

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2007 – 2012
(2009 update)

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

The West Alabama area, known as Planning and Development District II, is composed of seven counties. They are Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa. This area's primary source of employment was agriculture until around 1950. At that time, the number of farms and the acreage in farmland started to decline drastically. In 1977 there were 3,324 farms in the District comprising 918,756 acres. In 1987 this number had fallen to 2,644 farms and 398,753 acres. By 1997, the numbers have fallen to 2,505 farms and 685,173 acres. In 2007 the number of farms is up to 2,945 and farmed acres have increased to 747,815 as shown in Table 20.

The District experienced out migration of residents for several decades. During the decade of the 90's, that out migration was turned around and the District actually experienced an in migration of 3.9%. All counties in the District had positive in-migration rates except Pickens and Greene. Pickens actually experienced a slight increase in its total population while Greene continued to decline. The District's in-migration rate of 3.92% remains less than that of the State (5.15%) and the U. S. (6.12%).

The District's labor force continues to have a large percentage of workers with low educational levels. The percent of residents 25 years or older without a high school diploma in 2000 was 26.5%. This has improved from 36.5% in 1990. The percentage of residents without a high school education is two percent lower than the State's average and eleven percent lower than the national average.

Major employment groups in the District are government, manufacturing, education and health care. With the location of Mercedes in the early 1990's and the suppliers that located in the District, manufacturing employment has grown in spite of the loss of almost all garment industry jobs.

Employment in mining continues to drop as the coal, methane and oil reserves in the District are considered too expensive to extract. The deep mines in Tuscaloosa and Fayette Counties are almost the only coal being extracted. The oil and methane gas have lost their importance due to the high cost of extraction.

The District has lost almost all its garment industry. Only small concerns scattered throughout the District remain. The buildings that once housed that industry, for the most part remain empty. Concerted efforts are underway to find replacement industries for those facilities.

The automotive industry came to be an important segment of the District's employment base in the 1990's when Mercedes located in Tuscaloosa County. The company originally announced an employment base of 1,500. With the increase in popularity of its vehicle, the company has increased its employment to almost 6,000. Mercedes' suppliers that located in the District, ZF, Johnson Controls, Beeker, Inteva Products, etc. have all undergone expansion. In addition, new suppliers are also locating the District. Additional opportunities are available for Mercedes suppliers to be suppliers to the Nissan plant in Mississippi, the Honda plant in east Alabama, the Hyundai plant in central Alabama and the Toyota engine plant in north Alabama.

The District continues to have an abundance of natural resources that are attractive to several industrial groups. Coal, methane gas, oil, timber and water are available in varying quantities. Coal, gas and oil have lost employment over the past few years. The reserves in these minerals are available, however, the current prices the developers can get for their products are not encouraging any new developments. There continues to be an abundance of timber reserves, both hardwood and softwood. The rivers and creeks in the District are conducive to recreation and tourism. The Black Warrior and the Tombigbee Rivers provide water transportation for goods to be shipped into and out of the District as well as recreational activities. Other rivers and creeks provide recreational areas as well as sources of water for various water systems.

Over the past several decades several trends were established. Some of these trends have been reversed. However, the trends continue in some counties even though the District as a whole has reversed. Some of these trends are causes for the District's economic condition today. Some of the more important trends are:

1. An out-migration trend was established, but has reversed during the 90's. Greene and Pickens Counties continue to experience out-migration.
2. A large percentage of the District's residents are considered in the low-income category. One of the factors used in ARC's "Distressed County" program is income. Bibb, Fayette, Pickens and Hale were all classified as distressed in FY 2002. If Greene County were in the ARC region, it would have been classified distressed also. In 2008, only Hale County will be classified as distressed by ARC/DRA and Greene County by DRA.
3. A large percentage of the homes in the District continue to be unsound. A shortage of sound housing continues in the District, especially for the low-income residents.
4. A large number of the low skilled jobs that were filled by persons in the garment industry have disappeared and have not been replaced. Almost all garment industries in the District have closed.
5. Several municipalities need improvements/expansions to their sewer systems and several of the smaller municipalities continue to need sewer service. This lack of capacity continues to be a hindrance to industrial development.
6. Several central business districts are in a state of decay and need to be revitalized in order to be a viable element of the economy. Fayette and Greensboro have recently undertaken downtown revitalization projects.
7. The District's population continues to have a low level of education. Several of the schools in the District are on the State School Board's warning list.

All these factors hinder developers when they try to attract new industries. Some counties have improved over the past several years, however, there are several areas improvement in order for the District to make any gains toward reaching the same levels of the State and Nation.

CHAPTER TWO

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION

The forerunner of the present Commission was established in February 1966 as the Tuscaloosa Area Council of Local Governments. The original Council was composed of elected officials from Tuscaloosa County and the Cities of Northport and Tuscaloosa. By early 1969, Pickens County, its municipalities and the Town of Moundville had joined the Council.

In September 1969, the Alabama Legislature passed Act 1126, which provided for designation of state planning and development districts and authorized the governing bodies of counties and municipalities to establish regional planning and development commissions. By 1976, twelve regional commissions were operating in the State. These agencies provided professional planning and technical assistance to local decision makers. This was the first time most of these governments had had the use of these services.

After Act 1126 became effective and other counties and municipalities started joining the Council, the name was changed to West Alabama Regional Commission, Inc. to better indicate the area served. The name was changed again in April 2002 to the West Alabama Regional Commission, Inc. All seven counties and 37 municipalities are now active members of the Commission.

The basic purpose of the Commission remains that of coordinating activities and promoting cooperation among the various local governments represented on the Commission. The Commission promotes and assists in efforts to coordinate activities with local governments and their agencies such as school boards, water and sewer board/authorities, and industrial development boards/authorities.

In the beginning, the Commission was funded by local dues and planning grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Later the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provided (and still does) planning funds for the six counties in the ARC area. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided funds for water quality plans in Tuscaloosa County for a short time. The Department of Transportation (DOT) provides Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning funds for the Tuscaloosa Urban Area. The Commission is designated as the planning organization for the Tuscaloosa Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and since 2004, the Rural Planning Organization (RPO). In 2006, ALDOT expanded the RPO program statewide and all 12 Regions in the State participate. An employment program for the elderly (Senior AIDES) is provided funding by the Department of Labor through the Commission on Senior Citizens. The Department of Human Services (through the Alabama Department of Senior Services) provides funding for the various programs administered by the Commission's aging department. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has funded economic development activities in the Region for approximately 20 years. EDA, the State of Alabama and USDA Rural Development have provided other funds to capitalize the Commission's Revolving Loan Program. Member dues have been used to match all grants at the required rates.

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) program covers three of the Commission's seven counties. Greene, Hale and Pickens Counties are three of sixteen counties in Alabama included in the Delta region. The Commission has been designated a Local Development District by the

DRA. The Commission works with these three counties, all designated as distressed by ARC and DRA, to develop programs and projects for the Delta program.

The Commission has several designations received by its association with and meeting the requirements of various programs. The various designations held by the Commission are:

1. Metropolitan Planning Organization
2. Economic Development District
3. Affiliate State Data Center
4. Area Agency on Aging
5. Local Development District (ARC) and (DRA)
6. Historic West Alabama Tourism Commission
7. Rural Planning Organization

For several years the Commission prepared plans for its members and acted as their planning department. Only the City of Tuscaloosa has had a planning department throughout the Commission's existence. Now the City of Northport and Tuscaloosa County have planning departments.

As HUD's requirements for plans to be in place in order to qualify for grants were cut and plans were required to meet low and moderate income requirements, local governments lost interest in having plans prepared. Now, the Commission's services are in a number of different areas, including planning. Assistance in zoning, subdivision regulations, personnel policies, voting district plans, mapping of various services, such as water and sewer lines, police jurisdiction, etc. are provided by the Commission's staff. Currently, the most widely utilized service is the preparation of grant/loan applications.

Activities that cannot be funded under the various programs administered by the Commission, or by member dues, have been completed on a contractual basis. These activities have included such things as printing, administering grants, conducting surveys, assisting in the development of brochures and promotion materials, and the preparation of special plans.

The Commission received its first funding in 1997 for a Revolving Loan Fund. That fund, initially \$500,000.00 (\$375,000 EDA, \$121,000 State and \$4,000 WAPDC) has grown to more than \$2,500,000. Funding, other than interest paid and earned, came from a state bond issue (\$970,000) and IRP loans from USDA Rural Development (\$900,000). As of August 1, 2009 there have been 49 loans made for a total of \$4,647,976 loaned and 680 jobs created.

The Commission has been involved in economic development activities in the District by assisting the member governments and their agencies in applying for grants or loans to acquire and develop industrial parks/sites, to build or improve public infrastructure and to assist industries. Some examples of recent activities the Commission's staff have participated in are: application preparation and administration of infrastructure for the Brent State Prison and a catfish processing plant in Eutaw. Both these projects involved multiple applications for various parts of the activities. Industrial access roads in Northport, Berry and Aliceville were accomplished. Water and sewer were provided to an industry in Sulligent.

. Two recent and current examples of this are the Black Belt Action Commission (BBAC) that includes Greene, Hale and Pickens Counties for District II and the Alabama Rural Action Commission (ARAC). The BBAC includes 12 counties in the State that cover all or part of three Districts. The State is divided into eight Rural Action Commissions. Two of these

commissions take up all of three Districts. The other six follow District lines. District II is one of those six. A small amount of funds were made available for the BBAC to each of the three Districts to pay for administrative services. WARC contracted for person to work part-time to provide the administrative services. At the present time there has been no funding provided for the ARAC and no specific staff assignments. WARC staff has attended committee meetings as members of the committees.

The Commission's Board of Directors is undergoing a change to meet the new EDA requirements. The final make up of the Board was finalized at the September, 2008 meeting at which the election of county representatives was announced and private sector individuals appointed to meet the 35% requirement. All counties have at least one representative on the Board. Each county gets one representative of each 15,000 persons or portion thereof. After designation of county representatives, the Board will then appoint private sector representatives.

CHAPTER THREE

DISTRICT CEDS COMMITTEE

Committee Members

The District's committee is made up of representatives from the seven counties. The committee members represent all segments of the District's population. The membership of the District Committee is listed in Appendix A.

Purpose

The purpose of organizing the committee is to develop a plan of action to reverse the trend of low income, a high rate of unemployment, a great deal of underemployment and mass out-migration of the rural people. It is felt that by more efficient use of the District's total resources in providing employment, these trends could be reversed and make it possible for the people to continue residing in and retaining the communities as health and prosperous units of our society.

This report provides information based on the 2000 Census of Population, previous Censuses on Agriculture, Trades, etc., and other data as available to the Commission.

Functions

The functions of the District CEDS Committee include promoting, planning and executing programs and projects that will provide jobs, increase family incomes and improve social and economic conditions of the District. Specific functions include:

1. Inventorying and evaluating all resources
2. Studying and analyzing problems
3. Preparing a program for comprehensive economic development
4. Executing the program as effectively and rapidly as possible
5. Developing specific project proposals consistent with the objectives of this program
6. Submitting request for technical assistance needed in program implementation to either local, state, federal or private agencies
7. Maintaining liaison with other planning and development organizations
8. Evaluating progress of the program and making necessary adjustments
9. Preparing and submitting annual Progress Reports and Plans of Action as required by EDA.

Legal Authority

Legal authority of the District II CEDS Committee is limited to program development, coordination, promotion and supervision of the district's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The counties, municipalities and organizations cooperating in the development program will perform those legal functions necessary to carry out the programs.

Reporting & Evaluation

Reporting and evaluation will be a continuous process carried on by the committee. This group will meet formally and informally to evaluate progress, discuss new problems and developments, and make suggestions for program changes and new emphasis and to prepare and submit annual Progress Reports and Plan of Action to EDA. The committee will endeavor to keep the county committees, as well as the public, informed on progress of the economic development program.

Technical Assistance

West Alabama Regional Commission is assigned responsibilities of assisting the CEDS committees in the District carry out their development programs. USDA agencies are also assigned similar responsibilities. The Extension Service has the responsibility of providing organizational and leadership in resource development. The USDA Rural Development, Soil Conservation Service, Forestry Service, Rural Electric Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, Vocational Educational personnel and others have the responsibility of providing technical assistance in resource development.

Meetings

The District II CEDS committee will meet at least annually, normally in the first calendar quarter, to review and discuss progress made in the development of the District's total resources during the past year, and to plan projects and programs of work for the new year. The committee may subdivide into sub-committees and meet during the year on special projects. The committees will meet at other times at the call of the chairman or members as the need arises to plan, initiate and implement work on specific projects.

Representation

The committee will include at least one member from each county and will have representatives from public officials, community leaders, workforce development, education, minority groups, labor groups and private individuals. The committee will be expected to attend meetings and participate in program development.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISTRICT II AND ITS ECONOMY

A. General Description of the District

Planning and Development District II was created by an Act of the Alabama Legislature on September 13, 1969. The area drew its first settler from the Carolinas and at one time served as hunting grounds for the Creek, Choctaw and Cherokee Indians.

The counties of Hale, Lamar and Tuscaloosa are governed by a Probate Judge, who serves as the Chairman of the County Commission and County Commissioners, who are elected by the citizens of their respective county commission districts. The other four counties in West Alabama are governed by County Commissioners, elected by the citizens in their commission districts. In Greene County, the Commission elects a chairman who serves for their term of office. In Bibb, Fayette and Pickens Counties, the chairmanship rotates on a regular basis so that all commissioners will serve a term as chairman. The incorporated towns and cities in the District have their own municipal governments composed of mayors and councilmen. Consequently, residents of these towns and cities have an opportunity to receive more public services than the scattered, sparsely populated rural neighborhoods. Traditionally, the Probate Judge and the County Commissioners have been the primary spokesmen for rural residents living outside the municipalities.

The map on page 9 shows Planning and Development District II in relation to the rest of the State. The location of all counties, Interstate Highways and the other planning districts are shown also.

The map on page 13 shows several features of the District. The District's eight airports are shown. Pickens County is the only county in the District that is served by two airports. No airport in the District is served by commercial service. The Hale County Airport and Eutaw Airport in Greene County are temporarily closed until FFA regulations to extend the runway length are met. A movement headed by the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce is underway to have the Tuscaloosa Airport become a cargo terminal.

Railroads are shown by the traditional symbol. Rail closings over the past several years have greatly reduced the amount of rail service. There are only four companies serving the District at the present time. Only a small portion of Bibb and Fayette Counties are served by rail. A line dead ends at Belk in Fayette County and a line runs through the extreme northern corner of Bibb County an along the eastern boundary. Two lines serve Lamar County, one runs across the northern section of the county through Beaverton and Sulligent and the other across the southern section of the county through Kennedy and Millport. Hale County is served by one line that runs north-south through the Towns of Moundville and Akron. Greene, Pickens and Tuscaloosa Counties are all served by two lines. There are no plans at this time to abandon any more lines or to replace any of the abandoned lines.

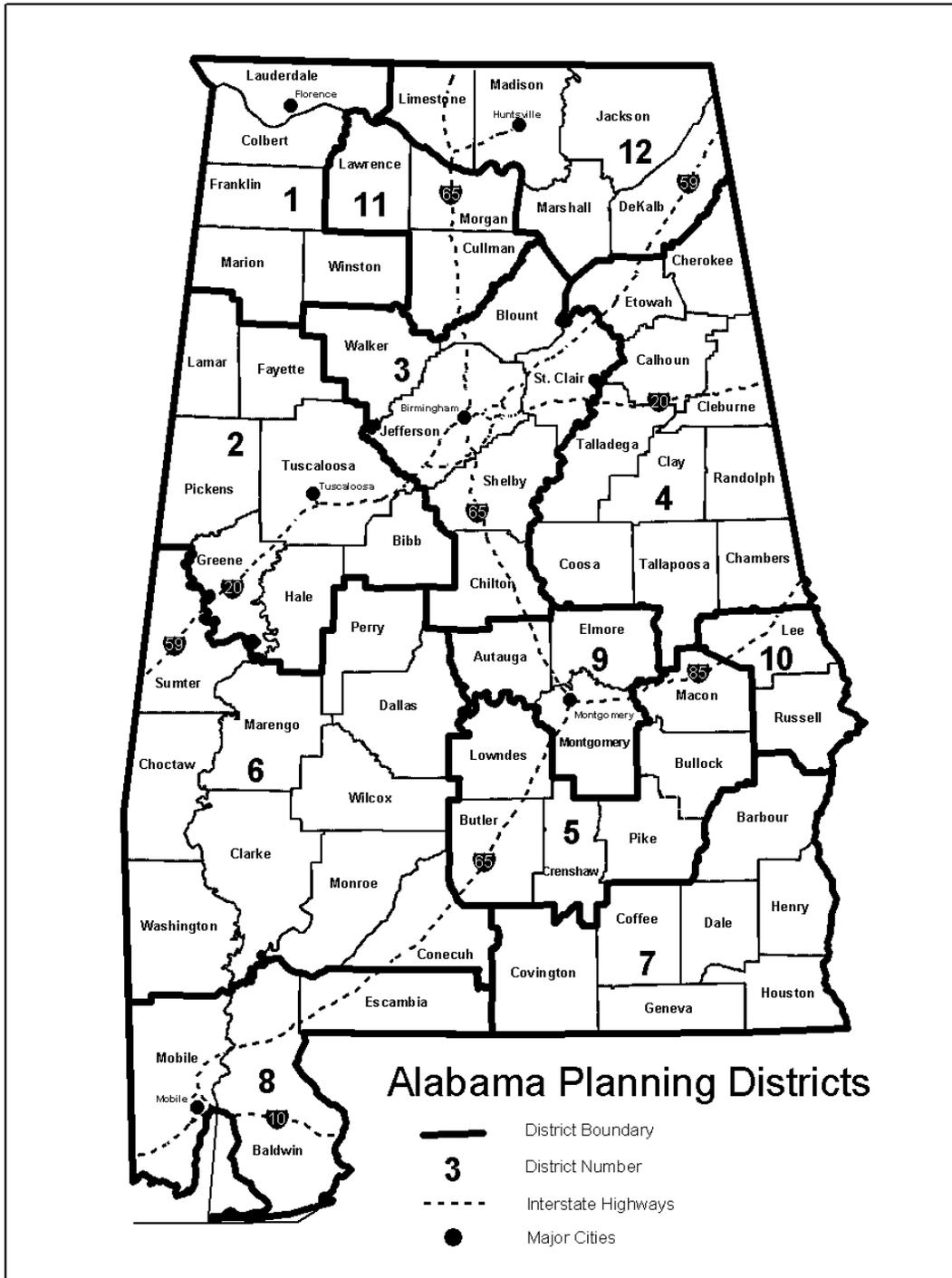


TABLE 1					
POPULATION DENSITY AND URBAN/RURAL RESIDENCY					
2008					
GOVERNMENT	TOTAL	LAND AREA	POPULATION	%	%
	POPULATION	SQ. MILES	PER SQ. MI.	URBAN	RURAL
United States	304,059,724	3,548,974	8.57	75.2	24.8
Alabama	4,661,900	51,060	91.3	55.4	44.56
Region II	279,904	5,378	52.05	47.3	52.7
Counties					
Bibb	21,629	625	34.61	18.2	81.8
Fayette	17,691	630	28.1	21.6	78.4
Greene	9,172	631	14.4	0	100
Hale	18,145	661	27.5	15.2	84.8
Lamar	14,295	605	23.63	0	100
Pickens	19,524	890	21.93	0	100
Tuscaloosa	179,448	1,336	134.32	70.7	29.3
Source: U. S. Census 2008 Estimates					

There are four inland ports on the Tombigbee Waterway, with one of them being private. All four ports are small and do not have a great deal of activity. The Bevill-Hook Port, south of Aliceville in Pickens County, is probably the most active. It serves two tenants that ship bark and chips. The port at Pickensville has a rail spur, grain elevators and a barge slip with equipment to load/off-load trucks, barges and rail cars. The Crossroads of America Industrial Park's port has utilities and access by rail and highway. The port was recently renovated by a new industry, TEPPCO that now owns and uses the facility. All facilities may be available for use in the future if the need develops.

