

JOB MARKET

Study says area job growth poor

Birmingham near bottom in ranking

By **SHERRI C. GOODMAN**
News staff writer

City and county leaders, business owners and others point to the Birmingham-Hoover area's low unemployment as proof of a healthy economy, but a new study suggests that job growth is below average compared with regional competition.

The study, conducted by Birmingham-based investment adviser Porter, White & Co., found Birmingham ranked near the bottom of an index comparing to six Southeastern cities in job creation from 1990 to 2005. Only Louisville and Chattanooga per-

"If you look at it from a long-term perspective, we don't stack up too well."

Bob Holmes,
dean of UAB's School of Business

formed worse in the index, which was released this month in Porter White's fourth-quarter economic report.

The Raleigh-Cary area in North Carolina ranked No. 1, with jobs growing by 50 percent during the 1990s. Nashville, which experienced strong growth in the last half of the 1990s, ranked second.

"If you look at it from a long-

term perspective, we don't stack up too well," said Bob Holmes, dean of UAB's School of Business. "We've got a situation where if we don't turn it around, we're going to be further and further behind" other cities in the region.

"We need government and business leaders to decide what are our priorities and get behind them," he added.

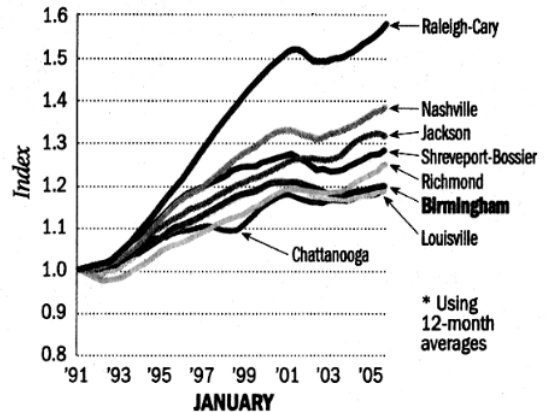
Factory woes

Teresa Percy, a consultant who compiled the information for Porter White, said the firm wanted to see how Birmingham compared to other comparable cities in the Southeast in terms of job growth. "We believe

Back of the pack

Porter, White & Co., found Birmingham ranked near the bottom compared with seven cities in the Southeast in job creation from 1990 to 2005.

Employment growth



Source: Porter, White & Company

A BIRMINGHAM NEWSCHART

► See Study, Page 3D