



Chambers County
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STRENGTH WOVEN IN

ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Look out 2019, here we come!

I always encourage the CCDA staff to embrace the New Year holidays. Change can be difficult for some people, but for us at the CCDA it is a time of reflection and anticipation, careful planning, a time to reminisce and a time to look forward to brighter events to come.

2018 was a great year in so many respects for Chambers County. From marketing and branding, to commercial and retail, to industrial and new jobs coming. We highly anticipate the kick off of construction of John Soules Foods in Valley during the 1st quarter of 2019. The City of Valley and our local utility allies are working diligently to make sure the infrastructure we have in place can serve the public as well as the companies we recruit to our area.

WestRock has expanded their current facility in Lanett, and the new distribution center in the Valley Park is also well under way. The City of Lanett's progress can be seen in its downtown redevelopment and the airport project, which is nearing completion.

The City of LaFayette has finished its downtown revitalization and continues to grow with the AL Solar Farm, plus Saehaesung and Kardoes/Hexpol's steady growth.

All in all, it was a good year. 2019 stands to be a phenomenal year. We have several local companies that are planning expansions in Chambers County, as well as several prospective companies we have been working with over this past year.

Economic development is cyclical. Project activity can be booming, and then all of sudden, begin to slow down. We've been fortunate at the CCDA that we had a steady year of activity while allowing us to focus on product and infrastructure. What the Cities and County are doing to bring good quality product to potential customers makes our job so much easier. We are ahead of the curve, and ahead of many areas in our state and neighboring states. I have now come to the conclusion that my mama was right; 'slow and steady wins the race, it's not a sprint but a marathon.'



– Valerie Gray | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CHAMBERS COUNTY OVERVIEW

The Chambers County Development Authority is working to build something truly exceptional. With our community's recent revitalization, we want to provide some information that shows where we are and how far we have come.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Chambers County by the numbers:



POPULATION

33,713

Population estimates



INCOME

\$36,027

Median household income (2016)

BUSINESSES

TOTAL EMPLOYER
ESTABLISHMENTS:



547

TOTAL
EMPLOYMENT:



15,097

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

HIGH SCHOOL
OR HIGHER:



87%

BACHELOR'S
OR HIGHER:



30%

Current Workforce Stats

| AREA | LABOR FORCE | EMPLOYMENT | UNEMPLOYMENT | UNEMPLOYMENT RATE |
|---------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Alabama | 2,215,839 | 2,128,082 | 87,757 | 4.0% |

Info based on April 2018 data.

CHAMBERS COUNTY

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE: 15,616

EMPLOYED: 15,097

UNEMPLOYED: 519

Unemployment Rate: **3.3%**

Source: November 2018 data

3,484

NEW JOBS

announced since 2006

1,740

NEW JOBS

announced over the last 5 years

28

INDUSTRY EXPANSIONS

over the last 5 years

87

COST OF LIVING INDEX

compared to national average

Top 5 COUNTY IN ALABAMA

for jobs created in 2017

40

PROJECTS WORKED

worked by CCDA in 2018

> 1,300

AVAILABLE ACRES

in 5 industrial parks

10 GB

HIGH SPEED BROADBAND

up and download capacity

LED THE NATION IN UNEMPLOYMENT DECLINE FROM 2009 TO 2015

72.1% REDUCTION

RETAIL DEMOGRAPHICS

Chambers County Retail Trade Area Opportunity Analysis

| INDUSTRY DESCRIPTION | POTENTIAL SALES |
|---|-----------------|
| Total Retail Sales Including Eating & Drinking places | \$354,138,741 |
| Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers | \$76,463,944 |
| Building Material & Hardware Stores | \$22,184,301 |
| Food & Beverage Stores | \$49,679,671 |
| Furniture, Home Furnishings | \$10,051,113 |
| Clothing & Clothing Accessories | \$9,696,183 |
| Electronics & Appliance Stores | \$8,442,965 |
| Food Service & Drinking Places | \$29,701,023 |
| General Merchandise Stores | \$58,620,174 |

Retail & Commercial Development in 2018

NEW RETAILER & COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS & OPENINGS:

- 4 Star Freightliner
- Jack's Family Restaurant
- Cracker Jack's Seafood Bar and Grill
- Pizza D' Action
- Old Town Cafe
- Popeye's
- Ace Hardware
- Workout Anytime
- Sassy Shelby's Boutique
- The River Market
- Wings Today
- Gracefully Southern

2018 SUCCESS STORIES

THE CHAMBERS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IS SUCCESS, WOVEN IN.