Along the Black Warrior River, there are several facilities available for shipping. The State Docks Facility in the City of Northport, Tuscaloosa County, is the only public facility.

The District has a good network of highways, mixed with State, Federal and County routes. Interstate 20/59 serves the District crosses through Greene and Tuscaloosa Counties. Major U. S. Highways serving the District include 11, 43, 82 and 278.

The county seats of the seven counties generally serve as the center of local trade in the county with Lamar and Pickens Counties being the exceptions. In Lamar County, Sulligent has a slightly larger share of the local trade and in Pickens County, Aliceville ranks first followed by Reform and Gordo. The county seats are: Bibb County - Centreville; Fayette County - Fayette; Greene County - Eutaw; Hale County - Greensboro; Lamar County - Vernon; Pickens County - Carrollton; and, Tuscaloosa County - Tuscaloosa.

District II has an area of 5,401 square miles or 3,456,640 acres. The 2000 population of the District is 268,208 or 49.7 persons per square mile. This compares to 79.3 for the U. S. and 87.2 for Alabama. For comparisons of the counties in the District, refer to Table 1.

District II's economy has largely been dependent upon agriculture and forestry. In recent years, manufacturing plants have located in the District and provide employment for a number of residents. Beef cattle, dairy products, poultry and eggs, aquaculture and forestry are the main sources of agricultural income in the District. Catfish farming is a major source in Hale and Greene Counties and is becoming a factor in other counties within the District. Crawfish were introduced in the area in the mid 90's and are a factor in Greene and Hale Counties. Shrimp have been introduced in the area and are becoming popular.

1. Climate

The District has a humid subtropical climate. Summers are warm, to hot and humid. Winters are relatively mild and humid. Rainfall is abundant and generally well distributed throughout the year. Usually, the period from December to March received the most rainfall, and, when flooding does occur, it is normally during this season.

Autumn months are usually the driest, and combined with hunting season, are the time of most forest fires. Measurable snowfall occurs only about every two years.

Tornadoes are often a serious problem in the District. They occur most frequently during the months of February, March and April. These storms have cause loss of life and enormous damage to homes, businesses, crops and forest in the District. The tornadoes do not always come during the three-month period described above. This is portrayed most vividly by the December

16, 2000 storm that hit Tuscaloosa County killing seven persons and destroying millions of dollars in homes, businesses and timber.

The average annual temperature is about 62 degrees, ranging from a 47 degree average in January to a July average of about 81 degrees. The frost-free period or growing season averages approximately 220 days.

2. Topography

The topography of the district varies from low, flood prone areas, to areas with steep and rugged slopes. The Counties of Bibb, Fayette, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa are considered to be in the Appalachian Region and contain the highest elevations. Southern Tuscaloosa County, Pickens County, Greene County and Hale County contain the greatest amount of flood-prone areas in the District. These areas are primarily along the Black Warrior, Sipsey and Tombigbee Rivers. Elevations range from about 100 feet above sea level to 700 feet above sea level.

The flood prone areas and generalized areas that contain steep slopes are shown on the soil map. Development in the flood prone areas should be limited to that which can withstand flood damage; such as certain types of agriculture, recreation, or structures with habitable space above the 100 year flood level and water and waste disposal systems not impaired or contaminated by flooding.

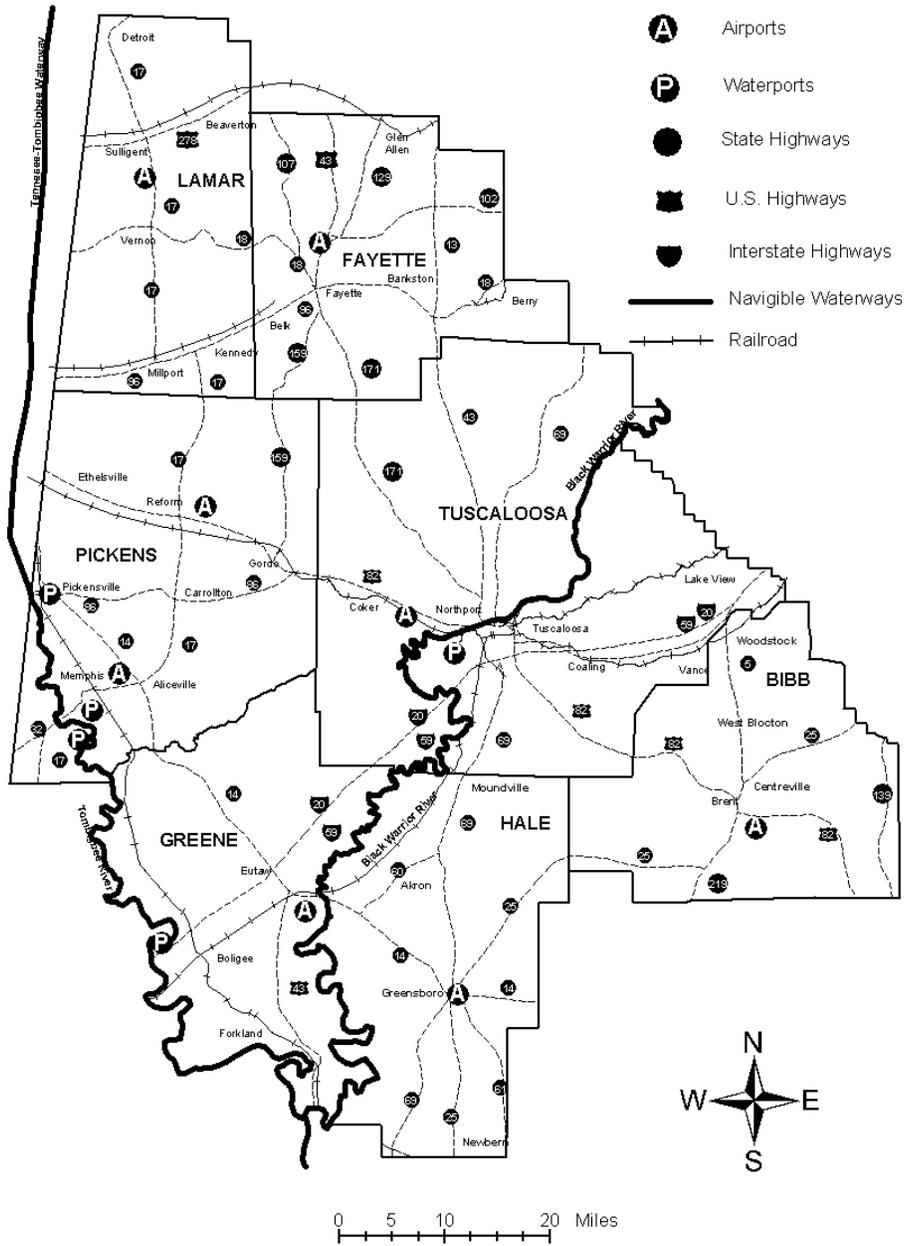
3. Geology

Geologic history of the West Alabama District indicates that six hundred million years ago, early in the Cambrian period, the District was under a broad, shallow sea bordered by a barren, mountainous land mass to the west. Sediment from the land and invertebrate life from the seas settled on the sea floor and great thicknesses of dolomite and limestone occurred. About one hundred million years later beds of iron ore were deposited. Geologic formations containing the dolomite and iron ore are located in the southeastern part of Tuscaloosa County and central Bibb County.

During the Mississippian period, the Appalachian Revolution occurred. Compressive forces pushing from the southeastern United States created a large mountain range centered in eastern Alabama. Forces within these mountains created molten rock which provided fuel for continual volcanic eruptions spewing ash and cinders into regressing seas. The mountains grew until, by Pennsylvanian time, they covered the entire eastern coast of the United States and were as majestic as the modern Alps.

As these mountains weathered sediments were carried by streams to the seas in the West Alabama District. Deposits filled the sea, then a sagging earth's crust allowed it to return, only to be filled again. The shoreline of the sea was flanked by swamps with lush vegetation and insects. Plants and animals died, their bodies submerged by the swamps and finally converted into coal. The geologic formations of the eastern part of Fayette County, Tuscaloosa County and Bibb County are from the Pennsylvanian period.

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



The seas covered the land again, regressed, and returned again during the Cretaceous and Tertiary times and finally settled into its present position in the Gulf of Mexico. The largest part of the district, which is the Coastal Plains Province, contains geologic formations of the upper Cretaceous period. (Atlas of Alabama, Neal Lineback, University of Alabama Press, 1973, pp 2-4)

Ground water, which is abundant within the West Alabama District, is primarily dependent on geologic formations. There are eight formations in the District. They are:

1. Limestones, Dolomite, Sandstone and Shale. Yields vary in these formations but are generally less than 25 gallons per minute. Large quantities are obtainable, but test drilling may be necessary. Water is generally of good quality, but is hard in limestone areas.
2. Pottsville Formation. This formation underlies the northeastern part of the District and ranges from 1,550 feet to 3,500 feet in thickness. At depths of less than 250 feet, water yields an average of about ten gallons per minute and in sections it is possible to obtain yields up to 100 gallons per minute. Generally, little if any, additional water is obtained below a depth of 250 feet. Pottsville water ranges from soft to very hard, contains dissolved solids greater than 100 mg/1, has less than 40 mg/1 of chloride, and locally has an iron content in excess of 0.3 mg/1.
3. Coker Formation. This formation is found throughout the District. The maximum thickness is approximately 1,900 feet in the southern part of the District. Generally wells 200 to 250 feet deep yield 100 gallons per minute. Ground water from the Coker formation contains less than 100 mg/1 of dissolved solids, less than 40 mg/1 of chloride and locally has an iron content in excess of 0.3 mg/1. The water is generally soft.
4. Gordo Formation. The Gordo Formation rests unconformably on the Coker Formation. The maximum thickness of the formation is about 1,800 feet, occurring in the southern part of the District. Domestic wells in the Gordo Formation yield water which has basically the same characteristics as water from the Coker Formation
5. McShan Formation. The McShan Formation which overlays the Gordo Formation has a maximum thickness of about 250 feet. The major aquifer in the McShan Formation generally produces water from wells 70 to 200 feet deep. Water from this formation, in some sections, contains high levels of iron and chloride.
6. Eutaw Formation. The maximum thickness of this formation is about 400 feet and generally yields wells at 100 gallons per minute from depths of 50 to 200 feet. Although the amount of water available from the Eutaw Formation is small compared to that from underlying formations (i.e. McShan, Gordo and Coker in descending order), the Eutaw is an important water-bearing unit because it is the shallowest source of ground water in the southern part of the District.
7. Mooreville and Demopolis Chalks. This formation overlays the Eutaw. These chalks are generally impermeable and do not usually yield water to wells. They have a significant influence on ground water conditions, because they confine water in underlying aquifers and retard downward percolation of water from overlying aquifers.

8. Alluvial and Terrace Deposits. These deposits are as much as 70 feet thick and yield water at well depths between 0 and 50 feet. Aquifers generally yield sufficient water for domestic and stock use. The water is of good chemical quality except locally where the iron content is high.

4. Soils

General soil characteristics and soil suitability for different types of development are important considerations in land use planning. The suitability of soils for certain type of agriculture is apparent, but often overlooked are soil suitability's for urban development, highways, and septic tanks. The oversight can cost governments and property owners large sums of money from cracking streets and foundations, eroding or sliding banks, overflowing septic tank drainage fields, infertile lawns, soggy, poorly drained home sites and similar problems.

The U. S. Natural Resources Conservation Service has grouped the different soils associations of the District into seven general soil groups.

1. Flood prone soils.
2. Soils on steep hillsides underlain by unconsolidated sands, silt, and clay
3. Soils on steep hillsides underlain by sandstone and shale
4. Prairie soils
5. Soils underlain by limestone
6. Rolling coastal plains uplands
7. Level and gently sloping coastal plains

The characteristics of these soils groups are shown on Table 2.

To determine whether soils in a particular location are suitable for septic tanks, the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in the local county should be contacted. This information is generalized and based on interpretations by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Characteristics such as drainage, permeability, shrink-swell potential, percolation rate, elevation, topography and load bearing were considered.

The West Alabama District Health Office requires the Natural Resources Conservation Service to test areas to be developed for residences before they will approve an area for septic tanks. There might be small areas within these general areas that would be approved. Generally, however, there are few large areas in the District that are well suited for septic tanks.

Prime agricultural areas are also usually prime areas for urban development. The Tuscaloosa Urban Area is located mostly in an area well suited for urban development. It is interesting to note that most early development in the District, both of roads and settlements, was located in areas shown on the map as fair or good for urban development.

5. Mineral Resources

Mineral reserves can be exhausted and are not renewable. The use of the land for surface extraction is not a permanent state because the land can be restored to productive use for agriculture, forests, recreation, or building sites. In some cases, reclaimed strip mine areas are more productive than they were originally because the terrain is more level.

Many of these resources are not being extracted presently, and their real potential is not known. For example, the natural gas and oil in Fayette, Lamar and Pickens Counties is being explored, but so far, not enough gas is being extracted to solve the energy problems of industries that might come into the region. Many of the wells are drilled and capped until the prices are higher, providing a better profit margin. The wells were drilled to take advantage of the tax breaks available at the time. Approximately 90% of all petroleum produced in the District comes from Lamar County.

The natural gas and oil deposits in Fayette, Lamar and Pickens Counties as well as the methane gas in Bibb, Hale and Tuscaloosa Counties are not shown on the map. During the 90's many methane wells and transmission lines were developed in Tuscaloosa County, northern Hale County and the northwestern edge of Bibb County. These wells are not capped and most are in production.

The iron ore deposits in the district are not being mined because of the economical availability of imported iron ore for Birmingham's steel mills.

The actual amount of coal in the District is not known. It is believed that the mineral covers the entire District, but is at such a great depth in some areas that it is presently not economically feasible to mine. Coal has been discovered during test oil and gas well borings in Lamar County. There are presently deep shaft coalmines in operation in Fayette and Tuscaloosa Counties. These are in addition to the areas being surface mined. The Alabama Geological Survey Office estimated that the deep mines would last until around 2015. Surface mines have decreased production drastically during the past few years. Reclamation of the spoils from the strip pits in Bibb County are being conducted by a single company with limited success. Most of the coal produced in the District is shipped out of country.

There are many sand and gravel quarries in the District. Dolomite is being mined in Bibb County. Limestone is mined in various locations for use in the production of cement.

TABLE 2
General Soil Characteristics
West Alabama

SOIL GROUP	LOCATION	TEXTURE	SLOPE	DRAINAGE
Flood prone soils	Low stream terraces and first bottoms	Medium and fine	0-22%	Well to poorly (Subject to flooding)
Soils on steep hillsides underlain by unconsolidated sand, silts and clays	Steep coastal plains uplands	coarse to fine	15-45%	Excessively to moderately well
Soils on steep hillsides underlain by sand stone and shale	Narrow ridgetops and steep hillsides	Medium to fine	15-50%	Well drained
Prairie soils	Prairie	Fine	15-30%	Well to somewhat poorly
Soils underlain by limestone	Cherry limestone ridges and valleys and coastal plains	Medium to fine	5-20%	Well drained
Rolling coastal plains uplands	Rolling coastal plains uplands	Medium to fine	6-15%	Well to moderately well
Level and gently sloping coastal plains	Gently sloping coastal plains uplands	Medium to fine	0-10%	Well to moderately well

SOURCE: SOIL CONSERVATION SER

B. Analysis of the Population and Labor Force

1. Population Characteristics

The population of West Alabama grew steadily from 1900 to 1940. However, after 1940 the rate of growth decreased until the district experienced a loss in population from 1960 to 1970. During the decade of the fifties, Tuscaloosa County was the only growth county. In the sixties, Fayette, Lamar and Tuscaloosa Counties experienced growth. The trend was reversed in the seventies and the district has experienced growth during the past three decades. During the seventies, all counties except Hale experienced growth. In the 1980's, only Bibb and Tuscaloosa Counties grew. During the 1990's, all counties experienced gains except Greene County. Greene County lost population over the past two decades.

