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# FORUMS

## on Communities

Innovative and Technology-driven Solutions

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Published by the  
Georgia Tech Enterprise  
Innovation Institute

Spring 2006

## Forums Ignite Dialogue about Innovation and Technology

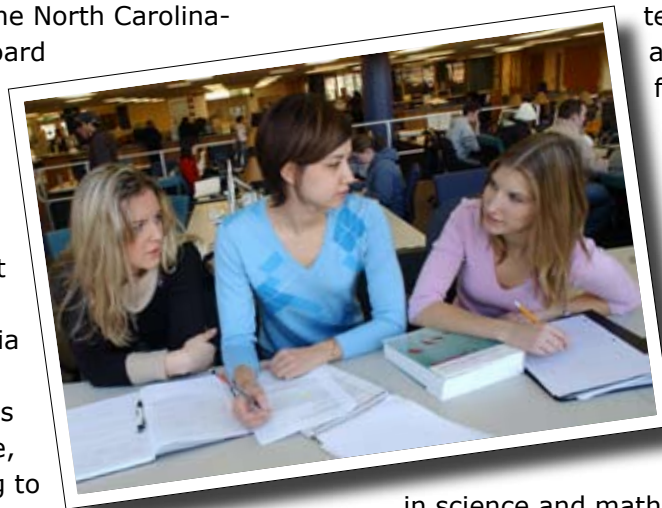
Competing successfully in today's global economy demands innovation in approaches, tools, techniques, and ideas. With that in mind, several Georgia regions and communities participated in a series of forums this past Winter that ignited dialogue around four key approaches to fostering innovation—building knowledge, encouraging entrepreneurship, boosting existing business, and recruiting talent and investment.

These forums—conducted for the North Carolina-based Southern Growth Policies Board—were coordinated by Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia in partnership with the Georgia Centers of Innovation, the Georgia Rural Economic Development Center (GREDC) at East Georgia College, and several local partners. "The University of Georgia was very pleased to work on this joint effort with Georgia Tech," says Mac Brown of the Fanning Institute, "and we look forward to continuing to work jointly in the future."

The purpose of the forums was fourfold: (1) to contribute to the Southern Growth 2006 Conference on the Future of the South, (2) to share information about the challenges that exist for bridging the innovation gap, (3) to help local stakeholders learn

about programs that can foster innovation, and (4) to begin to chart a customized path of action for each region.

Almost without exception, education was the elephant in the room. Participants cited poor preparation in math and science, lack of academic challenge, failure in teaching the "love of learning," and other factors, but also recognized that responsibility for educating children rests with parents as well as teachers. Capsule looks at five regional forums follow.



### Gainesville

Held Feb. 16th at the Center of Innovation for Manufacturing Excellence on the Lanier Tech campus, this session drew 15 people, many representing business and industry. Poor preparation

in science and math was a major concern, with participants sharing that kids are not seeing the relevance of these skills to the real world.

The consequent lack of a qualified workforce was cited as a key challenge by local business executives, with one noting that his company provides

*Continued - page 3*

## Focusing on Competitive Challenges

The Georgia Institute of Technology has launched a sweeping restructuring of its business and community assistance programs as part of a new initiative known as the Enterprise Innovation Institute.

The restructuring brings new and established Georgia Tech programs together into a broadly integrated initiative designed to help industry, entrepreneurs, economic developers and communities become more competitive through the application of science, technology and innovation.

Creation of the Enterprise Innovation Institute represents the first major reorganization of Georgia Tech's economic development and business assistance programs since the Economic Development Institute (EDI) was formed in 1993. The changes affect all activities of Georgia Tech's former Office of Economic Development and Technology Ventures, including the Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC) business incubator, VentureLab research commercialization effort, Commercialization Services initiative and former Economic Development Institute. ❖

## Technology — continued from page 2

remedial math training to new employees. Another concern was the lack of time and resources needed to innovate by small firms already hard-pressed to deliver low-priced goods and services in tight time frames. Investing in research and new product development was viewed as impractical for small-to-medium-sized firms.

Some discussion touched on effectively recruiting industry. Participants generally felt that targeting innovative firms that would see the community as a competitive asset and not just a cheap place to do business was the approach to take.

