

Not every law firm understands economic development, but there is a healthy number in the South that do. These law firms specialize in helping companies find the best locations, identify the best tax structures, maximize incentives, and build the most cost-effective buildings, among other activities.

Some of our top firms are headquartered in the South. Others have large offices here. Either way, there's no denying that the South has the legal infrastructure that growing companies need to get the best possible results when relocating or expanding.

Southern Business & Development magazine has identified the top 10 law firms that understand economic development – and a couple of additional firms that were just too impressive to leave off the list.

1. Miller & Martin

With tax incentives becoming a standard component of site selection, leading southeastern law firm Miller & Martin has made a name for itself in the economic development field. The firm has taken the lead on incentive projects in more than 100 cities and 33 states.

Miller & Martin uses its resources to negotiate incentives that are not advertised. That demands outside-the-box thinking, which is critical when a project fails to meet



LAW FIRMS THAT UNDERSTAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

the criteria of statutory incentives or when a community's first proposal fails to close the gap on financing. From initial presentations to target incentive selection and from written incentive proposals to application review, Miller & Martin guides companies through the tax incentive maze. All of these attributes make the firm deserving of a spot on our Top 10 list.

2. Burr Foreman

While some law firms are just getting

into the economic development game, the Mobile, Ala.-headquartered Burr Foreman has been a driving force since the early 1990s. In fact, Lee Thuston of the firm was Alabama counsel for the negotiations that brought Mercedes-Benz to Alabama in 1993.

With its multidisciplinary team of attorneys, the firm has since represented economic development and expansion projects that have brought more than \$12 billion of capital investment and 12,000 new jobs to the South. The firm's breadth of economic development services includes site selection, incentive negotiation and implementation, choice of entity and tax structure, construction, real estate, environmental permitting, infrastructure contract negotiation and government relations.

3. McGuireWoods

The McGuireWoods team knows that economic development is about much more than securing incentives for relocation or expansion. Instead, it requires an experienced and comprehensive approach to dealing with the many issues that confront expanding or relocating businesses. Over the past ten years, the law firm, along with its public affairs subsidiary - McGuireWoods Consulting - has built one of the premier economic development practices in the country by focusing on meeting the client's business needs. By combining legal acumen with government and public affairs expertise, McGuireWoods is uniquely positioned to not only help get the best deal, but lay the foundation for a long term productive relationship after the ribbon cutting ceremony is over. Just ask clients like Starbucks, Honda, Maersk, or Booz Allen about why they chose McGuireWoods for recent projects. The McGuireWoods team includes the likes of Michael J. Schewel, who served as Virginia's secretary of commerce and trade under Gov. Mark Warner.

4. Luther Strange

Luther Strange is a prominent lawyer and civic leader active in the Republican Party politics in Alabama. He is recognized as one of the "Best Lawyers in America®" and is widely regarded as one of Alabama's leading economic development lawyers.

Strange formerly served as chair of Economic Development and Governmental Affairs Practice Group for Bradley Arant (a firm also on our Top 10 list). His background



Law firm Martin and Miller has offices throughout the South. Pictured here are associates from the firm's Atlanta office: Jim Woodward, Tim Perry, Tom Harrold, and Bruce McCall.

also includes the running of the Washington, D.C., office for a Fortune 500 company. Strange frequently advises companies on growth and expansion opportunities. In this role, he led a team of attorneys in the deal that brought the \$1 billion Hyundai automotive plant to Montgomery, Ala.

5. Arent Fox

Arent Fox has a unique combination of practical economic development experience and legal expertise. The firm's staff includes the likes of Dale Bumpers, the former governor of Arkansas. Bumpers was deeply involved in attracting business to his state. Dennis Cuneo, also with the firm, led Toyota's site selection efforts for more than a decade. Arent Fox's real estate group is one of the strongest and most experienced in the country. As a full-service law firm with offices in Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles, Arent Fox can anticipate and handle virtually everything that comes up in complex economic development projects.

6. Bradley Arant

Bradley Arant uses a cross-discipline team approach to help businesses explore and pursue opportunities for locating or expanding operations in Alabama and the surrounding states. Attorneys across the firm work closely together, sharing information and expertise to accomplish client goals. This team approach ensures that the lawyer best suited for each aspect of the

project is involved. The firm's Economic Development Practice Group understands the complexities of every aspect of the business location process. It combines a thorough working knowledge of economic development incentives, land use and site selection procedures at the state and local level with strong relationships built over many years with key governmental, economic development and civic leaders.

7. Adams & Reese

Adams & Reese attorneys work throughout Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee to help companies and site selectors with project development, expansions, restructurings, finance options, tax incentives, mergers, acquisitions, dispositions, regulatory standards and administrative law.

By offering legal services on a regional basis, Adams & Reese gives its clients localized control over legal matters, and access in multiple markets where they have interests.