The District's population has grown by almost four percent since the 2000 Census. All that growth took place in Bibb, Hale and Tuscaloosa Counties. The other four counties all lost population during this seven-year period. The losses ranged from a low of 847 in Fayette County to 1,457 in Lamar County. The District's staff continues to believe that the Census Bureau is under estimating the population. The District's MPO staff keeps track of new housing units in Tuscaloosa County. Since the 2000 Census, the MPO has tabulated 16,315 new units compared to 10,039 recorded by Census. Using the Census' percent of vacant units in 2007 (11.4%) will give 5,561 more occupied units. Using the number of person per occupied unit that the Census uses, that would mean an additional 13,068 persons in Tuscaloosa County in 2007.

Table 3 shows the comparison of population changes for counties in the District. The map on page 20 shows the population change by county for the years 1990, 2000 and 2008.

a. Population distribution by Age Groups

During the 50s and 60, almost all age groups below 45 years of age lost population. Those losses were large enough that the Region lost population during those years. The loss of population was turned around during the 70s and the Region has gained population in each Census from 1980-2000.

b. Natural Population Increase and Migration

The reduction of the number of people under age 45 from the 40's to the 60's was a result of people in that age group moving out of the area to find employment and the reduction in family size. During the 60's, the out-migration trend was reversed and a slight in-migration was realized. During the 70's, the in-migration rate increased to 6.7%. The rate decreased during the 80's and a decrease of 1.2% was experienced. From 1990 to 2000, the District again realized a positive in-migration rate. That rate was 3.9%. With the influx of the automotive industry, which is still in an expansion mode, the District is expected to experience continued in-migration. Tables 6 and 7 show the migration rates for each of the District's seven counties as well as the District, State and Nation.

c. Rural – Urban Distinction

The percentage of people living in the urban areas of the District has remained almost constant during the past 20 years. The percent living in the urban areas in the 1990 Census was 48. In the 2000 Census, that percentage fell

slightly to 47.3 even though the number of people increased. This decrease in percentage is a continuation of the trend started in the 80's. As the demand for more open space living increases, this trend will probably continue in the foreseeable future.

d. Vital Statistics

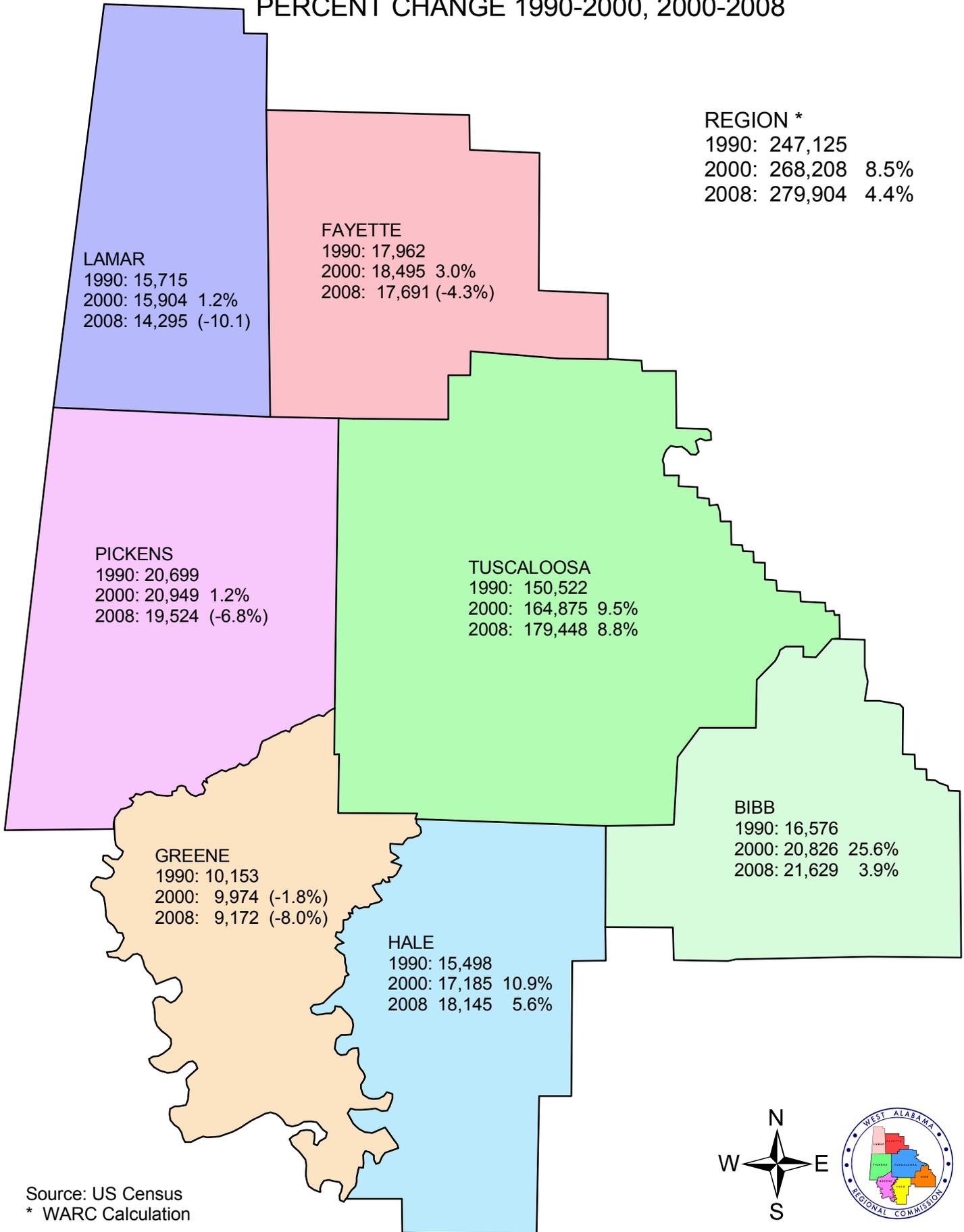
Birth and death rates shown in Table 8 are per thousands of population. The 2001 death rates ranged from a low of 9.0 in Tuscaloosa County to a high of 13.1 in Lamar County. In 2006, the rates ranged from a low of 8.8 in Tuscaloosa County to a high of 13.6 in Greene County. The only constant during the six-year period is that Tuscaloosa County maintained the lowest death rate. The highest rate changed from year to year from Lamar, Pickens and Greene Counties. Birth rates ranged from a high of 15 in Greene and Hale Counties in 2001 to a low of 9.2 in Fayette County in 2005. The highs and lows changed from year to year except for the low. Fayette County either shared or held the low rate from 2001-2005. Rates are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 3
POPULATION CHANGE

	Population		%Change*		
	1990	2000	2008 90-'00	00-'08	
Bibb	16,576	20,826	21,629	25.6	3.9
Fayette	17,962	18,495	17,691	3.0	(4.3)
Greene	10,153	9,974	9,172	(1.8)	(8.0)
Hale	15,498	17,185	18,145	10.9	5.6
Lamar	15,715	15,904	14,295	1.2	(10.1)
Pickens	20,699	20,949	19,524	1.2	(6.8)
Tuscaloosa	150,522	164,875	179,448	9.5	8.8
Region II	247,125	268,208	279,904	8.5	4.4

Source: U. S. Census - *Calculations by WARC

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION
 TOTAL POPULATION 1990, 2000, 2008
 PERCENT CHANGE 1990-2000, 2000-2008



Source: US Census
 * WARC Calculation

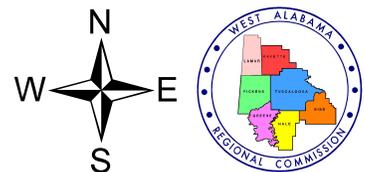


TABLE 4
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE GROUPS - PERCENT CHANGE 1970 - 2000 - REGION II

	POPULATION				PERCENT CHANGE	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970-80	1980-90
ALL AGES	207,292	236,632	247,125	268,208	14.2	4.4
0 - 4 YRS	19,133	17,845	16,399	17,679	-6.7	-8.1
5 - 9 YRS	21,376	18,876	17,384	18,370	-11.7	-7.9
10 - 14 YRS	22,380	19,289	18,339	18,395	-13.8	-4.9
15 - 19 YRS	18,827	24,861	22,371	22,387	32.0	-10.0
20 - 24 YRS	11,946	25,876	24,214	25,257	116.6	-6.4
25-34 YRS	21,305	34,798	37,322	36,109	63.3	7.3
35 - 44 YRS	22,517	24,062	33,909	38,396	6.9	40.9
45 - 54 YRS	20,906	23,140	23,627	34,976	10.7	2.1
55 - 59 YRS	9,767	10,458	10,657	12,442	7.1	1.9
60 - 64 YRS	8,229	9,588	10,868	10,636	16.5	13.4
65 - 74 YRS	12,337	17,189	17,655	18,399	39.3	2.7
75 - 84 YRS	1,810	8,246	11,016	10,956	355.6	33.6
85 + YRS		2,404	3,364	4,206	0.0	39.9

SOURCE: U. S. CENSUS

TABLE 5
MINORITY POPULATION 1990 - 2000

LOCATION	1990		2000	
	TOTAL	MINORITY PERCENT	TOTAL	MINORITY PERCENT
U.S. (000)	246,191	39,208 15.93%	281,421	69,961 24.86%
State	4,040,587	1,064,790 26.35%	4,447,100	1,284,292 28.88%
Region II	247,125	74,930 30.32%	268,208	89,563 33.39%
Counties:				
Bibb	16,576	3,524 21.26%	20,826	4,860 23.34%
Fayette	17,962	2,245 12.50%	18,495	2,420 13.08%
Greene	10,153	8,187 80.64%	9,974	8,070 80.91%
Hale	15,498	9,243 59.64%	17,185	10,341 60.17%
Lamar	15,715	1,910 12.15%	15,904	2,088 13.13%
Pickens	20,699	8,697 42.02%	20,949	9,229 44.05%
Tuscaloosa	150,552	41,124 27.32%	164,875	52,555 31.88%

The map on the following page shows the minority population of the Region's counties and the percentage change from 1990 to 2000

SOURCE: U. S. CENSUS

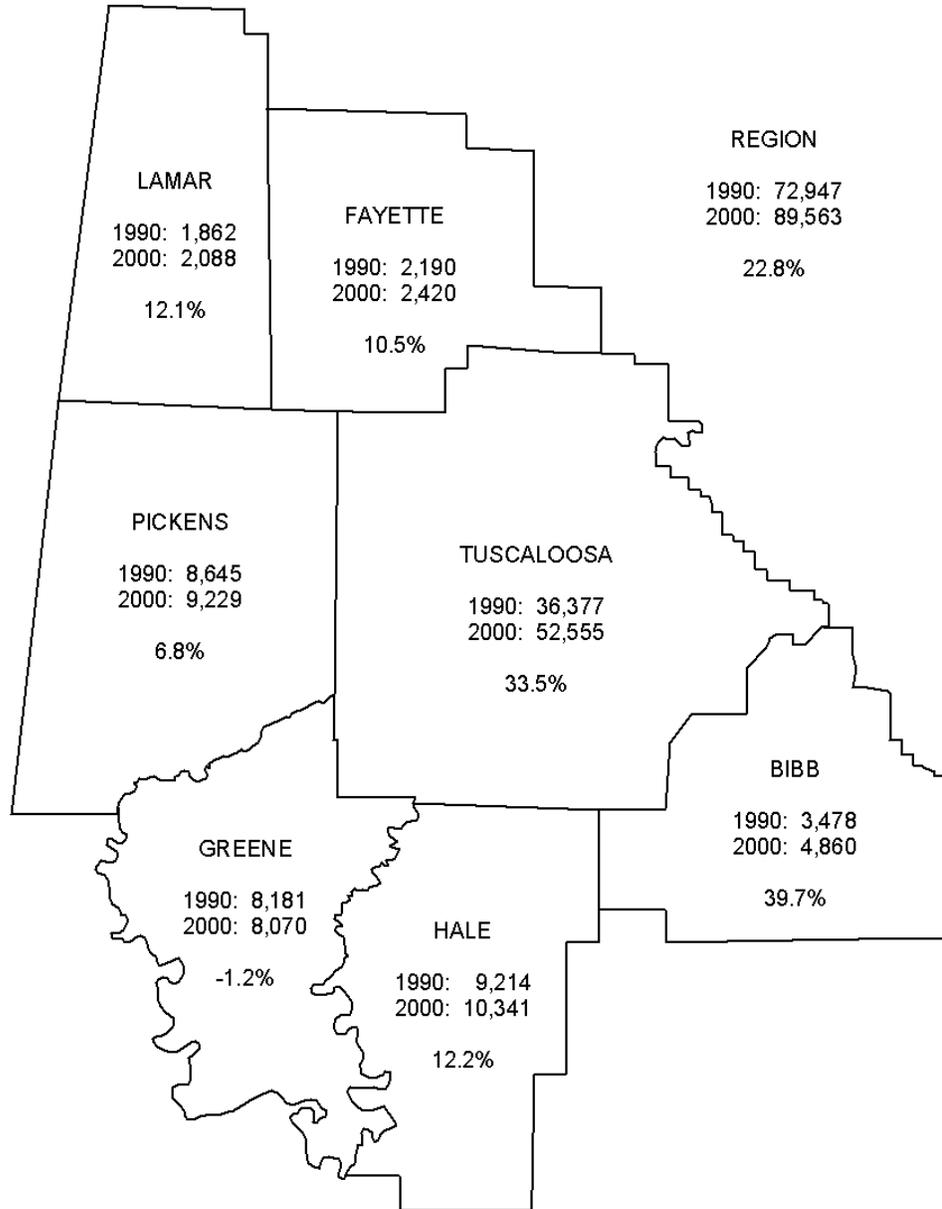
TABLE 6
COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE - NATURAL INCREASE AND MIGRATION, 1980 - 1990

LOCATION	TOTAL POPULATION		TOTAL CHANGE		NATURAL INCREASE		MIGRATION	
	1980	1990	AMOUNT	PERCENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT
U.S. (000)	226,546	249,023	22,477	9.92%	16,875	7.45%	5,602	2.47%
Alabama	3,893,888	4,040,587	146,699	3.77%	215,303	5.53%	-68,604	-1.76%
Region	236,632	247,125	10,493	4.43%	13,239	5.59%	-2,746	-1.16%
Counties:								
Bibb	15,723	16,576	853	5.43%	775	4.93%	78	0.50%
Fayette	18,809	17,962	-847	-4.50%	481	2.56%	-1,328	-7.06%
Greene	11,021	10,152	-869	-7.88%	724	6.57%	-1,593	-14.45%
Hale	15,604	15,498	-106	-0.68%	942	6.04%	-1,048	-6.72%
Lamar	16,453	15,715	-738	-4.49%	375	2.28%	-1,113	-6.76%
Pickens	21,481	20,699	-782	-3.64%	1,101	5.13%	-1,883	-8.77%
Tuscaloosa	137,541	150,522	12,981	9.44%	8,841	6.43%	4,140	3.01%

TABLE 7
COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE - NATURAL INCREASE AND MIGRATION, 1990 - 2000

LOCATION	TOTAL POPULATION		TOTAL CHANGE		NATURAL INCREASE		MIGRATION		
	1990	2000	AMOUNT	PERCENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT	
U.S. (000)	249,023	281,421	32,398	13.01%	17,148	6.89%	15,250	6.12%	
Alabama	4,040,587	4,447,100	406,513	10.06%	198,193	4.91%	208,320	5.16%	
Region	247,125	268,208	21,083	8.53%	11,398	4.61%	9,685	3.92%	
Counties:									
Bibb	16,576	20,826	4,250	25.64%	832	5.02%	3,418	20.62%	
Fayette	17,962	18,495	533	2.97%	8	0.04%	525	2.92%	
Greene	10,152	9,974	-178	-1.75%	495	4.88%	-673	-6.63%	
Hale	15,498	17,185	1,687	10.89%	690	4.45%	997	6.43%	
Lamar	15,715	15,904	189	1.20%	19	0.12%	170	1.08%	
Pickens	20,699	20,949	250	1.21%	569	2.75%	-319	-1.54%	
Tuscaloosa	150,522	164,875	14,353	9.54%	8,785	5.84%	5,568	3.70%	

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION
 MINORITY POPULATION & PERCENT CHANGE
 1990 AND 2000



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TABLE 8

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES BY COUNTY

	Births							Deaths					
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Bibb	13.5	12.8	12.2	11.8	12.8	12.0	10.0	10.0	10.8	10.3	10.9	10.5	
Fayette	10.8	10.5	11.0	9.8	9.2	10.2	11.7	12.0	11.5	14.3	11.1	13.6	
Greene	15.0	14.8	12.5	13.9	11.2	14.8	10.3	12.5	12.3	12.0	10.4	12.1	
Hale	15.0	12.9	11.5	11.8	11.7	10.1	12.0	10.3	11.4	11.5	10.3	7.5	
Lamar	10.8	10.8	11.0	10.8	11.8	12.2	13.1	13.2	12.0	12.2	11.9	11.9	
Pickens	14.8	12.0	12.3	12.8	10.6	11.9	11.9	13.4	12.9	12.1	12.7	13.3	
Tuscaloosa	13.4	12.8	13.3	12.9	13.4	13.7	9.0	9.0	9.2	8.9	8.8	8.8	

Source: Alabama Department of Public Health

d. Population Projections

Population changes occur because of births, deaths and migration. Based on a stable birth rate, the expected increase in the life span and the continued industrial growth due to the expanding automobile industry, the District is expected to continue to grow in population. The Center for Business and Economic Development at the University of Alabama has projected the population for all the counties of the District to the year 2025. This is a conservative rate of only 0.6% per year.

The projected population by age groups and race can be found on Table 9. This table shows each county and a composite of the District.

e. Education of Population

The educational attainment level of the population is important from an economic as well as a social aspect, in that the educational level of the people is directly related to skills, productivity and flexibility of the labor force. All these variables are important in attracting new and expanding industry and business to the District.

The District's educational attainment level is higher than all counties in the District with the exception of Tuscaloosa County. Tuscaloosa County's population has reached a high school educational level of 78.8% compared to the next higher county in the District, Pickens, which has a rate of 69.7%. The District's rate of 73.5% rates 1.8% lower than the State's rate of 75.3%. The District has closed the gap between the State's rate by 1.6% during the past decade. Both the District and the State still lag the National rate of 84.1%.