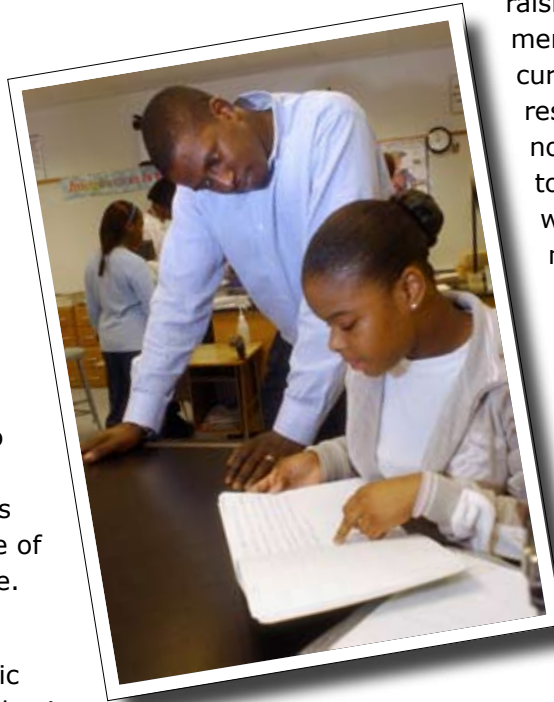
A significant “next step” centered on engaging successful business executives and connecting them to the classroom to help area youth envision greater possibilities for successful careers and to emphasize the importance of science and math in getting there.

### Calhoun

Some 18 people, mostly economic developers, educators, and local business persons, convened in Calhoun on Feb. 21st, and again, education and youth development were overwhelming concerns, in particular the absence of “a culture of learning.” Participants could see a small percentage of kids doing some amazing things, but suggested that most are disinterested in science and technology. Some attributed this to parents and other role models not pushing their kids to excel as much as they should be.

Other issues encompassed promoting entrepreneurship, fostering regional approaches, and forging partnerships with universities that would maximize the flow of knowledge and expertise. Some suggested universities need to do more in promoting their innovations, how they can be used for economic development, and how youth can become part of the process.

Next steps included developing a database of university research and technology available for licensing or other use and showcasing the business value of innovative practices, especially among young people.



### Tifton

At the Agriculture Innovation Center on Feb. 23rd, more than 40 individuals representing chambers, technical colleges, and government agencies pointed to education, and lack of support for it, as a barrier to productivity, emphasizing the need for raising the bar on student achievement. Some expressed that the school curriculum is being “dumbed down,” resulting in students with higher IQs not being challenged. Others pointed to systemic issues in the home, with the lack of family support and means for education cited as a greater barrier to productivity than the education system itself.

Lack of technology infrastructure (for example, high-speed broadband) and adult computer literacy were also expressed as key concerns. There was some disagreement on whether technology was closing or widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots. For instance, while technology in schools was

acknowledged as fair to good, it was also noted that many children, and their families, lack technology in the home. Also, some participants suggested that, politically, big business was valued more than entrepreneurship.

Participants advocated that communities make better use of available resources, such as the Georgia Center for Innovation, and try to generate higher-value jobs from university research.

As a next step, participants want to see more forums but with broader attendance by business and political stakeholders, and an action plan developed that is based on feedback provided through the forum. They recommended a report on findings from the forum for wide distribution.

### Savannah

Approximately 100 people came to this session at the Maritime Logistics Innovation Center, which was co-hosted by The Creative Coast Initiative, on March 1st, representing diverse ages, races, and backgrounds and stayed for three hours. Like elsewhere,

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public education was seen as having challenges, some of which might be met by expanding pockets of existing innovative practices in some Savannah schools and by fostering greater hands-on activities for students in science, math, and technology, according to participants. Although gifted programs were termed excellent, some attendees advocated the need to make similar services available to all students rather than just the handful who can pass certain tests.

Another theme that emerged was the need to create a K-12 atmosphere that encourages new ideas by allowing (and not punishing) failure. Participants saw making mistakes as critical to the learning process and suggested that the current public education system focuses more on getting correct and standard answers. Consequently, some observed, the natural creative light goes out in children's minds before they reach high school, sometimes earlier.

Some participants also raised concerns about the mismatch between wages and skills, noting that residents have access to skill-honing resources, such as the Savannah College of Art and Design and Savannah State University, but often leave the area for higher-paying jobs elsewhere.

As a possible next step, participants expressed the desire to have more discussion forums, with future sessions focused on specific topics of interest such education.

**Swainsboro**

Fifteen people, including college students, economic developers, and local government officials, attended this March 2nd forum held at GREDC where, once again, education and poor support of it took the brunt of the debate. In addition to concerns about math and science, the dropout rate was a big issue, and one participant reported that many area companies turn to the Hispanic labor pool for a better work ethic.

Creating an entrepreneurial environment means starting it in the local school system, said a pair of college students who noted they had not heard about entrepreneur development as a career strategy during their younger years. Beyond that, participants see the need for community stakeholders to have a better understanding of the real value of entrepreneurship versus traditional recruitment. And as noted by those in Gainesville, many small firms are

trying hard to survive and lack the time or resources for innovation. Some participants said firms are in survival mode due to the lack of effective business and market planning during their start-up years. Of surprise to some attendees were the pockets of innovation in this rural region described by fellow participants at the forum. Examples ranged from an entrepreneur specializing in RFID technology to one specializing in robotic food-plotting equipment.

In total, approximately 370 Georgians provided feedback through the forums. Combined, the forums yielded several valuable insights concerning innovation and technology. The two universities have prepared a joint report, in support of Southern Growth's Southern Innovation Initiative, to be released in the coming weeks.