The Chambers County Development Authority works throughout the year to actively recruit industrial, commercial, and retail opportunities for Chambers County. CCDCA strives to provide the highest quality of life to our residents, add new and quality jobs, provide leadership, and encourage economic development in all of Chambers County.

In 2018, the Chambers County Development Authority continued to have a record breaking year. Some of our favorite success stories of 2018 include multi-million dollar manufacturing projects, diversification of industry across the entire Greater Valley Area, an award-winning community branding campaign, higher wages for residents, and the launch of long-term strategic education initiatives.

John Soules Announcement

In late 2017, John Soules Foods announced it would open a 266,000 square foot facility in Valley, AL. During an initial phase of expansion, the company committed to hiring 210 employees and investing \$70 million. The company also committed to hiring an additional 300 employees, while investing another \$40 million over time. John Soules is the nation's leading formulator, manufacturer and marketer of ready-to-cook and fully-cooked beef and chicken products, so its commitment to Chambers County will bring economic opportunities for years to come.



Diversification of Industry

CCDA has been a main driver in rebuilding our community's economic base after the textile mills declined. We're working to blaze a new trail for diversity and long-term stability, and have seen more than 28 industry expansions in the last five years. Here's a breakdown by-the-numbers of industrial success:

2018 | \$56,320,881 CI, 9 jobs

2017 | \$21,829,721 CI, 85 jobs

2016 | \$19,608,373 CI, 31 jobs

2015 | \$64,460,032 CI, 143 jobs

2014 | \$21,790,000 CI, 43 jobs

Other exciting developments include Norbord Alabama reopening, which created 112 new jobs, and various mill demolition and redevelopment plans (including Lanett, Fairfax, Langdale, Riverview and Carter Lanier.)



Award-Winning Community Branding

CCDA partnered with Red Sage Communications, Inc. to create an award-winning community branding campaign. After developing a new logo and the Strength Woven In tagline, CCDA worked closely with community partners to promote the adoption of the brand across 14 local organizations including cities, the chamber of commerce, and even local schools. Awards for the campaign include both ACCA Awards and IEDC Awards in 2018.



Chambers
C O U N T Y
STRENGTH WOVEN IN



City of LaFayette
STRENGTH WOVEN IN



City of Lanett
STRENGTH WOVEN IN



City of Valley
STRENGTH WOVEN IN



Chambers County Library
& COBB MEMORIAL ARCHIVES
STRENGTH WOVEN IN



Greater Valley Area
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
STRENGTH WOVEN IN



Chambers County
SCHOOL DISTRICT
STRENGTH WOVEN IN

WestRock Expansion

In 2017, CCDA announced good news for both the cities of Lanett and Valley, involving a major industry expansion and distribution center. WestRock Co. planned to expand its paper and packaging operation, in a move that would add about 50 jobs. In addition, Scannell Properties committed to developing a 375,000 square foot distribution center on 30 acres, less than two miles from WestRock's facility. The center, which would also create jobs, was planned for Valley Industrial Park to support WestRock's plant. Both projects represent continued diversification of Chambers County's industrial base and CCDA's objective of increasing wages.



Quality of Life Improvements

Chambers County once had one of Alabama's highest unemployment rates. It now has one of the lowest, along with increased diversity of employment prospects and better-paying jobs for our residents.

CCDA has also worked hard to support education, coordinating with stakeholders to develop a long-range plan, and promoting the Knauf Community Involvement Program that gives supplies to local schools. Another unique project is the LEAP program. This initiative puts dual emphasis on teacher-student development, promoting Chambers County industrial and economic opportunities, and helping students gain soft-skills needed for success.



RECRUITMENT

An integral part of CCDA's role is to actively recruit industrial, commercial and retail opportunities for Chambers County. Over the last year, we have focused on bringing the best opportunities for our county, higher wages for residents, and continuing to build on our stable economy.

