



## Did You Know?

The Cullman Christkindmarkt brings seasonal cheer, old-world charm and delightful holiday traditions for everyone to enjoy. Inspired by the centuries-old German Christmas markets, this four-week long event blends traditional German-style holiday festivities with Southern hospitality to create a family-friendly celebration. It features an assortment of German-themed events and attractions including the tallest Weihnachtspyramide on display, the largest Ferris wheel in Alabama, carousel rides, authentic German flavors and popular holiday traditions such as ice skating, a Christmas parade and ceremonial lighting of a massive tree, plus so much more. Make your plans to attend in 2025!



[www.cullmanchristkindmarkt.com](http://www.cullmanchristkindmarkt.com)

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For information on developments in North Alabama see the 'NEWS' section of our website and follow us on Twitter [@NorthAlabamaUSA](https://twitter.com/NorthAlabamaUSA)



North Alabama  
Headlines — Q4/2024



## New Investments

### DeKalb County

**Fratco Inc.**, an Indiana-based manufacturer of drainage solutions, is investing \$17.8 million in Fort Payne to produce plastic pipe. This project is expected to create 57 new jobs.

### Madison County

**Glaukos Corporation** is building an \$82 million R&D and manufacturing facility in Cummings Research Park (CRP). Glaukos, a worldwide pharmaceutical and medical technology leader in ophthalmology focused on developing and commercializing novel therapies for the treatment of glaucoma, corneal disorders and retinal diseases, is expected to bring over 150 jobs to the region in the next 5 years. Their facility will be built on 25 acres north of Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology with an option of 15 additional acres for future expansion.

**SpaceFactory**, has announced the relocation of its Headquarters from the NYC metro area to Huntsville. SpaceFactory is a NASA Centennial Challenge-winning company dedicated to developing sustainable additive manufacturing construction solutions for point-of-need manufacturing in terrestrial and extraterrestrial environments. This relocation will create 25 new jobs.

## Industry Expansions

### Cullman County

**Precision Graphics**, an Alabama-based screen printing company, purchased a \$10 million facility in Cullman to open a new plant.

**Rehau Automotive** announced a \$43 million expansion for a new line to supply Mercedes.

### DeKalb County

**Frontier Gratings, LLC/Third Generation Fort Payne LLC**, is a fabricated structural metal manufacturer investing \$3.3 million & creating 30 jobs.

**Moriroku Technology North America (formerly RTI)**, is an automotive supplier investing \$6 million in upgrades to their Rainsville facility.

**The Children's Place Inc.**, a distribution center for the children's clothing retailer, is investing \$497,000 and adding 100 employees.

**The Heil Company (dba Environmental Solutions Group)**, a garbage truck manufacturer in Fort Payne, is investing almost \$48 million.

## Media

**North Alabama** is currently home to 15 of our state's largest industrial sites according to **Business Alabama**. Among these large sites, which range in size from a maximum of 1806 acres down to a minimum of 285 acres, North Alabama boasts an available inventory of 10,364 acres.

## Recent Developments

**Huntsville International Airport** set a record for passenger traffic in 2024 as nearly 1.5 million passengers flew in and out of the airport as of November 2024.

—*Huntsville Blast*  
Non-stop service to **New York City (Delta)** and **Houston (United Airlines)** will also begin soon, and the **Breeze** seasonal route to **L.A.** will begin again in 2025 from May 23rd through Labor Day.