Table 10 shows the rates for high school and bachelor degree by county, District, State and National. The map on page 32 shows the location of institutions of higher learning.

f. Income Levels of Population

Median family income of the District's counties rose at varying rates during the 90's. With the exception of Fayette and Lamar Counties, all counties rose at a higher rate than the Nation and State. All counties still remain below the National median family income and all except Tuscaloosa County are below the State. Fayette and Lamar Counties have been hit especially hard with losses of industrial jobs, mainly in the garment industry. It is expected that these two counties will have a long, slow struggle to reach the levels of the other counties in the District.

Per capita income in the District's counties rose during the 90's. Greene, Hale and Tuscaloosa grew at a faster rate than the Nation and State. Bibb grew at a faster rate than the Nation but just under the State rate. Even with the faster growth rate, all counties' per capita income remains lower than that of the Nation. Tuscaloosa County is the only county with a per capita higher than that of the State. Fayette and Lamar Counties lag in per capita growth and will

probably continue to do so for several years unless several large employers are recruited into the area.

There are approximately 6,700 families in the District with incomes below \$10,000. While this is down from 10,600 in 1990, that number is still too high. The District has over 185 of its residents below the poverty rate. This is only a decrease of 2.1% from 1990. Table 11 shows the distribution of income by county in the District as well at the State and Nation. This table clearly shows that the counties in the District, except for Tuscaloosa are not sharing equally in the economy. The map on page 34 shows the median family income for 1990 and 2000.

TABLE 9									
PROJECTED COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION, 2025									
	Bibb County			Fayette County			Greene County		
Age	Total	White	Nonwhite	Total	White	Nonwhite	Total	White	Nonwhite
0-4	1,866	1,449	417	1,010	440	179	604	88	516
5-19	5,774	4,395	1,379	3,278	1,438	550	1,851	256	1,595
15-44	11,285	8,165	3,120	6,507	2,888	1,030	2,986	544	2,442
20-64	17,725	12,556	5,169	10,051	4,385	1,522	4,623	908	3,715
55+	9,619	7,238	2,381	6,955	2,752	925	3,526	777	2,749
60+	7,475	5,691	1,784	5,759	2,239	736	2,943	653	2,290
65+	4,887	4,202	1,182	4,413	1,667	529	2,233	518	1,715
85+	497	417	80	541	143	52	238	63	175
Total*	30,749	22,602	8,147	18,752	15,972	2,780	9,311	1,770	7,541

TABLE 9 (continued)

PROJECTED COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION, 2025									
	Hale County			Lamar County			Pickens County		
Age	Total	White	Nonwhite	Total	White	Nonwhite	Total	White	Nonwhite
0-4	1,504	421	1,083	930	736	194	1,451	608	843
5-19	4,579	1,382	3,197	2,942	2,373	569	4,437	1,915	2,522
15-44	1,600	1,616	4,984	5,818	4,803	1,015	7,735	3,755	3,980
20-64	11,265	4,278	6,987	8,865	7,393	1,472	11,480	5,936	5,544
55+	6,676	3,041	3,635	5,510	4,775	735	7,286	4,216	3,070
60+	5,355	2,470	2,885	4,467	3,913	554	5,878	3,417	2,461
65+	3,867	1,828	2,039	3,438	3,055	383	4,372	2,605	1,767
85+	388	211	177	463	424	39	520	324	196
Total*	21,215	7,909	13,306	16,175	13,557	2,618	21,740	11,064	10,676

TABLE 9 (continued)

PROJECTED COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION, 2025									
	Tuscaloosa County			Region II					
Age	Total	White	Nonwhite	Total	White	Nonwhite			
0-4	11,347	5,388	5,959	18,712	9,130	9,191			
5-19	36,505	18,283	18,222	59,366	30,042	28,034			
15-44	83,598	47,331	36,267	119,529	69,102	52,838			
20-64	112,171	65,627	46,544	176,180	101,083	70,953			
55+	51,335	34,429	16,906	90,907	57,228	30,401			
60+	41,024	28,032	12,992	72,901	46,415	23,702			
65+	30,501	21,244	9,257	53,711	35,119	16,872			
85+	2,943	2,164	779	5,590	3,746	1,498			
Total*	190,524	110,542	79,982	308,466	183,416	125,050			

*Columns do not add due to age groupings.

SOURCE: Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Alabama

TABLE 10			
YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, PERSONS 25 & OLDER, 2000			
AREA	TOTAL PERSONS	% HIGH SCHOOL	% BACHELOR DEGREE
U. S. (000)	175,230	33.1	17.0
Alabama (000)	2,887	13.9	6.1
Bibb County	13540	35.7	4.1
Fayette County	12,579	35.0	5.7
Greene County	6,204	34.9	7.4
Hale County	10,591	35.9	5.1
Lamar County	10,758	37.5	5.4
Pickens County	13,536	37.8	6.4
Tuscaloosa County	99,039	28.4	14.3
Region II	166,247	31.6	10.8
SOURCE: U. S. Census, 2000			
Calculations by West Alabama Regional Commission			

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION
HIGHER EDUCATION
2008

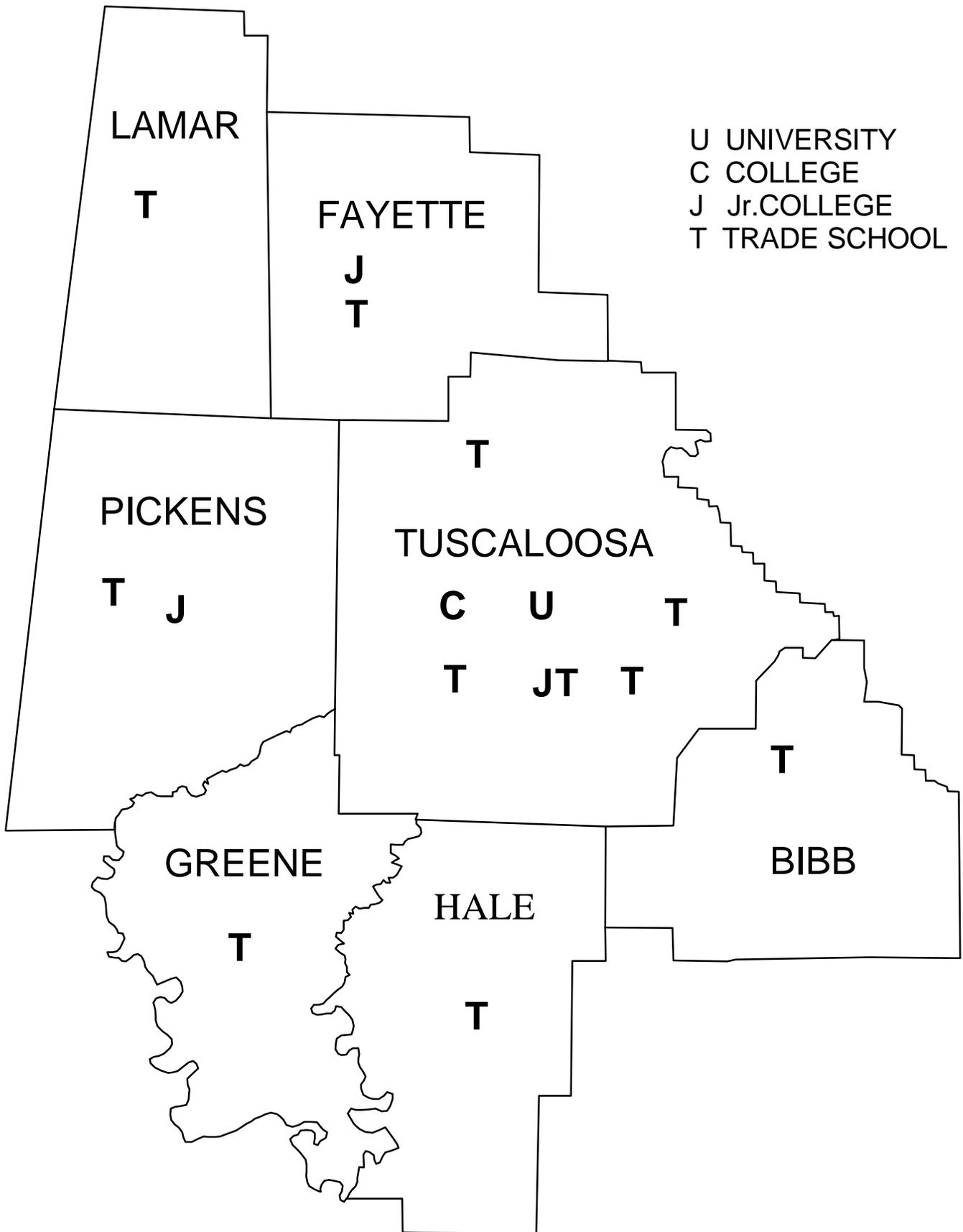
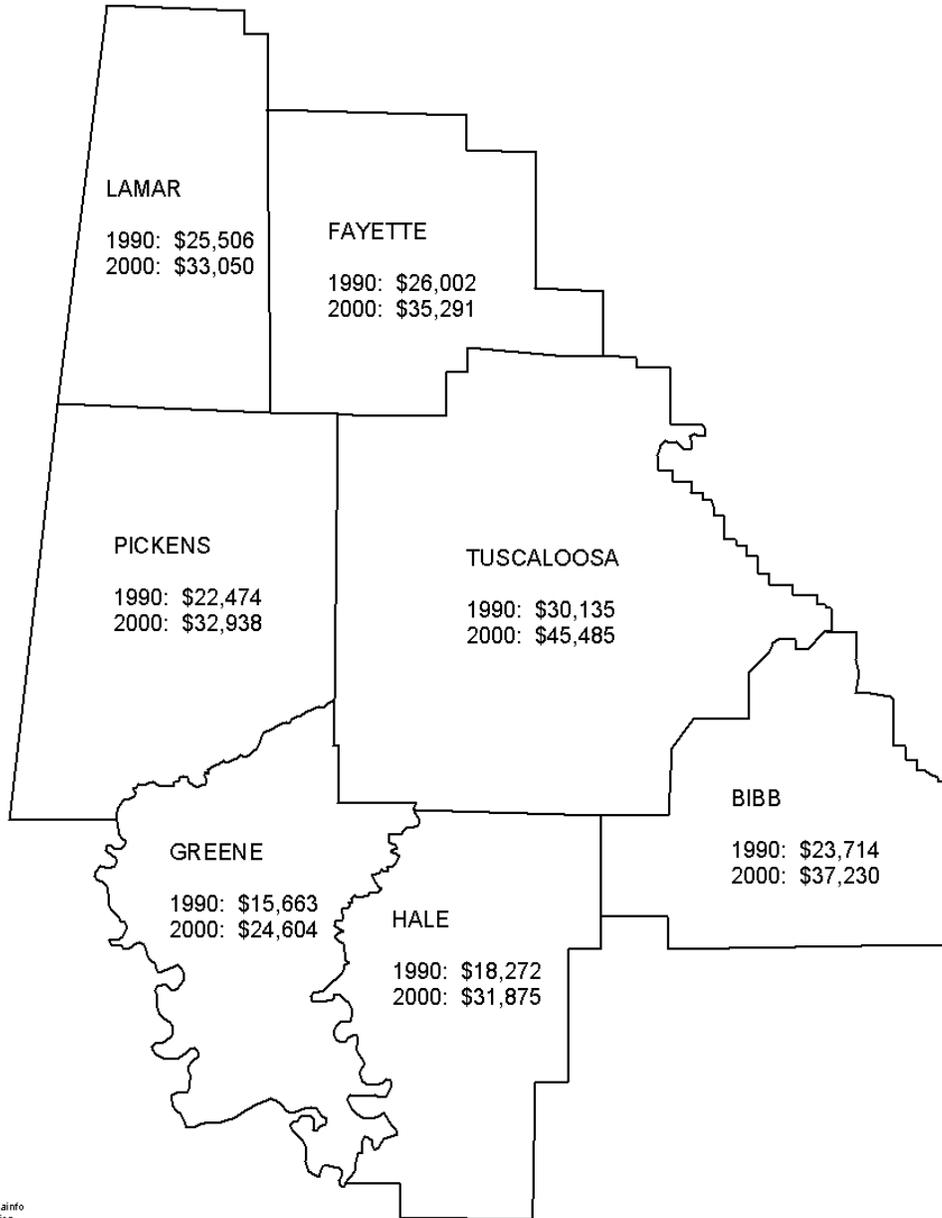


TABLE 11**MEDIAN FAMILY AND PER CAPITA INCOMES**

	MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME			PER CAPITA INCOME		
	1989	1999	% CHANGE	1989	1999	% CHANGE
U. S.	\$35,225	\$48,950	39.0%	\$11,687	\$21,181	81.2%
ALABAMA	\$28,686	\$41,657	45.2%	\$9,987	\$18,189	82.1%
Bibb County	\$23,714	\$37,230	57.0%	\$7,756	\$14,105	81.9%
Fayette County	\$26,002	\$35,291	35.7%	\$9,018	\$14,439	60.1%
Greene County	\$15,663	\$24,604	57.1%	\$5,948	\$13,686	130.1%
Hale County	\$18,272	\$31,875	74.4%	\$6,644	\$12,661	90.6%
Lamar County	\$25,506	\$33,050	29.6%	\$9,496	\$14,435	52.0%
Pickens County	\$22,474	\$32,938	46.6%	\$7,859	\$13,746	74.9%
Tuscaloosa County	\$30,135	\$45,485	50.9%	\$9,797	\$18,998	93.9%

SOURCE: U. S. Census, 1990 & 2000
Calculations by WARC

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME
1990 AND 2000



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**TABLE 12
DISTRIBUTION OF 1999 INCOME AMONG FAMILIES, 2000 ALL FAMILIES**

	U. S.	Alabama	Region	Bibb County	Fayette County	Greene County	Hale County	Lamar County	Pickens County	Tuscaloosa County
# Families	72,031,000	1,223,185	70,929	5,567	5,345	2,689	4,650	4,707	5,864	42,107
Med. Fam. Income	\$48,950	\$41,657		\$37,230	\$35,291	\$24,604	\$31,875	\$33,050	\$32,938	\$45,485
0 - \$10,000		103,257	6,678	536	452	532	694	419	807	3,238
\$10,000 - \$14,999		72,749	4,484	404	397	290	397	418	441	2,137
\$15,000 - 19,999		78,191	4,623	394	381	294	399	408	470	2,277
\$20,000 - \$24,999		82,730	5,176	502	448	238	373	419	503	2,693
\$25,000 - \$29,999		83,346	4,929	372	495	175	342	374	466	2,705
\$30,000 - \$34,999		83,454	5,075	406	473	169	351	459	377	2,840
\$35,000 - \$39,999		79,740	4,423	391	398	152	284	312	291	2,595
\$40,000 - \$44,999		75,348	4,144	402	394	127	233	307	368	2,313
\$45,000 - \$49,999		67,991	4,010	320	300	101	223	219	346	2,501
\$50,000 - \$59,999		122,145	7,011	512	478	143	433	430	620	4,395
\$60,000 - \$74,999		134,421	7,918	546	583	238	427	514	550	5,060
\$75,000 - \$99,999		120,781	6,858	527	381	122	292	279	349	4,908
\$100,000 - \$124,999		53,884	2,615	170	91	37	115	57	147	1,998
\$125,000 - \$149,999		24,158	1,161	36	32	27	49	55	19	943
\$150,000 - \$199,999		19,965	875	22	24	10	16	9	47	747
\$200,000 & Over		21,065	949	27	18	34	22	28	63	757

SOURCE: U. S. 2000 Census, Tables P76 & P77
Regional Calculations by WARC

TABLE 13

DISTRIBUTION OF 1999 INCOME BLACK AMONG FAMILIES, 2000 ALL BLACK FAMILIES

U. S.	Alabama	Region	Bibb County	Fayette County	Greene County	Hale County	Lamar County	Pickens County	Tuscaloosa County
# Families	288,588	20,641	972	586	2,101	2,491	494	2,288	11,709
0 - \$10,000	55,279	4,199	279	69	499	604	90	595	2,063
\$10,000 - \$14,999	30,964	2,148	80	64	283	293	31	286	1,111
\$15,000 - 19,999	28,182	2,027	105	61	245	256	52	235	1,073
\$20,000 - \$24,999	24,226	1,919	94	58	226	250	89	256	946
\$25,000 - \$29,999	21,719	1,723	67	67	152	205	46	179	1,007
\$30,000 - \$34,999	19,095	1,494	84	39	113	173	48	136	901
\$35,000 - \$39,999	17,239	1,213	52	32	133	151	36	98	711
\$40,000 - \$44,999	14,594	859	33	45	102	70	16	117	476
\$45,000 - \$49,999	12,510	882	21	22	46	92	14	82	605
\$50,000 - \$59,999	21,039	1,382	52	63	88	178	35	95	871
\$60,000 - \$74,999	18,992	1,447	49	35	128	81	24	110	1,020
\$75,000 - \$99,999	14,152	723	25	19	41	69	12	53	504
\$100,000 - \$124,999	5,321	284	31	3	19	29	0	16	186
\$125,000 - \$149,999	1,914	82	0	5	4	14	0	4	55
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1,531	51	0	4	6	3	0	2	36
\$200,000 & Over	1,831	199	0	0	16	14	1	24	144

SOURCE: U. S. 2000 Census, Tables P154B
Regional Calculations by WARC

2. Labor Force and Unemployment

The District's 2007 labor force was 129,012. This is slight drop of 601 from the 2000 number of 129,613. Table 14 shows the civilian labor force for the years 1990, 2000, and 2007. The 2007 unemployment rate for the District was 3.4%. While faring better than most parts of the country, current economic conditions have had their effect on the district. As shown on the map on page 40, 2008 Unemployment rates show increases of at least a percentage point in all counties and the district as a whole.

Tuscaloosa County's low employment rate (4.2% in 2008) continues to contribute to the District's relatively low rate. The District's rate has been lower than The State of Alabama and the United States each year beginning in 2000 through 2008, however this gap has narrowed considerably and may not hold into the next few years. The other counties have had higher unemployment rates than Tuscaloosa County annually and are seeing larger increases due to the slow economy.

