

**BUSINESS
ADVOCATE**

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 2

*A publication of the
Business Council
of Alabama*

LET'S NOT SIGN AWAY OUR FUTURE.

FOR ALABAMA'S AUTO-MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY,
THE STAKES HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGHER.

BCA IS THE VOICE FOR ALABAMA BUSINESS. LEARN MORE AT BCATODAY.ORG

THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS LABOR UNION MUST NOT DO TO ALABAMA WHAT IT DID TO DETROIT

By Helena Duncan, President and CEO of BCA

In the early 1990s and prior, Alabama's top industry was textiles, which was evidenced by the low-wage sock mills that peppered the state along with larger facilities making blue jeans, athletic wear, and other apparel items.

But in 1993, Mercedes shocked the world and launched a transformation that continues to benefit our state today when it announced intentions to construct a \$350 million plant in Vance, Alabama, to manufacture its new M-Class SUV automobile.

Suppliers needed to make the vehicle's components soon located here, and once the wisdom of Mercedes' decision became apparent, companies like Mazda Toyota, Honda, and Hyundai built facilities in Alabama.

Those developments came at the perfect time because Alabama's textile industry largely evaporated soon after when free trade agreements negotiated during that era sent thousands of our jobs to Mexico, China, and other low-wage nations.

Like layer upon layer of building blocks, the firm foundation that our success in the automotive arena provided later allowed Alabama to build a world-class aerospace sector by attracting Boeing, Airbus, Lockheed Martin, Sikorsky, and the many high-tech firms in the Tennessee Valley.



MERCEDES-BENZ INTERNATIONAL IN VANCE, AL

Industrial partners like Austal USA are also bringing jobs and opportunity to the Gulf Coast region by building the next generation of naval warships in the Yellowhammer State.

But you may ask what prompted Mercedes to make that first bold decision to locate here more than 30 years ago.

Aside from the industrial incentives that all competing states offered, I believe that three factors unique to Alabama drew the automotive giant's attention — an eager and trainable workforce with a work ethic unparalleled anywhere in the nation, our low cost and business-friendly economic climate, and the lack of labor union activity and participation.

This combination continues to offer a perfect three-legged stool for economic development, but if any of those legs are lost, the stool cannot continue to stand, and, unfortunately, one of those legs is being threatened.

Just last month, the United Auto Workers, commonly known as the UAW, announced a renewed effort to expand its footprint by organizing laborers in states like ours that have been historically and traditionally resistant to union activity. If they are successful, Alabama, and states like ours, could soon see their automotive industry quickly recede like a falling tide. The UAW and other labor unions are typically most active in areas where the cost of living is expensive, taxes are high, and

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK UNDER THE HOOD.

Why should you be concerned about the UAW's presence here on our turf? In our state?

Alabama's auto industry has driven the state's economy for years, and it faces a potential threat from a UAW infiltration. While individuals in the industry have the right to decide on unionization, it's crucial to be well-informed.

The UAW's PR campaign includes misleading information about our auto industry, alleging inadequate wages and benefits. In essence, the UAW aims to reshape Alabama in Detroit's image, which may not be in your and the state's best interests.

Alabama's thriving auto industry, born three decades ago from humble beginnings, serves as a remarkable testament to our state's global business potential. With over 50,000 secure, well-paying jobs spread across Alabama, it has positively impacted both urban and rural communities.

Currently ranked among the top five auto-producing states, Alabama continues to grow. However, maintaining our momentum means keeping the UAW at bay.

well-paying, long-lasting jobs are scarce, but in Alabama, our cost of living and taxes are among the lowest in the nation, and we currently have an abundance of lucrative 21st Century employment opportunities for anyone who seeks them.

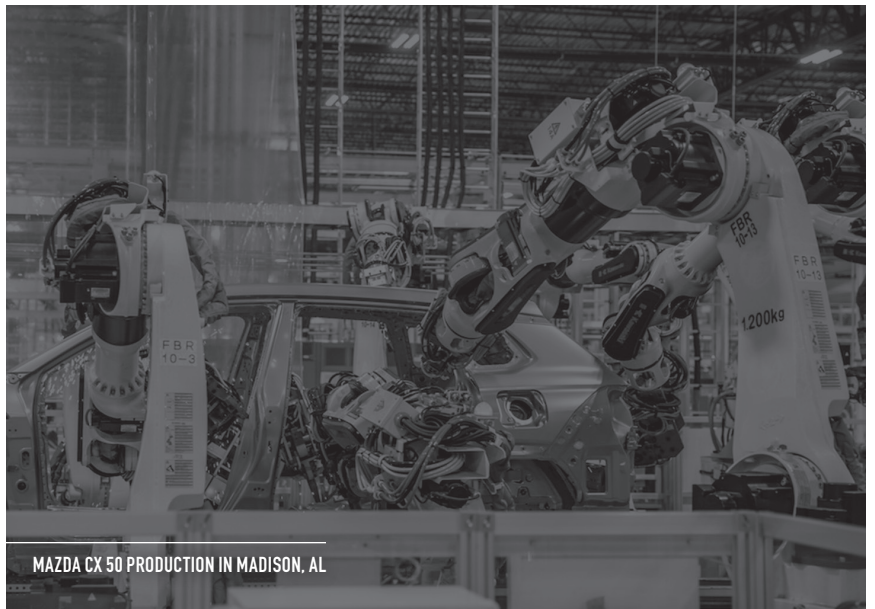
Alabama's automotive companies already offer generous salary and benefits packages across the board, and they score highly on employee satisfaction surveys.

