

\$430 Million Facility Coming to Brownfield Site



ADEM Director Ed Poolos speaks at Minth ceremony in Gadsden

At a huge ceremony on March 6, automotive supplier Minth Group Limited announced plans to invest \$430 million in a new facility in Gadsden that will create more than 1,300 jobs.

The project is set for a 400-acre brownfield site that was the previous location of Gulf States Steel and Republic Steel, which have been closed for more than 20 years. The new facility will manufacture high-quality plastic and aluminum components for automakers.

Minth is a Taiwan-based company that is a world-wide leader in producing automotive trim and structural components. Minth officials believe the new Gadsden facility will help them better serve automotive manufacturers in the U.S., including those transitioning to electric and advanced vehicles.

More than 500 people attended the announcement in Gadsden on the site that has close to one million square feet of manufacturing space. Those in attendance included U.S. Senator Katie Britt (R-Ala.), Gadsden Mayor Craig Ford, Minth representatives, state and local officials, and ADEM Director Ed Poolos. In addition, representatives of Ford, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, and Volkswagen were on hand for the announcement ceremony.

Senator Britt told the crowd that this project confirms Alabama as a leader in automotive manufacturing. She said the state can play a vital role in creating conditions for good paying jobs for hard working Alabamians.

Minth senior consultant David Myhal thanked the Alabama Department of Environmental Management for getting the project going from the early stages. In fact, he called ADEM's work fantastic.

"This is how government should work with business to come to common sense solutions to make progress. Thank you so much for the job you did.," said Myhal.

ADEM Director Ed Poolos also was called on to make remarks at the event inside one of the massive, old steel warehouse structures. He said it was a great day for economic stewardship and economic progress.

"We are announcing that we can cut through issues and we can cut through doubt. We can eliminate the idea that yesterday's industry must become tomorrow's burden," said Poolos.

"Through our brownfields voluntary cleanup program the narrative has been re-written. A brownfield is not a failure. It is a potential waiting for a partnership. We at ADEM... we believe that environmental protection and economic development are partners. They are not opponents. Environmental protection and economic prosperity can exist simultaneously."



Minth's William Chin, Sen. Britt, and Ed Poolos

ADEM Utilizing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has partnered with Auburn University, using drones to enhance ADEM's mission.

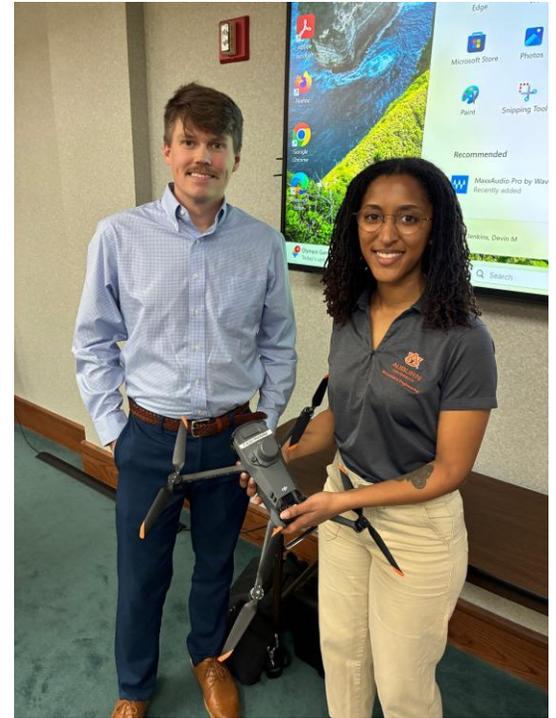
Since an initial agreement was reached in October of 2023 between ADEM and Auburn, approximately ten flights have been accomplished. The Department is aiming to increase awareness about the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) program.

On February 18, Destinee Ray from Auburn's Biosystems Engineering Department visited ADEM to talk about the drone program with ADEM employees at the monthly "Break to Educate" session. She brought one of the University's drones for everyone to view up close to see the sensors and cameras used, and to review maps and diagrams illustrating how images and data from the drones can support environmental management.

Ray said Auburn was one of the first colleges in the country to obtain approval from the Federal Aviation Administration to use drones for agricultural, environmental, industrial, and law enforcement applications. From helping modernize inspections and improving public safety to giving agencies and organizations a bird's-eye view, Auburn is exploring ways that unmanned aircraft can advance research in engineering, building science, and precision agriculture.

