

**The South Alabama Regional  
Planning Commission**

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
Annual Report**



September 2019

Prepared by:  
The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission  
110 Beauregard Street  
Mobile, Alabama 36602

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## **ADJUSTMENTS**

There have been no adjustments from the 2018 CEDS Report

## **REPORT**

Southwest Alabama continues with the designation of Manufacturing Community by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The U.S. Commerce Department-led program, part of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership, is designed to accelerate the resurgence of manufacturing in communities nationwide by supporting the development of long-term economic development strategies that help communities attract and expand private investment in the manufacturing sector and increase international trade and exports.

The District continues to seek diversification of its economic base and become more competitive in the global economy. The District is stressing the development of clusters that include the technology industry, aerospace engineering and manufacturing, medical research and tourism.

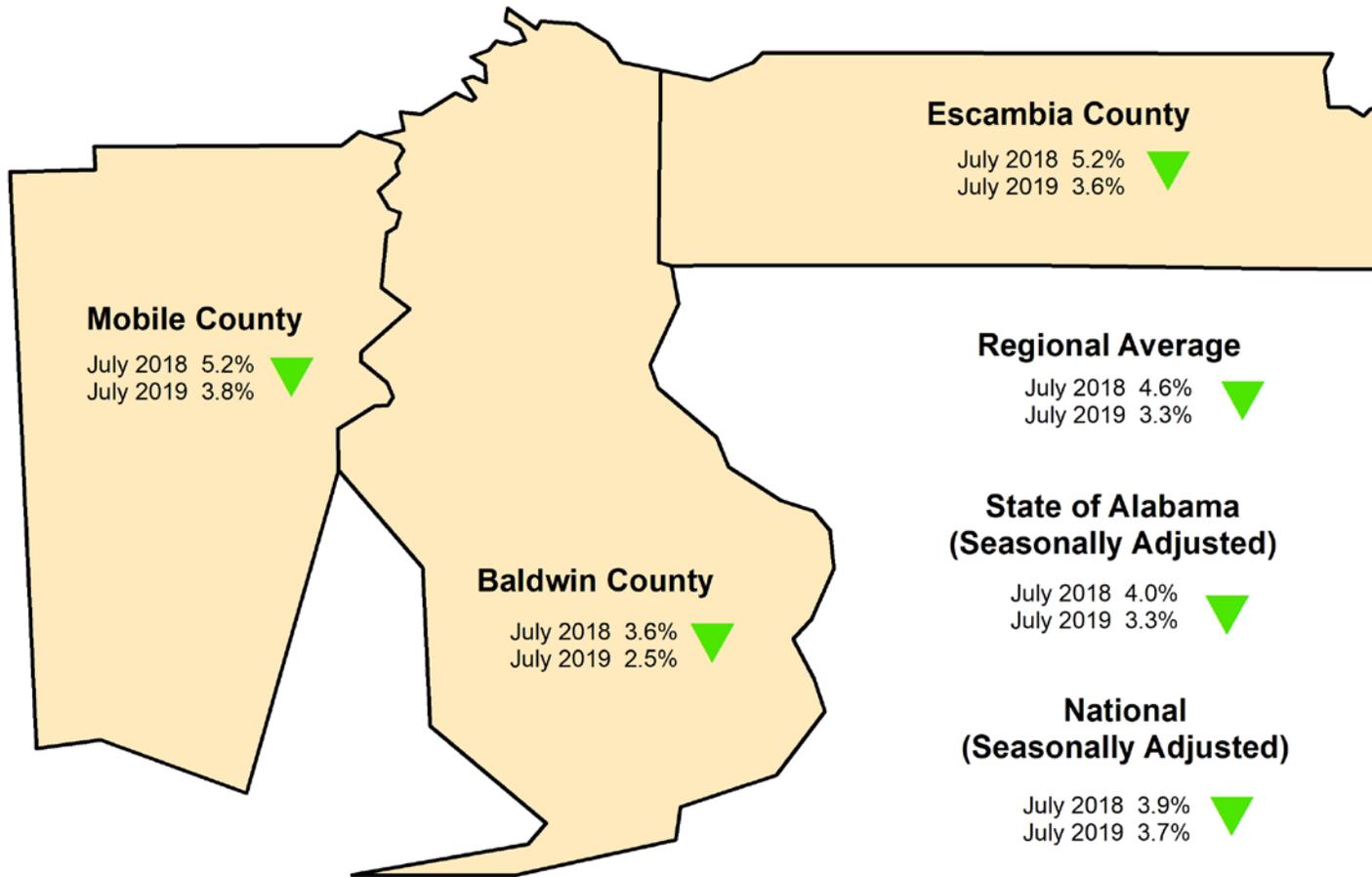
Job training and education are critical aspects of the economic development strategy; several initiatives for upgrading education and training are ongoing.

There have been significant changes to the region's economy. According to the Alabama Department of Labor, the civilian labor force for the region increased from 299,803 in July 2018 to 306,529 in July 2019. The unemployment rates for each individual county are shown on the map on the next page, as well as the average for the region, and the rates for the state and nation.