"Hearing about community priorities and concerns related to innovation and technology is invaluable," says Southern Growth Executive Director Jim Clinton. "It helps ensure that our 2006 Report on the Future of the South is grounded in reality." ❖

**Southern Innovation Summit**

The Southern Growth Policies Board, a regional think tank headquartered at Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, annually explores an economic development issue by fostering moderated discussions throughout the South. In the past two years, topics of these community forums have addressed globalization and rural prosperity. This year, the focus is on innovation and technology in preparation for the 2006 Conference on the Future of the South scheduled for June 4-6 in New Orleans which will feature Governor Sonny Perdue, chair of the Southern Technology Council. The conference will share a report to the governors and other leaders on the results of forums conducted across the South.

The forums also serve to encourage dialogue and action in regional communities, large and small. Southern Growth supplies the materials, including a moderator's guide and discussion guides, and local groups—ranging from civic clubs to economic development organizations—provide the audience.

[www.southerngrowth.com](http://www.southerngrowth.com)

## Sustainability Working Group Forms to Boost Community Competitiveness

Technology increasingly enables businesses to locate almost anywhere. However, quality business investment doesn't just happen anywhere. Whether one talks about the entrepreneur, an existing employer, an investor, or a prospective company considering location, "quality of place" is becoming an increasingly important criterion for being a community of choice. Driving business investment decisions, skilled and talented workers are growing more and more selective about where they will live and work based on quality-of-place considerations. Accessibility to talent is a leading site selection factor among business investors. Therefore, where people locate, businesses will tend to follow.

Quality of place means different things to different people, but it is often embodied in the choices we make on how we spend our time. For example, by ensuring job, housing, and recreational choices are in close proximity to each other, communities become more desirable by providing employees with shorter commutes and therefore more time to attend to family or personal endeavors or other matters of importance to them. Preservation of green space and other natural resources, supported by recreational assets, is also an important component of a community's desirability. It can be fairly said that a community's future economic vitality hinges on realizing its opportunities to develop quality of place.

To help communities pursue such opportunities, Georgia Tech has launched an effort to create a sustainable economic development toolkit, which will help communities simultaneously address factors impacting the three interdependent spheres of sustainability—economic health, environmental health, and social health—and thereby attract higher-quality jobs and business investments.

To foster the toolkit's development, Brent Verrill from Georgia Tech's Institute for Sustainable Technology and Development is teaming up with the Enterprise Innovation Institute community services staff over the next two years. The new tools will build on some of staff's current approaches, as well as incorporate new ones.

In its early design stages now, the toolkit eventually will include:

- A 101 fact sheet on fostering community sustainability.
- A Sustainability Readiness Assessment to determine a community's readiness for sustainable economic development.
- A Community Sustainability Matrix to measure whether community programs to foster sustainability exist and how they are implemented.
- A Sustainability Index to gauge a community's performance according to key and readily available metrics (efficiency, explanatory, input, output, outcome) and potentially provide comparative benchmarks for communities.
- Case Studies on Distinctive Practices featuring community-based efforts to foster sustainability, focusing on what worked, what didn't work, and lessons learned.

Other components may be added over time as the toolkit continues to evolve through research and practical application. Efforts will be made to further calibrate current services and tools to better address sustainability issues. Also, input will be solicited from other Georgia Tech units having expertise in sustainable development, such as the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development, the City and Regional Planning Program, the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, and the School of Public Policy.

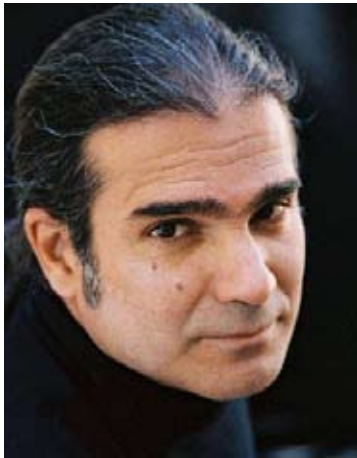
The toolkit will be developed and tested in communities with an interest in exploring ways to foster sustainable development. If your community is interested in learning more about the toolkit or participating in its development, contact Joy Wilkins (404.895.6115 or joy.wilkins@innovate.gatech.edu). ❖



Brent Verrill.

## A Q&A with The Creative Coast's Chris Miller

**C**hris Miller, executive director of The Creative Coast in Savannah, is active in community and local economic development. He formerly worked for MindSpring/Earthlink in Atlanta. Here, he shares some thoughts about the role of creativity in community competitiveness and economic growth.



Chris Miller.

**Focus:** How and when did The Creative Coast start?

**Miller:** In late 2003, 18 Savannah leaders gathered, read three books—*Good to Great*, *Rise of the Creative Class*, and *Home from Nowhere*—discussed the ideas, and addressed the following questions: (1) What is Savannah about?