"We have everything we need to do drone flights," said Ray. Auburn University's partnership with ADEM supports the Department's mission by providing a useful tool, in the form of images, video and data, to ensure permittees are in compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

Devin Jenkins in ADEM's Water Division is the Department's liaison for the drone flights. He said Auburn typically requests up to two weeks to schedule a flight, and ADEM personnel are always required to be on site - on the ground - with AU staff during the flights.



Devin Jenkins and Destinee Ray with a drone

ADEM Hosts Nonpoint Source Conference



ADEM's Nonpoint Source Conference was held on Jan. 15

ADEM held its Nonpoint Source Management Conference in January at the Wetumpka Civic Center, where municipalities, non-profit organizations, companies, and universities gathered for presentations on various topics, including canine wastewater detection, and the integration of community revitalization and watershed health.

Attendees were welcomed by ADEM Director Ed Poolos, who spoke of his excitement for the event.

"Over the years, I've had the opportunity to attend many different environmental conferences," Poolos said. "This conference is probably my favorite conference that I've ever attended."

The Nonpoint Source Management Program uses a voluntary approach to address nonpoint source pollution. The program relies on best management

practices, education and outreach, technology transfer, monitoring and assessments, and resource assistance using a balanced statewide and watershed-focused restoration approach. Local partnerships and input from the public are primary implementation components, with the focus being to fund targeted, on-the-ground, implementation practices to restore impaired waterbodies in Alabama.

Recycling Grant Workshop Conducted in Wetumpka

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management, in coordination with the Alabama Recycling Coalition, hosted an ADEM Recycling Grant Workshop in January.

ADEM Land Division staff from the Materials Management Section, alongside ARC Executive Director Rachel Koonce, led presentations designed to help communities, officials, and organizations better understand funding opportunities and the application process for an ADEM recycling grant.

The main presentation was an overview of the grant program and guidance documents, and covered topics such as eligibility, funding priorities, timelines, and required materials. Another presentation featured a walk through of the online grant application, including step-by-step guidance, as well as a short review of the Alabama Environmental Permitting and Compliance System (AEPACS). The AEPACS program is an electrical system that allows facilities to apply for and maintain permits, and submit applications, registrations, and certifications.

The recycling workshop also featured extensive networking opportunities between ADEM, ARC, and participants, such as a question-and-answer session, an interactive online recycling game, an open networking lunch period, and direct feedback from ADEM staff concerning ideas for future projects and funding.



Lots of information was available at the Recycling Grant Workshop

ADEM Holds Hearing on Water Quality Standards



ADEM held a water quality public hearing on January 12 in Montgomery

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management recently held a public hearing to gather comments regarding the proposed revisions to Division 335-6 of the ADEM Administrative Code (Water Quality Program Regulations). The hearing took place on January 12 in the Main Hearing Room of the Montgomery office and was well attended, with 13 speakers sharing their comments on the proposed changes.

During the Alabama Environmental Management Commission meeting in June, a petition was granted that directed ADEM to initiate the rulemaking process to revise the toxicity values in the ADEM Code for 12 pollutants, including arsenic and cyanide. Many of the revisions focus on the cancer potency values, the reference doses for exposure, and the addition of a cancer potency value for certain pollutants. A copy of the proposed rules and full summary of reasons are available on the ADEM website.

Public hearings are held to receive data, views, and arguments from concerned citizens regarding the proposed rules, changes, or amendments. Attendance at a hearing is not necessary to present such data, views, arguments, or comments as the same may be submitted in writing to the Department in advance of the closing of the public comment period.

ADEM UPDATE Available Online

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management publishes the *ADEM UPDATE* quarterly to inform Alabamians on the latest news and activities of the Department. As a cost-savings measure, the *ADEM UPDATE* is not printed. It is distributed electronically and available online through the publications link on the ADEM website at adem.alabama.gov. The ADEM website also has links to videos related to the Department's programs, public hearings, and recent events of interest.



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Alabama Department of Environmental Management
P.O. Box 301463
Montgomery, AL 36130-1463
(334) 271-7700
www.adem.alabama.gov