UNCOVER MARION, LAMAR, AND FAYETTE COUNTIES

Northwest Alabama
Economic Development Alliance
Marion County • Lamar County • Fayette County
HOUSING

From historic southern-style antebellum homes to contemporary residential living, you will find all types of housing available at extremely affordable prices throughout Marion, Lamar and Fayette Counties. Whether you prefer a country setting or a close-to-town more urban location, the choices are abundant. When the place you live is enveloped in warm hospitality, outdoor activities year-round, and a place where fun and family are embraced, you will soon recognize that the Northwest Alabama region offers not just a house in which to live, but a special environment to call Home.

Alabama also ranks high in affordable housing. Average sale prices for homes in Alabama are 28% less than the national average, with home prices in the Northwest Alabama region representing a 40% savings, allowing you to purchase the house of your dreams right here in Northwest Alabama.

THE LOWEST PROPERTY TAXES IN THE NATION

NORTHWEST ALABAMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE LIST PRICE</th>
<th>3 BR/2 BA</th>
<th>$150,000</th>
<th>1,200 TO 2,000 SQ.FT.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Building lots in desirable neighborhood settings can be found from $10-25,000, with rural land suitable as a home site (timber and pasture land) as low as $1,000 per acre.

EDUCATION

Public, private and religious-based educational institutions are offered throughout the region. Each of the public school systems in Marion, Lamar and Fayette County offer outstanding academics, sports and specialized academics including, foreign language, technology and technical courses, and advanced diplomas.

STRONG PERFORMANCE

Schools within the region consistently rank in the top 20 statewide, according to scores from the Alabama Reading and Math exams, and the Alabama Writing Assessment tests. Not only do students excel when challenged, but so do our communities when it comes to the local support of education.

TOP NOTCH TEACHERS

More than 60% of our teachers have received their master’s level or higher, in education or related fields.

STRIVING HIGHER

The Fayette and Hamilton Campuses of Bevill State Community College serve approximately 1,650 students with two-year academic and technical degree programs to prepare graduates to transition directly to full-time work/careers or to transfer to four-year universities.

FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES WITHIN A ONE HOUR DRIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of Alabama</td>
<td>Tuscaloosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi University for Women</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of North Alabama</td>
<td>Florence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mississippi State University</td>
<td>Starkville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham Universities</td>
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<td>The University of Alabama at Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAB School of Medicine</td>
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<td>Samford University</td>
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<td>The Cumberland School of Law at Samford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham-Southern</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Winfield City Schools is the first and only school district in the AdvancED Global Network to have every school AdvancED STEM Certified.
**HEALTHCARE**

**HOSPITALS INCLUDE**
- Fayette County
  - Fayette Medical Center
- Marion County
  - North Mississippi Medical Center–Hamilton
  - Northwest Medical Center–Winfield

Serving Patients With
- Combined 150 patient beds
- State-of-the-Art Cancer Center
- Dialysis Center
- Hyperbaric Wound Care Center

More than 200 physicians, nurse practitioners, specialty surgeons, and dentists serve the tri-county area. Should emergency needs exceed services found locally, the UAB Medical Center and others are only a 20-minute helicopter flight away.

**Additional Health Care Services Include**
- Cardiology
- Oncology
- Urology
- Orthopedics
- Neurology
- Ophthalmology
- Otolaryngology
- Nephrology
- Rheumatology

**GOVERNMENT**

County commission forms of government exist in all three counties of the region. The Probate Judge is the highest elected official in each county, and in Fayette and Lamar County the Probate Judge also serves as County Commission Chairman.

18 **MUNICIPALITIES**, each with an elected mayor and council form of government.

2 **REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS** represent the area and provide services from grant writing to aging programs for the elderly to assisting local communities with planning, loan programs, etc. These are the North Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG) and the West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC).

**FUN & GAMES**

From a gallery exhibit featuring world-renowned folk artist Jimmy Lee Sudduth to weekend water skiing and year-round golfing, recreational opportunities of all types provide relaxation and cultural experiences in Northwest Alabama. If you enjoy music, you will enjoy a visit to the Opry in downtown Vernon, or catch a concert at Belk’s outdoor music venue.

If antiquing is your passion, then Northwest Alabama is your destination, as the region is home to over 75,000 square feet of quality antiques and collectibles from more than 150 dealers in numerous local antique malls. Marion County is also home to Webster’s Auction House.

**CHECK OUT OUR LOCAL FESTIVALS**

- Brilliant CoalFest
- Fayette Fayette Arts Festival Froglevel
- Glen Allen Beyond the Tracks Festival
- Guin MayFest
- Hackleburg Neighbor Day
- Hamilton Buttahatchee River Fall Fest
- Sulligent Old Fashion Day
- Winfield Mule Day
WE’VE GOT WAYS TO GET WET

The **FAYETTE AQUATIC CENTER** at the Guthrie Smith Park opened its 5,380 sq. ft. outdoor facility in 2013. The multi-purpose pool (including four 25-yard lap lanes,) offers interactive play features and multiple waterslides from a 35 ft. tower. A refreshing splash pad and numerous umbrella tables are on site for a comfortable day.

The **GUIN WATER PARK** at Hayden Riley Park has been a fixture in the community since 1992 as families come to enjoy the 308 foot water slide and the Olympic size pool. A mushroom splash pad near the slide exit allows parents to observe children in both places.

Both parks are surrounded by tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, pavilions, walking trails, picnic areas and softball fields.

