

Top Marriott and Renaissance Spas Found in “Sweet Home Alabama”

While the resort spas in Aruba, Palm Beach, San Paula and St. Croix certainly are first class, the best Marriott and Renaissance Hotel spas in 2014 are found in *Sweet Home Alabama*.

In fact, three of the top seven Renaissance Hotel spas and two of the top four Marriott spas are part of the Resort Collection along Alabama’s Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail.

From the custom massages and facials to body and nail treatments, the RTJ Spa Trail features Southern Hospitality and innovative treatments that are truly world class.

Clearly great golf and spas work well together in Alabama. Below are the current Renaissance and Marriott spa rankings as of August 1, 2014:



The Spa at the Grand Hotel Marriott Resort

RENAISSANCE SPA RANKINGS:

- 1.) Spa at Renaissance Montgomery
- 4.) Spa at the Battle House Hotel – Mobile
- 7.) Spa at Renaissance Ross Bridge – Birmingham

MARRIOTT SPA RANKINGS:

- 1.) Spa at the Marriott Shoals – Florence
- 4.) Spa at the Grand Hotel – Point Clear ●

RTJ & PGA

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

Alabama’s Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail will hold its first PGA event in July 2015. The event, to be known as the “Barbasol Championship,” will be the first PGA tournament in Alabama since 1990.

Governor Bentley said the economic impact should be in the \$20-25 million range and will have a \$3.5 million purse. Bentley stated the tournament will be played at the RTJ Lakes Course in Opelika the first year of the four-year contract.

We are delighted to show off the beauty of Alabama’s RTJ Trail to the world with four days of broadcasts to over 110 countries. Many thanks to our political and business leaders for making this event a reality. ●

What the numbers show: Alabama dependent on federal funding

BY LEADA GORE | AL.COM

On average, state governments receive 32.8 percent of total general revenues from transfers from the federal government. In Alabama – and in many other Republican-heavy states – that amount is even higher. A recent study by the personal finance network Wallet Hub showed Alabama receives 37.02 percent of its revenue from the federal government. That’s the 10th highest in the country. Also, the state receives \$3.28 for every \$1 it pays in federal taxes, an amount that’s equal to the third highest in the country.

The Wallet Hub data also includes the percentage of federal employees in each

state. Alabama ranked 38th for the number of federal employees per capita, with about 11.66 percent of the state’s workforce employed by the federal government. Using those factors, Alabama was ranked as the third most dependent state in the nation, behind only New Mexico and Mississippi, which tied for the first position.

Other states receiving a high portion of federal dollars are Louisiana, Maine, Montana, Tennessee and West Virginia. Of those, only Maine voters opted for President Barack Obama in the 2012 presidential election. On the other end of the federal aid spectrum are Delaware,

Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Using the data – federal funding as a percent of state revenue, return on taxes paid to the federal government and number of federal employees per capita – Wallet Hub said Republican-voting states are “altogether more reliant on federal funding than Blue (Democratic) states.” That federal funding often translates to lower state tax rates. “The more dependent a state is on the federal government, the less likely it is to charge high tax rates,” Wallet Hub said. ●

Economic Impact of RSA's Golf Complex and Conference Center in The Shoals

BY DR. MARK FAGAN, DEPARTMENT HEAD EMERITUS, JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

RSA financed a 36-hole golf complex that opened in 2004 in The Shoals in Northwest Alabama as the ninth site on The RTJ Golf Trail. The Shoals refers to the rocky portions of The Tennessee River near Wilson Dam. The Shoals is composed of four towns in close proximity (Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, and Tuscumbia) located in two counties separated by the river. The golf complex was built on the south side of the river in Colbert County.

RSA financed the Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa that opened in 2005 on the north side of the river near Wilson Dam in Lauderdale County. Title to the existing Renaissance Tower on the hotel property was transferred to RSA and it was restored as a revolving restaurant. RSA then leased the existing conference center near the tower and connected it by covered walkway to the hotel. The Veterans Park and River Heritage Trail were included as components of this conference center.

Housing was developed near the golf complex. The total construction spending for the golf complex, hotel/spa/conference center, and new housing is estimated at \$120 million. Applying the RIMS II Final Demand Multipliers, the following impacts were determined. The total output was \$258 million; the total earnings were \$87 million; the total jobs were 2,340; and the value added was \$140 million. State and local tax revenue, such as income and sales, are not included in these impacts, nor is the spending by governments of the tax revenue.

RSA and SunBelt Golf advertised these tourism amenities worldwide to bring tourists to The Shoals. The Trail

(including The Shoals) has received millions of dollars in free publicity on television and in print media. The golf complex and hotel/conference center

related spending in Colbert and Lauderdale Counties for 2003 was \$108 million and for 2013 was \$243 million, an increase of \$135 million. At the end of 2013, the total increase in annual tourism spending over the 2003 level was \$851 million.

