

eFOCUS

In Business For You

ACCREDITED

November 2009

Gwinnett Chamber

In Focus:



Industry Spotlight
Yukon Private Research Center
December 1 Paper Item



Chairman's Club
The Academy Theatre
Seeking Gwinnett's Culture with the Arts



Photo courtesy of Denver Metro Convention Visitors Bureau

Gwinnett Chamber Strategic Leadership Visit: Leaders Return with a Regional Outlook

REGIONALISM. That is the buzz word that arose from the Gwinnett Chamber's fourth Strategic Leadership Visit in the 'Mile High City.' The 2009 Denver trip, which took place in late September, marked the fourth such trip the Chamber has planned for the county's and region's leaders in government, business, and education. The purpose of the Chamber's Strategic Leadership Visit is to take a select group of both Gwinnett's and the region's leaders to other metro counties and regions to explore innovative ideas and programs which have helped to build partnerships to impact positive community change. This also fulfills an important ongoing objective of the community's Partnership Gwinnett long-term economic and community development strategy.

"For 2009, we choose Denver because of its resilience to bounce back after busts and booms in the economy, including the oil bust in the 1980s," said Gwinnett Chamber Vice President of Communications and Public Policy Demming Bass. "The fact that

many of the region's most successful initiatives came out of this crisis can serve as an inspiration for Gwinnett and metro Atlanta as we weather one of the worst economic recessions in decades."

The way in which Denver bounced back with its regional approach left the biggest impression on the leaders who attended the trip. Throughout the Strategic Leadership Visit, Gwinnett's leaders heard from Denver-area city and county leaders who achieved economic stability and growth by doing what is best for the region rather than limiting their focus to their own community.

"Through Partnership Gwinnett's cooperative mindset that regional approach is already in play. Gwinnett is taking the lead with this new way of doing business," said Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District Executive Director Joe Allen. "During the Denver trip, all of the stakeholders that we heard from noted this model of cooperation among the local communities working as one

continued on page 10

Strategic Leadership VISIT

powered by Gwinnett Chamber

Inside this issue...



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Taking Business to the Streets with T-Mobile Disruption

Page 7



DON'T WORK!
Just say 'NO' to Unemployment
If Gwinnett's Workforce

Page 8



PUBLIC POLICY
Recent Updates from the Governor's Office
Speak at the Chamber's Legislative Luncheon

Page 9



PARTNER NEWS
Gwinnett Made it Clear and CLE Atlanta Partner to Host Career Assessment

Page 13



WHAT'S HAPPENING
Use your calendar for upcoming programs and events

Page 14

Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce • 6800 Sugarloaf Pkwy. • Duluth, GA 30097 • 770.232.3000 • www.gwinnettchamber.org

Strategic Leadership Visit (cont'd.)

to improve infrastructure, seek funding solutions, and plan for future growth. They truly realize each one's success is dependent on the success of the other."

Previous visits to Fairfax County, Virginia, Collier County, Texas, and the Research Triangle in North Carolina have exposed participants to a wide range of ideas and practices for economic and community development. Equally important, the visits have created new networks among business and civic leaders in Gwinnett and metro Atlanta - connections vital for implementing lessons learned upon return to Georgia.

Past visits have greatly influenced a number of Gwinnett success stories including the creation of Partnership Gwinnett, the Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology, the Gwinnett Braves Stadium, and the current pursuit of the tollway for the Ronald Reagan Parkway Extension.

So, what did attendees bring back from this year's trip to Denver? While Gwinnett and metro Atlanta will never have the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains and certainly not the low humidity levels that bring many

people and businesses to the Mile High City, Gwinnett may see changes in areas where revitalization is needed, a peaceful co-existence between roads and transit, and new business and education partnerships aimed at increasing completion rates and access to career choice for our future workforce.

Revitalization

During the tour of the Belmar redevelopment in Lakewood, Colorado, Gwinnett's leaders learned about the Denver region's strong public-private partnerships that allowed for the conversion of a dying mall into a new urban downtown center. The city officials had an attitude of "let's make this work" rather than the normal "follow the rules" mentality of government. The importance of allowing "out-of-the-box" rules and regulations and tax increment funding were an important part of the equation that made Belmar and the Town Center at Aurora possible.

"During the Belmar tour, what I saw before me continued on next page

Gwinnett Chamber



Q: What's your best marketing move NOW?

A: GET IN THE GAUGE!

