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REY CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL ARE
ENTERING THE
WORKFORCE EARLY
(AND OFTEN).

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Spotlight

HOUSTON & HENRY COUNTIES

by LORI CHANDLER PRUITT



Dothan is creating a sports magnet in the Wiregrass. Photo courtesy of Visit Dothan/James Champion

HOUSTON AND HENRY COUNTIES are located in the southeast corner of the state, close to the Gulf Coast and parts of Georgia and Florida, in the heart of the state's Wiregrass region. Both counties are working to provide quality of life and job opportunities for residents while encouraging tourism.

"Our diverse economy has helped us weather a challenging time with COVID, and our tax collections have jumped this year even from last year's collections, even with the impact we've had on our economy," says Matt Parker, president of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce and Grow Dothan, the economic development arm of not only Houston County, but also Henry, Dale and Geneva counties.

Both counties have new community development projects coming online this year

— an entertainment center called Hangar 38 in Dothan and an interactive STEM and history museum called ATTA in Abbeville. The city of Headland, in Henry County, is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, with many events planned.

Houston's county seat is Dothan, which serves as a major hub for retail and medical services. It also is a popular location for sports tourism of all kinds, from Travel Ball USA to golf, archery, soccer, mountain biking and more. Dothan jumped much higher in the Milken Institute's report on top-performing cities in 2021, ranking 60th from a 2020 ranking of 138th.

"Our major push for sports tourism came last August when the governor allowed us to play sports again," says Aaron McCreight, president and CEO of the Dothan Area Convention & Visitors

Bureau. "We got to work and we have 65 events scheduled so far in 2021. This has allowed our hotels and restaurants to function, and we were able to ramp up."

In Houston County, major economic sectors include agriculture and wood products, health care, aviation, retail/tourism, transportation, distribution, finance/banking and higher education. Henry County shares many of these, as well. Both counties have seen significant industrial growth. In Dothan, Global Resources International plans a medical manufacturing facility with 70 workers and SmartLam North America has acquired the former IB XLam facility. In Henry County, Abbeville Fiber opened its \$43 million sawmill employing about 100 people.

"We expect more announcements this year," Parker says. In fact, Houston County

has partnered with the state, the city of Dothan and Grow Dothan on an as-yet unnamed industrial project at the Sam Houston Industrial Park, a 67-acre project.

Partnerships also are important in workforce development, as K-12 school systems work with colleges to provide students with

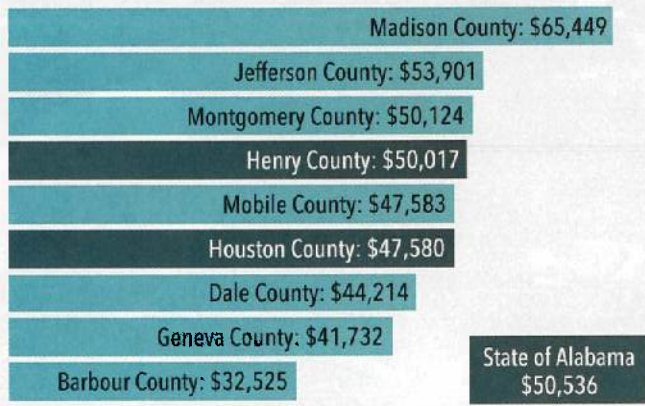
more opportunities in career technical fields and dual enrollment, and in other projects around the county, from parks to new housing developments. The chamber works with Southeast Alabama Works and other workforce development agencies.

Adding to a strong higher education

and medical sector is the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, affiliated with Southeast Health and the Houston County Health Care Authority.

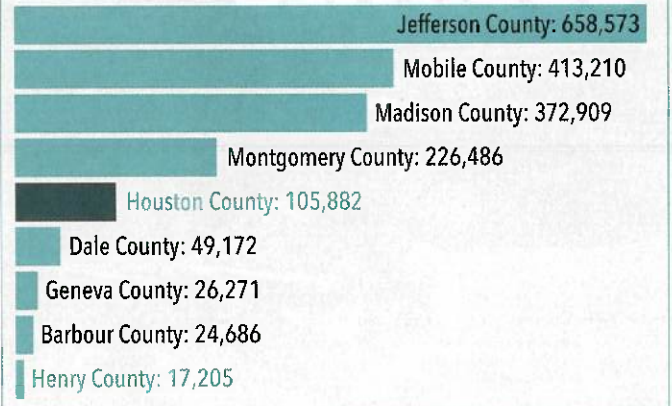
Lori Chandler Pruitt is a freelance writer for Business Alabama. She lives in Birmingham.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 figures

POPULATION Total Alabama Population: 4,903,185



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 estimates





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Economic Engines



Henry County Lake from the deck of Snoring Bear Lakeside Grill in Abbeville.

HEALTH CARE

Health care is Houston County's largest economic sector. Its hospitals and clinics form a regional health care hub, drawing patients from neighboring counties and states.

Southeast Health, with about 3,000 employees, is the largest overall employer in the county. Over the past 10 years, the health system, comprised of the Medical Center, the Medical Group, its foundation, Statera Network and the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, has experienced rapid growth.

Flowers Hospital is the third largest overall, with about 1,100 employees.

Also, Global Resources International – Advanced Product Solutions Inc. has announced plans for a \$9.5 million medical manufacturing facility in Dothan.

AGRIBUSINESS

Houston County ranks first in peanut production in the state and beyond, with

95 million pounds produced in 2019. The county's second largest commodity is cotton, with 55,000 bales, according to the USDA.