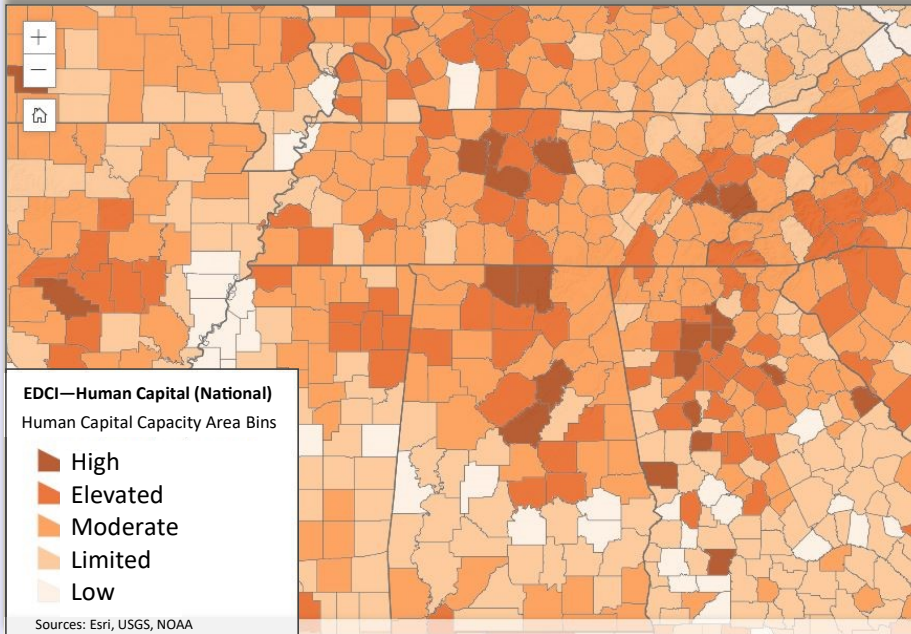


**The Port of Huntsville's Intermodal Center** volumes increased 22.3% in 2024. They also experienced their 5th busiest rail cargo year on record in 2024 with over 33,000 rail lifts.

**Huntsville, AL** has officially been named the **#1 City for Tech Talent Growth—Three Years Running**, on **CBRE's** list of up-and-coming North American tech-talent markets in their annual **Scoring Tech Talent Report**. The report ranks 75 U.S. and Canadian markets according to their ability to attract and grow tech talent. These up-and-coming markets are separate from the 50 larger tech markets that CBRE's report ranks in its Tech Talent Scorecard. Nationally, tech talent growth of 3.6% in the year ended in 2023 marked a slowdown from the 7.3% growth rate of 2022. Huntsville's local tech employment of 25,910, has grown by 17.9% in the past five years.

## Milestones

**Alabama's population** increased by more than 40,000 between July 2023 and July 2024, reaching a total of 5,157,699, according to estimates issued in December by the U.S. Census Bureau. Alabama ranked 22nd in percentage population increase and number 24 in numeric population change.



**“EDCI Human Capital Capacity Bins”** refers to a system within the Economic Development Capacity Index (EDCI) that categorizes a region's workforce quality and skills into different "bins" based on factors like education levels, workforce participation rates, and occupational skills, allowing for a comparative analysis of human capital capacity across different areas within a region or country.

**Huntsville, AL** has been ranked the **#1 Best Job Market in the U.S.** according to *SmartAsset* which examined employment, income, commute, benefits and affordability data for 340 of the largest U.S. cities.

## Industry Expansions cont.

### Limestone County

**InTech**, a manufacturer of medical equipment, is investing \$1 million in their facility in Athens.

**Morgan Metals**, a custom metal fabricator is investing \$975,000 in their facility in Athens.

**Triad Packaging, Inc.** a packaging solutions manufacturer is investing over \$413,000 in their facility in Athens.

### Madison County

**Auburn University** is expanding its presence by purchasing 13 more acres in Cummings Research Park (CRP) to build a radiation test facility that will house equipment to test and harden military electronics against radiation damage.

### Marshall County

**JST Corporation**, a Japanese-based advanced electronic connector manufacturer, is building a new 415,000SF facility in Guntersville's Connors



Island Business Park. The capital investment for this new development is expected to be approximately \$500 million. JST will be creating 80 new jobs initially, bringing their employment to 130.