(2) Where is Savannah now? (3) Where do we want Savannah to be 20 years from now? (4) What do we need to do to get there? (5) What can we realistically achieve?

We realized manufacturing jobs had been in a 14-year decline and that tourism was the fastest growth sector, but also that tourism jobs paid only 25 percent of the wages in the jobs being lost. We also knew that knowledge-based jobs in the 400-plus local small and large businesses already in Savannah were starting to generate more total wages than all the leisure and hospitality businesses combined. And recently, creative and technical businesses were growing in number in Savannah. The question was: How can we encourage more of these businesses?

From these discussions and a review of current assets, which range from universities, foundations, and broadband to mild climate, beaches, and an exceptional quality of life, we determined that Savannah could be highly successful in increasing its innovation, creative, and technical job capacities.

I circulated a white paper outlining various possible outcomes and futures for Savannah. Consequently, I was asked to draft a project proposal to address these needs and take Savannah's economy into the future. From this, the nucleus of The Cre-

ative Coast was formed. The Savannah Economic Development Authority provided seed money to create a formal project plan that the city and county joined in 2004 and 2005, respectively, for an equal-share partnership that now includes more than 30 local partners.

**Focus:** What is its mission?

**Miller:** We have a vision that places Savannah squarely at the center of the innovation economy in the southeastern United States. It is our job to communicate that Savannah isn't just "pretty"; it's "pretty smart."

**Focus:** What does it mean to foster creativity?

**Miller:** To foster creativity, you must first optimize the environment where creativity can flourish. It's our task to fill in the gaps and ensure the community has all the necessary ingredients and mindset to become a creative hotspot, then support those striving to build businesses and create higher-wage jobs. Much of our day-to-day activity involves acting as a type of concierge service to these creative, higher-wage businesses. We also act as a policy think tank and information center, and we produce authoritative economic and demographic trends reports used in policy decisions.

**Focus:** What do you see as the greatest challenges facing communities today for competing in the global economy?

**Miller:** One, creating the quality of life that is the first requirement for attracting smart people who can choose to work anywhere. Savannah's 270-year history of tolerance and quirkiness is one of our greatest assets in making this case. Two, developing solid, forward-thinking leadership that isn't afraid to take chances and tackle tough issues. And three, building sustainability into any model, then keeping an eye on the horizon for changes that may necessitate adjustments to the plan.

**Focus:** You've spoken on the need for communities to focus on quality. What does quality mean for you and The Creative Coast?

**Miller:** Quality means not just settling for being "good"; it means striving to be the "best," then

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**Miller** — continued from page 6

focusing intently on those things you need to work on to get there. It means lining up the entire community along a path that takes you where your vision points. Quality begins with knowing who you are, what you want to be, and what you can be.

**Focus:** Who are The Creative Coast's key partners and what role(s) do they play?

**Miller:** We are a hyper-collaborative organization that partners with anyone who is trying to move Savannah forward as it adjusts to global economic realities. Savannah has a huge number of assets, and we have ties to nearly all these organizations. Our role is to promote and support their efforts, as well as work with them on various projects that further our mission.

**Focus:** What are some things Savannah is doing that other communities can learn from or emulate?

**Miller:** These five certainly: know thyself, create a high-quality built environment, support knowledge-based entrepreneurs and businesses, cultivate a tolerant community where smart people will want to live, and build a consensus around a common vision.

**Focus:** What advice do you have for local economic developers?

**Miller:** Think outside the box. The world has changed, and so has the economy. Figure out how your community will be impacted by globalization, competitive pressures, information technology, marketing techniques, environmental pressures, and uncontrolled growth, and adjust your tactics accordingly. Continually reinvent yourself as you stay focused on building a sustainable community. Start with the end in mind.

**Focus:** Tell us a little-known fact about yourself.

**Miller:** I served two years in Zanzibar working for the Minister of Agriculture on a Peace Corps assignment.

## On the Horizon

Based on our research, the following factors are gaining importance in the economic development field and, singly or in concert, may soon be playing in a locality near you.

- Developing and attracting talent will increasingly become a "must-do" component within community economic development programs, no matter the community's size.

- Technology will increase the ability of businesses and talent to locate just about anywhere in the world, and communities that focus on improving their quality of place will have an advantage.

- More communities will recognize that innovation is not simply a buzzword; it is fundamental to every community's ability to compete in the global economy.

- The continuation of shrinking resources and increased competition underscores the urgency for greater regional action among communities throughout Georgia, something that the innovative North Carolina realized years ago.

- No matter the year or the decade, success boils down to leadership—an ability to collaborate effectively for positive change.



## Enriching Camden County's Quality of Place

Growing knowledge-based businesses, building a creative workforce, and enhancing tourism assets are three keys to **Camden County's** future growth, according to a comprehensive series of assessments by Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute and Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development. The community's central location between Savannah and Jacksonville is a major advantage for these efforts.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment, the project had as a focal point exploring economic diversification and reducing the county's dependence on Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay.