GIVING THE UAW A TOEHOLD WITHIN THE STATE IS THE SAME AS DUMPING A LARGE AND TOXIC DOSE OF CASTOR OIL INTO A DELIGHTFULLY DELICIOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECIPE.

Since that first stunning announcement, Mercedes has continued to expand its presence in Alabama, added new models, including electric vehicles, to its portfolio manufactured in Vance, and invested more than \$7 billion in the Yellowhammer State.

Hyundai recently announced a \$300 million expansion at its Montgomery facility and is adding 200 new jobs while one of its major suppliers, Hyundai Mobis, is building a \$400 million, 400 job plant that will provide batteries for electric vehicles and become operational by 2025.

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing is currently working to hire 300 additional workers in order to reach a 4,000-employee goal at its \$2.3 billion automobile assembly plant in Huntsville.



And the \$3 billion Honda plant in Talladega County has made a large investment in upgrades to ease and hasten production of its Pilot SUV, Ridgeline pickup truck, and other vehicles.

With so much expansion, investment, and, most importantly, job creation taking place within Alabama's automotive sector, it makes no sense to risk the UAW upending this delicate balance and reversing such positive trends.

It recalls one of our best known and often used Southern expressions, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

In order to combat the UAW's efforts, which could export our jobs to other regions and kill our ability to recruit new and expanding industries, the Business Council of Alabama and our allies are beginning an informational campaign titled "Alabama Strong."

Using a website, online advertisements, and other forms of digital and social media, our campaign will provide Alabamians with a full and thorough picture of the economic dangers that unionization presents. "Alabama Strong" will also suggest ways all of us can take a stand and discourage the UAW from making our state its main battlefield.

Newspaper headlines are often filled with stories about the "decline of Detroit" as portions of the city famous for automotive manufacturing now look like Wall Street on Black Tuesday in 1929. Jobs are scarce, opportunities are few, and valid hopes for a return to its glory days as an economic center are rare.

Much of the decay that exists in the "Motor City" today results from untenable demands that the UAW placed on its automobile manufacturers, an unwise move that sent untold numbers of jobs to right-to-work states like ours and crippled a once great metropolis.

JOIN OUR "ALABAMA STRONG" CAMPAIGN AND RESOLVE THAT WE WILL NOT LET THE UAW DO TO ALABAMA WHAT IT DID TO DETROIT.

LEARN MORE AT

**ALABAMA
STRONG.COM**

The Business Advocate is published by the Business Council of Alabama, a non-partisan, statewide business association representing the interests and concerns of nearly 1 million working Alabamians through its member companies and its partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama. For more information on the Business Council of Alabama, please contact us at (334) 834-6000 or visit us online at bcatoday.org.

The Business Council of Alabama is conducting the Alabama Strong Campaign as an independent advocate for the collective business interests of the whole Alabama business community and is not a spokesperson for, agent or representative of, or working under the direction or control of any particular employer in Alabama.

BEFORE YOU SIGN KNOW WHAT'S ON THE LINE.

Thinking about signing that electronic union authorization card?

You should exercise great care when signing anything a union organizer or supporter gives you. Be aware that union authorization cards are legal documents that authorize the UAW to be your exclusive bargaining representative in your workplace. These cards are good for one year, and the UAW can use your signed card to demand your employer recognize it as your exclusive bargaining representative. This can deprive you of your right to cast a secret ballot on whether you really want a union.

Bottom line...

Alabama's auto industry has thrived independently, with no significant contribution from the UAW. Local autoworkers have consistently rejected unionization attempts, preferring direct collaboration with their employers.

As the auto industry transitions to electric vehicles, Alabama's skilled workforce remains vital. However, the UAW's decline, with a membership drop from 1.5 million to around 400,000, raises questions about the value of union involvement.