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IT'S OFFICIAL: AIRBUS IS COMING



I was honored to join other state and local officials in welcoming Airbus to Mobile on July 2. During the ceremony at the Convention Center, Airbus CEO Fabrice Bregier and Governor Robert Bentley signed an agreement for the new \$600 million aircraft manufacturing facility at Brookley Aeroplex.

Two and a half years ago, Mobile and the Gulf Coast garnered unwanted front page news after an unprecedented man-made disaster threatened our shores. Earlier this month, Mobile, again, captured international headlines. This time we were proud to stand in the spotlight.

On July 2, Airbus CEO Fabrice Bregier, flanked by state and local leaders, officially announced that Mobile will soon be home to the international aircraft company's first American assembly plant. After 7-1/2 years, our long wait is finally over.

It is official. Airbus will construct a \$600 million facility at Mobile's Brookley Aeroplex where it will assemble three commercial aircraft – the A319, A320 and A321 and employ up to 1,000 local workers.

Approximately 2,500 jobs will also be created during the two-year construction of Airbus's aircraft assembly complex. Site construction is expected to begin next summer with the first A320 aircraft rolling out of Brookley by 2016. When operating at full capacity, the Mobile facility is expected to assemble four aircraft a month.

This is only part of the story, however. Many more jobs could come to our region once Airbus suppliers are selected. Close ties forged over nearly a decade helped South Alabama land Airbus and similar efforts to establish relationships with Airbus' potential suppliers are vital if our region hopes to capture even more jobs.

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RESTORE ACT NOW LAW

On July 6, President Obama signed the RESTORE Act into law, heralding a new opportunity for economic and environmental restoration in our coastal communities in the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

While we worked to finalize RESTORE for more than a year, it is perhaps ironic that final approval was nearly drowned out by another big event – the landing of Airbus in Mobile. But no one is complaining.

On June 29, 2012, the RESTORE Act passed the House by a 373 to 52 vote as part of the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012. It was quickly green-lighted in the Senate before heading to President Obama's desk.

Only one more hurdle remains before Gulf Coast states can claim their share of restoration funds: the legal settlement between BP and the federal government. More than two years after the tragic Gulf oil spill, BP and the Justice Department are still negotiating the fines the oil company and other parties involved in the largest environmental disaster to strike our shores will have to pay.

Under the RESTORE Act, 80 percent of future Clean Water Act fines paid by BP and others in connection with Deepwater Horizon will be steered back to those areas where the greatest harm was done – the Gulf Coast. These fines are estimated to range from hundreds of millions to billions of dollars.

There is little question the impact of the April 2010 oil spill will be felt along our shores and in our coastal communities for years to come. However, the RESTORE Act offers the potential for renewed economic prosperity and environmental restoration to offset the regional losses we have suffered and prepare our region for future disasters.

The passage of the RESTORE Act is a victory for coastal Alabama and the Gulf region which have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to set a new course for economic prosperity and growth.

I was pleased to be an original cosponsor of the RESTORE Act when it was introduced in the House last year and a member of a coalition of Gulf Coast lawmakers who worked behind the scenes for more than a year to see this vital legislation passed into law.

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Just days after the Airbus announcement in Mobile, I took part in an aviation jobs recruiting mission to the international aviation trade show and air show in Farnborough, England. Perhaps never before has Alabama been the recipient of so much attention from the world's aircraft industry. Our state delegation spent several long days in meetings with prospective Airbus suppliers, and I believe there will be more good news in the near future.

Now that Airbus has landed in our backyard, Alabama is on the verge of a jobs transformation. Before 1993, Alabama workers played only a small role in auto manufacturing. After Mercedes came to Tuscaloosa that year, the landscape dramatically changed. Suddenly, Alabama was on the radar of other auto makers. In less than 20 years we have gone from just a few thousand to 35,000 auto manufacturing jobs.

Alabama is already home to nearly 47,000 commercial aviation and aerospace jobs. More than 3,000 of these jobs are in Southwest Alabama. Airbus has the potential to remake Alabama as a major player in aviation manufacturing just as Mercedes did for our auto industry.

As Airbus confidently soars into a bright future filled with blue skies and unlimited potential, we are so excited to be on the front row for this exciting journey.



Baldwin County Commissioner Tucker Dorsey and I met with Pratt & Whitney VP Paul Finklestein at the Farnborough Airshow in early July. Pratt & Whitney is one of many suppliers for the Airbus A320 which will be assembled in Mobile. The company's new geared turbofan engine will help the A320 be 15 percent more fuel efficient than earlier models.



We're honored to have Maggie Fleming intern in our Mobile District Office this summer. Maggie is a history major at Tulane University where she will begin her junior year this fall.

