

# PartnershipGwinnett



Partnership Gwinnett Steering Committee and community stakeholders gather at the state capital during the press conference

J. Michael Levengood

# a shared vision for the future

"Gwinnett County currently has a population that is larger than four of the states in our nation as well as the District of Columbia," announced Gwinnett Technical College President Sharon Rigsby during the February 26, 2007 State Capitol press conference. With such tremendous growth come challenges and opportunities. In an effort to meet those challenges, state and key community leaders have developed Partnership Gwinnett, a strategy that is designed to produce more than 65,400 jobs during the next five years — 50,000 of those in high-wage industry sectors — in Gwinnett County.

Partnership Gwinnett is a five-year, \$10 million community and economic development initiative to develop a consensus vision for Gwinnett's future growth and an action plan to achieve it. Every successful community across the country has participated and become engaged in a process of evaluating its economic opportunities and challenges. However, most communities wait until they experience a significant decline before engaging in such a process to try and turn their community around. A steering committee comprised of a broad cross section of our community chose to be proactive and take steps while Gwinnett is still a great place to live, work, and play.

In other words, it's time to take Gwinnett County to the next level.

Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce President Jim Maran announced that Chamber Vice Presidents Nick Masino and Demming Bass will lead the Chamber's involvement in Partnership Gwinnett with Stephanie L. Hopkins serving as its new Director.

Gwinnett County has reached a critical juncture in its history. As the second largest county in the State of Georgia, Gwinnett is a major economic player and must proactively reorient local and external perceptions to embrace that reality. Having set a goal of economic diversification and wealth creation, it's essential to focus on strategies specifically related to generating and sustaining local jobs in the target business sectors identified for high quality job growth potential in Gwinnett; namely Health Care; Distribution and Trade; Headquarters, Regional Offices, and Professional Services; Information Technology; and Advanced Communications. If successful, Partnership Gwinnett will add almost \$6 billion to Gwinnett's economy alone.

Bill McCargo, Vice President of Scientific Atlanta, a Cisco Company, and Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce President Jim Maran met last year to brainstorm about improving our great county. Over that past nine months, with funding from the public and private sector, the Partnership Gwinnett steering committee studied Gwinnett's economic indicators and trends. Market Street Services, one of the nation's leading economic development consultants, led the visioning process and together with the Economic Development staff of the Chamber surveyed more than 2,500 people in Gwinnett.

A Competitive Assessment compared Gwinnett to three benchmark communities in four areas that are crucial to the economic development competitiveness of an area: education and workforce development, infrastructure, business costs and capacity, and





of life. A Target Business Analysis analyzed quantitative and qualitative research in order to determine priority target industry sectors for Gwinnett County to pursue. It included an analysis of current business concentrations, future projections and an assessment of Gwinnett's current workforce development capacity for each sector. More than 2,500 Gwinnettians participated in three stakeholder meetings for key community representatives, dozens of in-depth interviews and targeted focus groups and an online survey to gather as much public input as possible.

At the end of this process, the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce and its partners now have a strategy focused on the community's most pressing needs and the action steps necessary to achieve success. The steering committee and all of the partnering organizations unanimously agreed that the Gwinnett Chamber would be the "keeper of the goals" in the implementation of Partnership Gwinnett. Bill McCargo, will chair the Partnership Gwinnett Implementation Committee and has recruited outstanding community leaders who will lead the effort to accomplish Partnership Gwinnett's four major goals. The goals are ambitious, measurable and attainable.



Partnership Gwinnett Co. Chair, Bill McCargo of Scientific Atlanta addresses the media at the press conference.

Our vision is that Gwinnett will be known as an inclusive community where businesses thrive and residents maximize their potential through world-class schools, opportunities for life-long learning, a vibrant economy, diverse partnerships and a superior quality of life.

### Goal 1: Economic Diversification and Wealth Creation.

The Economic Diversification and Wealth Creation Committee will be chaired by Randy Dellinger, Jackson Electric Membership Corporation commercial/industrial marketing representative. Its objectives are:

- Objective 1: Attract new opportunities in targeted business sectors of Health Care; Distribution and Trade; Headquarters, Regional Offices, and Professional Services; Information Technology; and Advance Communications
- Objective 2: Retain and expand existing firms
- Objective 3: Nurture entrepreneurs and small business opportunities
- Objective 4: Advance economic opportunities for international and minority businesses

### Goal 2: Education and Workforce Excellence The Education and Workforce Excellence

Committee will be chaired by Barbara King, Executive Vice President of Primerica Financial Services. Its objectives are:

- Objective 1: Ensure the pre-K through 12th grade educational system is able to serve local needs
- Objective 2: Maintain a demand-driven approach to post-secondary education and training

### Goal 3: Quality of Life Enhancements

The Quality of Life Enhancements Committee will be chaired by Brett Harrell, Executive Director of the Gwinnett 78 Community Improvement District. Its objectives are:

