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## **Two wood products companies announce projects totaling \$92 million in Dothan/Wiregrass Alabama**

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A pair of economic expansion projects in Dothan will inject a combined \$92 million into the Wiregrass economy.

SmartLam North America, which makes cross laminated timber products at a Dothan factory, has announced it will invest \$62 million to build a new manufacturing facility to produce large beams and columns for construction, creating 43 jobs.

Peak Renewables also announced it will build a \$30 million wood pellet production facility in Dothan, which will use sawmill residuals to make pellets used in renewable power generation. The project will create 26 jobs.

The SmartLam expansion is expected to become operational in 2024, while the Peak Renewable wood pellet plant should open next year.

Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield said the projects “will inject additional vigor and innovation into this critical sector.”

“The forest products industry has long been a central pillar for Alabama’s economy, and its vitality is attracting significant levels of new investment and driving job growth across the state,” Canfield said.

SmartLam North America CEO Derek Ratchford said the company will build a 140,000-square-foot custom manufacturing plant with the capacity to produce 84 million board feet annually. It will also add equipment to fully automate its existing 225,000-square-foot plant to produce 2 million cubic feet of cross laminated timber annually.

The expansion will allow SmartLam to purchase high-strength timber from landowners throughout Central and Southern Alabama. SmartLam is the first and largest manufacturer using Southern Yellow Pine to produce CLT, according to the Alabama Department of Commerce.



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“Most mass timber glulam/columns are manually produced,” Ratchford said. “The new plant will be automated allowing SmartLam to significantly increase production and simultaneously deliver multiple mass timber projects.”

Peak Renewables CEO Scott Bax said his company’s growth project will use 30 acres and will be a 24/7, 365-day operation.

It’s one of several projects in Alabama to transform wood refuse into wood pellets for the energy industry.

“This facility and the investment will further strengthen the overall forestry economy and bring a world-class wood fiber operating facility to the Dothan area, producing 180,000 MT of wood pellets annually,” Bax said.

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