Loss of industrial jobs in the surrounding counties has slowed but remains lower than any time in the past 20-30 years. Outside of Tuscaloosa County, the only recent additions to the employment in industrial sector has been Steel Dust Recycling in Lamar County and the TEPPCO refined products terminal in Greene County, no major additions have been made in the District in the past year outside Tuscaloosa County.

TABLE 14
ESTIMATED CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE, 2007

	Bibb County	Fayette County	Greene County	Hale County	Lamar County	Pickens County	Tuscaloosa County	Region II	
								2000	2007
Employed	8,474	7,075	3,091	6,964	5,516	7,651	86,512	112,897	125,283
Manufacturing	528	1,426	326	927	1,236	845	14,353	21,211	19,641
Nonmanufacturing	7,946	5,649	2,765	6,037	4,280	6,806	72,159	91,686	105,642
Unemployed	316	306	184	329	322	353	2,577	7,915	4,387
Labor Force	8,790	7,381	3,275	6,635	5,838	8,004	89,089	129,613	129,012

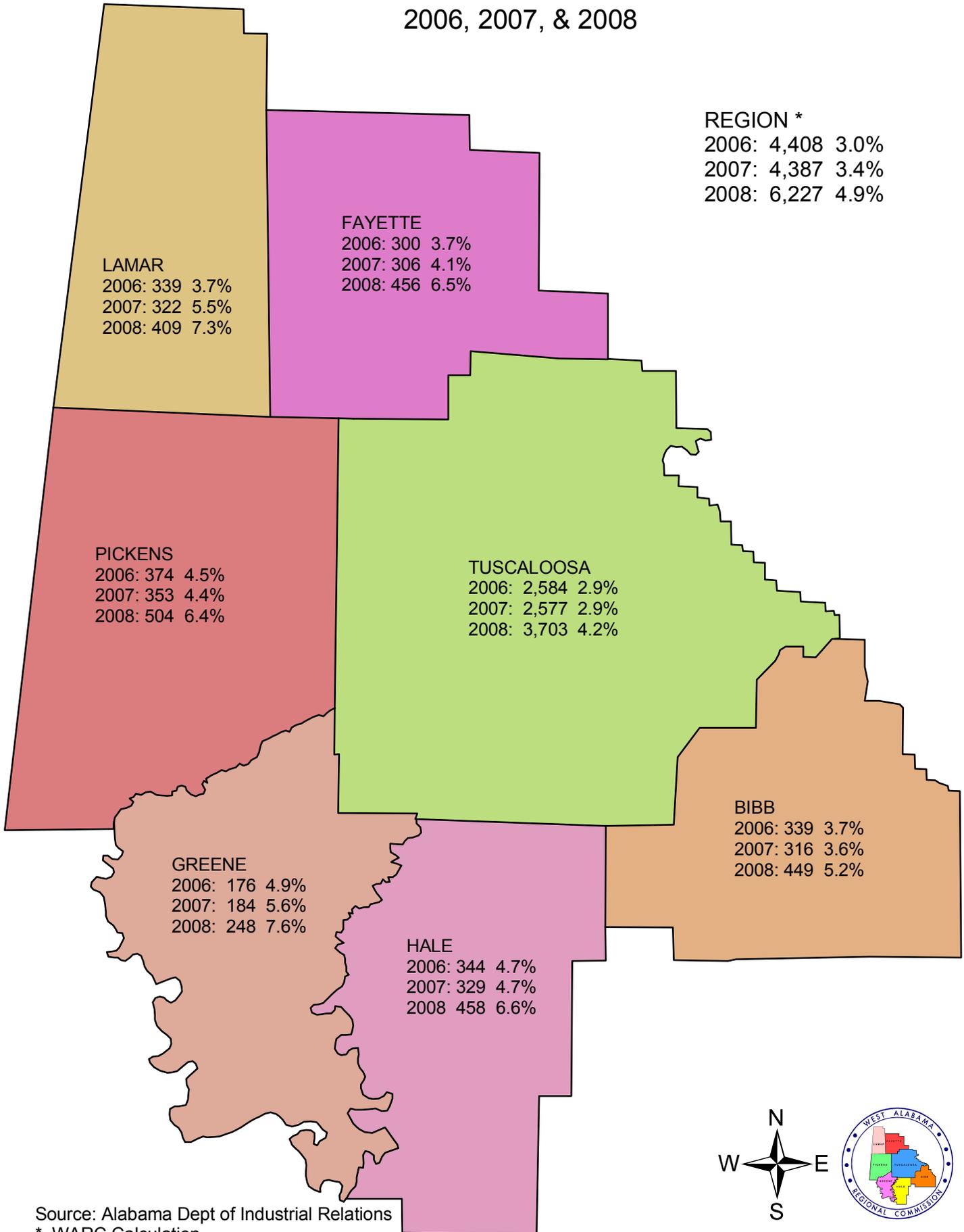
Source: CEBR, Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

* Calculations by WARC

TABLE 15							
EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS							
COUNTY	2008 EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS			ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES			
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	2008	2000	1999	
Bibb	8,715	8,266	449	5.2%	6.7%	6.9%	
Fayette	7,063	6,607	456	6.5%	7.2%	9.8%	
Greene	3,277	3,029	248	7.6%	10.3%	12.4%	
Hale	6,961	6,503	458	6.6%	7.5%	7.6%	
Lamar	5,617	5,208	409	7.3%	9.5%	9.5%	
Pickens	7,834	7,330	504	6.4%	10.6%	10.5%	
Tuscaloosa	88,491	84,788	3,703	4.2%	2.8%	3.0%	
Region II*	127,958	121,731	6,227	4.9%	4.7%	5.0%	
Alabama	2,162,479	2,053,502	108,977	5.0%	4.6%	4.8%	

SOURCE: Alabama Department of Industrial Relations
*Calculations by WARC

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION UNEMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 2006, 2007, & 2008



Source: Alabama Dept of Industrial Relations
* WARC Calculation

TABLE 16

TOTAL EMPLOYED 16 YEARS OLD AND OVER, BY MAJOR INDUSTRY GROUPS IN 2000

Occupation	AREA										Region*
	Bibb	Fayette	Greene	Hale	Lamar	Pickens	Tuscaloosa				
TOTAL EMPLOYED INDUSTRY GROUP	7,967	7,391	3,109	5,842	6,547	7,644	74,397	112,897			
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	263	247	200	256	284	455	512	2,217			
Mining	184	201	3	22	2	5	1,065	1,482			
Construction	719	470	241	494	477	541	5,097	8,039			
Manufacturing	1,892	2,270	527	1,481	2,153	2,004	10,884	21,211			
Wholesale trade	340	196	122	178	124	260	2,399	3,619			
Retail trade	791	884	279	734	700	850	9,992	14,230			
Transportation & warehousing and utilities	608	437	188	303	421	449	2,603	5,009			
Information	100	40	12	48	50	61	1,341	1,652			
Finance, insurance, real estate & rental/leasing	280	251	162	227	283	279	3,348	4,830			
Professional, scientific, management, administrative & waste management services	422	215	121	180	239	304	5,175	6,656			
Educational services	665	471	330	396	375	650	10,426	13,313			
Health care & social assistance	697	880	406	820	731	924	10,030	14,488			
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food services	338	234	190	198	183	211	5,173	6,527			
Other services (except public administration)	370	302	117	260	309	358	3,684	5,400			
Public administration	298	293	211	245	216	293	2,668	4,224			
Source: 2000 Census, Table P49											
*Calculations by WARC											

TABLE 17
DISTRICT EMPLOYMENT (Full & Part-time)*

	1990	2000	2007
Total Employment	113,106	131,915	147,168
Wage & Salary	97,448	111,952	121,435
Proprietors	15,658	19,963	25,733
Farm Proprietors	3,918	2,972	2,685
Non-Farm Proprietors	12,724	16,991	23,048
By Industry			
Farm	2,651	3,351	3,042
Non-Farm	109,455	128,564	144,126
Private	83,825	100,890	113,387
Forestry, fishing & Other	1,259	1,297	884
Mining	4,579	2,673	3,058
Construction	6,532	9,441	11,110
Manufacturing	21,525	19,735	19,643
Transportation & Utilities	4,404	5,059	3,999
Information**			1,428
Wholesale trade	3,086	3,430	2,278
Retail trade	20,435	22,834	15,825
Finance, Insurance, Real estate	4,160	6,006	8,430
Services	20,931	27,590	40,544
Governmental	25,630	27,674	30,739

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

* Data for some items is suppressed for privacy or is not available

** Data not available for all years

C. Analysis and Economic Structures and Activities

1. Industry and Business

The number of firms producing and processing goods and employing people in the District has grown very slowly. This is the result of several plant closings in all counties with the exception of Tuscaloosa. Table 18 shows the major manufacturing firms in each of the counties and their products. Table 19 shows the recent plant closings by county.

2. Petroleum and Natural Gas

Petroleum and natural gas were first discovered in the District in the early 1900's. Exploration was slow and sporadic until 1970 when the East Detroit Oil Field was discovered. That triggered new activity and concentrated lease play in the Black Warrior Basin. The first oil was produced in Lamar County in 1971. Later in that decade production started in Fayette and Tuscaloosa Counties. Approximately 90% of the production takes place in Lamar County.

Natural gas production began in 1973 in Fayette and Lamar Counties. Production began in Tuscaloosa County in 1980 followed by Pickens County in 1992. Production of these wells is not expected to be released until better market prices are available.

Methane gas has been under production in Tuscaloosa County for about ten years. Extensive exploration has expanded into Bibb and Hale Counties. The methane has been placed in production where pipelines are available.

3. Agriculture

Once the largest employer and principal economic activity of the District, agriculture has experienced a continuous employment decline over the past several decades. Low profit margins, increased capital requirements due to mechanization and the enticement of higher wages available in non-agricultural occupation have prompted many to abandon farming. Still the role of agriculture in the District both now and in the future will remain significant.

4. Farms, Land and Land Use Patterns

Table 20 shows the number of farms in each county. Since 2002 the number of farms increased in all counties except Greene and Lamar. This is a turn around from previous Censuses. The average size of the farms increased slightly in Greene and Lamar Counties, and decreased in all others.

Farming of catfish and crawfish has grown in importance in the District. While the majority of the production is located in Greene and Hale Counties, other counties are experiencing an increased amount of activity in that area. The Economic Census has no listings for these two activities and efforts to obtain information from the State have been unsuccessful. Shrimp has been introduced in Tuscaloosa County and the initial results look promising for that endeavor.

5. Forestry

The forestlands of the District continue to be very important in the economy. Several of the larger employers as shown in Table 18 are in the forestry related business. The many functions provided by the forest; timber production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection and aesthetics are still being performed, while the demand for these functions are greatly increasing.

6. Recreation and Tourism

Recreation and tourism provide a considerable amount of revenue in the District. The University of Alabama's sports program brings in a majority of these funds. Stillman College and Shelton State Junior College have programs that attract lesser crowds. Other major sources of revenue are: the recreation facilities of the various areas hosting softball tournaments; Tannehill State park; Mound State Monument; Lake Lurleen State Park; and, other lesser attractions across the District.

Each county has its own local and regional attractions, such as festivals, historic homes/buildings, and other events. All the individual attractions throughout the District are too numerous to list. However, they are important in that particular county and may increase in regional importance as they grow.

The District's natural setting provides excellent recreational opportunities in hunting and fishing. Sportsmen in the District hunt deer, fox, squirrel, rabbit, quail, dove and other game on both public and private land, lakes, ponds and rivers in the District. The Corps of Engineers provides public access areas on the Black Warrior and Tombigbee Rivers. Other public areas include Payne Lake, Lake Lurleen, Lake Tuscaloosa, Bibb County Lake, Fayette County Lake and the Lamar County Lake. In addition, the Corps operates its largest campground in the State at Pickensville in Pickens County on the Tombigbee River.

The District's staff started a tourism council, the Historic West Alabama Tourism Council that promotes tourism throughout the District. The Tourism Council meets at different locations in the District and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Attractions in the District are promoted in the newsletter at no cost to the local area/owners. The newsletter is mailed to all the tour operators nationally for whom addresses have been obtained. Several articles have been reprinted by national publications. The Tourism Council now meets on a regular basis with tourism promoters from the adjoining areas of Mississippi.

TABLE 18		
MAJOR FIRMS, PRODUCTS & LOCATION		
FIRM	PRODUCT(S)	LOCATION
BIBB COUNTY		
Brent Industries, Inc.	Reconditioned work gloves, printer towels	Brent
Burkes Mechanical, Inc.	Steel fabricating & installation	Brent
Cahaba Pressure & Timber	Sawed timber & treated wood & poles	Brierfield
Cahaba Veneer, Inc.	Lumber	Centreville
Freeman-Patrick Wood Products	Sawed timber	Brent
Randolph & Randolph Logging	Cut timber	Centreville
Unified Testing Services, Inc.	Metal testing	Woodstock
FAYETTE COUNTY		
Berry Wood Products	Hardwood flooring	Berry
Best Manufacturing	Latex gloves	Fayette
Dal-tile Corporation, Inc.	Flooring, tile, quarry tile	Fayette
Georgia Pacific Corp.	Sawed timber	Belk
Custom Automated Services	Wiring Harnesses	Fayette
Lumber Remanufacturing Services	Lumber/wood products	Belk
Newman Brothers Tracking	Hauling	Belk
Ox Bodies Inc.	Truck Bodies	Fayette
Pittsburg and Midway Coal	Coal/Ore	Berry
GREENE COUNTY		
Alabama Power	Electricity	Forkland
SouthFresh Aquaculture	Processed catfish	Eutaw
United Roofing Co., Inc.	Felt, saturated with asphalt	Eutaw
HALE COUNTY		
American Seafoods Group, LLC	Processed catfish	Greensboro
Gulf States Paper	Pine lumber, poles	Moundville
Plastics, Inc.	Bottles	Greensboro
LAMAR COUNTY		
Marathon Corp.	Refuse compactors	Vernon
NAACO Material Handling	drive train for lift trucks; Transmissions	Sulligent
Omni International	Wood office furniture	Vernon
Butler & Company, Inc.	Conveyor systems	Vernon
Weyerhaeuser Corp.	Sawed lumber	Millport
PICKENS COUNTY		
Buchanan Hardwood Flooring	Hardwood Flooring	Aliceville
Buchanan Lumber	Sawed Lumber	Aliceville
Lewis Brothers Lumber	Sawed Lumber	Aliceville
McShan Lumber	Sawed Lumber	McShan
Peco Farms Hatchery	Chicken feed	Gordo
Peco Foods, Inc.	Broilers	Gordo
Pate Lumber Company	Pine lumber	Carrollton

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY		
Ai3	Automotive logistics center	Vance
ARD Logistics-Alabama	Automotive components	Cottondale
Alabama Gas Corp.	Natural Gas	Tuscaloosa
Alabama Paper Products	Paper products, shingles	Tuscaloosa
Alabama Power Co.	Electricity	Tuscaloosa
B F Goodrich	Tires	Tuscaloosa
Borgers USA Corp.	Rear interior compartment (Mercedes)	Vance
Brion Harding Construction Co. Inc	Steel fabrication	Tuscaloosa
Brose Tuscaloosa	Interior door panels	Vance
Buffalo Rock Co.	Soft drinks	Tuscaloosa
Caterpillar Logistics	Service parts - wholesale	Vance
Coral Industries	Shower doors, tub enclosures	Tuscaloosa
Cottondale Wood Products	Pallets	Tuscaloosa
Ebershaecher North America	Exhaust systems	Cottondale
Elk Corp.	Roofing products	Tuscaloosa
Fitts Industries	Stair parts, millwork	Tuscaloosa
Flowers Baking of Tuscaloosa	Bread products, baked goods	Tuscaloosa
Graphic Package Laminations	Laminated paperboard, coated paperboard	Tuscaloosa
Graphic Packaging	Cartons, scoops, tubs	Tuscaloosa
Hanna Steel Corp.	Steel tubing	Tuscaloosa
Hard Wear	Hardened overlay for steel, pins	Tuscaloosa
Hinton Lumber Products Inc.	Timber, wood products	Tuscaloosa
Hunt Refining Co.	Heating oil, kerosene, petroleum coke	Tuscaloosa
Industrial Warehouse Services Inc	Warehousing	Tuscaloosa
Inteva Products, Inc.	Auto heating & cooling, MBUSI Cockpits	Cottondale
ISE Innomotive Systems U.S.	Front & rear end auto modules	Tuscaloosa
Jim Walter Resources	Coal	Brookwood
Johnson Controls	Seating systems, headliners	Cottondale
JVC Disc America Co.	CDs, DVDs, CD-ROMs	Tuscaloosa
Kykenkee Inc.	Lumber, pulpwood	Vance
McAbee Construction, Inc.	Pipe fabrication, vessels	Tuscaloosa
Mercedes-Benz U S International	All Activity Vehicles	Tuscaloosa
Midstate Asphalt	Fiber board, perlite fabrication	Tuscaloosa
Nucor Steel	Steel bands, in coil form	Tuscaloosa
Peco Foods	Chickens (whole & parts)	Tuscaloosa
Phifer Wire Products	Aluminum, Fiberglass	Tuscaloosa
RADICISPANDEX Corp.	Elastic products	Tuscaloosa
Randall-Reilly Publishing Co.	Magazines	Tuscaloosa
Reticel North America	Automotive interior, "Skin" for MBUS	Tuscaloosa
Southern Heat Exchanger	Heat exchangers, shell & tube	Tuscaloosa
Southeastern Asphalt	Asphalt manufacturing	Tuscaloosa
S T Bunn Construction	Asphalt	Tuscaloosa
StressCrete, Inc.	Decorative concrete poles	Tuscaloosa
Tamko Roofing Products	Asphalt	Tuscaloosa
The Westervelt Company	Wood Products	Tuscaloosa
TTL, Inc.	Environmental Testing	Tuscaloosa
Tuscaloosa News	Newspaper	Tuscaloosa
ZF Industries	Auto axle systems	Tuscaloosa
Soruce: "2008 Directory of Mining and Manufacturing Companies in West Alabama," WARC		

