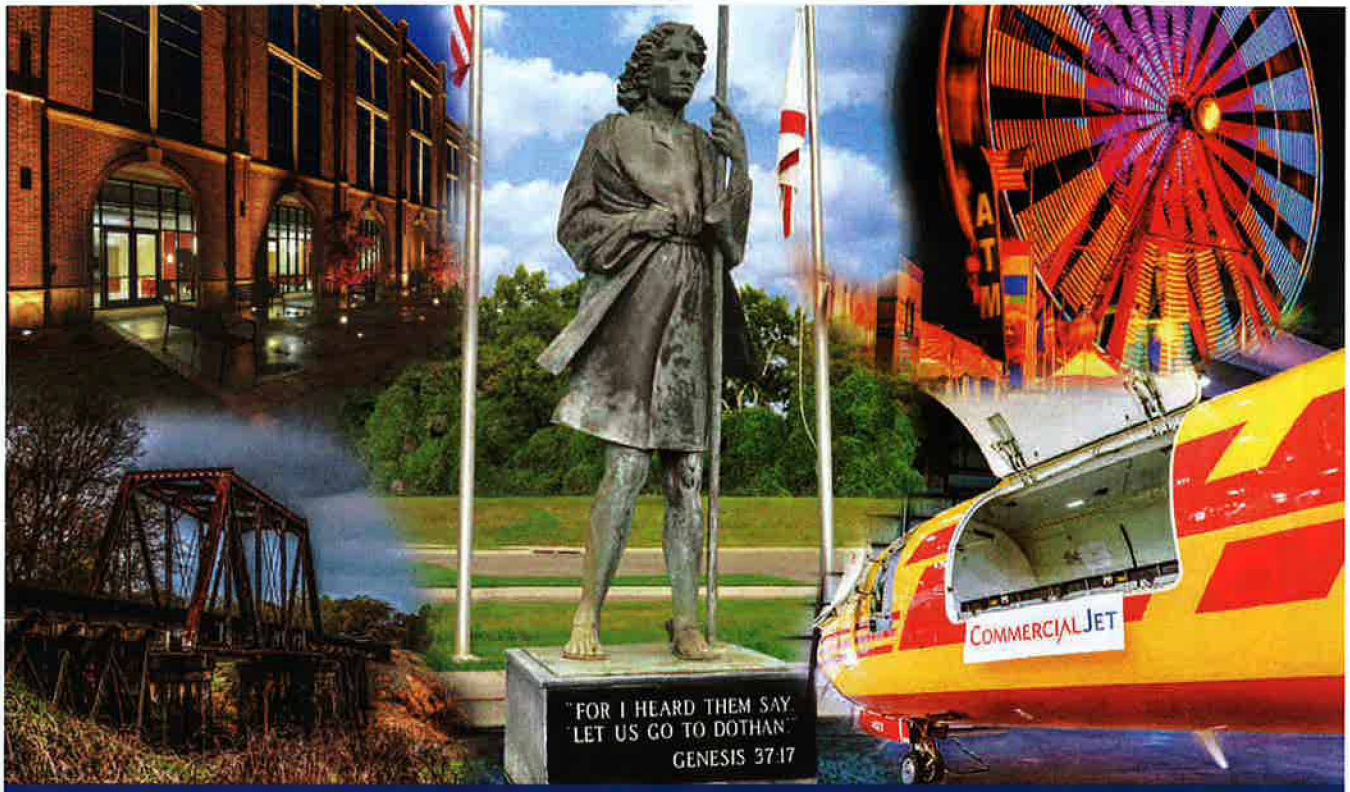
HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, Dothan

HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital in Dothan has 51 beds and offers comprehensive inpatient and outpatient rehab services. It provides a wide range of physical rehab services with a network of independent private practice doctors and HealthSouth therapists and nurses, along with innovative equipment and rehab technology.

Noland Hospital Dothan

Noland Hospital Dothan is located on the fourth floor of South Alabama Medical Center and is a long-term acute care hospital that treats medically complex patients. It is part of the Noland Health network, based in Birmingham.

Flowers Hospital has a new neonatal intensive care unit and constantly recruits new health care professionals.