State and local sales taxes from tourism spending for 2003 were \$9.7 million and for 2013 were \$21.9 million, an increase of \$12.2 million. At the end of 2013, the total increased state and local sales taxes from tourism spending were \$76.6 million over the 2003 level. State and local lodging taxes for 2003 were \$1.1 million and for 2013 were \$2.4 million, an increase of \$1.3 million. At the end of 2013, the total increased state and local lodging taxes over the 2003 level were \$8.2 million over the 2003 level. This totals \$86 million in tourism sales and lodging taxes over what might have been collected with no golf complex, hotel/spa, and major advertising.

The partnership developed by RSA with the political and business leaders in The Shoals during negotiations for the golf complex and hotel/conference center laid the foundation for further investments by RSA in The Shoals. RSA invested \$1.3 billion in two

major manufacturing companies in The Shoals. Navistar partners with Freight Car America to share the Barton facility. The \$670 million loan to Wise Metals has been fully repaid while giving RSA a 15 percent equity interest at no cost. The impact from these investments and image enhancement are increasing the quality of life and providing ongoing economic assets for Alabama. ●



MARRIOTT SHOALS HOTEL & SPA



RTJ GOLF COURSES AT THE SHOALS

now allows conventions of 200 to 400 participants to be hosted in The Shoals. Major organizations throughout the region and beyond have been meeting at the hotel/conference center. The golf complex has had about 50 percent of play by golfers from out-of-state. It has hosted people from 39 states, several Canadian provinces, and a number of European countries.

Annual Reports for the Alabama Tourism Department showed tourism

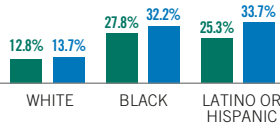
Alabama is the Nation's Seventh Poorest State

Nearly 900,000 of our neighbors – including 300,000 children – live below the poverty line.

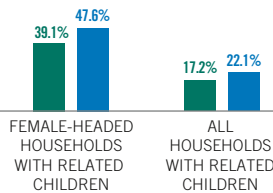
Alabama Possible is a statewide nonprofit organization that works to reduce systemic poverty and its root causes by inspiring Alabamians to pursue a state in which no individual's quality of life is diminished by poverty.

POVERTY BY:

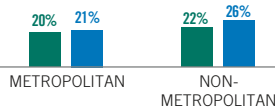
RACE



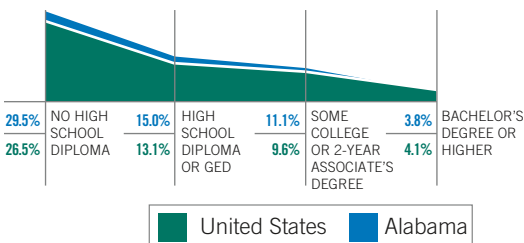
HOUSEHOLD TYPE



REGION



EDUCATION LEVEL



Source: alabamapossible.org

WANT TO HELP? A FREE CAR TAG

Tired of that worn-out dealer tag on the front of your car? Would you like to help the RSA and our Alabama Tourist Department advertise "Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail" on your front bumper? If so, call to request a tag at 334.517.7000 or 877.517.0020, or write:

Tag, P.O. Box 302150
Montgomery, AL 36130-2150

ALABAMA



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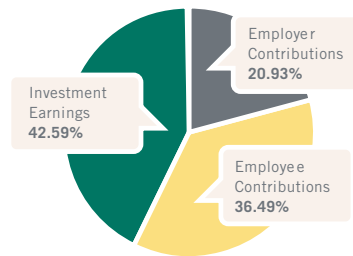
Key Findings

Pensionomics 2014:

Measuring the Economic Impact of DB Pension Expenditures

Overview

Expenditures made by retirees of state and local government provide a steady economic contribution to Alabama communities and the state economy. In 2012, 115,224 residents of Alabama received a total of \$2.9 billion in pension benefits from state and local pension plans.



The average pension benefit received was \$2,114 per month or \$25,367 per year. These modest benefits provide retired teachers, public safety personnel, and others who served the public during their working careers income to meet basic needs in retirement.

Between 1993 and 2012, 20.93% of Alabama's pension fund receipts came from employer contributions, 36.49% from employee contributions, and 42.59% from investment earnings. Earnings on investments and employee contributions—not taxpayer contributions—have historically made up the bulk of pension fund receipts.

Impact on Jobs and Incomes

Retiree expenditures stemming from state and local pension plan benefits supported 36,063 jobs in the state. The total income to state residents supported by pension expenditures was \$1.4 billion.

To put these employment impacts in perspective, in 2012 Alabama's unemployment rate was 7.1%. The fact that DB pension expenditures supported 36,063 jobs is significant, as it represents 1.7 percentage points in Alabama's labor force.

Economic Impact

State and local pension funds in Alabama and other states paid a total of \$2.9 billion in benefits to Alabama residents in 2012. Retirees' expenditures from these benefits supported a total of \$4.8 billion in total economic output in the state, and \$2.6 billion in value added in the state.

\$2.6 billion in direct economic impacts were supported by retirees' initial expenditures. An additional \$1.3 billion in indirect impact resulted when these businesses purchased additional goods and services. \$868.7 million in induced impacts occurred when workers employed by businesses as a result of the direct and indirect impacts made expenditures.