TABLE 19			
PLANT CLOSINGS IN WEST ALABAMA			
2/15/2009			
Company	Closed	Employees*	County Total
Bibb County			
Centreville Lumber Company	11/98	100	
Southern Ductile	4/01	45	
N D Cass	9/01	150	
Belcher Lumber Co.	12/01	40	
Vanity Fair (Health Tex)	9/01	250	585
Fayette County			
Oneita Apparel	9/97	350	
Shelby Die Casting, Inc	1/98	200	
Oneita Textile	3/99	350	
Lanier Clothes	1/99	210	
Fayette Manufacturing	3/01	168	
Arvin Industries, Inc.	10/01	500	
Fayette Cotton Mill	4/02	300	
Marathon	7/08	41	2119
Greene County			
Kimberly Clark	7/98	5	
Vanco, Inc.	8/98	150	155
Hale County			
Golden Rod	4/01	170	
Zildjian Percussion	06	62	232
Lamar County			
Vernon Manufacturing	4/97	42	
Millport Slacks	5/98	210	
Glenn's All American Sportswear	4/99	150	
Glenn Enterprises	4/00	320	
Wiegand Appliance Div.	8/02	219	
Weyerhaeuser	3/03	250	
Chromalox	4/03	180	
CMD Apparel	1/05	60	
Alan White Furniture	12/06	245	1676
Pickens County			
Reform Manufacturing Co.	4/99	270	
Q-Glass	3/99	15	
NRV Manufacturing	5/00	170	
Aliceville Cotton Mill	5/00	180	
Rainer Sawmill	00	5	
Durbin Durco	1/03	25	665
Tuscaloosa County			
Lawter International	5/02	100	
International Paper	4/03	180	
JVC (Magnetic Tapes)	1/04	150	
Graphic Packaging International	2/09	96	526
TOTAL			5958
*At the time of closing			

TABLE 20 GENERAL FARM INFORMATION												
COUNTY	TOTAL ACRES	# FARMS		LAND IN FARMS				RECEIPTS FROM MARKETING				
		2002	2007	Total Acres	Average Acres		(x\$1,000)	2002	2007	2007 Change	%	
Bibb	400,000	187	211	44,893	3,809	240	181	\$1,666	(D)			
Fayette	401,300	365	401	75,144	78,799	206	197	\$12,136		\$12,958	89%	
Greene	407,680	349	316	128,032	135,652	367	429	\$19,709		\$23,048	17%	
Hale	424,320	433	479	160,536	169,287	371	353	\$44,367		\$57,830	30%	
Lamar	387,200	463	422	86,717	84,645	187	201	\$5,127	(D)			
Pickens	567,700	493	503	142,561	130,751	289	260	\$73,912		\$109,821	49%	
Tuscaloosa	857,600	547	613	102,973	110,588	188	180	\$20,513		\$25,389	24%	
Region II*	3,445,800	2,837	2,945	740,856	747,815	264	257	\$177,430		\$229,013	29%	

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture, 2007

*Calculations by WARC

D. Analysis of Community Facilities and Services

1. Education and Training

Each county operates a public school system. In addition, the City of Tuscaloosa operates a city system. There are also several private schools in the District. All the public systems operate grades K-12. The private schools vary from school to school, but in all counties, grades K-12 are available through the private schools. All county systems operate technical or vocational schools.

All public school systems are all operated by elected Boards of Education. (The City of Tuscaloosa System is had its first election, August 2001). Some of the superintendents in the county systems are elected. Boards appointed by the organization responsible for the school run the private schools and the board hires the principal/head master of the school.

In addition to the public systems, the University of Alabama and Stillman College are located in Tuscaloosa. Together they offer a full range of degrees. There are also two junior colleges in the District, Beville State Community College in Fayette and Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa. Shelton State also operates a technical division with training in various vocations. Both senior and junior colleges offer various classes at night. There are several private technical/career schools in the Tuscaloosa Urban area.

2. Health

Hospitals, clinics and emergency facilities are located in all counties except Lamar. That county does not have a hospital. One of the State's leading medical centers is Tuscaloosa where there are facilities for treating most major illnesses. Serving West Alabama from Tuscaloosa are two major hospitals, a VA medical Center, The University of Alabama Psychology Center and Speech and Hearing Center, West Alabama Rehabilitation Center, Bryce State Hospital, Partlow State School and Hospital, and the University of Alabama Family Practice Center. The map on page 51 shows the location of the major medical centers in the District.

3. Welfare

The Department of Human Resources operates offices in all seven counties. The services rendered by the Department include: aiding public assistance applicants and recipients in furnishing agencies with the necessary information to establish eligibility; administer the food stamp program; administer the financial aid program - supplementary payments to SSI recipients or non-receivers of SSI, the aged, blind, and the totally and permanently disabled; aid to dependent children; and, provide social services and make referral to agencies.

Alabama has an approved child welfare plan for preventing and dealing with serious problems of children who may or may not, be in financial need. Whether they are in their own homes, children who need care and protection are the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources.

The Department investigates and licenses boarding homes to care for children and also helps with arrangements for children who need institutional care. Persons who wish to adopt children apply to the County Departments, which work with the State Department in making adoption placements, and also investigates adoption petitions filed in Probate Courts.

Services to delinquent children are the joint responsibility of juvenile courts and the county departments.

4. Community Service Programs

Community Service Programs replaced the Community Action Agencies and deliver the services provided by the CAAs. The objectives of the CSPs are: to identify and define the causes and extent of poverty in the area; to coordinate and focus all available resources and community facilities to eliminate the causes and results of poverty; and, to carry out programs designed to attain these objectives.

Some of the services provided are:

a. Transportation for the elderly: Provides transportation for persons 60 years or older who have no means of transportation. Provides supportive services such as shopping assistance and transportation for medical assistance.

b. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance: Provides assistance to eligible households in meeting the rising cost of home energy on a one-time basis only.

c. USDA Food Distribution: Distributes commodities that are made available by the U. S. Department of Agriculture to households that meet all eligibility requirements.

d. Department of Energy Weatherization Program: Assists low-income home owners stop infiltration of outside temperatures by providing insulation, weather-stripping, storm windows, caulking, underpinning, installing vents and repairing windows.

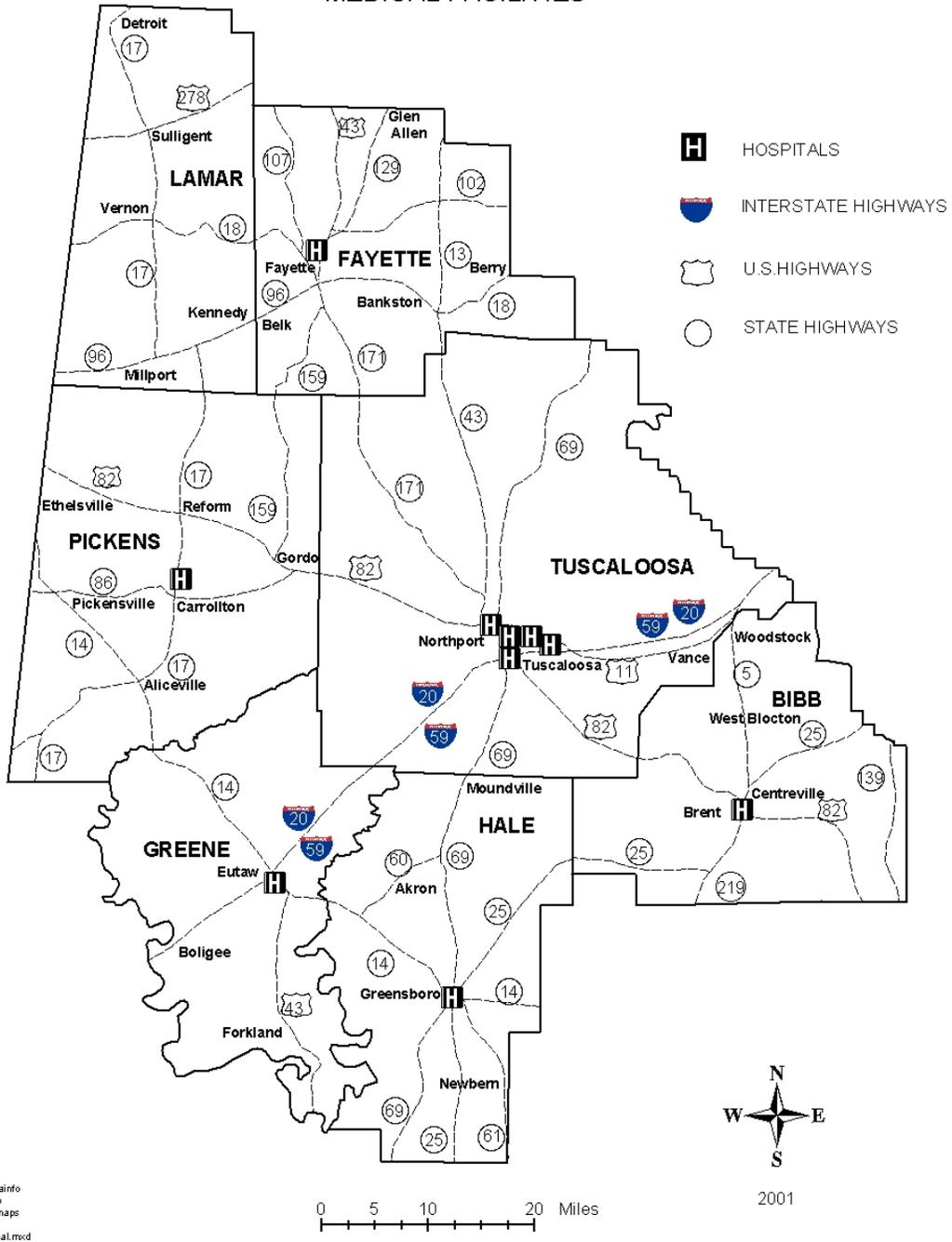
e. Emergency Food & Shelter Program: Provides funds for existing food banks for distribution to the needy on a limited basis and provides supplies for mass shelter.

f. Minor House Repair for the Elderly: Furnishes limited assistance for persons 60 or above, for material to repair porches, steps, make minor roof repairs, and build ramps for the handicapped.

g. Garden Project: Provides garden supplies to assist low-income families to have an adequate food supply and good nutrition.

h. Emergency Crisis Intervention: Assists a limited number of families as the need arises in emergencies such as fire, floods and storms by purchasing food, clothing and household items.

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION MEDICAL FACILITIES



5. Employment Offices

The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Employment Offices in the counties provides job seekers with the latest information on job openings and employment opportunities in the county, area, State and District. They also provide statistical information on the number of people employed by various categories as well as numbers of unemployed.

6. County Extension Service

The Extension Service is an educational agency (arm of Auburn University), designed to meet the needs of the people through the giving of instructions and practical demonstrations in agriculture, home economics, 4-H and Community Resources Development. The main objective in Cooperative Extension is “the development of people themselves to the end that they, through their own initiative may effectively identify and solve the various problems directly affecting their welfare.” Extension programs are designed to help families acquire the knowledge, experience, and the understanding that will enable them to adjust to an ever-changing social and economical condition of the world. The focus is on the development of the individual and his potential, and the opportunity to strengthen family living through the meeting of the problems faced by families as they work to improve the quality of their life at home and in the community. Offices are in all counties.

7. Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service)

The Natural Resource Conservation Service, a USDA agency, works through an in cooperation with the County Natural Resource Conservation Districts in assisting individual land owners as well as groups of land owners in planning for the proper use of their lands and establishing treatment according to its needs for continued production. NRCS can assist land owners and farmers in developing water disposal systems for drainage, seeding, management of pasture lands, farm pond layouts, as well as woodland conservation and management practices. The primary aim is soil and water conservation is to focus the efforts of all individuals and groups toward using soil and water resources efficiently and conserving them so that their usefulness will be retained for future generations.

8. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

The ASCS, a USDA agency, assists farmers in carrying out recommended soil and water conservation practices, reforestation, and in regulating acreage and prices of selected crops.

9. USDA Rural Development

The USDA Rural Development, a USDA agency, serves farmers and other rural residents with credit and needed technical help on farm and money management problems. Loans are made only to applicants unable to obtain adequate credit from private lenders at reasonable rates and terms. USDA RD programs strengthen family farms and rural communities and reduce rural poverty. Types of loans and assistance available include: farm ownership and operating loans, soil and water conservation loans, housing loans, loan guarantees, and community facility grant and loans for water, sewer and other community facilities.

10. Transportation

There are 1,049 miles of State and Federal highway in the District. During the past year, work has been accomplished on U.S. 43, U. S. 82 and I-20/59. Other smaller projects such as turning lanes, resurfacing and replacement of small bridges on county roads have been accomplished. The project on U.S. 43 is a widening project that expands the capacity of the road from two lanes to five lanes from U.S. 82, northward for approximately five miles to the new county high school. The U.S. 82 project is a continuation of expanding the road to four lanes from the Mississippi border to Tuscaloosa. A portion in western Tuscaloosa County is under construction and is scheduled for completion in early 2009. Two sections of I-20/59 have been under construction. Both sections will expand the highway to six lanes. The eastern most section has been completed and is open for traffic. The next section is due to be completed before the end of 2008 and will provide a six lane interstate route from just east of Tuscaloosa to Birmingham.

Several sections of the District are in need of improved roads. Industrial recruiters are asked the number of miles to four lane highways and are usually turned off when the prospect learns there are no four-lane highways in the county. The Rural Planning Organization as well as the West Alabama Mayors' Association is working toward obtaining a commitment from the State to improve the road system in the District.

Limited commercial passenger service is available in the District. Amtrak provides passenger service once per day both north and south in Tuscaloosa. Greyhound provides limited interstate bus travel in the District. The City of Tuscaloosa has the only regularly scheduled transit service. The University of Alabama has recently started a service for its students that is limited to on-campus and a few off-campus locations. There is limited service in some of the rural counties but connecting with other counties is a problem. There is no commercial air service in the District. All counties in the District have airports for limited private use.

Cargo transport is available in the District through a variety of methods. There are numerous trucking firms located throughout the District. Rail service is available in all seven counties; however, several lines have been abandoned and removed. All counties in the District have had lines removed. Private carriers such Federal Express, United Parcel Service, DHL and other smaller companies have offices in Tuscaloosa and provide service to all areas. Air transportation I handled privately. There is no scheduled air service at any of the airports in the District.

a. Highways: Numerous State and Federal highways serve the District. I 20/59 serves Greene and Tuscaloosa Counties. Other U. S. Highways include U. S. 11, 43, 80, 82, and 278. Major State Routes are 5, 6, 13, 14, 17, 25, 69, 96, 129, 159 and 171. In all categories, there are over 6,700 miles of roads in the District.

b. Air: Airports with lighted runways are located in each of the District's seven counties. These are part of the State's 121-facility system. There is no scheduled commercial service available in the District. The airport in Birmingham, AL offers service.

c. Water: The Black Warrior River provides Greene, Hale and Tuscaloosa Counties with a navigable waterway and connects with the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Demopolis, just south of the District. The Tombigbee River (part of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway) serves Greene and Pickens Counties. These two rivers

provide the District with a navigable waterway from the Port of Mobile to the mid-west. Public port facilities are available at Aliceville, Boligee and Pickensville. There are also a few private facilities along both rivers.

d. Rail: The District is served by the Burlington-Northern, Norfolk Southern and Kansas City Southern Rail Roads. Piggy back service is available in the District. Passenger service is available in Tuscaloosa.

e. Truck: The District is served by several truck lines. One or more operate terminals in each county. United Parcel Service and Federal Express operate terminals in Tuscaloosa.

f. Bus: Greyhound Bus Lines operates in all the counties in the district except Fayette. Several leasing companies operate from Millport in Lamar County and the Tuscaloosa Urban area in Tuscaloosa County.

11. Communications

a. Telephone: Moundville, South Central Bell, GTE and Frontier companies serve the District.

b. Television: There is one local television station, located in Tuscaloosa, in the District. Cable systems are in all counties and provide service from all networks as well as several "super stations" and pay-for-view channels.

c. Radio: There are one or more local radio stations in every county with the exception of Hale. Other stations from Columbus and Meridian, MS and Birmingham are receivable with outside antennas.

d. Newspapers: One daily newspaper, "The Tuscaloosa News" is published in the District. There are also ten weekly papers published in the district. Several daily papers from across the country are also circulated in the District.

12. Utilities:

a. Electricity: Alabama Power and Black Warrior Electric Membership Corporation provide the District with electricity. The District has reliable service due to the interconnections of Alabama Power with surrounding states which are served by sister companies of the parent company, Southern Company. All counties in the District have adequate power for residential and industrial growth. Rates are controlled by the Alabama Public Service Commission.

b. Gas: The District is served by Southern Natural Gas, Alabama Gas and a few local gas boards. Some of the local producing gas wells are used to supply the area. Most municipalities are served by a natural gas system. Only the smaller ones are not served. There is sufficient supply in the District to provide for additional residential and industrial growth.

c. Water and Sewer: All the municipalities in the District are served by water systems. Some of the smaller municipalities are served by a county system. For the most

part, these systems have adequate source and storage facilities to handle the current population and business community. Several are near their capacity and a major industry would create a need for additional source water, treatment and storage. Fayette and Lamar Counties are both seeking financial support to construct reservoirs on North River and Yellow Creek respectively. The Town of Millport is seeking funding for a new well to serve a new industry that has expansion plans and will need additional water beyond the current capacity of the existing systems in the area. A new Federal prison has been announced for the area near Aliceville in Pickens County. The construction of this prison and its need for potable water will probably be beyond the capacity of the city or the Pickens County Water Authority that also serves in that portion of the county. There are still several areas not served by water.

Very few residents outside the 21 municipalities that operate sewer systems are served by other than septic tanks. Sewer systems are located in all the larger municipalities. Most of the municipalities that have sewer systems are unable to extend service to all the residents within their boundaries. Additional problems surface with old lines and sewer treatment lagoons. Yet, most of these systems can handle additional growth. Because of the costs, several of the smaller municipalities, cannot construct systems and will therefore not be able to handle any substantial growth, especially in areas that will not accommodate septic tanks. Some of the smaller towns are going together with systems. Millport and Kennedy in Lamar County, and Brent and Centreville in Bibb County are examples. The Towns of Lake View and Woodstock are in the process of installing systems that will serve portions of their jurisdictions. Woodstock will pump its collections to West Blocton for treatment and Lake View will be connected to a private system in Jefferson County for treatment. Tables 21 and 22 show the water and waste water systems and their capacities. The map on page 59 shows the coverage area of water and sewer systems and the designated industrial parks in the District.

d. Solid Waste: All counties have solid waste collection programs and operate inert landfills. Some of the collection is contracted with private corporations. Tuscaloosa County is the only county in the District operating a solid waste landfill.