Other agricultural interests rank among the county's largest employers, including Wayne Farms, which is Houston County's largest manufacturing employer. Agribusiness company GreenPoint Ag in Dothan recently completed a new warehouse facility, while Dothan Warehouse Freezer Storage opened a refrigerated warehouse for poultry and other food products for the Southeast. The \$20 million investment created 70 jobs. And Flagstone Foods is one of the county's largest employers.

In Henry County, Golden Peanut & Tree Nut, one of the largest manufacturing employers in the county, expanded recently. And Henry County Gin recently invested \$1 million for a 45,000-square-foot warehouse. Red Star Yeast in Headland is listed among the county's largest manufacturing employers.

WOOD PRODUCTS

Great Southern Wood Preserving in Abbeville is Henry County's largest manufacturing employer. Recently, Abbeville Fiber, a sawmill, opened, a \$43 million investment that employs 100.

SmartLam North America, headquartered in Montana, recently acquired

PROPERTY TAX

NOT INCLUDING MUNICIPALITIES

HOUSTON COUNTY: 13.0 mills

HENRY COUNTY: 18.5 mills

STATE OF ALABAMA: 6.5 mills

SALES TAX

HOUSTON COUNTY: 1%

Cities within the county:

Ashford: 4%

Columbia: 3%

Cottonwood: 3%

Cowarts: 2%

Dothan: 4%

Gordon: 4%

Kinsey: 4%

Rehobeth: 3%

Webb: 3%

HENRY COUNTY: 2%

Cities within the county:

Abbeville: 3%

Haleburg: 2%

Headland: 3%

Newville: 2%

STATE OF ALABAMA: 4%

Source: Alabama Department of Revenue

BUSINESS BRIEFS

JUNE 2021: Family entertainment center Hangar 38 opens in Dothan with bowling, games, food and more.

APRIL 2021: Henry County Gin invests \$1 million for a 45,000-square-foot warehouse.

MARCH 2021: MidSouth Bank opens a new financial processing center in Dothan.

MARCH 2021: The Houston County Commission, the City of Dothan, State of Alabama, and Grow Dothan are working on a 67-acre industrial development project at the Sam Houston Industrial Park.

FEBRUARY 2021: Henry County officials appoint Rhonda Harrison as economic development director.

JANUARY 2021: Keel & Co. Distilling in Headland invests \$445,000 to expand its production of whiskey and other distilled products.

NOVEMBER 2020: ALK 2 LLC opens a boat manufacturing facility in Dothan.

DECEMBER 2020: Vintage Trailer Works expands into a new facility in Dothan.

The company builds custom teardrop trailers and retro campers.

DECEMBER 2020: Tri-State Graphics expands its Dothan operation where it offers printing, graphic design, vehicle wraps, signs and banners.

OCTOBER 2020: Global Resources International - Advanced Product Solutions

the former IB XLam facility in Dothan. The company's two facilities will provide a combined capacity of 6 million cubic feet of cross laminated timber annually.

AIRPORTS/AVIATION

Dothan is located on "South Alabama's Aviation Business Corridor," close to Fort Rucker, which has a \$1.97 billion economic impact on the Wiregrass region.

Dothan Regional Airport, one of six major commercial airports in the state, is operated by the Dothan-Houston County Airport Authority and has both commercial aviation service and aviation companies on site.

The airport industrial park is home to several aviation companies including Commercial Jet, Flight Safety International, Aero-One Aviation and Flightline of Dothan. The airport recently received a \$919,170 grant to rehabilitate a taxiway.

In Henry County, the Abbeville Municipal Airport was awarded a \$150,000 FAA grant to extend its runway and update its master plan.

RETAIL & TOURISM

A retail hub, Dothan's retail options are continuing to grow, says Dothan Mayor Mark Saliba.

Dothan is working to add attractions. Family entertainment center Hangar 38, with bowling and games, is slated to open this summer. And Water World has just finished a \$1 million update.

Visit Dothan has worked to attract sports events, bringing more than 65

scheduled events, says Aaron McCreight, president and CEO of Visit Dothan.

That means more hotel rooms booked, restaurant meals and more. The uptick of tourism has meant healthy sales tax collections, also.

DIVERSE MANUFACTURING

The area has several industrial/business parks and has attracted a diverse group of manufacturers, which has helped tremendously during COVID-19, officials say. The area also has several distribution centers.

Some of the more diverse sectors in both counties include tire manufacturing, motor freight, logistics, mechanical contractors, industrial systems, utilities, machining distillers, boat manufacturing and trailers.

FINANCE/BANKING

Dothan is a finance regional hub for the region with more than 20 local banks, many of them growing.

MidSouth Bank opened a \$5 million financial processing center in Dothan. Five Star Credit Union set up a financial processing center in the old Gander Mountain store. SB&T recently completed a merger with Bank Plus with a presence in Dothan, Enterprise and Geneva. River Financial Corp., parent company of River Bank & Trust, announced a merger with Trinity Bancorp Inc., parent company of Trinity Bank, converting Trinity offices in Dothan and Enterprise to River Bank & Trust.