BE FIRST among Gwinnett County's business and community leaders to **RESERVE YOUR PRIME AD POSITION** in the Chamber's 2010 Chamber Guide and Membership Directory

It's our magazine for marketing and promotion, where newsmakers expect to find your organization and year end. It's 2010 year's best marketing opportunity. And it's only available NOW.

Get Whipped! You Deserve It!
Our website attracts thousands of new visitors annually so this magazine will appear on the Chamber's home page as an online flipbook. With your ad purchase in the magazine, you can also purchase the online flip for only \$199 more, and prospects can find you fast with the click of a button!

Call Audrey Rouse, our Project Director with Great Southern Publications, Inc., at 404-331-3362 to reserve your ad space, before your competition does! OR complete and return the following fax reply form.

Center Address Line 1: _____
 Chamber # 220-088-2290 ext 444-0233-3263
 Website: www.gwinnettchamber.com
 or Chamber Fax: 770-211-8800

Link your ad to your Facebook site!

Thank you to our sponsors! As a non-profit organization, the Chamber's work would not be possible without the support and contributions made by many dedicated companies and individuals in Gwinnett County. The Gwinnett Chamber would like to show sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following sponsors who supported Chamber programs and events for October 2009.

- AcuityGFI, LLC
- Anderson, Tins & Carr, PC
- ASK Staffing, Inc.
- Bank of North Georgia
- BBAT
- CAB, Inc.
- Canvas Systems
- Carole Parks Galoring
- Charter Business
- Cisco Systems, Inc.
- Costco Wholesale
- DataPath, Inc.
- Davis & Hunter's
- Dakota Office Enhancement
- Eagle Rock Distributing Co.
- Georgia Federal Credit Union
- Georgia Gwinnett College
- Georgia Power
- GRANT Impact
- Gwinnett Business Journal
- Gwinnett Daily Post
- Gwinnett Medical Center
- Gwinnett Technical College
- Horizon Software International, LLC
- Mail Surf, Inc. / Striking Solutions
- Meggit Training Systems
- Merrill Lynch - The Cross Group
- Metro Coffee
- Monte, Manning & Martin, LLP
- Network Solutions
- Olympus Media, LLC
- Partnership Gwinnett
- Pepsi
- Quantum National Bank
- Rocket IT
- Saint Leo University
- Sander Training
- SCANA Energy
- Sentinel Offender Services
- Signs Now
- Systems of Sound
- T.Y. Lin International
- The 1816 Club
- TPC Sugarloaf Country Club
- University of Georgia SBDC at University of Phoenix
- Veristar Systems, Inc.
- Webb, Towner, Powell, Mertz & Wilson

Strategic Leadership Visit (cont'd.)

was a complete integration of retail, employment, residential and cultural venues on the footprint of a former interior mall about the size of the Gwinnett Place Mall area," said Allen. "We would do well to further explore this model and bring the various private and public decision makers to the table to determine Gwinnett Place Mall's long-term direction and strategy for continued success. This step is something the CID has already begun to do with various meetings scheduled with local property owners."



Members of the Gwinnett Delegation rode the Denver Light Rail system from Greenwood Village to Downtown Denver. The segment was part of the FasTracks transportation initiative.

Transportation

Gwinnett County Commission Chairman Charles Bannister was particularly impressed with Denver's regional approach to transportation. "Denver reinforced the notion that we need a regional approach to solve our transportation issues," said Bannister. "As Chairman, I serve the people and businesses of Gwinnett, but I also serve the people who commute from surrounding counties to Gwinnett. It is important to remember this as we discuss transportation."

Chairman Bannister and fellow business and community leaders learned about several different transportation models that would be interesting for Gwinnett to consider. One model is Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD) where the governing body of the RTD includes representation from throughout the region, and no one area of the region (including the City of Denver) dominates the RTD. Denver's model for funding its FasTracks and T-Rex transportation initiatives are also worth considering as we debate how to increase state funding here in metro Atlanta and Georgia. Gwinnett leaders also learned about the peaceful co-existence between roads and transit when they heard from one of the presenters who said "While it is true that roads alone are not the answer. Roads are not the enemy."

Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District Executive Director Chuck Warbington was equally impressed with Denver's regional approach to solving transportation issues. "The idea of tackling issues from a regional standpoint instead of individually was the biggest lesson that I learned on the trip," said Warbington. "One initial way to solidify relationships and work together is through better planning and funding for transportation and transit projects

on a regional level that connects employment centers across the Atlanta metro area."

