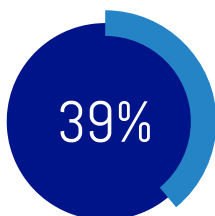




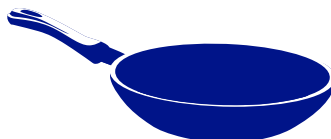
ALABAMA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

The Voice of the Grocery Industry

The Grocery Industry Is Integral to the Health of Alabama



The grocery industry is integral to the health of Alabama. In Alabama, 39% of the adult population is obese. According to studies done by Cambridge University, it is healthier to eat at home.



When cooking at home, you know what you are going to consume. You can control what you put into your food and make things healthier.



Grocery stores can help accommodate speciality diets. On a given day, 17.1% of adults are on some form of speciality diets.

The Grocery Industry Brings Families Together



With rising food prices, Alabama's grocery industry offers a relief for household pocketbooks.



The grocery industry employs diverse populations, including teenagers, retirees, and developmentally disabled people.



By shopping at grocery stores and cooking at home, families have more time to spend together.

The Grocery Industry Helps Alabama Communities



The AGA has raised more than \$1.4 million in scholarships since its inception with most of that money going to in-state colleges.



Grocers donate millions of pounds of food to food banks every year.



Alabama grocery stores engage in community outreach, bringing food to those who likely otherwise would not have access to it.



The Grocery Industry Is Integral to the Health of Alabama

- » The health of those in Alabama is something that is exceedingly important, and something that will remain important for the coming years. Obesity is an epidemic, and Alabama's obesity rate is 39% according to the Alabama Department of Public Health. Additionally, Cambridge University released a study saying that cooking at home is healthier than eating out.
- » When cooking from home, people know what they are putting in their food. With the rampantness of fast, unhealthy food, oftentimes people have questions about what goes into their food. 37% of Americans consume fast food on any given day, introducing large amounts of fat, oil, and salt into their diet. When you cook from home, you know exactly what is going into your food, and you have the ability to control how much of each ingredient you put in.
- » Grocery stores can also accommodate more specialty diets, making it easier for those with Celiac or Crohn's Disease to find food that they are able to safely eat. People with autoimmune diseases that limit the intake of food will have a hard time finding dishes at restaurants that they are able to safely consume.

The Grocery Industry Brings Families Together

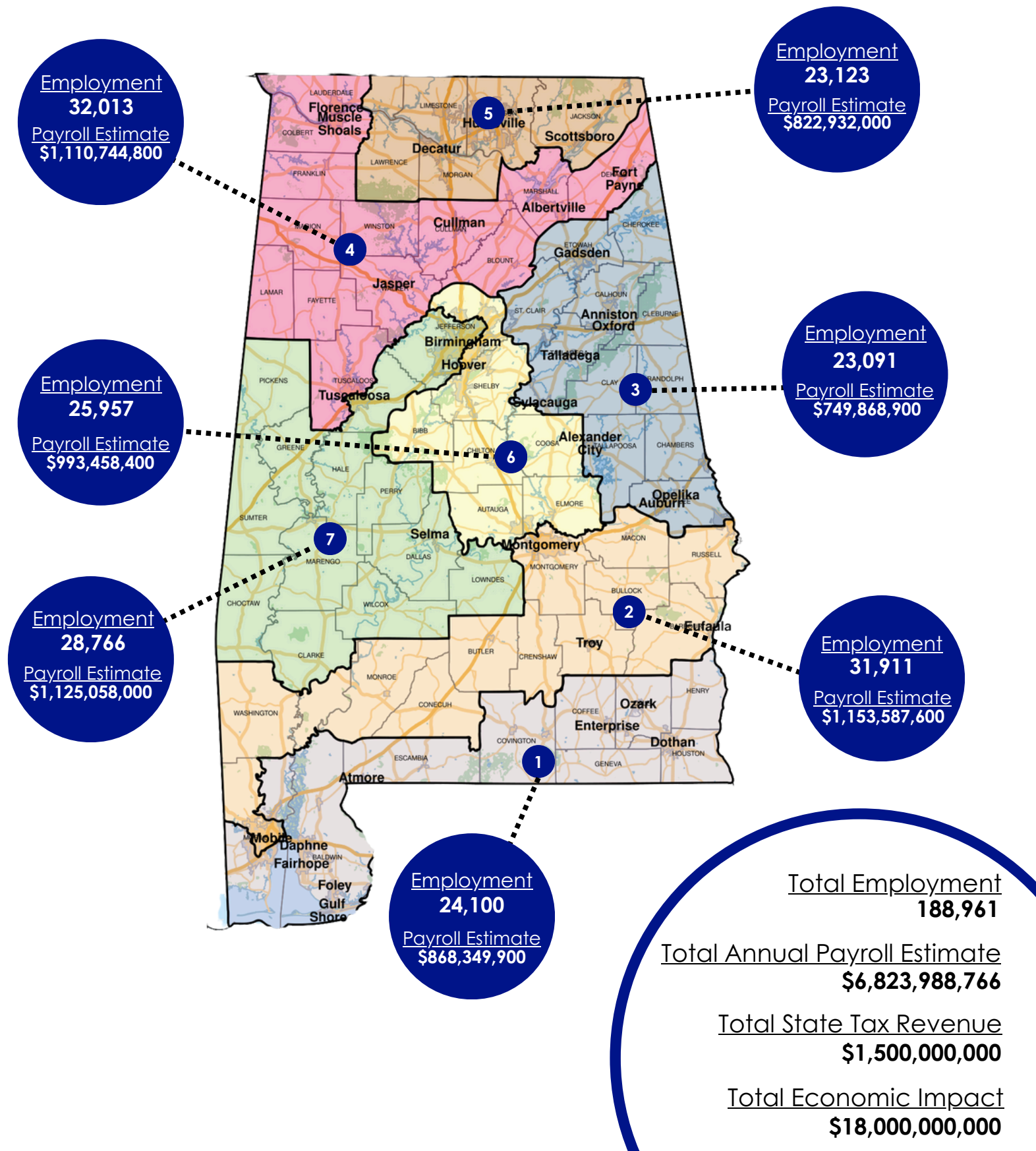
- » With inflation hitting the highest levels seen in the last four decades, the vast majority of Americans are citing groceries as their top concern, and families across Alabama are looking for ways to navigate rising prices that can cut into their pocketbooks. Food costs from sit-down and fast-food restaurants are projected to rise 6-7%, but Alabama's grocery industry offers a cost-effective alternative that saves hard-working families money. While restaurants limit customers to menu items, grocery store customers are offered a variety of unique ways to save money, such as buying in bulk, shopping generic brands, and switching from meat to plant-based alternatives - all of which are of growing interest to Americans.
- » Grocery stores are also key employers for diverse populations of local communities. With supermarket and grocery store wages now topping \$15/hour, developmentally disabled individuals can find fulfilling careers within grocery stores serving as baggers, stockers, and other positions. Retirees work as greeters, giving them extra retirement income and a social outlet. Teenagers and young adults can find their first jobs working as cashiers, teaching them the value of hard work and allowing them to build transferable skills.
- » Only about a third of families manage to eat together regularly, and with regular family dinners associated with lower rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorders, tobacco use, and early teenage pregnancies, families have more than just an economic interest in eating together. With a rising trend of saving money on groceries by cutting down on restaurant spending, families can find full meals for dinners together in grocery stores and supermarkets. Curbside and delivery services help families with convenience and time management.