Part of our recruitment process includes an annual evaluation by our staff and colleagues in economic development. With their feedback, we then develop our plan and strategy for the upcoming year.



These are steps we took in 2018 to retain and recruit new industry and competitive projects in Chambers County:



IDENTIFY AND COMMUNICATE WITH TARGET INDUSTRIES

Our targets include food and beverage, diverse demand manufacturing, warehouse and logistics companies.



ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH TARGETS

CCDA works throughout the year to establish meaningful, genuine relationships with consultants and those who come for industry visits.



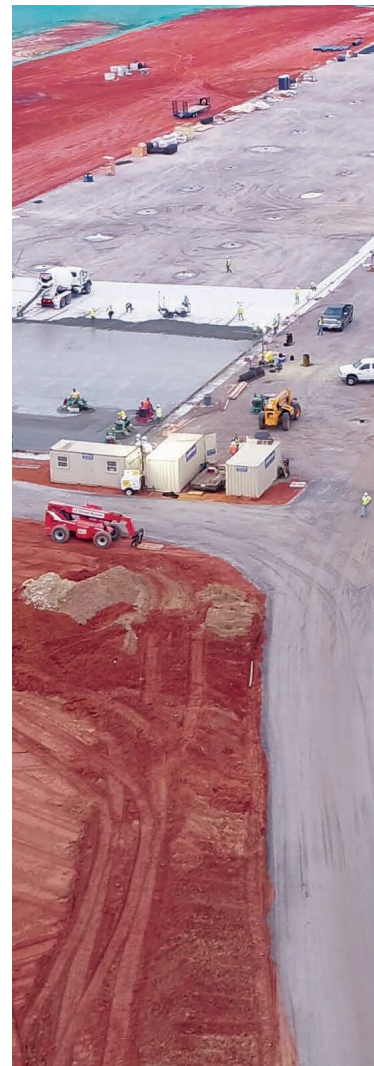
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT (BUILDING COMPETITIVENESS)

We acquire and develop land, and work with developers, land owners and building owners, to make sure our product can serve potential customers. That also includes infrastructure, utilities, transportation and workforce.



INVOLVING MULTIPLIERS

The CCDA can not do this alone. We must involve our partners and stakeholders who provide these items to our customers.



EXISTING INDUSTRY EXPANSION & RETENTION

The Chambers County Development Authority had an outstanding year when it comes to existing industry expansion and retention. CCDA puts strong emphasis on meeting and communicating with existing industry leaders regularly to forge positive relationships. Our economic development team has a high level of market intelligence to help companies stay abreast of relevant and important information.

In 2018, we secured three industry expansions totaling \$56,320,881 in capital investments and nine new jobs. CCDA also hosted 20 existing industry visits in 2018 and 22 partner visits to discuss opportunities in Chambers County.

OTHER EI INITIATIVES:

- Grassroots workforce development team assembled
- Teacher on Tour for 2019 teacher in service days planning began
- Wage and Labor Survey completed
- Industrial Directory completed
- Partnership with Point University preacademics department and assistance in student programs each semester
- Pilot Community for the Alabama Forestry Association Heavy Operator training for the forestry industry
- Master Planning for Exit 77, I-85 thoroughfares
- CCDA high school & college intern programs
- Partnership with Goodwill Career Center
- Partnership with Southern Union State Community College
- Featured in Business Alabama, AMEA, and ALPCO employee magazines





DIVERSE EXISTING INDUSTRY BASE IN THE FOLLOWING MARKETS:

- Logging, forestry & wood products
- Insulation
- Automotive manufacturing
- Metal stamping
- Printing & graphic design
- Solar power generation
- Metal fabrication
- Pipe fitting
- Drilling, pump and water filtration
- Asphalt paving
- Trucking, logistics, warehousing and distribution
- Plastic injection molding
- Electroplating & metal e-coating
- Rubber mixing
- Air filtration systems
- Ice processing
- Call center
- Paperboard manufacturing
- Corporate headquarters
- Metal plating

EDUCATION FOR EXISTING INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT:

- WIOA Grant Program Training for workforce development
- Monthly East Alabama SHRM Meetings
- OSHA Seminars
- IEDC Existing Industry Class
- ALPCO Existing Industry Forum
- Participation with the Chambers County chapter of the Alabama Forestry Association
- EAMC Lunch n Learn Programs



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To foster positive community development, the CCDA works to understand the landscape of each municipality, individually. We consider the strengths, weaknesses, assets and the needs of each community, to develop a strategic plan for each.