### Morgan County

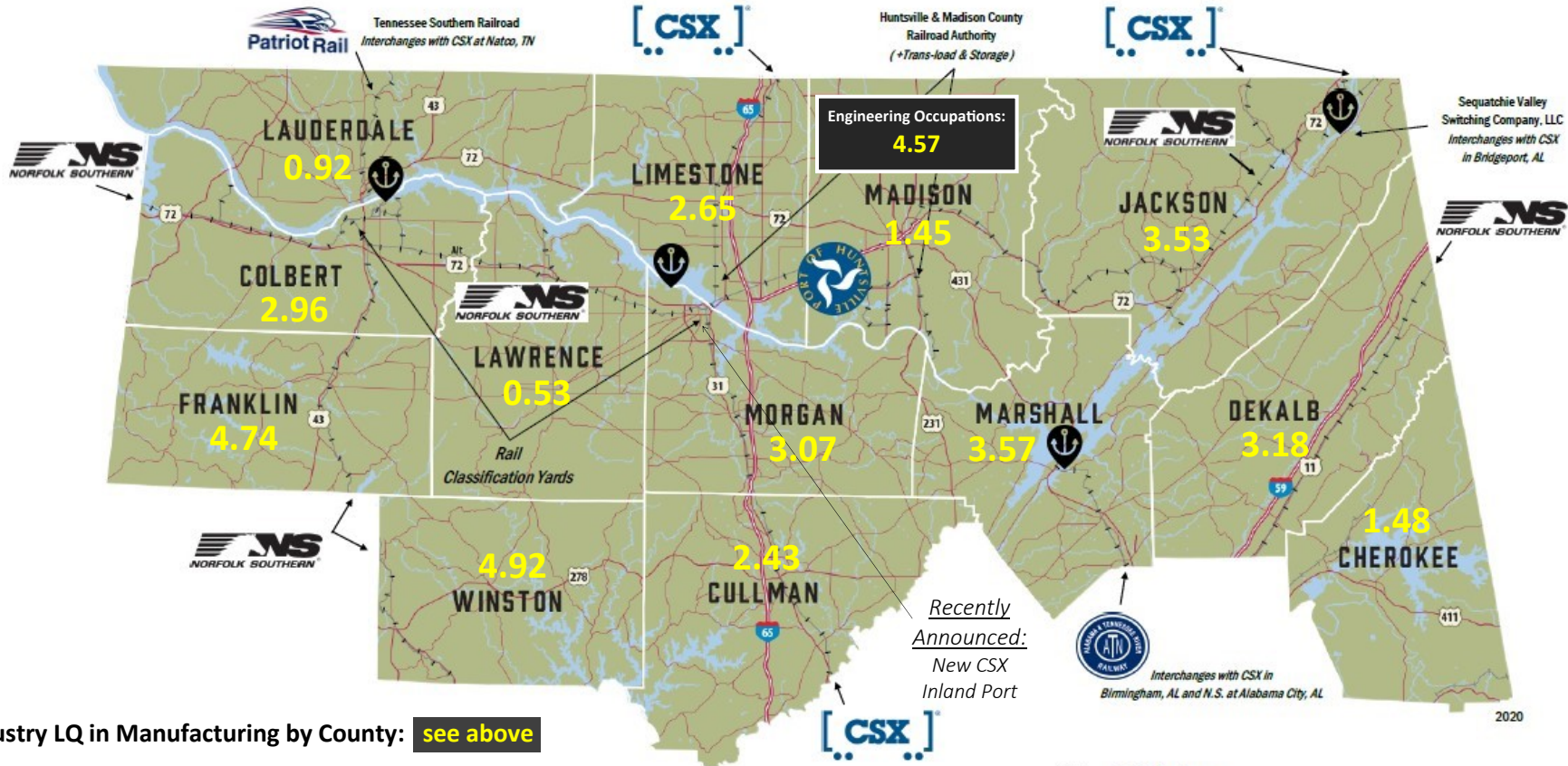
**Bunge Corporation**, a leading agribusiness and food ingredient company is investing \$20,200,000 in their Decatur facilities, securing the jobs of their 219 employees.

**McCall Brothers LLC**, is investing \$3,725,000 to add a new 60,000SF warehouse to be operated by Corporate Warehouse Services in Decatur.

**Wolverine Industries**, located in Decatur, has increased a previous announced investment figure by over \$28 million.



# Location Quotient (LQ) — Manufacturing



Overall Location Quotient  
for Manufacturing:  
**2.23**

**What is a location quotient?**

Location quotient is a measurement of concentration in comparison to the nation. A LQ of 1.00 indicates a region has the same concentration of an industry (or occupation) as the nation. A 2.00 LQ would mean the region has twice the expected employment compared to the nation.