AUSTAL USA EXPANDS TO FULL PRODUCTION OF LCS AND JHSV

July is proving to be a memorable month for our area. Airbus's announcement, followed by the signing of the RESTORE Act kicked off the month. Then days later, Mobile's Austal USA held a ribbon cutting signifying a major expansion of its local shipbuilding facility.

On July 6, a little more than a year after breaking ground, Austal officially opened its new Module Manufacturing Facility (MMF) Phase 2, Assembly Bay 5 and new office complex.

The MMF expansion can

accommodate a total workforce of up to 1,200 personnel in the new buildings. According to Austal, the completion of MMF Phase 2 now makes the MMF large enough to hold all of the football fields of the Southeastern Conference inside its walls.

The state-of-the-art facility is capable of constructing six large aluminum vessels such as the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and/or the Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV). Construction is currently progressing in the MMF on modules for JHSV 2, 3 and 4 and LCS 6 and 8.

Austal says Assembly Bay 5 is long enough to construct an LCS completely inside and is about 10 feet taller than Bays 3 and 4, allowing additional clearance for the LCS uppermost deckhouse. The building contains additional overhead cranes to allow modules to be rotated inside the assembly bay.

Austal's new three-story, 110,000 square foot office complex will house 450 employees. It is five times the size of the existing two-story office building. This new office building will allow Austal to co-locate its engineers, project and program offices, purchasing, contracts and legal, finance, business integration, and sales and marketing, which are currently spread all over Mobile in separate buildings and trailers.

On July 12, the House passed the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2013, including funding for continued Navy shipbuilding at Austal.

The defense bill funds local construction of two additional LCSs and one JHSV. Austal currently has a contract with the Navy to produce up to ten LCSs, four of which have been paid for, and ten JHSVs, all ten having now been bought by the Navy once this legislation becomes law.

The contracts position Austal to grow its Mobile workforce to approximately 4,000 employees.



On July 6, Austal cut the ribbon marking a major expansion of the Mobile shipbuilder. The new facilities include an office complex that will house 450 employees, a massive Module Manufacturing Facility and Assembly Bay. Shown above is Austal's Joint High Speed Vessel, USS Spearhead, during April sea trials. Austal projects its local workforce will soon reach 4,000 as the company produces up to ten JHSV and littoral combat ships (LCS) for the Navy.

JUNE TOWN MEETINGS



During June, I held 18 congressional town meetings throughout Southwest Alabama, including the one shown above at the Grand Bay Community Center on June 11. Even with heavy rains and flooding in some areas people were not deterred from coming out to express their views. From Frisco City to Foley, the economy and national debt were uppermost on many people's minds. As a gentleman at one of the town meetings observed, we are not Democrats or Republicans first, but Americans. In this spirit, we each have a duty to work together to seek a solution to the problems facing our nation. Unfortunately, this South Alabama common sense is often missing in Washington. I appreciate everyone coming out to personally talk with my staff and me. Since taking office in 2003, I have conducted 250 town meetings.



This summer has been a busy one for South Alabama college students interning in my Washington, DC office. From helping answer the phones to performing legislative research, the 15 college interns who have served my office from May through July have done a superb job. Shown here are five June interns: Trip Casteix from Mobile, Janie Turner from Mobile, Caroline Dunklin from Greenville, Anna McClure from Mobile, and Harris Morrisette from Mobile.

SOUTH ALABAMA STUDENTS APPOINTED TO MILITARY ACADEMIES

One of the honors of being your congressman is the privilege of nominating South Alabama's brightest young men and women to our nation's service academies.

In order to receive an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, an individual must first receive a nomination from his or her U.S. Representative or Senator.

I am pleased to announce that the following South Alabama students have received appointments to the various U.S. Service Academies for the Class of 2016.

U.S. Air Force Academy

- Chris Boudreaux
- Tom Moore
- Carson Orwig
- Madeleine Philpot

U.S. Military Academy

- Ben Andrews
- Justin Joiner
- Tom Moore

U.S. Naval Academy

- Dan Drew
- Josh Harrelson
- Patricia Neno
- Danny Rose

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

- Will Burch

From the mailbox...



Representative Bonner:

Over the past year, I have unsuccessfully tried to persuade the VA to reverse a decision they made concerning three veterans that graduated from the Institute in Mobile. The VA refused to show any professional courtesy or accountability regarding the numerous attempts I made to get someone to review the appeal. The VA compliance agent had invoked an erroneous regulation and VA senior official refused to accept responsibility for the blunder.

Thankfully, one of the veterans sought assistance from your office, and Elizabeth Roney, [your] Senior Caseworker, persisted until the VA repealed their decision that had revoked the veterans' education benefits and demanded each veterans repay over \$10,000 in tuition.

Ms. Roney's efforts corrected a gross injustice imposed on the three veterans. Her desire to not accept the VA's unaccountability is tremendously appreciated by the three veterans and me.

*Best regards,
President of the Institute
April 26, 2012*