SEE SOME OF OUR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN 2018 HERE:



Developing **new, modern website** for Chambers County



Cities of LaFayette and Lanett **joined Main Street Alabama Network**



Relocation of Point University housing to Lanett
Point University golf course and event center in Lanett receiving **facility upgrades**



Working with Chambers County Education Foundation to **restore historic theater in downtown LaFayette** for community fine arts facility



Lanett Municipal Airport upgrade, including runway extension to 4,400 ft with plans to extend to 5,200 ft in coming years, runway realignment and new terminal proposal



Exploring county public transportation plans with Circle of Care



Far reaching branding implementation throughout the county, including total overhaul of county courthouse signage, county vehicles, City of Lanett department logos, billboard advertisements, and street banners in Valley and LaFayette



Broad reaching involvement with local school systems, including teacher support efforts, student training programs, partnership with Career Technical Center, and comprehensive facilities assessment and long range planning for possible consolidation



Assisting Circle of Care with **relocation efforts to increase facility size**, and increasing their efforts with workforce development and business incubation



Assisting Town of Waverly with funding efforts for **downtown paving efforts and rehabilitation of community center and arts center**



City of Lanett completed Phase I of **complete downtown beautification plan**, with Phase II underway



Working with property owners and potential developers to **restore dilapidated storefronts in downtown LaFayette**



Langdale Mill **redevelopment efforts**



Lanett Mill **clean up and redevelopment efforts**



Partnering with Extension Office to **capitalize on grant funds for upgrades** at the Chambers County Agricultural Park, LaFayette High School and LaFayette City Park



City of Valley **renovations and upgrades at Community Center**, including new softball fields and **expansions to the senior center**

2019 INITIATIVES & BEYOND

We are so proud of the work our team has accomplished over the last year, but we're even more excited to see what 2019 has in store. In the next year, we plan to build on our core focus areas along with adding new jobs and opportunities for Chambers County. See some of our 2019 initiatives below:



BRANDING

The CCDA will keep branding as a high priority in 2019. We will continue to implement a consistent brand across all platforms and mediums for our community organizations, schools, and government offices. With the momentum we created in 2018, receiving local and national awards for our branding efforts, we aren't stopping any time soon!



RECRUITMENT

We aim to create a business-friendly environment in Chambers County. The CCDA will promote industrial site locations in the cities of Valley, Lanett and LaFayette to our target industries. We will work to grow areas such as the property located off the CL Torbert Parkway, Valley Industrial Park and Lanett Airport and the Chambers County Industrial Park.



HIGHER WAGES

The CCDA wants to bring the best opportunities for our residents and growing community. Recruiting jobs and companies that offer higher wages and improve the quality of life in Chambers County, is a priority for 2019.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS FORMATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The CCDA will work with the Circle of Care to assist with local workforce development needs as well as business entrepreneurship. Other partnerships include, but are not limited to, Southern Union State Community College, Point University, Chambers County School Systems, Lanett City School System and other local educational institutions in the area.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

A critical factor in our mission, is our team. The CCDA is committed to maintaining an effective office. In 2019, we will work to retain staff members who are highly competent and eager to make a difference in their community. Our staff will continue best practices in economic development while being recognized in the State by their peers, Board of Directors and local community leaders.



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The Chambers County story is one we think is worth learning about. We will continue to work external partners, such as Red Sage Communications, to successfully tell our story internally and externally. Some of our future plans include explaining why Chambers County is a great place to live, in hopes of attracting new people to our area, growing our workforce, and improving our quality of life.

For most, a new year brings change, which can turn into unknown territory and difficulties for some. At CCDA, we are carefully planning and looking forward to all that 2019 has in store. We have several local companies that are planning expansions in Chambers County next year, along with several prospective companies we have been working with in 2018. The CCDA is ahead of the curve, and ready to tell more of our **Strength Woven In** story in 2019.



Chambers County
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STRENGTH WOVEN IN