ENJOY THE THEATRE

Local Performing Arts theatres/troupes exist in Fayette, Hamilton and Winfield. Winfield is home to the historic “Pastime Theatre” a fully restored, circa 1937 art-deco facility. The Fayette Civic Center also houses an Art Museum, founded in 1969 which contains over 4,000 pieces in the permanent collection, with both alternating and permanent display pieces on the main floor, and six folk art galleries on the lower level. Other symphony and theatre performances may be enjoyed within an hour drive.

DRIVE UP TO THE DRIVE-IN

Proud to have stood the test of time is the Blue Moon Drive-In in Gu-Win, Alabama. This local icon first opened in 1956 and now operates with two screens showing first-run movies.

JUMP INTO THE OUTDOORS

If you love the outdoors, you will be right at home here. The region boasts the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the Sipsey Valley River Wilderness Area in Fayette (as traveled by Birmingham’s Audubon Society), and numerous public lakes with picnic areas and boat launches. The Lake Lurleen State Park and Bankhead National Forest are also nearby. Most campgrounds are open year-round. Hunters and fishermen can enjoy thousands of public and privately owned acres for sport.

PADDLE THIS WAY

The Bear Creek Canoe Run in Hackleburg, in Marion County, has exploded in popularity as it is one of the few places where controlled and predictable water level is found every weekend to be enjoyed by canoe, kayak or inner tube. The local outfitter is the Bear Creek Canoe Rentals. Cabins and campsites are available at the Bear Creek Lakes or at nearby Dismal Canyon.

SO MUCH TO DO BY THE LAKE

Bear Creek Lakes offer more than 160 campsites in five campgrounds on more than 15,000 acres of land maintained by the Bear Creek Development Authority (BCDA). Most of these campsites have electrical and water hookups with campfire areas and cooking grills and all sites have picnic tables. Camping areas are family oriented and isolated from main traffic areas.

Scenic Marion County Lake consists of 37 acres where bass and catfish are caught year-round. An accessible fishing pier makes it easy to reach deep water without using a boat. However, boats are also available for rent, along with a launching ramp for anglers with their own boats. On-site concessions may also be enjoyed underneath the shelter of picnic pavilions. Also available is a wide variety of fishing tackle, live and artificial bait, and other fishing supplies.

Jerry Brown Arts Festival was voted one of the “Top 10 Events” in Alabama and a “Top 20 Event” by the national Southeast Tourism Society.
The region represents many youth sporting interests including baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, golf, and numerous other activities. These are offered at each of the public or private schools, or as municipal or church-sponsored leagues. There are more than 15 golf and tennis complexes within a short drive, including those of the Robert Trent Jones golf facilities in Birmingham and Florence.

**SPORTS GREATS**

**FOOTBALL**

Rashad Johnson  
Sulligent

Played at the University of Alabama, First-Team NFL Draft—Arizona Cardinals.

Joe Cribbs  
Sulligent

Played at Auburn University, and in the NFL—Buffalo Bills, San Francisco 49ers, Indianapolis Colts, Miami Dolphins and USFL Birmingham Stallions.

Mike Davis  
Fayette

Topeka Sizzlers in the Continental League.

**BASKETBALL**

Jerry Brown  
Hamilton

Nov. 9, 1942- March 4, 2016

American folk artist and traditional stoneware pottery maker who lived and worked in Hamilton, Alabama. He was a 1992 recipient of a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and a 2003 recipient of the Alabama Folk Heritage Award. His showings have included the 1984 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife.

Dale Shelnut  
Guin

July 29, 1935-May 11, 1983

Shelnut began his career in 1951 with the Rhythm Masters, sang with the Tennesseans Quartet, but left in 1963 to join the Dixie Echoes as their lead singer; he would later buy/own the group. He was also a soloist on the Gospel Singing Jubilee television program.

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**ART**

Jimmy Lee Sudduth  
Fayette

March 10, 1910- Sept. 2, 2007

Sudduth used pigments made from mud, weeds, flowers, and berries combined with household paints, sugar, oil, and other binders. His work has been featured in the Smithsonian Institute, the High Museum of Art, the House of Blues, and is on permanent display at the Fayette Museum of Art.

Sonny James  
Hackleburg

May 1, 1929- Feb. 22, 2016

Country Music singer/songwriter best known for the 1957 hit “Young Love”, had 72 country and pop chart hits from 1953-1983, along with 23 No. 1 hits and 21 albums reaching the country Top 10. James is also a Member of the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Dan Penn  
Vernon

born Nov. 16, 1941

Singer/songwriter and record-producer, Penn co-wrote many soul hits of the 1960s including “The Dark End of the Street” and “Do Right Woman, Do Right Man.” He was considered to be one of the great white soul singers of his generation, though released few records featuring his own vocals.

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**COACHING CAREER**

Miles College—Fairfield, AL., Venezuela, hired as staff coach at Indiana University in 1997, and then replaced the legendary Bobby Knight; UAB Blazers and Texas Southern.
Alabama has tremendous natural diversity with more than 1.3 million acres of public hunting land and some of the most liberal seasons and bag limits in the nation for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, bobwhite quail, feral hogs, waterfowl, rabbits, squirrel, mourning doves, and many other species.

WE’RE #1 IN ALABAMA DEER HUNTING

Alabama deer hunting continues to top the list, with the herd currently at 1.75 million. The season covers 108 days annually and hunters may harvest both a buck and a doe every day in most areas, while harvesting whitetails with a bow, crossbow, rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader, or spear.

The largest deer populations in the State of Alabama can be found in Lamar, Fayette, and Marion counties, and produce some trophy animals. The region offers more than 170,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas and National Forests.

FISHING

Clean waters from 8 lakes in 3 counties provide anglers with abundant small and largemouth bass, Florida Bass, salt water stripe, bream, crappie, as well as threadfin shad and channel catfish. Each lake is intensively managed to provide quality fishing on a sustained basis.