The project entailed interviews with some 100 leaders in business, government, and education; 20 economic development partners from outside Camden; and many other research tasks. Following are some highlights from the team's findings.

- Views concerning what constitutes "successful economic development" and "successful quality growth" were similar to the point of being almost synonymous, signaling community recognition of how the two pursuits are inextricably linked and its desire for "sustainable development."

- Developing a quality workforce was viewed by stakeholders as most important to the community's future prosperity, reflecting the desire for a talent-driven economy in Camden County.

- In terms of economic diversification opportunities, Camden appears to have potential for distribution, warehouse, logistics, materials, marine-based, business services and trade, and knowledge-based businesses in each of these sectors.

- Camden has great potential for further entrepreneur development.

- Water quality was viewed by stakeholders as most important to Camden's future livability.

- Camden has potential to become the gateway of Georgia's east coast from Florida, and, given its location between Savannah and Jacksonville, it also has the potential to become a more attractive destination for "creative class" jobs and talent.

Walt Yourstone, president of The Camden Partnership, says the study helped launch several community betterment initiatives, with some 150 volunteers involved in efforts to implement numerous recommendations. He estimates at least a dozen volunteers participated in each initiative. "The amazing thing is that it's not the same dozen in each one," he says.

Among the initiatives under way:

- A Workforce Development Task Force has formed to develop a one-stop workforce development consortium for growing a knowledge-based labor pool with math, science, and entrepreneurial skills.

- The Camden Entrepreneurship Development Team has formed and is organizing its efforts to make Camden an Entrepreneur Friendly Community as designated by and with the help of the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

- An Affordable Housing Team has formed to address what many consider the number-one social issue Camden faces.

- A group is working with the Camden County Public Service Authority

to develop a "green print" plan, and the city of St. Marys has sponsored a grant application to fund the effort.

- Findings and recommendations from the study are being incorporated in various elements of Camden's comprehensive plan update currently under development. ❖



U.S. Navy Photo

*The Ohio-class guided missile submarine USS Florida makes her way through Cumberland Sound to Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay.*

## Helping Barrow County Move Forward

A 2005 initiative conducted by a partnership of four organizations—Georgia Tech, the University of Georgia's Small Business Development Center, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and Georgia Electric Membership Corporation—combined a wide range of talents and expertise to help **Barrow County's** leaders identify their most promising next steps. The project sprang from a Barrow County summit in fall 2004 that convened community leaders to develop a common agenda.

Says SBDC Director of Applied Research Sharon Kane of the effort: "The combination of Georgia resource partners provided an innovative team approach for addressing several economic development issues simultaneously, adding significant value for the Barrow County community."

Undertaken for the Winder-Barrow Development Authority, the assessment focused on retail/commercial development, industrial development, and quality-growth principles.

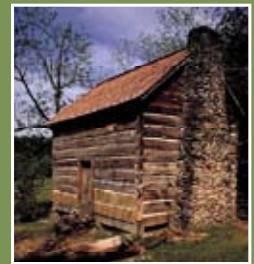
Tools employed included interviews with stakeholders and partners, an economic development report card, retail market analysis, community choices assessment, and gateway identifications study.

Among economic development-related recommendations: (1) capitalize on assets such as Fort Yargo State Park, Chateau Elan, and Winder-Barrow Airport; (2) hire a full-time economic developer; (3) devise an economic development plan; (4) pursue entrepreneur development and expand support of existing industry; (5) develop industrial sites with appropriate infrastructure; (6) continue participating in the Bioscience Development Authority; (7) adopt quality growth principles in community development planning; and (8) focus on education and workforce development.

The study noted that **Winder** could turn several vacant or underused properties into mixed-use centers, and it recommended an inventory of such buildings and lots. Also, federal funds could be tapped to improve the city's downtown streetscape, and efforts to reduce traffic congestion, enhance pedestrian/bicycle routes, and integrate "connectivity" could pay dividends to the entire community. Other aspects addressed housing, transportation, environmental protection, and open-space preservation.



*Barrow County is home to Chateau Elan and Fort Yargo State Park.*



Georgia Department of Economic Development

Three community teams met in early February 2006, and more than 80 participants gathered to begin the process of implementing their preferred recommendations. The workforce development team scheduled a spring education summit to highlight best practices in education; this group also will begin initiatives to address absenteeism and high school dropouts. The community development team has begun examining how to capitalize on Fort Yargo, and it launched a cultural development initiative in March; it also is looking into branding and signage for the county. The economic development group will tackle the gateway concept and work with various governments for proper infrastructure, as well as pursue the hiring of a full-time economic development professional and begin the process of becoming one of Georgia's Entrepreneur-Friendly Communities.

