

# NEWS FROM THE CCDA

January 2010  
www.chambersda.com

## The Year 2009 in Review: *By Valerie G. Gray*

What an amazing year! Some numbers go up, some numbers go down. For the most part Chambers County has been struggling to reduce the 5th highest unemployment rate in the State of Alabama. On the bright side, we are not number 1. In March I stood before a group and delivered our story of hope. For 2010, the word will be faith. Faith that our hard work is starting to pay off. Faith that all of our residents will have every available opportunity to apply for a job. Faith that our economy locally and nationally will turn around. And most importantly, faith that our area can once again find the comfort and harmony that once was predominant in Chambers County.

2010 promises to be exciting as our office takes on a new role of development. In September the IDA Board of Directors voted to change our name and mission statement to become the Chambers County Development Authority. With this new name, comes new responsibility. Retail recruitment/development, more commercial development, back-office development and service industries. The Board realized that what makes our cities and county viable, is the ever coveted sales tax. With our county and cities struggling due to declining expenditures by consumers, the CCDA has charged the staff with bringing in companies to "get cash registers rolling." The staff and Board have embraced this new concept. With the help of several local entities, we have entered a partnership with the Buxton group out of Texas. They have assisted us with creating 3 target trade areas in Chambers County. With these 3 areas, retailers have been matched with the particular psycho-demographic of each. 20 retailers have been contacted and appointments are being lined up as we speak.

Our 2nd focus continues to be diversification. Automotive has been a blessing to us, now it's time to write our destiny by diversifying our industrial base. We have been focused on plastics and packaging and are now working with a consulting firm to determine if any existing buildings or sites can be a fit for the food industry. Also in 2009:

- July, the CCDA announced the location of Commercial Spring & Tool, a Canadian firm, into the former Riverside Equipment Building in LaFayette. With this location the City of LaFayette will gain 70 new jobs. The recruitment process took nearly 12 months to finalize.
- 246 people went to work in the Chambers County Industrial Park.
- 146 or 59% were unemployed at the time of hire.
- 150 or 61% are Chambers County residents of which 58% were unemployed.
- Over 100 residents worked for the Michelin plant in Opelika. Now our organization has a presence on the Steering Committee of the Michelin Development Fund to assist local business start-ups.
- June 3, : the Business Council of Alabama, ADO and Governor's Office gave the Chambers County Development Authority the 2009 Economic Development Achievement Award.
- July Southern Business & Development Magazine named Chambers County as one of the Top Deals and Hot Markets of 2008.

Moving forward we will make these commitments to you, our citizens. We will continue to work hard to bring new diversified companies to Chambers County. We will continue to recruit commercial and retail opportunities for our cities and county. We will continue to work with our elected officials and leaders to develop and move this county forward!

The Board of Directors and Staff of The Chambers County Development Authority would like to thank James Williams for his 7 years of service and dedication to the organization.

Our Website is now accessed at [www.chambersda.com](http://www.chambersda.com). Please remember to change your links and bookmarks. Our email addresses are as follows:

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## Census 2010,

Please promote the efforts of  
Census 2010!

An accurate Census count  
will aid on many levels of  
funding and reporting.

## Lanett Schools Continue Capital Improvements

*By Phillip Johnson, Lanett Superintendent*



Pictured above is the new unloading area at Lanett High School

Construction and renovation projects, totaling \$1.4 million, continue in the Lanett City School District as part of a three-year capital improvement plan. According to Lanett Superintendent Phillip Johnson, upgrades have cost the Board of Education very little.

"The bulk of our projects were funded by a \$1.2 million state bond issue. This year's projects are a combination of state and federally funded grant opportunities which total around \$150,000."

Each school in the district received new construction or renovation projects including: Lanett High School new façade which features a bus loading and unloading area, gymnasium renovation including new, electronic bleachers and court refurbishment. LHS and Lanett Junior High School received a new heating and air system which is electronically climate controlled. LJHS also received gym floor refurbishment as well as a bus loading/unloading canopy.

Johnson is most pleased with the extensive restroom renovations "All restrooms in the district were renovated and include new tile, partitions and fixtures. Students were using the original restrooms constructed in 1965 at LHS/LJHS and 1980 at Lance and our maintenance department was spending more and more time on repairs. Students are so impressed with the finished product, they are taking good care of the new facilities" stated Johnson.