Largest Industrial Employers

HOUSTON COUNTY

Wayne Farms
DOTHAN
Chicken processing • 1,000 employees

Southern Nuclear (Farley)
DOTHAN
Electricity generation • 950 employees

Michelin North America Inc.
DOTHAN
Tire production • 550 employees

AAA Cooper Transportation
DOTHAN
Distribution/logistics/transportation
375 employees

Twitchell Corp.
DOTHAN
Manufacturing/production/wholesale
350 employees

Coleman Worldwide Moving
DOTHAN
Moving/storage • 300 employees

Comfort Systems USA Southeast
DOTHAN
Mechanical contractors • 260 employees

Alabama Motor Express
ASHFORD
Motor freight • 250 employees

HENRY COUNTY

Great Southern Wood Preserving
ABBEVILLE
Treated lumber, Yellowood • 172 employees

TriDelta Systems
ABBEVILLE
Industrial systems • 100 employees

Abbeville Fiber
ABBEVILLE
Sawmill • 96 employees

Golden Peanut & Tree Nut
HEADLAND
Shelled peanuts/seed peanuts
84 employees

Red Star Yeast
HEADLAND
Baker's yeast • 47 employees

Source: Economic developers

Inc. invests \$9.5 million to open a medical manufacturing facility.

SEPTEMBER 2020: Agri-business project Agri AFC (now GreenPoint Ag) completes a new warehouse at its Dothan site.

JULY 2020: TriDelta Systems in Abbeville begins a \$2.3 million project to

add 22,000 square feet, machinery and 35 jobs.

JUNE 2020: SB&T merges with Bank Plus with a presence in Dothan, Enterprise and Geneva.

MAY 2020: Five Star Credit Union purchases the former Gander Mountain facility in Dothan for a financial processing center.

JANUARY 2020: The Wiregrass Public Safety Center opens to provide training for first responders in the surrounding area.

OCTOBER 2019: Wayne Farms, a poultry processor, adds another \$9 million of industrial investment at the Dothan processing facility.



HENRY COUNTY

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Henry County Commission
David Money, Chairman
davidmoney3737@gmail.com
(334) 585-3708



Henry County Economic
Development Authority
Rhonda Harrison, Director
rwjharrison@gmail.com
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Partners Investing in the Wiregrass

Health Care



SOUTHEAST HEALTH is a comprehensive health system and a regional referral center serving patients in three states. With 3,000 employees, it is the largest employer in Houston County.

Over the last 10 years, the health system, which includes Southeast Health Medical Center, the Medical Group, the Foundation, Statera Network and the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, has experienced rapid growth.

Recent developments include:

- Southeast Health, which owns the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, in 2020 adopted the same branding to demonstrate the relationship between the two entities.
- Southeast Health received approval from the Alabama Certificate of Need Review Board to build a new 14-bed critical care unit and add another linear accelerator in its cancer center.
- The health system built Southeast Health Medical Park on about 39 acres in east Dothan, which includes a partnership with Digestive Health Specialists of the Southeast. Digestive Health also plans two more buildings to give patients easy access to new technology and advanced health care providers.
- Southeast Health Medical Center Clinic opened the region's only internal medicine residency clinic.
- The Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine started work on a 10,000-square-foot simulation center, slated to open this fall.
- ACOM's team took first place in

the AMSACon2021 Virtual Patient Challenge, where students compete to develop diagnosis and treatment strategies during timed virtual patient encounters.

FLOWERS HOSPITAL in Dothan has 235 beds and has served the Wiregrass for more than 65 years. It is a major tertiary referral system for south Alabama, southwest Georgia and northwest Florida. It is one of the largest employers in Houston County.

In 2020, Flowers handled more than 38,200 ER visits, 243,000 outpatient visits and 14,900 surgeries. It has 370 physicians on staff.

Flowers also has several additional sites to serve patients, with six primary care clinics, two walk-in care clinics,

three specialty clinics, a breast health center, a wound care center, outpatient rehab services, a sleep-wake disorders center and a Center for Metabolic and Weight Loss Surgery.

In July 2020, Flowers named Jeff Brannon as CEO. He has more than 30 years of experience in health care administration.

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

ENCOMPASS HEALTH REHABILITATION HOSPITAL in Dothan has 51 beds and is committed to helping patients regain independence after a life-changing illness or injury.

It is a leading provider of inpatient rehab for stroke, hip fracture, amputation and other complex neurological and orthopedic conditions.

NOLAND HOSPITAL DOTHAN, located within Southeast Health, provides long-term acute care for medically complex patients. It is part of the Noland Health network, based in Birmingham.

LAUREL OAKS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER, with 46 beds, provides high quality, acute psychiatric hospitalization and longer-term intensive residential treatment for children and teens, ages 4 to 18.



Movers & Shapers



THOMAS BEDSOLE JR. is president of Jackson Thornton Asset Management, with offices in Dothan and Montgomery.

He is a licensed CPA and holds the Personal Financial Specialist designation. He is a graduate of Troy University and is a member of its Accounting Department Hall of Honor. Community work includes the Dothan Nation League for Dixie Youth Baseball, Civitan, Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Alabama Associated General Contractors.



JEFF BRANNON is CEO of Flowers Hospital. Earlier, he served as CEO of Wiregrass Medical Center and Nursing Home in

Geneva. He earned his nursing degree from Wallace Community College and his undergraduate degree from Troy University. He is a member-at-large of the Alabama Hospital Association Board of Trustees, has served on the association's executive committee and was awarded the AHA Distinguished Service Award in 2016.



ANN MARIE CARR is executive director of Southeast Alabama Works. She has created individualized programs to help

industry meet employment needs through apprenticeships, work-based learning programs and on-the-job training opportunities. A University of Alabama graduate, she has served as a Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce ambassador, has completed AIDT Leadership Skills Training Level 1 and 2, and serves as the Wiregrass Human Resource Manager Association Workforce Development Board co-chair.