"The report provided a comprehensive assessment of our county, which gave us the avenue to proceed," says Carolyn Delamont, president of the Barrow County Chamber of Commerce. "The community is focused, working together, and thinking positively." ❖

## Students Go to College Park

The Enterprise Innovation Institute's Jan Youtie, who also teaches in Georgia Tech's School of Public Policy, is instructing a community development workshop this spring—the focus of which is **College Park**, a small city neighboring Atlanta. The purpose of this new course—a joint offering from Public Policy and City & Regional Planning—is to provide graduate students with an opportunity to integrate theory, knowledge, and methods and apply all that in an environment similar to what they might find in professional practice. Students plan, organize, and manage work in small groups and communicate results to a real-world client.

Challenges for College Park include undeveloped land, leveraging proximity to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, affordable housing, and abandoned retail space along Old National Highway. And there are policy considerations concerning finance and various political jurisdictions providing services, such as **Fulton County, Clayton County,** and the city of **Atlanta**.

The initial task entails profiling the community in terms of several perspectives: location quotient; employment; demographics; economic development organizations and functions; finance/policy analysis; land use; and creativity, which comprises such things as education, patents/publications, and tourism. This effort involves researching secondary data and interviewing civic officials and economic developers.

Halfway through the course, the 10 students will make presentations on issues facing College Park, such as workforce housing, attracting retail development, and benefiting from historic main streets. Student teams will benchmark with similar cities and develop innovative solutions appropriate for this community.

The workshop's final deliverable is a report and a presentation given to the mayor, city council, and industrial development authority.

"Georgia Tech has a treasure of capabilities in its students," says Youtie of the class she co-teaches with Professor Bill Drummond, "and it is nice to have a mechanism for this to be of use and benefit to economic developers in the state." ❖



Georgia Department of Economic Development

Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

## Getting Better with Getting Older

In late January, **Valdosta** welcomed some 125 representatives of regional planning agencies, local chambers of commerce, and the elder care industry, as well as state officials and property owners to a two-day workshop on retirement communities.

Sponsored by Georgia Tech and the Georgia Rural Economic Development Center at East Georgia College, the workshop covered a range of relevant topics, such as baby boomer demographics, retiree attraction strategies, and financing tools. Speakers represented retirement-community builders, the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the Georgia Association of Homes & Services for the Aging, and other business interests.

According to Alison Stokes with Triple Crown Hometowns Retirement Development Partnership in Valdosta, the workshop was a great success. She notes the partnership, an economic development program of the chambers of commerce of **Brooks, Lanier,** and **Lowndes** counties, has been actively marketing south Georgia to retirees for the past five years. "Georgia has a great window of opportunity to take advantage of attracting amenity-seeking, affluent retirees, and south Georgia in particular has the climate most retirees find desirable," she says, adding that the building of active-adult retirement communities (AARCs) and continuing-care retirement communities (CCRCs) will create high-paying jobs in medical, financial, and professional services fields. "The workshop echoed what we've been preaching—retiree attraction is clean economic development," she says.

Georgia Tech's Rick Duke, CEcD, who helped coordinate the workshop and who is leading a study of AARCs and CCRCs (see *Focus on Communities, Fall 2005*), calls it a good event that drew diverse interests. He partnered with the Georgia Department of Human Resources' Division of Aging Services on its April 28 summit in **Atlanta**, "The Future of Long-Term Care in Georgia." This growing activity, he says, underscores the rising interest in AARCs and CCRCs as economic development tools. ❖



Allan Dear of Triple Crown Hometowns (L) and Tech's Rick Duke.

## Bryan County Seeks Diversification

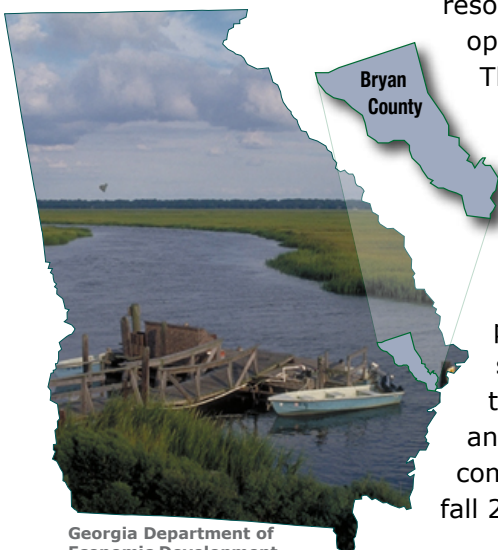
To diversify and grow its economic base and reduce dependence on the U.S. Army's Fort Stewart, **Bryan County** is being assisted by Georgia Tech to evaluate conditions and opportunities and make recommendations for advancing the coastal community's economic growth. This effort is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment and administered by the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center.

The Tech team will advise feasible long-term strategies for implementation over the next five years, possibilities that are linked to current and potential resources and appear optimal for community development. The project will assist Bryan County in its efforts to develop strategies for sustainable and innovative economic diversification, strengthen its economic development program, expand its support systems for business and industry, and foster a greater quality of life and quality of place.

