



**NEWS RELEASE
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**Date: NOVEMBER 23, 2009
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**New Southern Growth Chairman Kentucky Gov. Steve
Beshear targets the Southern Auto Industry**

Research Triangle Park, NC —Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear today announced he will be the new chairman of the Southern Growth Policies Board. Gov. Beshear becomes Southern Growth's 40th Chair, succeeding Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi and follows a long line of distinguished Southern leaders, including Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. As chairman, Gov. Beshear will host the 2010 Chairman's Conference in Lexington, Kentucky June 6th through 8th. The focus will be on highlighting and strengthening the automotive industry in the South.

"I am honored to serve as chairman of the Southern Growth Policies Board and confident the 2010 conference will be a success for Lexington and the entire state," Gov. Beshear said. "With my administration's focus on creating and maintaining jobs in Kentucky, and the Commonwealth's status as an automotive center, Kentucky is the perfect location to host a serious conversation on the South's emerging leadership in the automotive industry."

Over the last two decades, the South has experienced remarkable success building an automotive cluster. There are 16 automotive manufacturing facilities located in Southern Growth member states, producing 36 percent of our nation's cars and light trucks. The conference, **Driving the Next 20 Years: Maximizing the New Automotive Industry in the South**, is being developed as an opportunity to connect industry players across the region to take actions to create additional jobs and investments. **Next 20** is designed to create collaborations that will benefit the South for years to come. Conference information will be available soon at www.southern.org.

Lexington Mayor Jim Newberry said he looks forward to welcoming the group to Lexington. "This is a great opportunity to acquaint leaders from across our nation with our dynamic community and its growing horse, healthcare and high-tech industries," Newberry said. "Shining the national spotlight on our automotive industry is also important. Auto parts suppliers are the top industrial employers in Kentucky, and many of these employers are located in Central Kentucky because of the Toyota plant."

In addition to a focus on the automotive sector, during the next year there will be a focus on economic recovery. Southern Growth is developing community self-help guides to support economic development planning efforts, as well as developing a broad Southern database of competitive indicators, so that communities and states can better gauge their needs. The **Listening to the South** effort will focus on communities and how they can respond to current economic challenges, while at the same time positioning themselves for success in the future. Thousands of Southerners will be able to provide their input to policy-makers. Southern Growth will also be working on the advanced materials clusters and changing leadership models.

About Southern Growth Policies Board

Southern Growth Policies Board is a public policy think tank based in Research Triangle Park, N.C. Formed by the region's governors in 1971, Southern Growth Policies Board researches and develops economic development policies by providing a forum for collaboration among a diverse cross-section of the region's governors, legislators, business and academic leaders and the economic and community development sectors. Southern Growth provides its members, and the region, with authoritative research, discussion forums and pilot projects in the areas of technology and innovation, globalization, workforce development, community development, civic engagement and leadership. To learn more about Southern Growth Policies Board, visit <http://www.southern.org>.

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