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## Alabama development office named best in U.S.

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by [Cindy F. Crawford](#)

Staff

**An industry magazine named the Alabama Development Office the top state economic development agency in the United States for its success in attracting new capital investment in 2006.**

Site Selection magazine Wednesday gave the office the 2006 Competitiveness Award. The agency also won the award, which scores groups based on new plant activities, in 2005 for industrial investment.

North Carolina placed second, followed by Indiana, Georgia and Ohio.

Last year, 568 companies located or expanded in Alabama, bringing 24,780 new jobs and more than \$3.1 billion in capital investment. Companies coming include the planned \$44 million, 1,300-job Verizon Wireless call center in Huntsville and \$107 million in capital investments planned in the Black Belt region that should bring nearly 1,100 jobs.

ADO Director Neal Wade said it has been a goal of the agency for the past four years to focus on job growth in both the urban and rural areas of the state.

"I think the job creation numbers for 2006 clearly indicate that we have enjoyed record job growth throughout Alabama," Wade said in a news release. "Even today, we are working more mega projects than ever before that could continue to expand job growth in all parts of the state."

Wade expects a strong 2007 for job creation, depending on whether ThyssenKrupp and several other mega projects decide to locate in Alabama.

In a special session two months ago, the Alabama Legislature unanimously approved new incentives that could be used to help win the ThyssenKrupp steel project and other projects being worked across the state. The measure must still be approved by the voters in an election June 5.

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