Total Economic Impact \$4.8 billion

direct
impact
\$2.6 billion

indirect
impact
\$1.3 billion

induced
impact
\$868.7 million

Totals may not add up due to rounding. For data and methodology, see Rhee, N., 2014, *Pensionomics 2014: Measuring the Economic Impact of DB Pension Expenditures*, National Institute on Retirement Security, Washington, DC, www.nirsonline.org. Results not directly comparable to previous Pensionomics due to methodological refinements.

"Come Join Us"— The Yokohama Tire LPGA Classic

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ENJOY YOUR FALL
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**The Battle House,
 A Renaissance Hotel – Mobile – \$109**
 • September 1-5, 17-19
 • October 1-2, 5-13, 17-28, 30-31
 • November 2-4, 9-27, 28-30

The Renaissance Riverview Plaza – Mobile – \$99
 • September 1-5, 17-19
 • October 1-2, 5, 17, 31
 • November 2-4, 9-27, 28-30

Marriott Grand – \$109 plus a 15% resort fee
 • September 1, 4, 14-16, 21-24 • October 1, 15, 19-21, 28-30
 • November 2-4, 18-20, 23-24

Marriott Grand – RSA Golf Package – \$179
plus a 15% resort fee – Promotional code—R2A
 Includes: Deluxe Room, One Round of Golf for Two People.
 Call for Tee Times after booking package
 • September 4, 14-15, 22-23
 • October 1, 20-21, 28-30 • November 2-4, 18-20, 23-24

**Marriott Shoals – Florence – \$99;
 Breakfast Package \$124**
 • September 1-4, 6-8, 13-14, 21, 27-30
 • October 3-5, 17 • November 2-3, 9-10, 14-15, 25-30

Renaissance Ross Bridge – Hoover – \$109
 • September 1-4, 14-16, 21-25, 28
 • October 1-2, 12-13, 26-31 • November 3-5

Opelika Marriott – \$99
 • September 1-4, 7-14, 16, 18, 21-22, 24, 28-30
 • October 1-2, 5-9, 12-14, 19, 26, 28-29
 • November 2-6, 9-20, 23-30

Prattville Marriott – \$89
 • September 1-3, 5-6, 11-15, 22-23, 25, 28
 • October 5-7, 11-16, 19-27, 29-30
 • November 1-6, 8-11, 13-20, 23-30

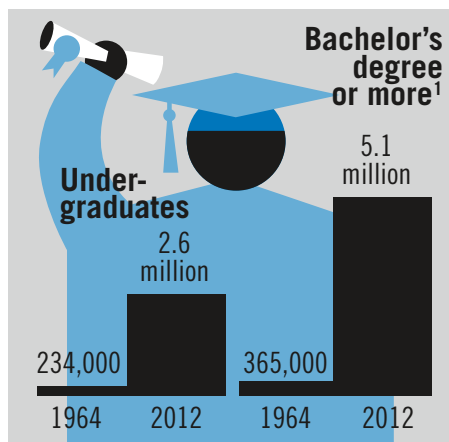
Renaissance Montgomery – \$109
 • September 1-2, 7-9, 12-13, 21, 25, 29
 • October 2, 5-7, 9, 12-13, 18-20, 25-26, 30-31
 • November 3-4, 9-10, 15-19, 23-29
RSA Spa Package – \$189 – Promotional code—R2A
 • September 2, 9, 12-13, 25
 • October 2, 7, 9, 18, 25, 30-31
 • November 4, 15, 18-19, 25, 28-29

*Specific room requests may require additional charge.
 Rates available the 1st of the month and
 are not applicable to groups.*

800-228-9290 Ask for RSA rate. **Promotional
 Code: R2A** on www.rsa-al.gov
Book Online and Save RSA \$4.

Progress in black higher education

The 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination. Effect on African-American college enrollment:



1 – Age 25 and over

Source: Census Bureau

Repetitive Injuries

Civil wars and internal armed conflicts in the Middle East, 1975–2014

| Country (Time-frame of conflict) | Estimated deaths |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Lebanon (1975-90) | 100,000 |
| Syria, Hama (1982) | 20,000 |
| Yemen (1986) | 10,000 |
| Iraq, Anfal (1986-89) | 100,000 |
| Algeria (1991-2002) | 200,000 |
| Yemen (1994) | 1,500 |
| Sudan, Darfur (2003-present) | 300,000 |
| Iraq (2004-07) | 93,000 |
| Yemen (2011) | 2,000 |
| Egypt (2011-present) | 3,000 |
| Libya (2011-present) | 30,000 |
| Syria (2011-present) | 160,000 |

Source: *The Economist*, UNHCR; WikiLeaks



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RSA-1

Rhonda H. Peters

Teachers' Retirement

Christopher P. Townes

The Retirement Systems of Alabama

201 South Union Street

P.O. Box 302150

Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2150

Phone: 334.517.7000

877.517.0020

RSA Website: www.rsa-al.gov