13. Senior Centers:

The Area Agency on Aging, a program of West Alabama Regional Council, operates senior centers and nutrition sites in all the counties. Meals are provided at all sites five days each week for persons 60 years or older. Supportive services such as, nutrition education, health and welfare counseling, consumer education, information and referral, shopping assistance and recreation are also offered at the sites. Homebound meals are provided for individuals who are unable to prepare meals for themselves. Homemaker services are provided on a limited basis to homebound participants. Other services are available as requested and as funding is available.

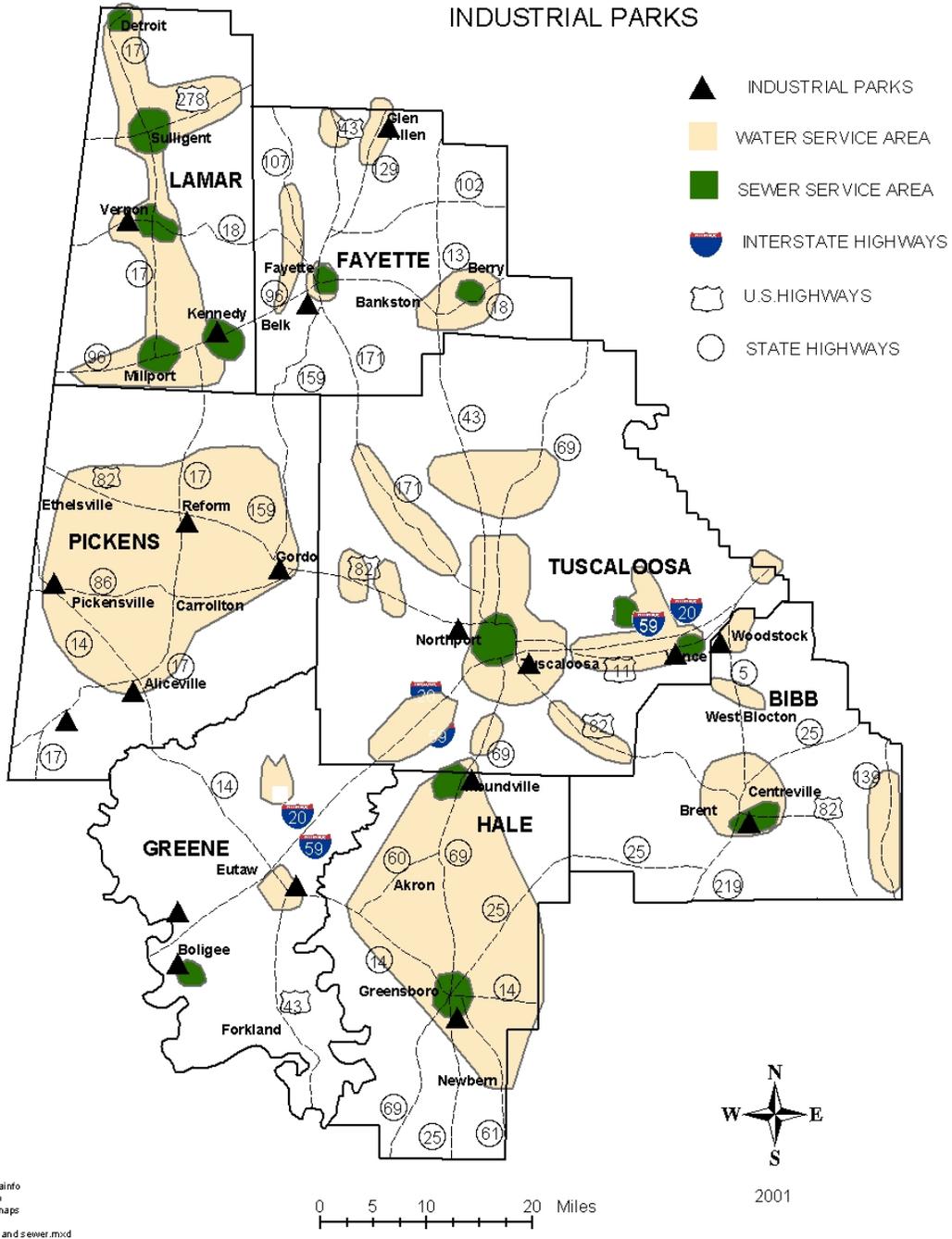
TABLE 21
WATER TREATMENT FACILITIES 2007

COUNTY	TREATMENT FACILITY	CAPACITY GALLONS/DAY	AVERAGE USE GALLONS/DAY
Bibb	Brent	2,880,000	1,172,000
	Centreville	1,872,000	895,000
	Green Pond	1,584,000	775,000
	Harrisburg	*	78,000
	Randolph	*	60,000
	West Blocton (1)	1,000,000	225,000
Fayette	Belk	*	100,000
	Berry (2)	2,000,000	183,333
	Fayette Co. Water	*	210,000
	Fayette	3,000,000	1,150,000
	Glen Allen	1,018,500	100,000
	Oakman	*	40,000
	Winfield	4,400,000	600,000
Greene	Boligee	*	52,206
	Eutaw	2,940,480	1,000,000
	Forkland	98,000	98,000
	Fosters-Ralph	144,000/*	373,810
	Greene County	200000/*	150,000
Hale	Akron	*	48,000
	Englewoow Hulls	*	380,000
	Greensboro (3)	6,180,000	2,300,000
	Hale County	1,859,900	1,346,500
	Moundville	1,440,000	537,370
Lamar	Detroit	144,000	39,000
	Kennedy	120,000/*	160,000
	Lamar County	519,000/*	450,000
	Millport	360000/*	150,000
	Sulligent	612,000	630,000
	Vernon	2,000,000	900,000
Pickens	Aliceville	2,356,000	800,000
	Carrollton	320,000	133,000
	Gordo	1,252,000	650,000
	Pickens County	2,282,400/*	1,713,400
	Reform	936,000	242,454
Tuscaloosa	Buhl, Elrod, Holman Water	648,000	300,000
	Carroll's Creek Water	*	941,193
	Citizen's Water Service	2,160,000/*	1,000,000
	Coaling Water Authority	*	296,000
	Coker Water Authority	720,000	295,000

	Englewood Hulls Water	*	380,000
	Fosters-Ralph Water	144,000/*	373,810
	Green Pond Water	N. A.	
	Mitchell Water	*	730,000
	Moundville Water		
	Northport	5,080,000	3,348,000
	Oakman Waterworks	N. A.	
	Peterson Waterworks	*	133,000
	Sand Springs Water	*	250,000
	Tuscaloosa Water	45,000,000	25,000,000
	Warrior River Water	N. A.	
*Purchase treated water from another system			
Harrisburg purchases treated water from Brent			
Randolph purchases treated water from Centreville and Wilton			
Belk purchases treated water from Fayette and Covin-Mt. Vernon			
Covin-Mt. Vernon purchases treated water from Fayette			
Glen Allen purchases treated water from Winfield			
Greene County purchases treated water from Eutaw and Forkland			
Akron purchases treated water from Hale County			
Hale County purchases treated water from Greensboro and Moundville			
Kennedy purchases treated water from Lamar County			
Lamar County purchases treated water from Detroit, Sulligent & Vernon			
Millport purchases treated water from Lamar County			
Carrollton purchases treated water from Pickens County			
Pickens County purchases treated water from Gordo, Reform & Lowndes County, MS			
Buhl-Elrod & Holman purchases treated water from Coker			
Carroll's Creek purchases treated water from Tuscaloosa			
Citizens' purchases treated water from Tuscaloosa and Coaling			
Coaling purchases treated water from Tuscaloosa			
Coker purchases treated water from Fosters-Ralph, Northport & Tuscaloosa			
Englewood-Hulls purchases treated water from Tuscaloosa			
Fosters-Ralph purchases treated water from Tuscaloosa			
Mitchell purchases treated water from Tuscaloosa			
Northport purchases raw water from Tuscaloosa (and can purchase treated water)			
Peterson purchases treated water from Tuscaloosa			
Warrior River purchases treated water from various sources outside the Region			
(1) West Blocton has the capacity to increase its treatment by 1,000,000 gal/day			
(2) Berry's source can provide 2,000,000 gallons/day			
(3) Greensboro's source can provide 4,680,000 gallons/day			
SOURCE: Information collected from water systems in 2006			

TABLE 22			
WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES 2007			
COUNTY	TREATMENT FACILITY	CAPACITY	AVERAGE
		GALLONS/DAY	GALLONS/DAY
Bibb	Brent-Centreville	1,600,000	840,000
	West Blocton	490,000	100,000
Fayette	Berry	150,000	100,000
	Fayette	3,000,000	2,000,000
Greene	Eutaw	880,000	570,000
	Greene County	N. A.	N. A.
Hale	Akron	200,000	46,800
	Greensboro	1,425,000	800,000
	Moundville	210,000	112,400
Lamar	Detroit	N.A.	N.A.
	Millport	210,000	180,000
	Sulligent	499,000	225,000
	Vernon	600,000	400,000
Pickens	Aliceville	1,245,000	351,000
	Carrollton	110,000	100,000
	Gordo	271,000	130,000
	Reform	500,000	450,000
Tuscaloosa	Brookwood	200,000	35,000
	Northport	5,000,000	3,000,000
	Tuscaloosa	24,000,000	18,000,000
	Vance	500,000	60,000
Woodstock is construction a collection system that will be treated by West Blocton			
Boligee has a collection system that is treated by Eutaw			
Kennedy has a collection system that is treated by Millport			
Lake View is constructing a system that will be treated by a system outside the Region			
SOURCE: Information WARC gathered from sewer systems in 2006			

WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION MAJOR WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREAS AND INDUSTRIAL PARKS



CHAPTER FIVE

POTENTIALS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Industry and Business

Prospects for increasing and expanding industry and business during the next few years are in a state of flux in most counties due to recent economic conditions. Tuscaloosa County is faring slightly better despite some minor setbacks. Mercedes has offered buy-outs to some of its workers and has occasionally had to reduce shift hours. B. F. Goodrich has had similar reductions in their work force, temporarily laying off workers, but usually reinstating them within a number of months. The most recent plant closings include Graphic Packaging International in 2009 in Tuscaloosa County, which resulted in a loss of 96 jobs, and Marathon in 2008 in Fayette County (41 jobs). Expansions that have been postponed include Steel Dust Recycling in Lamar County. Table 19 shows plant closings since 1997 and highlights the significant losses in the textile and timber industries in the rural counties.

Gains in the district include Lone Star Mill in Fayette County 25 jobs, Teppco in Greene County, Castlebrook Creamery in Hale County will reopen and re-employ 10, the new prison in Aliceville in Pickens County will employ 343, and in Tuscaloosa, Erbespaecher North America will expand and add 37 jobs.

Coal mining, once a major employer in the District, is now only a minor force in the employment market. Overseas coal has undercut the prices at which local coal can be produced. International prices will have to increase or technology will have to improve in order for coal to have the same impact it did 5-10 years ago.

During the 90's, exploration for natural gas, including methane, was very prevalent in Tuscaloosa, Bibb, and Hale counties. Many wells were drilled and capped. Major portions of these wells were drilled to take advantage of tax breaks. As prices increase and other sources become depleted, those capped wells will come into operation. This resource is an attractive asset to the District in recruiting new industry.

Most industrial activity in the District has taken place in Tuscaloosa County. One new industry has located in the Town of Millport in south Lamar County. That industry, Steel Dust Recycling, has 40 employees and plans an expansion that will create another 20-25 jobs. Additional jobs and capital investment has taken place with the trucking company and the railroad that serve SDR. A refined fuel terminal has been constructed on the Tombigbee River at Boligee in Greene County.

Investments by companies expanding or locating in the District greatly affect the growth of the District. Many new and expanding companies are in the Tuscaloosa County and northern Bibb County area. The economy of this area is more diverse than that of the other areas of the District. In order to continue to grow, and for those areas not growing or losing job opportunities, the communities must identify and publicize their unique and positive attributes. Among those items that most reflect a positive approach are a host of activities that can be classified as support activities. These include education, health services, housing, water supply and quality, sewage disposal capacity, fire protection, utility systems, land-use planning and zoning, identification of

industrial sites and transportation systems to tie all the elements together. While housing is considered as one of the necessary supportive services to provide for industrial growth, it also represents potential job provision as an industry in itself. The strengthening of all these services and an active program to develop and attract industry offer the major potentials for further economic development in District II.

Agriculture and Forestry

Prospects for increasing incomes and expanding agricultural production remain good during the next several years. There are thousands of acres available in all counties that could be developed into cropland if the economy were such that a profit could be expected. Also the development of catfish ponds, crawfish ponds, shiitake mushroom growing, angora goats, rabbits, emu, and other new products that are being introduced in the area are all possible sources of income for the farmers. The catfish industry is well established, especially in Greene and Hale Counties. Expansion is occurring in other counties. The recent construction and opening of a new processing plant in Greene County will assure the continued strong growth of the catfish industry. Crawfish is grown mainly in Greene and Hale Counties at this time. Shrimp are being grown in Tuscaloosa, Greene and Hale Counties. There is not enough experience in this endeavor to project how successful it may be.

Forest resources offer good potential for increasing incomes and to a lesser extent for increasing jobs. As the demand and prices for timber increase, landowners will have more incentive to spend money to carry out improved forestry management practices, thereby increasing job opportunities as well as the supply of timber.

Increases in the forestry related fields recently are mainly in the areas of chip and bark mills. Also two hardwood-flooring companies have located in the District; one in Aliceville (Pickens County) and one in Berry (Fayette County). A cedar saw mill and exporting concern has located in Boligee (Greene County) and is now in the process of expanding. Jobs in agribusiness and related industries that process these products are increasing, and will continue to increase as the industry increases.

Industrial Sites

There are many industrial sites available in the District, either in parks or stand alone sites. In Bibb County, the Bibb County Industrial Development Board has sold their small park in the northern end of the county to a sign manufacturing company. Fayette County and the City of Fayette own a 350 acre park in the western section of Fayette. In Greene County, the Greene County Industrial Development Authority owns the Cross Roads of America Industrial Park and the Greene County Industrial Park in the City of Eutaw. In Lamar County, the City of Vernon owns a park on the western side of the city. The Pickens County Industrial Development Authority owns a building and lot northwest of Reform. The City of Aliceville owns the Bevill-Hook Port and a 100-acre industrial park. The Town of Pickensville's Industrial Board owns the Pickensville Industrial Park. In Tuscaloosa County, the Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority, owns two parks, the Airport Industrial Park and Cedar Cove Park.

The Fayette industrial park has all utilities in place. The site is located on State Route 96 and is served by rail.

The 2,000-acre Cross Roads of America Park in Greene County is located on the Tombigbee River and is adjacent to I 20/59. The site has water, sewer and rail service. The

Greene County Industrial Development Authority recently received a commitment from an industry that will occupy their speculative building in the park. The Greene County Industrial Park in Eutaw has 40 acres remaining available for development. All utilities and rail service are in place.

In Hale County, there is no publicly owned land for industrial development.

The City of Vernon has recently acquired an industrial park west of the city off County Road 9. This site has all utilities available.

Aliceville's industrial park is located on State Route 17 near the airport. This 100-acre site has rail service and all utilities in place. The Bevill-Hook Port, five miles south of Aliceville on State Route 17 and the Tombigbee River, is a 523-acre site with an inland dock and turn-around basin.

The Pickensville Industrial Park is located on the Tombigbee River at State Route 86. The site has water, electricity and rail service on site as well as barge loading facilities.

The Tuscaloosa Airport Industrial Park is located adjacent to the Tuscaloosa Municipal Airport and U. S. 82. The park has 750 acres available with all utilities and rail service in place. The Cedar Cove Park is located between U. S. 11 and I 20/59 approximately two miles west of the Mercedes site. This site has all utilities in place.

Several other potential sites have been identified as potential industrial sites but have not yet been placed in public control.

The West Alabama Regional Commission assists the members in the District by updating Community Data Reports, available building and site listings with the Economic Development Partnership and the Alabama Development Office. Information provided to this website is available immediately. The Commission's staff also assists members in applications for funding to extend utility/access roads to industries.

CHAPTER SIX

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Strategy Committee developed goals for the District several years ago to be used as a guide in the development process. The basic goals remain the same. Under each goal each county may have several specific objectives. However, the committee felt that the site-specific objective in the District should not be listed as local conditions might change with little or no notice and the objective would no longer be valid. Goals are established to cover all areas, not just those that might be eligible for funding from the Economic Development Administration.

- Goal 1:** Water - Provide potable water to all the citizens of the District. Approximately 85% of the citizens in the District are served by a public water system. Some of the systems are approaching their maximum capacity in providing for customers and additional capacity is needed in treatment, source or storage. Several systems have deteriorated or undersized lines that need replacing due to the age of the lines or growth in the area. Each water system should attempt to provide water in sufficient quantities to provide for present and future residential and commercial/industrial uses.
- Goal 2:** Sewer - Provide sanitary sewer to as many of the District's citizens as possible. Only those areas that are heavily populated can afford to provide sanitary sewer. Lack of sewer will prevent commercial/industrial development, especially in those areas where septic tanks fail. Systems should strive to provide enough capacity to provide for present and future demands/needs.
- Goal 3:** Transportation - Provide safe transportation systems, to include surface, air, water and rail for the residents and businesses of the District.
- Goal 4:** Education - Provide the residents with a quality academic and vocation education system.
- Goal 5:** Recreation - Provide the District with adequate recreation/cultural facilities.
- Goal 6:** Housing - Provide all segments of the population with safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing.
- Goal 7:** Health - Provide quality health care for the District's residents.
- Goal 8:** Historical/Cultural Facilities - Preserve the significant historic and cultural facilities in the District.
- Goal 9:** Government - Continue to develop the cooperation between the governments in promoting the entire District.
- Goal 10:** Tourism - Promote and develop tourism in the District to the fullest extent possible, preferably through a joint effort such as the Historic West Alabama Tourism Council.