The first stage will review the degree of economic dependency on Fort Stewart. (Recently, Georgia Tech helped nearby **Camden County** explore ways to reduce dependency on another military installation—Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base. See page 8 for details.)

The second will involve extensive interviews of community leaders and economic development partners, followed by analysis of community assets, resources, and opportunities.

Then will come recommendations and a report to community stakeholders. Expected to take six months, the project is anticipated to be completed during fall 2006. ❖



Georgia Department of Economic Development

## Georgia Communities Get TechSmart

In today's "flat world," information technology (IT) is more important than ever. Communities across Georgia can find ways to harness IT to improve productivity, gain a competitive edge, and boost economic development with Georgia Tech's TechSmart programs. TechSmart is unique because it focuses on (1) technology's bottom-line business benefits, (2) collaboration, and (3) the vital role of business and civic leaders. It provides simple and flexible models for utilizing IT, as well as facilitation and coaching to effectively apply the models.

**Oglethorpe County**, which recently finished the program's technology road-mapping process, found numerous needs for Web-based streaming video, as well as work flow and financial services. A start-up day care and the county's new jail need video for surveillance, and the school system and regional non-profit medical clinic are both developing distance learning. Also, the jail has potential video applications for remote arraignment of inmates. There also are possible digital media applications for a local non-profit, eco- and agri-tourism, and retirees to the area.

These applications require greater bandwidth and specialized talent, so the community anticipates partnering with local telecommunications providers and higher education. More important, these applications could support entrepreneurial and educational opportunities that could form the foundation for long-term sustainable economic growth. Oglethorpe County now moves into the second phase of TechSmart—implementing the technology road map.

Elsewhere, **Warren County** is in the middle of the TechSmart process, and has identified several areas for targeted investments in IT infrastructure. Also, **Troup**, **Tift**, and **Lowndes** counties will be working with Georgia Tech over the next few months to develop their technology road maps.

For more information on TechSmart, contact Greg Laudeman (greg.laudeman@innovate.gatech.edu, 706.271.5521) ❖

## An Eye on the New Fundamentals

Community economic development got a good going-over by Georgia Tech graduate students last fall. Professor Nancey Green Leigh's Planning and Economic Development class spent the semester researching the "new fundamentals in local economic development." Specifically, they studied select community practices implemented across the United States relating to the following themes: culturally adaptive, entrepreneur friendly, eco-friendly, knowledge-based, and resilient.

The objective was to foster greater awareness about innovative community practices relating to the five themes, and in particular to identify those practices that could be replicated by communities elsewhere. According to the Enterprise Innovation Institute's Joy Wilkins, who served as co-advisor to the class, their research transcended the purely academic and focused on finding practical solutions that have worked and have lessons to teach.

A main goal was to enable the 20 students to transfer the knowledge they gained to those who

could best use it. To that end, they not only prepared extensive reports on their topics, they delivered presentations in December through two sessions for more than a dozen economic development professionals who engaged the students in discussion about their work. Attending one of the sessions, Pat Merritt, manager of community development for the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation, expressed her plans to reference some of the student work in updating curriculum materials for the Georgia Academy of Economic Development.

The students' written case studies are undergoing an editorial review and should be available later this spring. Copies of their presentations are available on request from Dr. Nancey Green Leigh (404.894.9839, nancey.leigh@coa.gatech.edu) or Joy Wilkins (404.895.6115, joy.wilkins@innovate.gatech.edu) ❖

## Welcome to Georgia

Jennifer J. Clark, PhD, a faculty member in Georgia Tech's School of Public Policy, is also a member of the Enterprise Innovation Institute team. Holding a master's degree in economic development from the University of Minnesota and a doctorate from Cornell University, she specializes in regional economic development policy in the United States. She has worked on regional industry and labor market studies in New York and Minnesota and has developed regional models for economic development. Prior to coming to Georgia Tech, she was a visiting assistant professor at Cornell.

An assistant professor at Georgia Tech, Dr. Clark works with other researchers and faculty involved in economic development, particularly those engaged in the new Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy Program, a collaboration between the Enterprise Innovation Institute and

Tech's School of Public Policy. For example, she is helping to develop (1) mapping small and large firm clusters to better understand the regional impacts of research and innovation investments on economic development, and (2) creative economy-based development strategies for global cities and regions.

Her book, *Remaking Regional Economies: Firm Strategies, Labor Markets, and the New Uneven Development*, coauthored with Cornell Professor Susan Christopherson, is due out this year. In it, the authors examine what is happening to cities and regions from a perspective that allows both academics and policy-makers to rethink assumptions about knowledge-based regional economies. Their approach incorporates renewed interest in economic geography and development with questions concerning market institutions, governance, and policy.



Jennifer J. Clark, Ph.D.

## Meeting Society's Needs—Today and Tomorrow

Fourteen years ago, Georgia Tech made a commitment to sustainability—the combining of a vibrant economy and high quality of life with sustaining natural resources and protecting the environment. Tech's Institute for Sustainable Technology and Development (ISTD) represents that commitment in many ways, not the least of which is extending sustainability to the world beyond Tech's Atlanta campus.