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CULTURE AND RECREATION

National Peanut Festival
About half of the peanuts grown in the U.S. are grown within 100 miles of Dothan, and this festival — the nation's largest peanut festival — honors peanut growers and celebrates the harvest each November.

Dothan Area Botanical Gardens
Paved nature trails meander through gardens with fountains, butterflies, gazebos, meditations areas and more.

Dothan Opera House
Built in 1915, the Opera House represents the elegance of turn-of-the-century Southern life. Theatrical productions, ballets and symphony performances are still held in this landmark.

G.W. Carver Museum and Monument
The museum is a tribute to Carver as a catalyst for Southern farm prosperity and as a symbol of the creative link between science and art. The monument, located on the National Peanut Festival fairgrounds, is a tribute to Carver, who discovered more than 300 uses for the peanut.

Chattahoochee State Park
This park features a 20-acre lake with horse and nature trails, picnic area and both primitive and RV campsites.

Westgate Softball Complex/ Westgate Tennis Center
This five-field complex hosts softball and tennis competition at all levels. It also has a Miracle Field and playground for the disabled.

Highland Oaks Golf Course
Part of Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, Highland Oaks offers 36 holes with three championship 9-hole courses.

Landmark Park
This early 1900s farmstead is complete with farmhouse, outbuildings and farm animals. It includes a nature trail, a planetarium show and more.

Murals of the Wiregrass
This ongoing project features murals depicting the area's history painted by nationally and internationally acclaimed muralists on the walls of buildings in the downtown historic district in Dothan.

Water World
Water World has triple-flumed and great whitewater slides, a giant wave pool, video arcade, concessions and picnic/kiddie play areas.

Wiregrass Museum of Art & Conference Center
Six galleries feature changing exhibitions of visual and decorative arts in a historic building. A youth art gallery has a hands-on exhibit for children.

Peanut Monument and Visitor Information Center
An oversized gold peanut sculpture at the Visitor Information Center helps to proclaim Dothan as the "Peanut Capital of the World." While here, visitors can get a map of "Peanuts Around Town," an exhibit of 4-foot peanuts creatively designed by various artists.

Foster Fest brings folks to downtown Dothan every third Friday from May through October.

Fun Zone
Family entertainment center houses an indoor skating rink, laser tag arena, soft play gym with tunnels and slides, ball war, a rock wall, arcade and pizzeria.

Adventureland Theme Park
Miniature golf, go-cart track, bumper boats, batting cages and the Mad Max virtual roller coaster provide the fun.

Roundabout Plantation Golf
This golf course has a professional and friendly staff that is able to help improve anyone's golf game. Novices have the help of experienced teachers while golf lovers can practice drives on the driving range. The entire family is welcome to come practice for a better game or challenge themselves on the entire course.

Dothan National Hotel and Golf Club
The 18-hole championship golf course was built in 1968 to complement the Hot Mineral Pool. The architect, Robert Simmons, has built some of the most beautiful courses in the country. Each hole at Dothan National is elegantly placed into the flowing hills of lower Alabama.

Joseph Monument/ Millennium Park
A 10-foot, cast bronze sculpture in the historic downtown area is the centerpiece of Millennium Park. It depicts the Bible verse "For I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan,'" in Genesis 37:17, which inspired the city founders in 1885 to change the name of the town from Poplar Head to Dothan.

Shute Pecan Company
This shop offers a complete selection of nuts, local honey and pralines along with Old South gifts, souvenirs, Indian artifacts, woodcrafts, collectibles, antiques, dolls and more.

Todd Syrup Farm
Learn how seven generations have built a family business of making cane syrup from their sugar cane farm. Have breakfast in the café, visit the expanding museum of syrup making and watch the bottling process.

Farley Nuclear Visitors Center
Displays, programs and tours introduce visitors to this nuclear generating facility. Special programs are available for groups.

Folklore Brewing & Meadery
Dothan has its own microbrewery, sitting on the outskirts of town in an old family farm. They also have human foosball and giant Jenga. Must be 21.

World's Smallest City Block
Recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records, this land triangle features a stop sign, yield sign and street signs.

Cherry Street AME Church
This church is declared the Mother Church of the A.M.E. denomination in Alabama. It was organized in 1877 as the Colored Methodist Church.