JOSH CHAPMAN is a civil engineer with the city of Dothan. A Clemson University graduate, he completed Leadership Dothan

and was named to the Dothan Chamber's Top 20 Under 40. He is the vice president of the Dothan Rotary Club, chair of Wiregrass Habitat for Humanity, and on the boards of Dothan Miracle League and Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center. In 2019, Chapman received the N. Wayne Simmons Sr. Rotarian of the Year award in Rotary International District 6880.



ANITA DAWKINS-WEATHERINGTON owns real estate brokerage firm Community 1st Real Estate and Property

Management LLC in Dothan. She attended George C. Wallace Community College and Central Texas College. She is cofounder of the Neighborhood Kids Fun Day and the Student Honors Awards; was named Woman of the Year by the Dothan Association of Women Club, is a Girls Inc. board member and active with Dothan-Houston County Rotary Club and the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.



KATIE EUBANKS and her husband, Jason, own Barberitos Southwest Grill & Cantina, which honored them as

Franchisee of the Year, and Cheeburger Cheeburger in Dothan. She was also honored for community service. She is a member of the Dothan Area Young Professionals board and was named to Dothan's Top 40 Under 40 in 2019. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Troy University. She and her husband are part owners and she is CFO of Security Services LLC in Slocomb.



DWIGHT GAMBLE is chairman, president and CEO of HNB First Bank. An Auburn University graduate, he is on the board of the

Alabama Bankers Association, Wallace College Foundation, Henry County Health Care Authority, Headland Industrial Board and Headland Planning Commission. Gamble also served on the state's Small Business Commission.



CLAUDIA HALL is vice president of marketing and strategic planning for Southeast Health, the largest employer in Houston County.

Hall is a University of Alabama graduate with a master's from Mercer University. She serves on the boards of the Wiregrass Museum of Art and the Wiregrass United Way and as secretary for the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.



AMANDA HARDY, a lifelong resident of Henry County, is the career coach for Henry County Schools and Dothan City Schools and

is active with the Region 6 Workforce Council. An Auburn University graduate, she has worked in international programs in Germany and Korea. She volunteers with Under the Oaks, Main Street Alabama and Heart of Headland groups.



RHONDA HARRISON is director of the Henry County Economic Development Authority. She

earned the city's first Hero Award and a Key to the City. A member of the steering committee for the EDAA Rural Development Initiative for Southeast Alabama, she serves on the board of

Grow Southeast Alabama; Wallace College Sparks Foundation; Industrial Development Authority of Houston, Henry and Geneva Counties; Southeast Alabama Works Regional Workforce Council; and Wiregrass United Way-Henry County. She is a graduate of Troy University.



STORMY HICKS is executive director of Headland Main Street. Since becoming a Main Street City in June of 2019, 14 new businesses have opened in Headland bringing 54 jobs and investment of \$93,230 public dollars and \$280,362 private dollars. She is on the board of Kingdom College and the Headland Area Chamber of Commerce.



GEORGE "LLOYD" KEEL is president of Action Computer in Dothan and Keel and Co. Distilling in Headland and managing partner in several other Southeastern businesses. Keel attended Wallace Community College and Troy University. He is active with Heart of Headland and, since early in the pandemic, has used his distillery operation to supply hand sanitizer free to schools, daycares, churches, nursing homes and more.



KATE KILLEBREW is president and CEO of Killebrew Design, an interior and architectural design firm in Abbeville. Among her many projects is the design of an educational entertainment concept, an interactive library located in Abbeville named the ATTA Library of S.T.E.M. & History. An Auburn University graduate, Killebrew was president of the International Interior Designers Association there.



BRAD KIMBRO is COO at Wiregrass Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Hartford. At Wiregrass, he has developed a partnership with Habitat for Humanity for home weatherization, established the cooperative's charitable foundation and is working with Troy Cable to bring high-speed broadband to rural areas of the Wiregrass. He is a Troy University graduate. He and his wife also own a retail gift shop in Ashford. He is chairman-elect of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.



DAVID MONEY SR. is probate judge and Henry County Commission chairman. He is a graduate of Wallace Community College and the University of Alabama. A former Abbeville council member and mayor, he is a Leadership Alabama graduate. He has been president of Association of County Commissions of Alabama and is chair of the 2021 Statewide Legislative Committee. Money is a founding member of both the Abbeville Boys & Girls Club and the Henry County Youth Leadership Program and active in the Walk to Emmaus program.



DAVID NORWOOD is a community relations manager for Alabama Power Co. He is a Troy University graduate with a master's from the University of Southern Mississippi. He serves on the boards of Abbeville Boys and Girls Club, Headland Area Chamber of Commerce, Henry County Youth Leadership, Henry County United Way and is active with Abbeville Kiwanis Club, Agribusiness Council of Alabama and EDAA Rural Development Committee. He is a past chairman of the Region 6 Workforce Development Council.



MATT PARKER is president of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, serving as the lead economic developer for the Dothan area. He started the Dothan/Houston County Microloan program, established a Foreign Trade Zone and obtained designation for Dothan Regional Airport as an Airport Enhancement Zone. A native of Salt Lake City, Parker graduated from Auburn University, where he was All-SEC and ran a sub-four-minute mile. He is a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow.



KEVIN SAVOY is vice president of Great Southern Wood Preserving Inc. and its subsidiary Greenbush Logistics Inc., serving on the Great Southern executive committee. He is an Auburn University graduate. A graduate of Leadership Alabama, Savoy serves on the Leadership Alabama Wiregrass Area board, as well as boards for the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, Houston Academy, Alabama Wildlife Federation, Wiregrass Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the HNB First Bank advisory board. He is on the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame Selection Committee.



