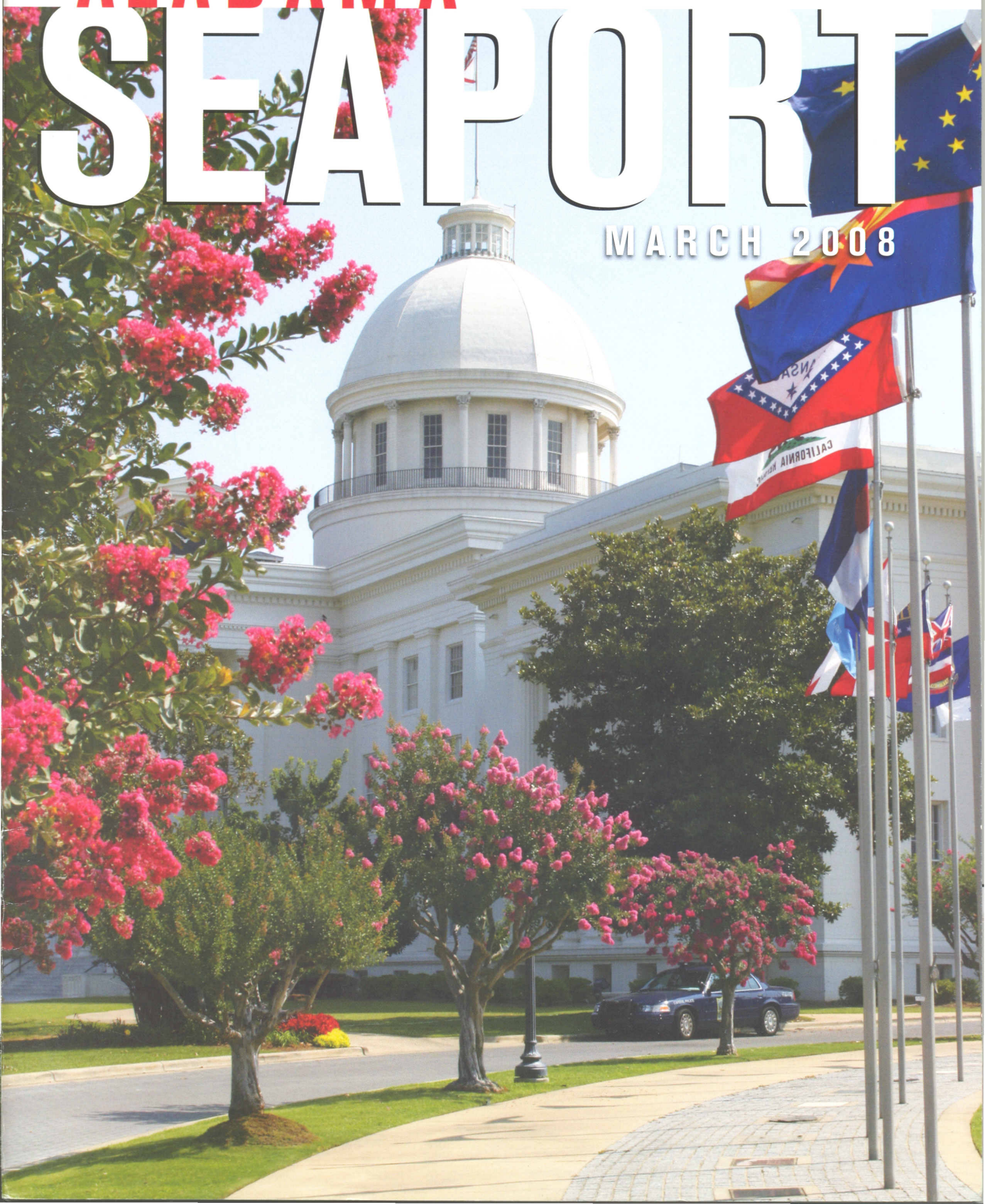


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# SEAPORT

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## COMMUNITIES ON THE MOVE **THE CITY OF ANNISTON:** CONNECTING TOWNS WITH NATURE

After ten long years and a \$100,000 grant from Coca-Cola North America, Anniston is connecting more people to one of the nation's busiest cities than ever before by uniting the Chief Ladiga Trail with the Silver Comet Trail located just outside of Atlanta.

The grant was used to help close the eight-mile gap in the Silver Comet-Chief Ladiga trail and build a charming gateway park at the Alabama/Georgia state line.

"We've met; we've talked; we've planned; we've dreamed; but it's taken this refreshing financial splash from Coca-Cola to help us finally connect to our neighbors," said Pete Conroy of Jacksonville State University and chairman of the Chief Ladiga project. "It's a thrill to know that our trails united, like a long skinny park, will connect more people and more places than ever before."

Alabama's first extended rails-to-trails project, the Chief Ladiga Trail covers 33 miles through the countryside of Calhoun and Cleburne counties and connects the cities of Piedmont, Jacksonville, Weaver and Anniston. Crossing beautiful wetlands, streams, forests and a horizon filled with mountains, the Chief Ladiga Trail is a pathway made for families which provides a safe, non-motorized way to travel, exercise and relax while enjoying the outdoors. Currently, the Silver Comet offers 50 miles of rail-trail; together they offer over 100 miles of continuous outdoor space.



**Chief Ladiga meets the Silver Comet in the summer of 2007. The new trail allows riders and other trail users to stand with one foot in Alabama and the other in Georgia along its path.**



**Extending more than 100 miles, the entire trail is paved with asphalt and is eight feet wide.**



The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), which linked the two trails, is a non-profit organization working with local communities to preserve unused rail corridors by transforming them into trails, enhancing the health, environment, economy, neighborhoods and people of America. The Silver Comet-to-Chief Ladiga gift is just a part of a larger \$500,000 grant made by Coca-Cola North America to the RTC to help trail development across the United States.

"We're grateful that Coca-Cola is taking a leadership role in helping us connect with our neighbors through pedestrian paths," said Alabama Gov. Bob Riley. "There is a great need for recreational trails as a safe place for exercise and outdoor equipment. Partners like these help Americans to get moving and enjoy more active lifestyles."

Completed in 2007, the trail is designed with the needs of cyclists and hikers in mind. The gateway park features bicycle racks, picnic tables, restrooms and a covered pavilion which stores information, maps and brochures, and a payphone.

For more information on the city of Anniston please visit [www.ci.anniston.al.us/](http://www.ci.anniston.al.us/), or for more information on the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, please visit [www.railstrails.org](http://www.railstrails.org). □



**Closing the eight mile gap between the trails are four renovated bridges that cross over Terrapin Creek.**

*The Chief Ladiga Trail was named for a Creek Indian leader who signed the Cusseta Treaty in 1832. Under the terms of that agreement, the Creeks gave up claim to their remaining lands in northeast Alabama. Because Chief Ladiga had signed the treaty, he was allowed to select some land in Benton County, Ala., for his wife and himself which later became Cleburne and Calhoun counties.*



**The Chief Ladiga Trail has increased tourism and benefited local businesses in Anniston while increasing the quality of life for its residents.**