8. HunterMaclean

Savannah-based HunterMaclean is the leading business law firm in Georgia outside of Atlanta. For more than 100 years, the firm has been the leading legal voice for businesses locating or expanding into the coastal Georgia area.

With two offices and more than 50 practicing attorneys, HunterMaclean has extensive experience representing busi-



Longtime Toyota executive Denis Cuneo now serves in Arent Fox's Automotive Group as counsel in the Washington, D.C. office. Cuneo led Toyota's site selection efforts for more than a decade.

nesses and individuals in all areas of litigation including corporate, tax, real estate, business planning and maritime law. Its clients include Fortune 500 manufacturing companies, banks and hospitals, professional service organizations, an industrial development authority, and nonprofit corporations.

9. Seyfarth Shaw

Seyfarth Shaw's Atlanta office is the home of economic development legal guru Daniel McRae. He leads the team that handles financing and investing in projects. In the past, he has managed finance and investment transactions amounting to billions of dollars. Known for his expertise in finance and incentives, companies and communities frequently retain McRae to help them obtain successful project locations.

McRae was the first attorney to be elected a director of the Georgia Economic Developers Association. He has helped members of Georgia's general assembly draft economic development legislation that has become law in the state of Georgia. McRae also publishes Quick Takes, a newsletter about economic development and finance. In addition, he is a faculty member for the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute, which trains development authority board members.

*Legal
Ingenuity*

Known for its legal ingenuity and its longstanding commitment to community service, HunterMaclean provides expert legal counsel in a wide range of business practice areas, including commercial real estate, business litigation, employment law, business transactions and taxation.

With more than 55 attorneys in Savannah and Brunswick, HunterMaclean offers one comprehensive source to handle a full range of legal needs for businesses in Georgia and the South Carolina low country.



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10. Jones Walker

Jones Walker's Baton Rouge office is home to Fred Chevalier, who has represented both the public and private sectors in major economic development projects, including Union Tank Car Co., Northrop Grumman Ship Systems and CG Rail. He works extensively with Gulf Opportunity Zone benefits, tax increment financing, special tax districts, and tax sharing and tax credits including new market tax credits, historic, and rehabilitation credits.

Chevalier has served as bond counsel to the state of Louisiana and its agencies, public corporations, political subdivisions, and public trusts, including five statewide issuers of tax-exempt bonds. He has also served as a technical legal advisor in the drafting of the federal Gulf Opportunity Zone Act of 2005 (GO Zone) legislation after Hurricane Katrina at the federal level and numerous public finance measures adopted by the Louisiana State Legislature.

11. Sanford Holshouser

Former U.S. Sen. and North Carolina Gov. Terry Sanford and former North Carolina Gov. James Holshouser formed Sanford Holshouser in 1993. Given the background of its founders, it is not surprising that this firm has a focus on matters that deal with state and local governments.

Sanford Holshouser's economic development practice is enhanced by its relationship with an affiliated economic development consulting firm, the Sanford Holshouser Business Development Group. The availability of five non-lawyer consultants in that Group, all of whom have extensive experience in economic development at state, regional and local levels, significantly adds to this firm's value.

12. Womble Carlyle

From Atlanta and Washington, D.C., to Wilmington, Del., Womble Carlyle uses a team approach to help corporations explore opportunities for locating or expanding operations in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. The firm's economic development team understands the complexities of every facet of the business location process.

Womble Carlyle combines a thorough working knowledge of economic development incentives, land use and siting procedures at the state, county and local level

with strong relationships built over many years with key governmental and civic leaders. Womble Carlyle's impressive roster of attorneys includes former Gov. Jim Hunt (North Carolina's only four-term governor) and former Maryland Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. among others.

13. Nexsen Pruet

Nexsen Pruet's economic development team earns a spot on our list for its

experience in helping new and expanding businesses with capital investments in North and South Carolina. The firm's attorneys have helped hundreds of companies establish manufacturing, tourism, distribution, healthcare, corporate office and other commercial facilities. Nexsen Pruet attorneys also excel in providing support to project coordinators and consultants in evaluating, negotiating, and documenting economic development incentives. ■

When Experience Counts . . .

Sanford Holshouser
Attorneys at Law

Terry Sanford (1917-1998)
U. S. Senator and
N. C. Governor

James Holshouser, Jr.
N. C. Governor

Ernest C. Pearson -- Managing Partner

- ★ Founding partner of The Sanford Holshouser Business Development Group LLC, a regional economic development consulting firm, with experience in over 90 local, regional and state consulting assignments;
- ★ Assistant Secretary for Economic Development for the State of North Carolina (1989-1993);
- ★ Representation of local governments in incentives negotiations in over 50 projects;
- ★ Representation of over 40 companies in site selection projects;
- ★ Legal Counsel in forming over 30 nonprofit economic development corporations.

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