ADRIENNE WILKINS is executive director of the Headland Area Chamber of Commerce and economic development director for the city. Wilkins helped bring Main Street Alabama to Headland and helped create the Under the Oaks concert series. A graduate of Louisiana State University, she is the founder of Sphere Media Marketing. In January of 2021, Wilkins was awarded the first ever Heart of Headland award.

EVERY MILE MATTERS

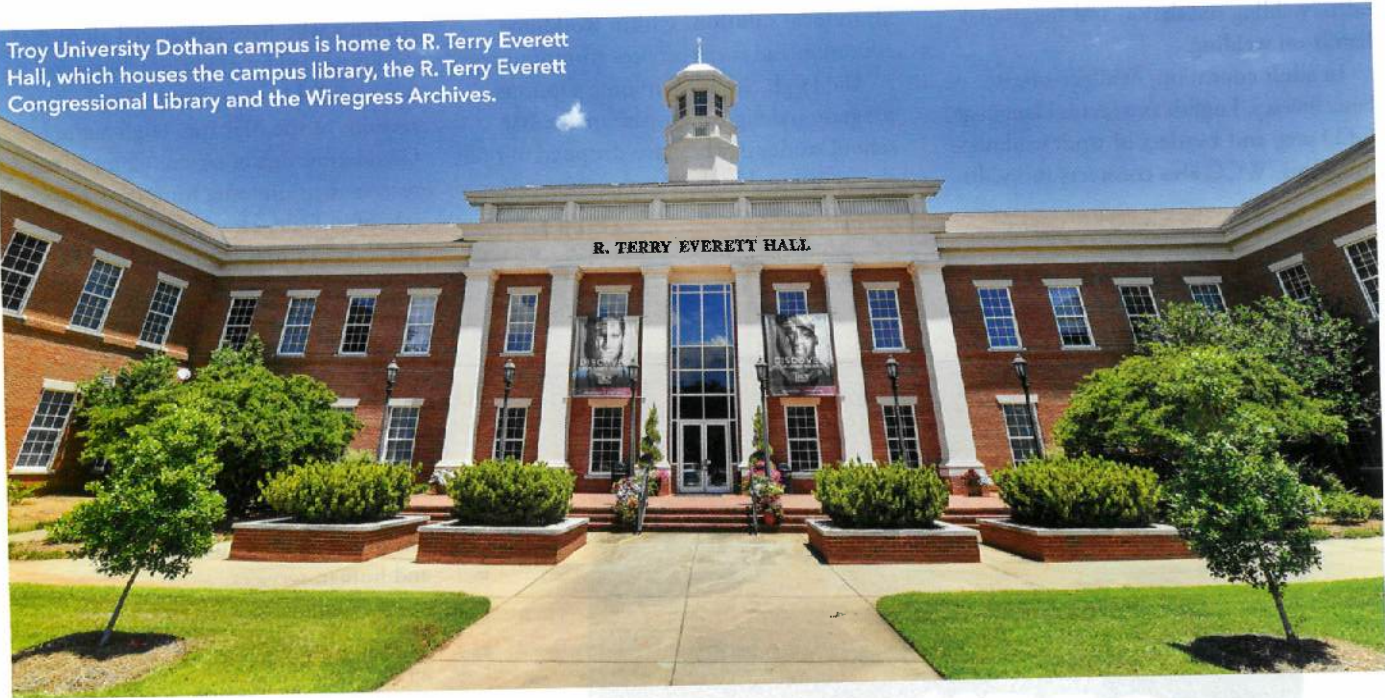
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Higher Education

Troy University Dothan campus is home to R. Terry Everett Hall, which houses the campus library, the R. Terry Everett Congressional Library and the Wiregrass Archives.



WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

operates at two regional campuses — one in the Dale County portion of Dothan and one at the Sparks Campus in Eufaula. WCC also has an Alabama Technology Network Center on the Sparks Campus.

WCC has a total of 3,686 students, nearly 40% of whom are in one of its eight health science programs. The first class in its surgical technology program graduated in May.

Wallace is in the second phase of the Rethink Adult Ed Challenge, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The project aims to expand adult education partnerships with workforce development to create skillsets for pre-

apprenticeship programs.

In recent developments, the campus has renamed the Science Building at WCC to honor the support of John and Gail Watson and their family over many years.

Both campuses have a writing center and a math lab to help students with these subjects, with trained staff and peer tutors.

Birmingham-Southern College and Wallace have signed an articulation agreement that will allow students who have earned associate degrees at Wallace to seamlessly continue their education at BSC.

Wallace offers workforce development courses on both campuses, as well as dual enrollment for high school students, GED classes and adult education. There are 440

full-time and part-time faculty and staff.

WCC has received grants to support three workforce programs.

A \$176,135 ACCS Industry Certification Initiatives grant will support the new basic maintenance technician program. Focused on entry-level and intermediate level skills needed for employment in the manufacturing sector, the program was the first pre-apprenticeship program to win approval from the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship. The program targets individuals in a Second Chance training program, as well as those who are unemployed or underemployed.

The basic MIG welding program won a \$90,837 grant. The program was developed in partnership with Dothan City Utilities, the Alfred Saliba Family Service Center and Coleman Worldwide. Program graduates will earn an American Welding Society Welder Certification and other industry credentials upon completion.