Education

A new initiative may be born from what Gwinnett leaders learned from their lesson on The Adams County Consortium, which was created a few years ago in partnership between Adams County Economic Development and all local educational systems from K-12 to colleges. In less than five years, more than 5,100 students have attended its Career Expo and 1,000 went through its "Experience 9 to 5" mentoring program.

"The result of this program for Denver has been increased overall successful completion rates for secondary and post-secondary students with increased access to career choices in local industry," said Bass. "The '9 to 5' program impressed everyone on the trip so much that there are already plans to implement the program in Gwinnett."

What's Next

While it may be too early to measure the ideas elicited and successes gained from the Chamber's trip to Denver, these areas mentioned left a big impression on attendees and will surely help to direct the Gwinnett area's and the region's future.

"The regional cooperation between the cities in metro Denver made it possible for huge transportation projects, attracting seven professional sports teams, and an array of arts and cultural amenities," said City of Norcross Mayor Bucky Johnson. "We have had similar success with Partnership Gwinnett, which has made it possible to keep and attract businesses, support education, and develop arts and cultural programs. This trip has inspired all of us take another step forward and reinforced the importance of regional thinking."

For more information on the Strategic Leadership Visit, go to www.strategicleadershipvisit.com.

eCOMMUNIQUE



**From the President
Get to Know
GCPs Superintendent,
J. Alvin Wilbanks**

By Jim Moran

THE GWINNETT COUNTY Public School System has a dedicated and accomplished history of preparing students for success in the future workforce. With Superintendent Alvin Wilbanks leading the charge for 72 elementary schools, 24 middle schools, 18 high schools (including Phoenix HS) and nine other educational facilities that teach more than 152,000 students, Gwinnett County is in great hands.

Wilbanks was given the Chamber's highest honor with the "2005 Citizen of the Year." He has also won the "2005 Georgia Superintendent of the Year" and was one of the four finalists in the "2005 National Superintendent of the Year."



Alvin Wilbanks

GCPS has a deep commitment to provide their students with the best education possible for success after high school. Their vision is for students to develop and exhibit leadership and teamwork skills while becoming effective problem solvers and communicators. This pledge is working when you look at the stats.

continued on page 3

Commissioners Approve Five Tax Allocation Districts

GWINNETT COUNTY took a big step toward revitalizing older areas of the county last month when commissioners approved redevelopment plans and the formation of five tax allocation districts, also known as TADs. Under state law, counties can issue development bonds for specified redevelopment areas to be paid back from increased tax revenues from those areas as they are improved. The funds can be used for both public and private facilities and infrastructure improvements within the tax allocation district.

Public hearings were held on the five TAD plans in September. Gwinnett's first five TADs are in the Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Indian Trail Road sections of the Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District, the Park Place and Lake Lanier areas in the Evermore CID, and in the Gwinnett Place CID area. The County has established the Gwinnett County Redevelopment Agency to manage the process.

Gwinnett voters approved the use of TADs in Gwinnett in the general election last year. Commission Chairman Charles Bannister said, "We've been focused on revitalizing older areas of the County for many years, and now we're finally ready to take concrete steps to make that dream a reality. I am thankful to voters for approving the use of this powerful redevelopment tool, and I am also proud of the hard work the Community Improvement Districts put into developing their plans."

Albi Meek, the County's Director of Economic Analysis, estimated the five areas together have a taxable value of about \$640.3 million, which is 2.1 percent of the County's overall tax digest. "These

five TADs could conceivably triple their value, to \$1.9 billion, over the next 25 years, attracting as many as 36,000 new jobs and providing \$1.6 million in payroll," said Meek. He expects the TADs to produce more than 8,700 new housing units, 1,500 hotel rooms, and 3 million square feet of new retail with a total market value of \$4 billion.



Taxes will not be raised to pay off the redevelopment bonds because bondholders, not the County or the taxpayers, assume all risk. If the areas are redeveloped as envisioned, they will help increase tax revenues and could help to lower taxes in the long run, according to County Administrator Glenn Stephens. Until his appointment to the County's top management spot last month, Stephens chaired the Gwinnett Redevelopment Agency as part of his role as director of the County's Planning and Development Department. "It's exciting to finally see years of planning and hard work take flight. I am eager for these projects to start coming out of the ground. That's when we'll be able to see the tangible results and the impact these developments will have on their surrounding communities," said Stephens. The new TADs are expected to be in operation next year.