



# Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail: Its History and Economic Impact

*Mark Fagan*

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*The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail* tells how a bold, imaginative investment by a public employee pension fund turned into a world-class tourist attraction that helped change the image and boost the economy of an entire state.

The pension fund was the Retirement Systems of Alabama, and its alternative investment was in a string of golf courses and affiliated high-end hotels and spas. In business-speak, this was an "economically targeted investment" designed to diversify returns, create jobs, and increase tax revenue.

Twenty-five years later, the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail is known worldwide for the quality and beauty of its courses and the hospitality and elegance of its resorts. It has significantly increased Alabama's infrastructure for tourism and conventions, provided millions upon millions in new tax revenues, spurred construction of thousands of units of adjacent housing, and helped persuade other businesses to locate in the state.

Making the Golf Trail a reality involved not only the initial vision of CEO David G. Bronner and his associates at RSA, but also the design genius and reputation of Robert Trent Jones Sr. and the hard work of many dedicated engineers and builders. It also required the cooperation of scores of local and state elected officials and economic developers.

This book is the illustrated historical account of the financial, legal, political, and economic impact details of RSA's investment in the RTJ Golf Trail. Such a detailed history could not have been written without the years of economic analysis conducted by author Mark Fagan dating back to the earliest stages of the concept. Fagan's ongoing involvement with Dr. Bronner and those working to develop the Trail made possible the mammoth one-of-a-kind history that is presented in this book.

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