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OUTLOOK HIGHLIGHTS

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing (MTM) has begun production at its $2.3-billion plant in Limestone County. The plant is currently hiring an additional 1,700 employees in this initial phase, with plans to create up to 4,000 jobs at full production. KC Logistics is investing $12 million to establish an Athens location that will allow the company to transport seats from autosupplier TBAKI to the Mazda Toyota Manufacturing plant, creating 100 jobs. Amazon is expanding its presence in Limestone County with a 1 million-sq.ft. Huntsville XL Fulfillment Center that will open in 2022 and create more than 250 full-time jobs. Gregory Industries, an Ohio-based producer of roll-formed steel, is investing $30 million to open a factory in Athens that will create 100 jobs in the area by fall 2022. Construction has begun on Buc-ee’s in Athens with plans to open by the end of 2022. The 54,000-sq.ft. travel center represents $35 million of investment and will create 175 jobs. Two of the six Meta Data Center buildings in Huntsville are now online. Construction is continuing on the rest of the $1-billion campus, with expectations to create 200 jobs when complete. HudsonAlpha has broken ground on two new additions to its Huntsville campus that are expected to be operational by the end of 2022. The projects are partially funded through a $15-million grant from Alabama’s Public School and College Authority and will strengthen the company’s partnerships with Alabama A&M and Auburn universities. The $40-million Orion Amphitheater in Huntsville will host its first concert in May 2022. The venue will seat up to 8,000 guests and host community cultural events in addition to music experiences.

GDP AND EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

Huntsville’s real GDP registered at $27.0 billion in 2020 after decreasing 0.8 percent from 2019. In 2022, the metro is expected to have strong employment and output growth, increasing 3.2 percent and 4.0 percent, respectively.