- Goal 11:** Economic Development - Promote economic/industrial development in the District. Utilize the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, Alabama Development Office, West Alabama Regional Commission and local Chambers of Commerce and Industrial Boards.
- Goal 12:** Public Safety - Provide a safe environment for the District by providing adequate police, fire, and rescue service and addressing potential natural and man-made hazards.
- Goal 13:** Telecommunications – Provide increased accessibility and use of telecommunications technology in education, law enforcement, health care, and e-commerce.

These goals are intended to be broad enough that any government can put a priority project for its local use in one or more category.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

VITAL PROJECTS

Vital projects were selected by the Strategy Committee and address the regions' greatest needs or enhance the regions' competitiveness by providing regional impact. The committee selected the top projects from the Suggested Projects list, focusing on those that would create jobs or enhance the region as a whole. The projects are ranked with 1 being the highest priority and indicate which goal is being addressed.

1. Extend water to spec building at Tuscaloosa County Airport Industrial Park (100-150 jobs) - Goal 1
2. Extend sewer service to spec building at Tuscaloosa County Airport Industrial Park (100-150 jobs) – Goal 2
3. Complete widening U.S. 82 to four lanes in Bibb, Pickens and Tuscaloosa – Goal 3
4. Construct north-south corridor through the Region – Goal 3
5. Expand Shelton State vocational programs – Goal 4
6. Build new facility in Tuscaloosa County to serve and provide jobs to adults with disabilities (100 jobs) – Goal 11
7. Provide vocation training as needed by existing industry in the Region – Goal 4
8. Develop infrastructure at the industrial parks in the Region – Goal 11
9. Extend commercial sewer service at I20-59 Exit 40 in City of Eutaw – Goal 2
10. Develop school system-sponsored dropout prevention programs – Goal 4
11. Expand medical facilities and services in the rural counties – Goal 7
12. Upgrades to crossing and main rail line at Airport Industrial Park – Goal 3
13. Construct reservoir on Yellow Creek as a source for Lamar County – Goal 1

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

Suggested Projects are shown under their respective goal and are listed singularly and in groups. Those listed in groups are similar in nature throughout the Region. These projects form a basis from which Vital Projects are selected and prioritized.

1. POTABLE WATER GOAL

Provide adequate potable water to the citizens of the Region in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the residential and commercial needs of the present and future

- Assess current conditions of water infrastructure by county; identify priority projects, develop a funding plan
- Develop new sources in Bibb County
- Rehab water lines in Brent
- Develop reservoir on the North River as a source in Fayette County
- Renovate distribution mains in Eutaw, Gordo and Moundville
- Extend water service in Eutaw
- Water line relocation at S. Needham Creek in Greene County
- Upgrade Akron's water system, construct well
- Construct storage tank in Aliceville
- Expand capacity in Aliceville
- Extend water service in Pickensville to west side of Tombigbee River
- Repair water line on Lubbub Creek in Reform
- Rehab water tanks in Reform and Moundville
- Provide generator at Northport water treatment facility

- Rehab/relocate water lines in Green Village in Northport
- Upgrade water system serving West Blocton in Bibb County
- Extend water to unserved areas in the Region
- Upgrade all water lines in the Region to a minimum of six inches
- Explore possibility of consolidating rural systems in the Region

2. SANITARY SEWER GOAL

To provide sanitary sewer to as many residents and businesses as practical

- Extend sewer to residences and businesses north of HWY 82 in Brent
- Rehab stormwater sewer system in Berry
- Renovate existing mains in Eutaw, Greensboro, Moundville, Vernon, Sulligent, Reform, Gordo and Aliceville
- Extend residential sewer service in City of Eutaw
- Expand capacity of existing systems in Brent/Centreville and upgrade Wastewater Treatment Plant in Eutaw, Greensboro, Moundville, Aliceville, Carrollton, and Reform
- Rehab stormwater system in Carrollton
- Rehab sewer lines/manholes in Carrollton
- Rehab wastewater treatment plant in Reform
- Rehab stormwater sewer system on HWY 17 North in Reform
- Extend sewer service to Holt community in Tuscaloosa County
- Extend sewer service to Culver Road in Tuscaloosa County
- Rehab/relocate sewer lines in Green Village in Northport
- Extend sanitary sewer service to Coaling in Tuscaloosa County
- Upgrade Reform's wastewater treatment facilities in Pickens County
- Support construction of new systems in areas as appropriate in the Region
- Expand service areas of existing systems in the Region
- Explore new/alternate systems for less populated areas in the Region

3. TRANSPORTATION GOAL

To provide adequate and safe transportation systems for the Region

- Four lane AL 5 from U.S. 11 to U.S. 82
- Four lane U.S. 43 through Greene, Fayette and Tuscaloosa Counties
- Rehab streets and bridges in Eutaw
- Rehab streets in Branch Heights and King Village Housing Authorities in Eutaw
- Replace S. Needham Creek bridge in Greene County
- Rehab County Road 60 in Greene County
- Pave all dirt roads in Hale County
- Improve SR 69 in Hale and Tuscaloosa Counties
- Improve SR 171 from Fayette to Northport
- Upgrade SR 18 and 96 in Fayette and Lamar Counties
- Upgrade SR 17 in Lamar and Pickens
- Upgrade Lamar County airport
- Upgrade SR 86 in Pickens County
- Upgrade SR 14 in Greene, Hale and Pickens Counties
- Construct Highway 14 bypass in Aliceville – to serve new prison 350 jobs
- Rehab downtown streets and drainage systems in Aliceville
- Rehab streets in Memphis
- Construct industrial access road to Industrial Park in Pickensville
- Resurface Northport streets
- Gateway beautification in Northport
- Replace Hunter Creek bridge in Northport
- Construct turn lane at Mitt Lary Road and Hwy 69
- Hwy 82 Phase 2 widening in Northport

- Extend Warner Parkway to I-20/59
- Complete east/north by-pass around Tuscaloosa/Northport
- Expand Intelligent Transportation system in the Tuscaloosa Urban Area
- Complete items listed in the Tuscaloosa Urban Area TIP
- Complete items listed in the RPO's Plan
- Complete Brookwood Parkway Phase II
- Investigate possible rural transit system to serve Region
- Upgrade County road and bridge systems throughout the Region
- Upgrade railroad crossings throughout the Region

4. EDUCATION GOAL

To provide residents with a quality academic and vocation education system

- Continue and expand drop-out prevention program in Bibb County
- Continue and expand Leadership Greene County to become Leadership West Alabama
- Conduct program in Hale County to assist dropouts with re-entering academic programs
- Upgrade Pickens County School system computer server and system
- Continue and expand Leadership Pickens County
- Construct a new high school and middle school in south-west Tuscaloosa County
- Continue and expand Leadership Tuscaloosa
- Establish library branches in Brookwood, Coaling, Coker and Lake View
- Support construction of schools and improved graduation rates throughout region
- Develop/maintain leadership training programs for youth and adults in the Region

5. RECREATION/CULTURE GOAL

To provide residents with adequate recreational/cultural facilities

- Construct a youth facility in the Brent/Centreville area
- Construct a civic center in Bibb and Lamar Counties
- Construct a senior center in Millport, Northport, and Coaling
- Develop parks in Glen Allen, Lake View and Pickensville
- Promote/expand the art museum in Fayette
- Continue development of Eutaw Park
- Relocate Boligee Community Park adjacent to Crossroads of America Industrial Park
- Construct a multi-purpose facility in Pickens County/Gordo
- Develop walking trails at the Pickens County Medical Center in Carrollton
- Build a community center in Coaling to provide programs and recreation for adults and youth
- Expand educational opportunities at Safe House Black History Museum in Hale County with new computers and software
- Promote tourism in the Region
- Expand/renovate recreational facilities throughout the Region

6. HOUSING GOAL

To provide all segments of the population with safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing

- Revitalize Rosedale Court in City of Tuscaloosa
- Promote public housing throughout the Region
- Encourage private developers to construct more affordable housing in the Region
- Identify affordable housing shortages within region and develop plan to remediate

7. HEALTH CARE GOAL

To provide quality affordable health care for the residents

- Promote/protect the Hale County Hospital
- Establish clinics in outlying areas of Tuscaloosa County

- Re-establish service in the Brookwood clinic
- Secure additional doctors/dentists for the rural counties

8. HISTORIC GOAL

To preserve the significant historic and cultural facilities in the Region

- Promote and expand facilities at Tannehill, Brierfield and Mound State Parks
- Continue restoration of the Greene County Court House Square
- Restore the Hale County Courthouse
- Continue restoration of Stage Coach Inn
- Continue restoration of the Pickens County Courthouse
- Continue activities of groups such as the Tuscaloosa County Heritage Commission
- Restore Opera House in City of Greensboro
- Promote restoration of historic buildings in the Region

9. GOVERNMENT GOAL

To develop the cooperation between the governments in promoting the entire District

- Promote capacity building activities in the Region
- Encourage Leadership training programs throughout the Region
- Develop community leaders through Bibb County Leadership Program

10. TOURISM GOAL

To develop tourism in the Region to the fullest extent possible

- Continue and promote local festivals throughout the Region
- Study other events to attract tourist to the Region
- Promote Theater Tuscaloosa and other similar groups in the Region
- Promote the museums in the Region
- Utilize the Alabama Bureau of Tourism, the Tuscaloosa Conventions and Visitors Bureau and other like agencies to promote the Region

11. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL

To promote economic/industrial development in the Region

- Develop new barge facility/relocate Corps of Engineers at Tuscaloosa Airport Industrial Park to include dykes and fixed crane way
- Establish industrial parks in Bibb, Hale and Pickens Counties
- Construct six-mile rail line in eastern Bibb County to serve two existing industries and attract additional development
- Provide gas service to Crossroads of America Industrial Park in Greene County (100-125 jobs)
- Upgrade electrical service capacity to Crossroads of America Industrial Park in Greene County (100-125 jobs)
- Utilize all agencies possible, such as ADO, EDAA, West Alabama Regional Commission and local boards to promote development in the Region
- Promote commercial development as possible in the Region
- Promote industrial parks in the Region
- Promote available buildings in the Region
- Develop and promote workforce development programs within region
- Form partnerships among various organizations/agencies to provide training in grant writing

12. PUBLIC SAFETY GOAL

To provide a safe environment for the Region's residents

- Construct a fire house in Gordo and Moundville
- Develop a police firing range and training center in Gordo
- Provide NOAA weather radios to residents in Pickens County
- Develop a fire department in Memphis
- Clean & channel the Buttahatchee River and Beaver Creek to prevent flooding
- Recruit additional personnel for fire departments throughout the Region
- Install fire hydrants for fire protection in rural areas of the Region
- Provide adequate equipment for fire/police departments in the Region
- Explore need for police departments in small municipalities throughout the Region
- Purchase/install adequate signage for E-911 Systems in the Region
- Construct community storm shelters throughout the Region
- Install additional Outdoor Warning Sirens throughout Region
- Upgrade railroad crossings throughout the Region to increase safety
- Upgrade drainage systems throughout Region to eliminate flooding

13. TELECOMMUNICATIONS GOAL

To increase accessibility and use of telecommunications technology

- Develop telecommunications plan for region, emphasizing educational, healthcare and business access to broadband
- Provide distance learning opportunities to students in schools throughout the region
- Improve local law enforcement safety and efficiency through video arraignment capability and other applications
- Improve medical facility patient care via telemedicine interconnectivity
- Expand e-commerce opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses
- Utilize the State of Alabama Telecommunications Plan

PUBLIC REVIEW

This document was made available for public review and comment by being placed on the WARC web page and posted in the WARC offices in August 2009.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The success of the CEDS will be measured by the following criteria:

1. The number of new jobs in the District as reported by the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations
2. The unemployment rate of the counties in the District
3. The number of additional residents that are added to water/sewer systems
4. The amount of private investment in the District

ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE PAST YEAR

Bibb County

1. Bibb County approved for CDBG-R stimulus funds for repairs to County Road 83
2. Bibb County approved for ARC funds for Youth and Adult Leadership programs
3. Bibb County water extension under construction to serve approximately 50 customers
4. City of Brent approved for sidewalk through Safe Routes to School program
5. WARC completed Bibb County Hazard Mitigation plan for AEMA/FEMA

Fayette County

1. Lone Star (Saw Mill) opens in Fayette County
2. Beville State Community College (Fayette County) received a workforce development fund allocation
3. Fayette County – ALDOT to bid resurfacing of SR 129 from SR 171 to CR 49
4. Fayette County receives Stimulus funds for road repairs
5. Fayette County announces it will proceed with reservoir project
6. Fayette County begins GPS mapping of water systems
7. Town of Berry receives Stimulus funds for downtown revitalization project
8. City of Fayette creates City Redevelopment Authority
9. WARC completed Fayette County Hazard Mitigation plan for AEMA/FEMA

Greene County

1. City of Eutaw completed CDBG project to construct a ball field
2. Greene County Industrial Board received Appropriation allocations for Industrial Park improvements and a Master Plan
3. City of Eutaw received Transportation Enhancement Stimulus funds for sidewalks
4. Town of Forkland received JAG funds for police car
5. Greene County Water and Sewer Authority receives DRA funds for sewer improvements at Greene Track
6. Greene County receives COPS stimulus funds to hire officers
7. WARC completed Greene County Hazard Mitigation plan for AEMA/FEMA

Hale County

1. Grupo Lala of Mexico purchases Dairy Fresh of Greensboro in Hale County
2. Castlebrook Creamery, Inc. to re-open Dairy Fresh Ice Cream plant in Hale County
3. Hale County Board of Education approved for ARC funds for HIPPIY (at-risk childhood development program)
4. Hale County received stimulus funds to widen and resurface portions of SR 25, SR 69 and SR 14
5. Hale County announces construction of new Whatley Health and Dental Center
6. Hale County begins CDBG funded water improvement project
7. City of Greensboro received Transportation Enhancement funds for a sidewalk improvements
8. City of Greensboro performing water and sewer rehab using CDBG funds
9. Town of Akron completes renovation of two remaining sewer lagoon ponds
10. Town of Akron completes construction of new water tank
11. Town of Moundville completes sewer outfall line and wetland cell
12. Town of Moundville begins downtown sewer rehab
13. Town of Moundville approved for FEMA AFG grant for equipment upgrades and Mobile Command Unit
14. City of Greensboro receives stimulus funds from COPS to hire officers
15. Closed RLF loan for construction company
16. WARC completed Hale County Hazard Mitigation plan for AEMA/FEMA

Lamar County

1. Lamar County approved for CDBG-R funds for a water line extension
2. Lamar County begins GPS mapping of water systems
3. Town of Kennedy approved for CDBG-R stimulus funds to rehab two water tanks
4. Town of Kennedy performing rehab of water treatment plant
5. Town of Kennedy upgrading police equipment through use of JAG grant
6. Town of Millport completes renovations to two water tanks
7. Millport Housing Authority constructs two storm shelters
8. WARC completed Lamar County Hazard Mitigation plan for AEMA/FEMA

Pickens County

1. Town of Carrollton completes sewer lagoon renovation
2. Town of Carrollton begins rehab of two sewer pump stations to serve hospital
3. The City of Aliceville receives funding approval for downtown revitalization
4. Town of Reform to purchase new patrol car using JAG funds
5. City of Aliceville receives funds from Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board for City records management and museum database
6. Town of Reform approved for DRA funds for wastewater treatment plant upgrades
7. WARC completed Pickens County Hazard Mitigation plan for AEMA/FEMA

Tuscaloosa County

1. Eberspaecher North America locates second plant in Tuscaloosa County
2. MBUSI announces plant expansion, TCIDA provides site prep grant
3. Tannehill State Park completed renovation of historic Mule Tram
4. City of Tuscaloosa received funding approval for downtown revitalization
5. City of Tuscaloosa received funds toward construction of a new Federal Courthouse
6. Tuscaloosa Army Corps of Engineers received funding approval to relocate their engineering offices
7. City of Tuscaloosa receives COPS Stimulus funds to hire officers
8. City of Tuscaloosa begins construction of amphitheater
9. Town of Brookwood approved for CDBG ED funds for sewer line extension
10. Town of Coaling purchased a new patrol car using JAG funds
11. City of Northport receives COPS Stimulus funds to hire officers
12. Tuscaloosa County approves design and bidding of new Faucett Brothers Park
13. Cities of Tuscaloosa and Northport complete new fire stations
14. WARC completed Tuscaloosa County Hazard Mitigation plan for AEMA/FEMA
15. Closed RLF loan for manufacturing company

Region

1. Committees on Education, Workforce Development, Health, and Economic Development are functioning and accomplishing initiatives in each county under the Governor's Alabama Rural Action Commission.
2. WARC continued to oversee the Governor's Black Belt Action Commission Committees on Communications, Education, Families, and Small Business Development.
3. WARC Executive Director elected Secretary/Treasurer of High Speed Rail Commission

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Appendix

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**WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION
CEDS COMMITTEE
2009**

	Member	Location	Economic Interest
1.	Ricky Hubbard	Bibb County	Business
2.	Dennis Stripling	Bibb County	Municipal Government
3.	Theron Nolen	Fayette County	Business
4.	Greg Guenin	Fayette County	Industry
5.	Danny Cooper	Greene County	Industry
6.	Nick Underwood	Greene County	County Government
7.	Howell Poole	Hale County	Banking
8.	Larry Taylor	Hale County	Business
9.	Elizabeth Johnson	Lamar County	Banking
10.	Johnny Rogers	Lamar County	County Government
11.	Tony Junkin	Pickens County	Business
12.	Roddy Sanders	Pickens County	Industry
13.	Ronny Rhodes	Tuscaloosa County	Industry
14.	Nisa Miranda	Tuscaloosa County	Education
15.	Mike Fields	Tuscaloosa County	Work Force Development
16.	Hardy McCollum	Tuscaloosa County	County Government
17.	Dara Longgear	Tuscaloosa County	Economic Development
18.	Tim Smith	Tuscaloosa County	Industry