

***Globally Positioning the South***  
**Global Community Forum SUMMARY**  
**March 2004 • Huntsville, Alabama**

**Key Concerns about Globalization that Emerged from the Discussion**

- Globalization is a negative word - need to educate/use different word
- There is a need for basic public awareness, and there is resistance to change
- Religious differences play a role
- Adverse news media feeds resistance to globalization
- People are concerned about safety within our borders
- Language and cultural barriers may lead to vulnerability during global conflicts
- There is a need to balance benefiting business vs. the workforce
- People are concerned about a loss of cultural identity - homogenizing world culture leads to loss of sense of heritage and tradition
- Increased competition for fewer jobs (over supply of trained workers, innovation and technology cost jobs)

**Future Direction the Community Should Take**

- Globalization is here, and we need to find ways to embrace rather than deny it.
- Work toward balancing immigration laws - seems unbalanced to favor Hispanics
- All agreed that globalization has an effect on us, but it is difficult to come to a consensus
- Retraining is important – look at skills that can be used in another industry when jobs are lost or workers are displaced
- May be overeducating – liberal arts may be too broad for current reality – need to specialize for jobs

**Possible Actions or Next Steps**

- Identify 1 entity to coordinate and bring together existing international/foreign organizations in the community to strategically plan a globalization strategy for Huntsville/Madison County and the surrounding region
- To strengthen the workforce, we need to start by preparing our children, putting an emphasis on scholastic aptitude, teaching foreign languages earlier.
- Host an international fair with food from different cultures to help promote diversity among the local culture.
- The South needs to be proactive and invest tax money to raise education levels.
- Mentoring
- Global companies should share knowledge with community

**Unique information that our Leaders Need to Know**

- We need a focal point organization for international relations forcing execution, e.g., monthly international forum at COC to disseminate information.
- Group needs would include cooperation among group, authority, and funding.
- 6% of Alabama's economy is related to international business. On a national level, international business is 10-12%. Raise Alabama to the national level.
- 20,000 people from foreign countries live in Huntsville/79 languages spoken here