Women in Welding received \$10,000 in grant funds from Wiregrass RC&D for workshops to interest high school women in dual enrollment welding programs and to attract women affected by COVID-19 and looking for new or better jobs. The workshops will focus on



LEFT: Kingdom College in Henry County. RIGHT: Graduates of Wallace Community College's Certified Nursing Assistant program.

Higher Education

safety, welding simulation and traditional hands-on welding.

In adult education, Wallace offers basic literacy, English as a second language, GED prep and a variety of work readiness programs. WCC also connects individu-

als to local solutions within workforce, education and social services communities.

The High School Diploma Options program is designed for Alabama public school students who have dropped out of the traditional high school setting or for

students who have completed all of the credits needed for graduation but were unsuccessful in completing one or more sections of the Alabama High School Graduation Examination. Completers receive their diploma from their high school in Dale, Houston, Henry and Barbour counties school systems.

In dual enrollment, WCC has seen marked growth in both career and academic programs.

TROY UNIVERSITY DOTHAN campus has about 1,004 students. Dothan offers more than 47 graduate and undergraduate degree programs in arts and sciences, fine arts, business, education and health and human services.

The Dothan campus employs 93 full-time faculty and staff members and 54 part-time employees and adjunct faculty.

Located on 400 acres off U.S. Highway 231, the campus has three academic buildings plus 130 forested acres.

New at Troy is the Coleman Center for Early Learning and Family Enrichment that provides care and learning for children from six weeks through age 5. The center houses three state-funded First Class Pre-K classrooms.

Also, the School of Nursing now features simulators that mimic real patients, plus other new labs.

ALABAMA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE is a comprehensive, four-year osteopathic medical school. It is the academic division of the Houston County Health Care Authority. The private, non-profit school was founded to help address the primary care physician shortage in the state. It is affiliated with Southeast Health in Dothan. Its first class of students graduated in 2017.

KINGDOM COLLEGE is a new four-year institute in Henry County that offers programs in Biblical studies, clinical mental health and psychology. Recently it received a donation of renovation of a historic building in Headland to house classrooms, office and library. It has applied for accreditation.



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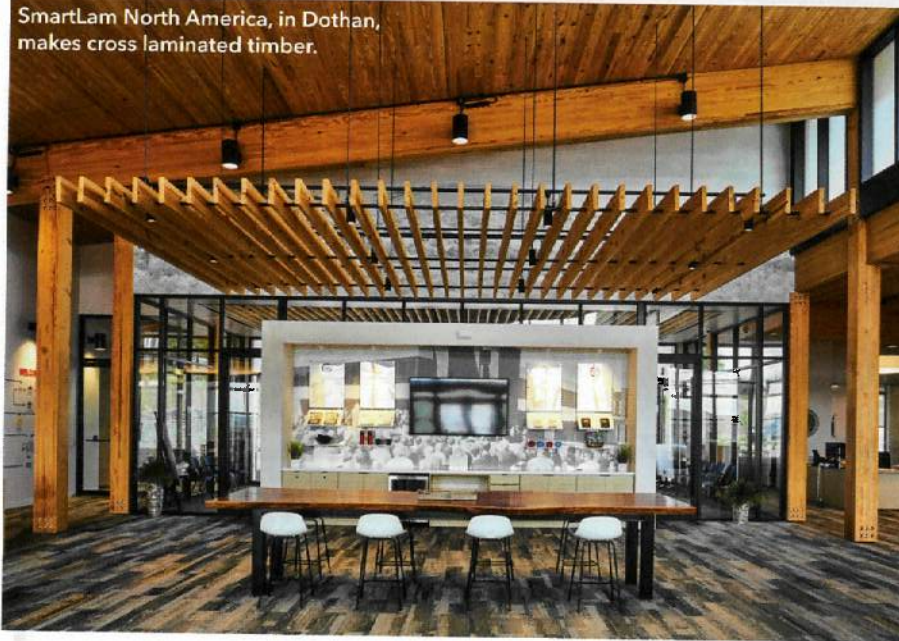
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Promoting Regionalism &
Improving the Quality of Life



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Community Development

SmartLam North America, in Dothan, makes cross laminated timber.



HOUSTON COUNTY works with the city of Dothan and other entities on all types of quality of life and community development projects. For example, in January 2020, the Wiregrass Public Safety Center held its grand opening, funded with a \$23 million grant from the Wiregrass Foundation and a partnership between the city of Dothan and Houston County, along with private businesses. It provides training for first responders from across the region.

The Wiregrass Foundation invests in area nonprofits through funding and organizational development and also invests in long-term community projects to enhance quality of life.

In February, the Houston County Commission purchased the Five Star Credit Union building next to the county administrative building. Plans are to move the sheriff's office there, after renovations. The current sheriff's office was built in the late 1930s. The credit union plans to relocate its main office to the former Gander Mountain location, but the county will partially transfer some property to the credit union for a downtown branch.

The city of Dothan, which is the county seat and a Main Street Alabama community, has ongoing projects designed to improve quality of life for residents and attract tourists. "Dream

Downtown," a public initiative to spur growth and economic development via the arts, also is being supported by the Wiregrass Foundation.

Residents have the opportunity to share their ideas with fun events, planning charrettes and more. "There are so many entities here and we want to enhance what we have here and bring even more," says Dothan Mayor Mark Saliba.