One way of doing that is teaching sustainability to students so that they carry it into their workplaces and lifestyles after graduation. Georgia Tech has emphasized sustainability by supporting Earth Day on campus, building "green" facilities, and fostering courses and research with sustainability content.

Some of our most successful learning experiences," says ISTD Director Carol Carmichael, "have involved student internships. They learn the challenges associated with making balanced decisions in real time. Through such experiences, students and their professors learn that sustainability is fundamentally a social process.

In a more direct approach, ISTD is supporting Enterprise Innovation Institute staff in developing decision-support tools that incorporate a range of non-economic factors into economic development analysis. This derives from their mutually shared view that a community's environmental, social, and economic factors are in a symbiotic relationship and should be addressed simultaneously rather than separately. The goal of an initiative launched in January is to create a toolkit (see page 5) to help community leaders create the quality of place that enables sustainable development.

Carol Carmichael notes, "We're encouraging systems thinking in community development. For example, Georgia's coastal region is highly desirable in terms of economic and residential development. People love the area for its climate and natural

beauty—the region's natural capital, so to speak. Savannah also has developed rich socio-cultural amenities and economic capital. It is the combination of the three that makes it so exciting," she says. "Any degradation of one of these forms of capital diminishes the region overall. The economic develop-

ment community needs to appreciate the broader perspective of the natural, social, and economic systems in which their particular projects will operate. The systems are complex, but long-term value depends on a balance among them."

She adds that one of Georgia Tech's most significant contributions to creating a more sustainable society is technological innovation. "The concept of sustainability presents an opportunity for creativity, for finding ways to meet our wants and needs within the constraints presented by a balanced view of social, ecological, and economic impacts," says Carmichael. "One of our most notable graduates, Ray Anderson of Interface, Inc., has leveraged his commitment to sustainability into the top-selling carpet product in his market sector, the Entropy carpet tile."

One of six interdisciplinary research centers at Tech, ISTD offers several valuable resources for use by almost anyone. It has an extensive library of sustainability-oriented books, journals, conference proceedings, and videos, and it can direct an inquiry to appropriate researchers who are active in sustainability locally and around the world. ❖

*For more information, contact  
Dr. Carmichael at 404.894.5676,  
carol.carmichael@marc.gatech.edu.*



## June

### Enterprise Innovation Institute

- IEDC Economic Development Credit Analysis, **Atlanta**, June 6-8, 2006
- CEcD Study Group, **Atlanta**, June 27, 2006

## August

### Enterprise Innovation Institute

- CEcD Exam, **Atlanta**, Aug. 19-20, 2006

## September

- **GEDA**—Georgia Economic Developers Association annual meeting, **Savannah**, Sept. 20-22, 2006
- **TTS**—Technology Transfer Society annual conference, **Atlanta**, Sept. 27-29, 2006

## October

- **GPA**—Georgia Planning Association Fall Conference, **St. Simons**, Oct. 11-13, 2006

## December

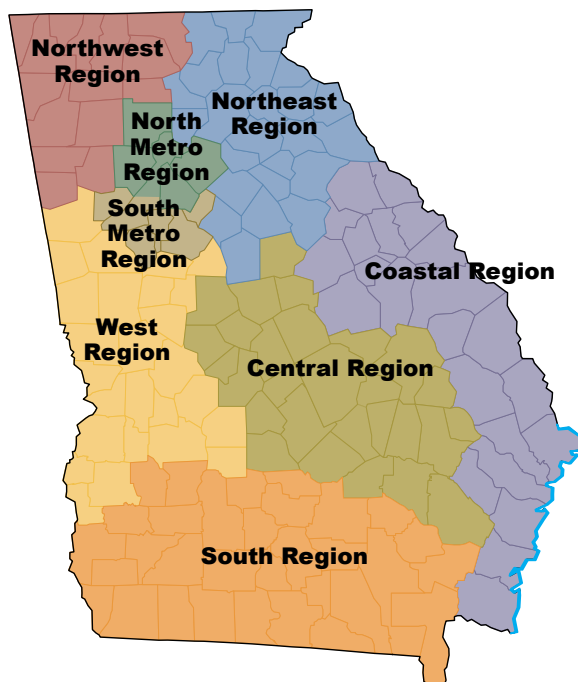
### Enterprise Innovation Institute

- Emerging Trends in Business Location Analysis 2006, **Atlanta**, December 5-6, 2006

For more information on these and other Enterprise Innovation Institute courses, contact Martha Schoonmaker, CEcD, at 404.894.0332 or [martha.schoonmaker@innovate.gatech.edu](mailto:martha.schoonmaker@innovate.gatech.edu)

## Georgia Tech Region Network

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*Focus on Communities* is published by the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute, Atlanta, Georgia.

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