Other projects include: new cabinets in classroom pods at Lance Elementary School as well as new carpet in the media center and new tile in classrooms and in the cafeteria. The most obvious improvement is a new portico entrance at Lance Elementary which is nearing completion and will provide a covering for students and guests during inclement weather.

According to Johnson, other projects are on the drawing board as funding permits. "The next project will be renovation of the Lanett High School auditorium. We are seeking grant opportunities or corporate contributions to update the facility which is vital to fine arts programs and to community events. Heating and air-conditioning upgrades at Lance Elementary School will also be a priority as funding permits" continued Johnson.



Pictured above is work progressing at the Lance Elementary Entry Area.

## CCDA to Submit Site to the EDPA's Advantage Site Program

*By The Valley Time News*

LANETT — In January 2010, The Chambers County Development Authority will be submitting a 26-acre site, in the Chambers County Industrial Park, for designation into the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama's Advantage Site Program." The Advantage Site Program is a voluntary program that allows communities to demonstrate that due diligence has been done on the designated site.



Pictured above: Assistant Director Bruce Emfinger of the CCDA explains the steps in the process to several of the utility providers at a meeting in the CCDA office.

On Thursday, December 17th, Valerie Gray, executive director of the Chambers County Development Authority, discussed this possibility with representatives of local entities that have the site inside their service areas. Among these are the Chambers County Sheriff's Department, the East Alabama and Huguley water authorities, Valley EMS, Knology, Alabama Power and the Tallapoosa River Electric Cooperative (TREC). "Alabama, through the EDPA, recognizes that site location decisions require detailed information and shorter dead lines," said Gray. "Our economic development team knows that companies seeking to locate a new facility are allowing less time for site selection, site development and project construction. To meet the needs of industry, Alabama's economic development community is working to designate an inventory of industrial sites with sufficient site documentation for accurate, timely project evaluation." The requirements for the program are as follows:

## THE SITE

- Applicant or other recognized economic development entity must document ownership/control of the site
- Site must be marketable for a minimum of two years (the length of designation)

## SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- Minimum of 25 developable acres in a prepared industrial park or 50 developable acres not located in an industrial park
- Accessible, at a minimum, by a two-lane, paved public roadway
- Zoning for the site clearly permits industrial land uses or, where no zoning exists, an industrial use compatible with existing land uses in the vicinity
- Local government must support industrial use of the property

## UTILITY STATUS

- Public water and wastewater: Documentation of status (Where service is not at the site, preliminary plans, cost estimates, and timelines are required)
- Electric power: Documentation of status
- Natural gas: Where natural gas is available, documentation of status
- Telecommunications: Documentation regarding the location, extent and quality of service Due Diligence
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
- Preliminary wetlands assessment
- Preliminary geotechnical exploration
- Information concerning rare or endangered species, archeological findings or sites with historical concerns

"We are always looking for any advantage we can gain in the selection process with visiting companies," Gray added. "The submission of this site into the program will decrease the amount of time needed to begin construction for any potential company. "As with anything we do here, It's a team effort. By the time of submission and consideration, Assistant Director Bruce Emfinger will have allocated countless hours into preparing the application." "This opportunity would not be available for Chambers County without the cooperation of our service providing partners supplying detailed information of services to the site, which will help greatly reduce the time needed in site selection," said Emfinger.



Pictured above: Bruce Emfinger answers questions from service providers Tammy Clark of Knology, Chief Deputy Richard Carter of the Chambers County Sheriff's Department and Tony Segrest of The East Alabama Water District

The service providers that have helped make this submission possible are: the Chambers County Commission, the Chambers County Sheriff's Department, the Chambers County Highway Department, Farner Barley & Associates, Alabama Power Company, Harmon Engineering & Contracting, Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Knology/Interstate Valley Telephone, Huguley Water, Sewer and Fire Protection Authority, East Alabama Water, Sewer & Fire District, Tallapoosa River Electric Co - O p / P o w e r - S o u t h , Southeast Alabama Gas District, City of Valley Emergency Medical Services and Lanier Health Services. "This designation will demonstrate to the public and to consultants that the staff at the Development Authority is not 'resting on their laurels' and continuously strives to remain competitive in today's uncertain economic climate," said Gray. For more information regarding the Advantage Site Program, please visit the Economic Development Partnership's website at [www.edpa.org](http://www.edpa.org).

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