

BALDWIN INSIDER

Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) Enhancing Manufacturing Workforce Pipeline

As Baldwin County continues to grow, it is vital to support the manufacturing industry to help diversify our local economy. With manufacturing jobs on average paying 29% more than the county's average wage, promoting and growing this economic sector is critical. To meet the demand for a skilled workforce, industry leaders have launched a new chapter of the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) in Baldwin County, FAME Built by Baldwin.

FAME Built by Baldwin is a work-based learning initiative connecting Coastal Alabama Community College students to local industries to cultivate a pipeline of skilled workers and Baldwin County will officially welcome its first cohort in May 2025.

The program will provide work experience in mechanical equipment, electrical controls, robotics, pneumatics, hydraulics, industrial computers, and motor controls – paired with the opportunity to earn an Advanced Manufacturing Technician credential. The students will divide their time between the classroom and one of the ten companies sponsoring the program, spending two days per week in class and three training with their employer.

The FAME Built by Baldwin program is supported by Coastal Alabama Community College and a coalition of industry sponsors, including Vulcan, Inc., Novelis, Segers, Quincy Compressors, Coca-Cola, Collins Aerospace, Gulf Packaging, Inc., Kaishan Compressor USA, Ecovery, LLC., Saunders Yachtworks, and others. Students will be placed with their sponsoring companies upon graduation, ensuring a direct path from the school door to the factory floor.



Jennifer Crawford,
Vulcan, Inc.

"Vulcan is proud to be affiliated with the new FAME Built by Baldwin program at Coastal Alabama Community College," Jennifer Crawford, SPHR, Vice President of Human Resources at Vulcan, Inc., said. "Through our partnership with this new curriculum, we are committed to nurturing the next generation

of talent, empowering them with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the ever-evolving landscape of manufacturing."

The FAME program could not come at a better time to continue helping foster a sustainable workforce pipeline, especially with Baldwin County's newest manufacturer, Novelis, looking to fill 1,000 positions for their soon-to-be-built aluminum plant in Bay Minette.



Amanda Selph, Novelis

"Novelis is a proud part of FAME USA at multiple chapters across the U.S.," Amanda Selph, Human Resources Business Partner Lead at Novelis Bay Minette, said. "When we start talking about how many jobs we will have open at Novelis - we are often asked, 'Where are

you going to get all those workers?' The answer - 'everywhere.' Novelis wants to be a part of the talent ecosystem that grows talent and reaps the rewards of motivated learners. FAME's mechatronics program is especially critical for us as we develop our future tradespeople into mechanics and electricians."

For the students motivated to tackle this growing industry, work-based learning resources such as FAME Built by Baldwin and Baldwin Preparatory Academy are great opportunities. Baldwin Preparatory Academy is Alabama's first standalone career-tech high school and offers mechatronics as an area of study to further support workforce development.

Coastal Alabama Community College is also strengthening its commitment to the manufacturing workforce. The college's Workforce Development division recently secured a \$250,000 grant from the Alabama Community College Systems (ACCS) Industry Certification Initiative to purchase new equipment for the FAME Built by Baldwin learning lab at Fairhope Airport Academy.

"We know that FAME is a world-class program," Dr. Josh Duplantis, Dean of Workforce for Coastal



Dr. John Duplantis,
Coastal Alabama
Community College

Alabama Community College, said. "For Coastal, we want to assure that the lab environment for students matches the FAME Built by Baldwin brand. We are thankful for ACCS giving us the opportunities to apply for these funds to support programs that help us grow local talent with our local industries."

The FAME Built by Baldwin program will be a pivotal initiative that will leverage the region's workforce strengths and fulfill the manufacturing industry's requirements for long-term success and innovation by equipping local talent. With FAME having its largest presence in Alabama, the program is well-positioned to drive economic success and maintain a competitive edge in the manufacturing landscape in Baldwin County for decades to come.

BALDWIN BY THE NUMBERS

BALDWIN COUNTY MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT (2024)

	Manufacturing	All Industries
Total Manufacturing Employees	4,302	92,703
Manufacturing Average Annual Salary	\$63,327	\$48,898
Projected 1-Year Total Manufacturing Job Demand	506	11,911
Projected 1-Year Manufacturing Job Growth	70	1,732

The manufacturing industry pays **29% higher** than the average annual wage in Baldwin County.