The Grocery Industry Helps Alabama Communities

- » Helping Alabama's grocery stores helps the colleges you love, whether you bleed crimson or orange. Through the AGA and other members of the grocery industry, colleges in the state receive donations and scholarship funds to help keep bringing in bright young students to get a worthwhile education.
- » The rural parts of Alabama often have little to no access to grocery stores, creating food deserts, leaving communities in need without the supplies to care for themselves. Through the AGA and grocery-affiliated community outreach programs, food and supplies are taken to these communities to help eliminate or reduce food scarcity.
- » Eight hundred pounds of food are discarded by grocery stores each year in the United States alone. That amount of food is equal to 129 fully fueled Saturn V rockets. Grocery stores have partnered with organizations all across Alabama to help remove food from the waste stream and redistribute it to communities facing food uncertainty through food banks. Grocery stores and affiliates keep Alabama's food banks afloat by providing the majority of donations.



Totals by Congressional District



Testimonials from Alabama Grocers

Jimmy Wright - “Nourishing Families, Strengthening Communities

Jimmy Wright, a long-time AGA member, was only twelve when he started his first job at a small convenience store across the street from his childhood home, a store built and owned by his father and operated by their family. Together, Jimmy and his parents mostly served workers of Opelika's textile mills – and, like many twelve-year-olds, was sometimes sent home for goofing off, only to be called back to work when his parents needed help. Despite his semi-tumultuous early employment as a young boy, Jimmy Wright eventually grew to own and run the same family store on his own and continue serving the proud people of east Alabama.

The original market opened in 1973 and was rechristened as Wright's Market in 1997 when Jimmy took over ownership from his father. Located just outside of the historic downtown area of Opelika, the grocery store has been a staple of the town and its surrounding rural communities for decades. And Jimmy's not the only person who's enjoyed a long career at the store – he works alongside a dedicated staff comprised of many employees who have been with the store for 25 or 30 years. From its humble beginnings, Wright's Market has seen substantial growth, allowing Jimmy to participate in numerous community outreach programs, such as delivering groceries to small communities in food deserts. Alabamians of Lee County likely agree with Jimmy's adage: “Nobody goes without anything if we can help.”

Austin and Andrew Virciglio - “The AGA Goes to Bat for You.”

As fourth generation employees of Piggly Wiggly, Austin and Andrew Virciglio were quite literally born into the grocery industry. Both began their respective grocery careers by working in various positions in their family store before working up to management positions – and one shopping trip at their Piggly Wiggly located in Birmingham will prove they know exactly what they're doing. Their family, as well as many other Piggly Wiggly's in the state, are proud members of the Alabama Grocers Association.

The Virciglio's are major proponents of the AGA for a variety of well-deserved reasons, with perhaps the cornerstone being the sense of family and community felt among members. They feel pride in what they have accomplished for their local community and see the AGA as an extension of that, connecting them with other members of the industry that share the same goals of consistent and affordable fresh produce, meat, and dairy products for Alabama. The Alabama Grocers Association has been a voice for the industry and a leader amongst leaders, allowing the Virciglio brothers to continue offering the same quality service as their father, grandfather, and great-grandfather before them.

Sources:

agi.alabama.gov, revenue.alabama.gov, RIMS II for economic impact modeling, agi.alabama.gov, revenue.alabama.gov/, www.bls.gov/cew, www.feedingtheeconomy.com, www.ers.usda.gov, <https://data.census.gov/US> including Census Bureau County Business Patterns, OpenAI LLM