Those include:

- Dothan's network of parks, trails and sports fields is the backdrop for Visit Dothan's campaign focusing on sports tourism that has already resulted in more than 65 sports tournament bookings in 2021.
- The city is renovating the Doug Tew Recreation Center to house all of the therapeutic programs for individuals with physical/mental disabilities. It should open this summer.
- The city has renovated its popular Water World, including new slides, kiddie pool updates, a large water bucket feature and more, a \$1 million investment.
- Private investors have opened Hangar 38, a family entertainment center with an eight-lane bowling alley, 80 arcade games, restaurants, bars and more.
- The city is looking into renovating

its football stadium, a \$7 million project, Saliba says. It is a part of the city's capital improvements plans and will benefit the school systems as well.

- Road work is under way on Ross Clark Circle, Honeysuckle Road and U.S. 84W toward Flowers Hospital.
- The city has moved its farmers market and is working toward a permanent structure for it.
- Dothan Regional Airport recently received a \$919,170 grant to rehabilitate a taxiway. A recent study by the Aviation Council of Alabama lists the airport's annual economic impact as more than \$93 million.

Houston County schools and Dothan City Schools have career technical facilities for their students, with several programs to choose from. The most popular programs are in health sciences, says county schools career coach Tonya Holland, but the county school system also offers aviation, welding, EMS, medical assisting, a firefighting program with Alabama Fire College, education/training, engineering and is looking to add ROTC.

Dothan City Schools will open a virtual school for those students in grades 7-12 who have a need to school at home, officials say. The concept will allow those students who were home educating during COVID-19 to continue. In March of this year, the system appointed Dr. Dennis Coe as superintendent.

Amanda Hardy, a career coach for Dothan City Schools and Henry County Schools, says many students are interested in health sciences and agriscience. The Dothan Technology Center also offers many other programs, from automotive to construction. Coaches also encourage students to consider aviation careers. "We are in Region 6 for workforce development, and there are several aviation industries with a lot of demand," she says.

Students beginning in 8th grade also participate in World of Work, where they can see high-demand jobs and high-wage sectors in the area, she says. There are several programs that both systems participate in.

HENRY COUNTY was one of the few counties to receive reimbursement of every eligible dollar of allocated funds under the CARES program, says Probate Judge David Money, who also is Henry County Commission chairman. The funds are in a one-year CD until the window of possible chargeback has passed. The county also is eligible for \$3.34 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds, and funds also will be put into CDs until the parameters of the program are complete. The county also has contracted with the Association of County Commissions of Alabama to advise and administer its new “Investing in Alabama Counties” program.

The county’s most critical needs include the construction of a new jail, Money says. The 70-year-old jail is too small and does not meet current needs. Also, the county is looking at the purchase of a building near the courthouse to add a courtroom and other space.

“We have outgrown the current courthouse built in 1967, and the adjacent building would allow all administrative offices in one building, the courthouse would contain the entire court system,” he says.

The county plans to use Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs grant funds for a Childhood Development Program at Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Headland, along with first responder equipment purchases. Abbeville, the county seat, plans to purchase first responder equipment and renovate the gym floor at Abbeville Boys and Girls Club.

Then, officials hope to renovate the Henry County Annex building.

Henry County is considering using its Rebuild Alabama money for road improvements.

The county also is considering a partnership with citizens and groups to help prevent and clean up litter, he says.

Abbeville is anticipating the fall 2021 opening of the ATTA – Library of STEM and History. Under construction now, it will offer STEM information and exhibits for all ages.

Abbeville’s airport recently received a

\$150,000 FAA grant to extend its runway and update its master plan.

Headland is a Main Street Alabama community and is celebrating its 150th anniversary with special events July 4 and during Harvest Festival and more,

all designed to promote historic awareness and community pride.

Henry County schools, headed by Superintendent Lori Beasley, have a robust career technical program and a virtual school program.



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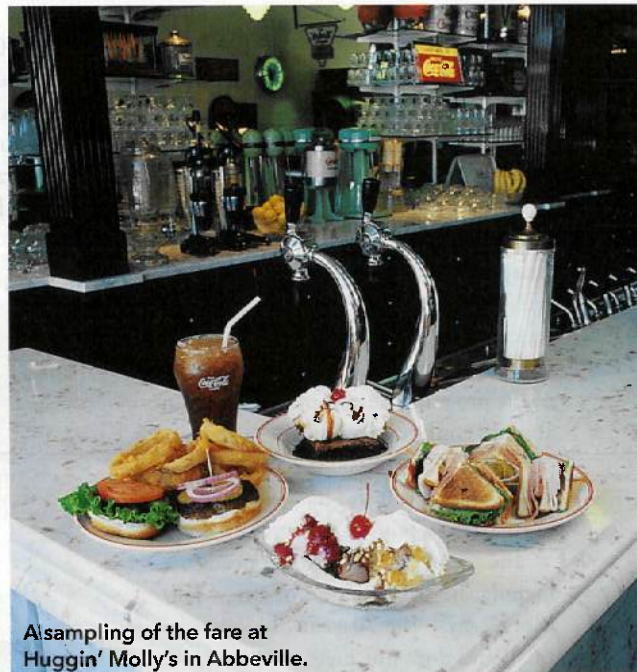
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Culture & Recreation



"Mamma Mia!" being performed at the Dothan Opera House.



Sampling of the fare at Huggin' Molly's in Abbeville.

Houston County

DOTHAN AREA BOTANICAL GARDENS

The gardens offers 50 acres of cultivated gardens, nature trails and undeveloped, wooded landscape, plus outdoor classroom and event space.

DOTHAN OPERA HOUSE • This elegant 1915 facility hosts theatrical productions, ballets and symphony performances. Look for the hidden mural on the stage fire curtain.

G.W. CARVER MUSEUM & MONUMENT

This museum is focused on educating individuals of all ages, races and creeds on the rich historical contributions of African Americans.