TOP OCCUPATIONS IN BALDWIN COUNTY'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR (2024)

Occupation	Employees	Average Salary
Assemblers and Fabricators	659	\$38,500
Other Production Occupations	615	\$45,300
Metal Workers and Plastic Workers	378	\$50,100
Material Moving Workers	292	\$36,600
Engineers	233	\$107,100
Supervisors of Production Workers	186	\$66,600
Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	180	\$54,200
Woodworkers	171	\$38,400
Business Operations Specialists	130	\$78,400
Motor Vehicle Operators	109	\$49,200

source: JobsEQ

The Herbert J. Malone Sports Tourism Complex Growing Sports Tourism Presence in Baldwin County

Baldwin County is the State of Alabama's top tourism destination, and Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism is expanding its impact by investing in sports tourism to stay ahead of the game.

The idea to build a sports tourism complex in Coastal Baldwin came from a strategic plan developed by the Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism board of directors to host impactful sporting events, fulfilling their mission to "market Alabama's Beaches as a year-round destination while stewarding a thoughtful, sustainable level of growth, thus enhancing the economy and quality of life for all residents."



Beth Gendler, Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism

"Tourism is a major economic driver in Baldwin County and the main industry along Alabama's Beaches," Beth Gendler, CEO of Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism, said. "The future success of our destination relies on healthy business, and many of our residents own, operate, and work for tourism-based businesses in Gulf Shores,

Orange Beach, and Fort Morgan. There has been a significant increase in rental accommodations inventory in the past two years, and maintaining our sports tourism business is key in filling room nights."

With the tremendous residential growth in Baldwin County, the local need for city sports facility access has also grown. Gulf Shores and Orange Beach have created city school systems in recent years, broadening their need for residential city facility use. Reduced field availability paired with increased lodging inventory in the area has created a need to maintain and grow supporting types of tourism, such as sports.



In 2022 and 2023, Coastal Baldwin experienced over 65,000 room vacancies that could have attracted sports tourists. As a result, \$43.1 million in direct visitor spending and \$2.5 million in tax revenue were lost for the community.

In 2022, the tourism office purchased just over 111 acres of land on Coastal Gateway Boulevard for sports tourism development and has worked with Sports Facility Companies to move forward and create the crown jewel of sports tourism complexes – the Herbert J. Malone Sportsplex. The tourism bureau and Gulf Shores | Orange Beach Sports & Events are currently working to establish funding mechanisms, and the project will be an 18-to-20-month build once the funding is secured, helping to fill the gap in lost field use and address the increase in available rental units.



"Our aim is to continue to pursue new family-friendly sports and event tourism opportunities and enhance our existing events," Gendler said. "Without funding and building a sports tourism complex along Alabama's Beaches, our existing long-standing events will have a difficult time growing and could seek other destinations that can better accommodate those events."

The Herbert J. Malone Sports Tourism Complex will feature an outdoor field complex and an indoor athletic facility that is anticipated to host more than 76 events and competitions annually. Projected visitation to the complex will drive more than 111,000 hotel room nights annually and attract an estimated 368,600 non-local visitors, which will generate more than \$76 million in expected direct spending annually for Coastal Baldwin.

▶ City of Daphne Investment in Infrastructure and Community Paves the Way for Growth

The City of Daphne, Baldwin County's largest city, has had an eventful year, making strategic investments in infrastructure and public amenities that set the stage for future growth and enhance residents' quality of life.



Mayor Robin LeJeune,
City of Daphne

One major milestone is the completion of the new Daphne Animal Shelter, which officially opened on November 16th. The \$4.5 million facility houses the Animal Control Division department and offers three times the capacity of the previous shelter, consolidating all animal services under one

roof to better serve the growing community. In addition to kennel space, the new shelter has ample space for dogs to run, cool off, and be visited with. "The state-of-the-art facility includes cutting-edge drainage and air filtration systems designed specifically to keep the animals well while in our care," Mayor Robin LeJeune said.

Final plans for a 2,500-seat amphitheater on the north side of Bayfront Park are also underway. The \$9.1 million project, made possible by a \$7.1 million Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act grant, should be finished in 2026. The amphitheater will provide a dynamic outdoor venue along Daphne's waterfront portion of scenic Mobile Bay, priming the area for development. "We hope the addition of the amphitheater will open the door for a future entertainment district along Bayfront Drive," Mayor Robin LeJeune said.

The City of Daphne completed other proactive improvements to Bayfront Park earlier this year, including road and utility improvements, additional parking, landscaping, and a new restroom. The new infrastructure and the existing commercial presence position the area for vibrant mixed-use development.

These intentional investments highlight the City of Daphne's commitment to meeting the needs of the growing community and attracting new opportunities to foster economic growth.