

# State Exports Up Nearly 10 Percent in 2008

Representatives from several local companies traditionally participate in Mobile Area Chamber- and state-sponsored trade missions to boost sales. Results for 2007 were \$22.5 million. Last year that number increased more than 60 percent to \$37 million.

These exports are integral to the companies who win the contracts and represent between 5 and 20 percent of total sales, yet are a fraction of the state's record total for 2008 – \$15.8 billion.

“Even though economists agree that the United States was in a recession for all of 2008, Alabama saw its exports increase by nearly 10 percent and U.S. exports increased by almost 12 percent. One could say that U.S. exports were one of the few bright spots in our economy during 2008,” said **Tony van Aken**, the Chamber's director of international trade.

For the previous year, Alabama exports increased by a mere 3.6 percent and were valued at \$14.4 billion.

Companies in the state shipped their products to 192 countries, with the top five destination markets being Germany, Canada, Mexico, China and Japan.

Finished automobiles topped the list of Alabama exports for 2008, accounting for 31 percent of the state's total exports. Vehicles produced in Alabama were shipped to 113 countries and totaled almost \$5 billion in foreign sales. Other top exports showed healthy gains with chemicals increasing 13.5 percent to \$2.27 billion, minerals and ores rising 69 percent to \$1.15 billion, and paper seeing a 12.7 percent increase to \$1 billion. Exports of primary metal manufacturing increased 73 percent to \$1 billion.

“Alabama companies have proven they know how to compete in the global market. That means more jobs for our citizens, higher wages and a stronger economy for our state,” said **Gov. Bob Riley**. “The more aggressive and proactive we are in exporting, the more successful Alabama is going to be.”

Alabama imported \$24.6 billion worth of goods, with top imports including mineral fuel, industrial machinery, vehicles, iron and steel, and apparel.

U.S. exports increased by 11.8 percent and were valued at \$1.3 trillion. Central Gulf Coast states all had increases – Florida (20.9 percent), Alabama (9.9 percent), Mississippi (40.8 percent) and Louisiana (38 percent).

“The value of the dollar this last year made U.S. products cheaper and more competitively priced and is one of the reasons for the increase,” explained van Aken.

In addition he added U.S. free trade agreements have significantly increased both national and state exports by leveling the playing field and reducing or eliminating tariffs and barriers for U.S. products. According to U.S. Chamber statistics, since the North American Free Trade Agreement was enacted in 1994, Alabama exports increased 181 percent; Chili Free Trade Agreement, 2004, 61.5 percent increase; Singapore Free Trade Agreement, 2004, 43.6 percent; and Australia Free Trade Agreement, 2005, 50.8 percent.

Trade statistics show that more than two-thirds of U.S. exporters have fewer than 20 employees, and 97 percent are small to medium-sized businesses. Employees who

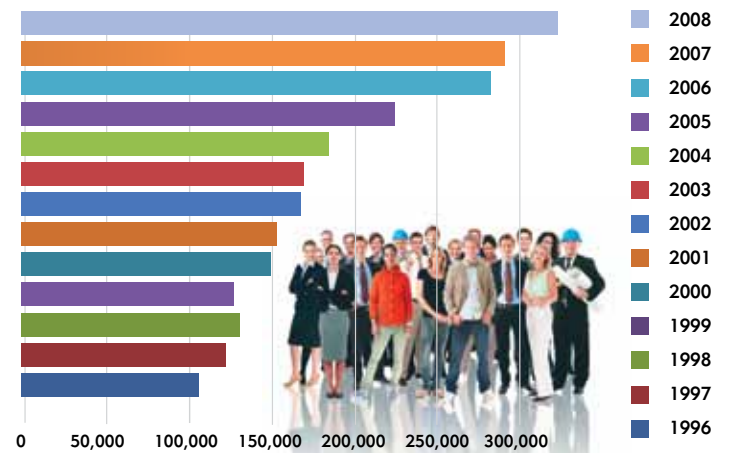
work with exporting companies make 13 to 18 percent more than their counterparts in non-exporting businesses.

The Chamber is sponsoring or assisting in several trade missions this year, starting in April with a trip to Mexico, followed by Australia in June, Colombia in September

(tentative) and India and Dubai in November.

Companies interested in expanding their export market should contact **Bridgette Clark** at 694-0702 or [bclark@mobilechamber.com](mailto:bclark@mobilechamber.com).

## Export Jobs Created 1996 - 2006 18,000 jobs per 1 billion in exports



Jobs created and supported by Alabama Exports

**Jobs created or supported by exporting reached nearly 300,000 last year, more than doubling those of a decade ago. Jobs positively impacted by rising exports include those at stevedoring companies, truck lines, manufacturers and logistical support. Employees who work with exporting companies make 13 to 18 percent more than their counterparts in non-exporting businesses.**

Source: Wisner

## Value of Alabama Exports



**Alabama exports increased by nearly 10 percent last year, reaching \$15.8 billion, while U.S. exports increased by almost 12 percent and were valued at \$1.3 trillion. Companies in the state shipped their products to 192 countries, with the top five destination markets being Germany, Canada, Mexico, China and Japan. In addition, Central Gulf Coast states all had increases, Florida (20.9 percent), Alabama (9.9 percent), Mississippi (40.8 percent) and Louisiana (38 percent).**

Source: Wisner

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