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA COMMUNITY

THEATRE • This theatre was formed in 1974 and offers shows and the opportunity to act or help stage them.

LANDMARK PARK • Visit an early 1900s farmstead complete with farmhouse, out-buildings and animals or check the nature trails or planetarium show.

MURALS OF THE WIREGRASS • Peanuts, Tuskegee Airmen, singer Johnny Mack Brown and historic events — all are

subjects of murals in Dothan's historic downtown.

WATER WORLD • Enjoy the triple-flumed and great whitewater slides, a giant wave pool, video arcade and more.

WIREGRASS MUSEUM OF ART • Located in Dothan's old Municipal Light and Water Plant, the Wiregrass Museum of Art collects and exhibits contemporary work by artists from Alabama and around the Southeast.

PEANUTS AROUND TOWN • Four-foot peanut sculptures, each sporting its own creative design, are scattered throughout downtown, helping to proclaim Dothan as the "Peanut Capital of the World." Find the city's Visitor Information Center at the golden peanut.

THE FUN ZONE • Family entertainment center houses an indoor skating rink, laser tag arena, soft play gym with tunnels and slides, arcade and more.

ADVENTURELAND THEME PARK

Family-oriented mini-theme park has two 18-hole miniature golf courses, figure-8 go-cart track, water-gun/bumper boats, arcade, batting cages and the Mad Max virtual roller coaster.

JOSEPH MONUMENT • A 10-foot cast bronze sculpture, the centerpiece of Millennium Park, 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 CO. • This pecan and peanut store was established in 1929 in Dothan. Three generations later, it still buys, sells and ships nuts.

TODD SYRUP FARM • Learn how seven generations have built a family business of making cane syrup from their sugar cane farm. Visit the expanding museum of syrup making and watch the bottling process.

FOLKLORE BREWING & MEADERY

Dothan has its own microbrewery, on the outskirts of town in an old family farm. Folklore also features 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

Identified as the Mother Church of the

A.M.E. denomination in Alabama, this church was organized in 1877.

ER PORTER HARDWARE MUSEUM

Before it closed in 2014, Porter Hardware was the oldest working hardware store in Alabama. Now, it has been transformed into a museum, preserving the hardware store as it was when it was in operation.

PARKS • **Westgate Park**, Dothan's largest, offers sports fields plus biking and walking trails. **Westgate Softball Complex** has five lighted fields and hosts local, regional, state and national softball tournaments. **Westgate Tennis Center** has 20 courts and is the 18-year host of the USTA Professional Tennis Pro Classic.

GOLF • **Highland Oaks**, part of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, features 36 holes, plus pro shop, dining and lounge. **Roundabout Plantation Golf** includes a driving range and staff members who can help golfers improve their game. **Dothan National Hotel and Golf Club**, an 18-hole 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.

Henry County

LAKE EUFAULA • This lake offers a wide variety of fishing and boating activities in north Henry County, including Hardridge Creek Park, Highland Park, White Oak Creek Boat Landing, Baker's Landing and White Oak Bass & Go. Snoring Bear Lakeside Grill, on White Oak Creek, features indoor and outdoor dining and live music. Abbie Creek Park is located on the Chattahoochee River.

HUGGIN' MOLLY'S • Named for one of the legendary ghosts in Abbeville, Huggin' Molly's is a classic soda fountain-style restaurant. Its chicken fingers with a "comeback" sauce is listed as one of 100 Dishes to Eat in Alabama.

THE ATTA LIBRARY OF STEM AND HISTORY • Slated to open this fall in Abbeville, The ATTA will offer interactive displays for all ages.

TODD FARMS • This working cane farm includes a café, and the family makes syrup, cane juice for beverages, jelly, pickles, barbecue sauces and salsa.

RAVENWOOD SPORTING CLAYS • More than skeet shooting or simple target practice, "golf with shotguns" is very popular here.

KEEL & CO. DISTILLERY • This distillery produces rye and bourbon whiskey along

with other products and is featured on the state's Distillery Trail.

CORNDODGERS FARM • This Headland attraction offers down-home fun on the farm in the fall, with a corn maze, pony rides, wagon rides and more.

SOUTHERN CROSS RANCH • This event venue also offers horse boarding and training and a campground.

HEADLAND COUNTRY CLUB • A semi-private golf course with pool.

ROSA PARKS CHILDHOOD HOME • Parks was born in Tuskegee but grew up in Abbeville on a 260-acre farm. It still stands today but is not available for tours.

HEADLAND DOUGHBOY STATUE • This marble statue in Headland is in the town square.

BETHUNE/KENNEDY HOUSE • This historic home in Abbeville was built around 1870 by local physician William Calvin Bethune and changed hands several times before being acquired by William and Mollie Kennedy in 1885.

"SOLDIER IN THE WINDOW" STAINED GLASS MEMORIAL • This stained-glass window in the Methodist church in Abbeville is a favorite of visitors. It depicts a soldier in his World War I uniform, a Doughboy, holding a rifle. An angel hovers over the soldier.

festivities & events:

FIREWORKS AT THE FAIRGROUNDS
July – Dothan

LOW COUNTRY BOIL
October – Dothan

FALL FARM DAY
October – Dothan

HARVEST DAY FESTIVAL
October – Headland

NATIONAL PEANUT FESTIVAL
November – Dothan



LEFT: Hangar 38 brings eight lanes of bowling and a lot more to Dothan. ABOVE: The welcome sign into Abbeville proudly proclaims it is home to Great Southern Wood Preserving.