## **Vision Statement**

*"To promote long-term economic resiliency through economic growth and diversification by utilizing existing resources and workforce, and eliminating unemployment and under-employment."*

## 2018 and 2019 Unemployment Rates



Source: AL Department of Labor as of 08/21/2019  
Note: Percentages for 2018 are revised and those for 2019 are projected

**TABLE 1**  
**Baldwin County, Escambia County, and Mobile County**  
**January 2019 – July 2019 Regional New and Expanding Industries**

<b>BALDWIN COUNTY</b>				
<b>Company</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Jobs Created</b>	<b>Investment</b>	<b>Product/Service</b>
<b>New Industry</b>				
Bay Minette Box, LLC	Bay Minette	16	\$8,500,000	Corrugated Boxes
Gulf Coast Automation Solutions	Bay Minette	19	\$6,901,800	Machining
<b>Expanding Industry</b>				
Ecovery LLC	Loxley	30	\$8,275,000	Metal Processing and Recycling
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>\$23,676,800</b>	
<b>ESCAMBIA COUNTY</b>				
<b>Expanding Industry</b>				
Alto Products	Atmore	10	Unavailable	Clutch/Friction Project
Provalus	Brewton	100	Unavailable	IT and Computer Programming
Brown Precision Inc.	Atmore	10	Unavailable	CNC Manufacturing/Aerospace
Frontier Technology	Brewton	10	Unavailable	Wind Energy Components
<b>Total</b>		<b>130</b>		
<b>MOBILE COUNTY</b>				
<b>Expanding Industry</b>				
Kemira	Mobile	20	\$70,800,000	Polymers
Bay Steel Corporation	Mobile	5	\$6,290,000	Steel Service Center
Kimberly Clark	Mobile	0 (retained jobs)	\$29,270,000	Paper Manufacturing
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>\$106,360,000</b>	
<b>TOTAL FOR REGION</b>		<b>220</b>	<b>&gt; \$130,036,800</b>	

Sources: Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance, Coastal Gateway Economic Development Alliance, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee continues to be active. Topics of significance economic importance were reviewed and updated, as necessary, to illustrate the current need of our region.

Progress achieved in accomplishing scope of work goals and objectives are as follows:

### **GOAL/OBJECTIVE 1: ADVANCE THE REGION'S ECONOMY**

Create an environment that fosters economic diversification and growth in the region

- Continue to respond to questions about grant funding for economic development projects
- The Daphne Innovative and Science Center (a new technology park) was completed
- The Rivercane Industrial Park access road was completed

Strengthen and expand economic cooperation and collaboration regionally and beyond the regions borders

- 220 new jobs were created in the region by 10 new and expanding industries

### **GOAL/OBJECTIVE 2: CREATE A REGION THAT SUPPORTS EXISTING BUSINESSES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION**

Improve the availability of capital

- Continue to assist with federal and state grants and revolving loan opportunities (gap financing) to stimulate new business and existing business

### **GOAL/OBJECTIVE 3: CREATE A REGION THAT SUPPORTS EXISTING BUSINESSES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION**

Align education and training programs to ensure the region's current and future workforce can meet employer needs

- Airbus, in Mobile, received an EDA grant to purchase equipment to use at their new FlightWorks high school education facility
- Provalus, an expanding industry in Brewton provides extensive training and workforce development to its employees

**GOAL/OBJECTIVE 4: PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT, AN DREVITALIZATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Develop public-private partnerships that improve, expand and maintain adequate infrastructure that is current with the latest technological advancements and capable of meeting existing and future needs

- Continue to administer grants for Brewton Water Tank, well and service line due to demand based on new industry. (ADECA \$700,000 and DRA \$300,000 which support the EDA grant of \$2,800,000)
- Frontier Technology is an expanding industry in Brewton that is in wind components
- Ecovery, an expanding industry in Atmore in the metal processing and recycling business
- An additional bridge is planned across the intracoastal waterway to support tourism and evacuation in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores

**GOAL/OBJECTIVE 5: PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT**

Implement land use management policies and environmental policies that protect valuable natural resources but still allow and encourage economic development

- Continue to work with local governments, located in watershed areas, to increase their stormwater management regulations
- Wrote one Coastal Zone Management Planning Grant in the amount of \$60,000 for municipal comprehensive plan updates
- Continue to work on five Coastal Zone Management Planning Grant projects that were awarded in 2018 which include stormwater management
- Applied for Alabama EMA and FEMA Hazard Mitigation funding for a regional hazard mitigation plan
- Completed a dune protection ordinance for a coastal municipality in the region

Build upon the uniqueness of the region's rural resources to leverage sustainable and diverse enterprise opportunities

- Travel related earnings in Baldwin County and Mobile County were up 8.4% and 7.2% respectively between 2017 and 2018 according to the 2018 Alabama Tourism Department Report

Implement a program to clean-up and reuse contaminated sites

- Bay Minette is in year two of a three year EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment grant in the amount of \$150,00 for hazardous substances and \$150,000 for petroleum

**GOAL/OBJECTIVE 6: SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ACCOMPLISH THE REGIONS ECONOMIC GOALS**

Strengthen and expand economic cooperation and collaboration regionally and beyond the regions borders

- Planners of Lower Alabama Network is a group that meets monthly to collaborate on regional issues, most recently was transportation planning