- Objective 1: Promote redevelopment and more sustainable development patterns
- Objective 2: Enhance mobility in Gwinnett and throughout the region
- Objective 3: Strengthen arts, cultural, and recreational assets
- Objective 4: Improve public safety and code enforcement

### Goal 4: Marketing and Outreach

The Marketing and Outreach Committee will be chaired by Denise Townsend, President of Wellsys Corp. Its objectives are:

- Objective 1: Initiate an external marketing campaign
- Objective 2: Make Gwinnett attractive and welcoming for young professionals
- Objective 3: Expand community-building, involvement, and outreach
- Objective 4: Partner with local and regional entities

# Measurable Outcomes: Gauging Success


Pursuing these initiatives, Partnership Gwinnett expects to attain the following goals within the next five years

Number of new targeted industry jobs created	50,875
Number of new jobs created	65,410
Increase in total wages	\$5.87 billion
Increase in per capita income	\$4,101 (from \$30,570 in 2004)
Increase in average annual wage	\$8,067 (from \$43,276 in 2005)
Percent of population with high school diploma	89.1% (from 87.1% in 2005)
Percent of adults with college degrees	45.4% (from 41.4 in 2005)

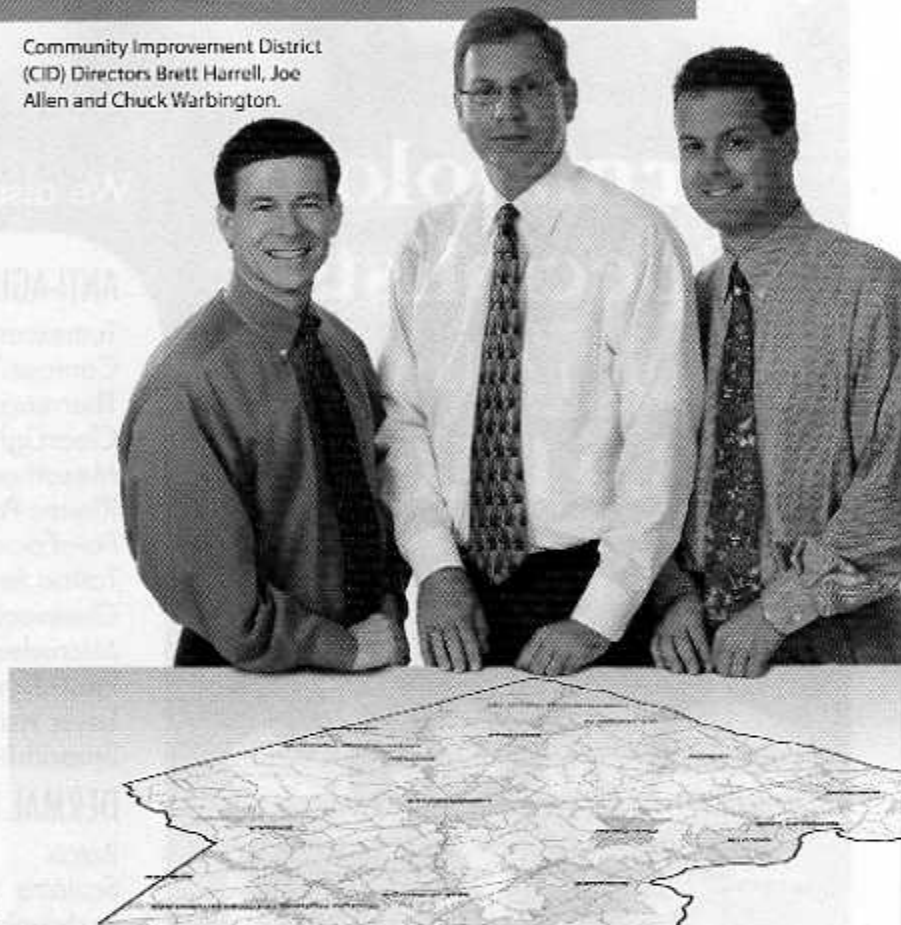
As you look at Partnership Gwinnett's goals, you may be asking, "Can it be done?" Based on the results of Partnership Gwinnett's research and the public's response, the answer is a resounding "YES."

The leadership and resources are available—the will to succeed is building. As the Partnership Gwinnett campaign moves into high gear, local business and community leaders will be investing their time and financial resources to meet challenging goals over the next five years.

The time is now for Gwinnett to make a long step forward toward sustainable long-term economic prosperity for its companies and residents. The time is now for Gwinnett to competitively compete for quality jobs not only against Birmingham or Boston, but also Beijing and Bangalore. The time is now to propel Gwinnett forward from a good community to a great one.

Please join us in supporting this exciting and important public-private initiative. If your organization would like to be involved or if you would like additional information please contact Stephanie Hopkins at the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce and visit the Partnership Gwinnett website which is [www.partnershipgwinnett.com](http://www.partnershipgwinnett.com). 

Community Improvement District (CID) Directors Brett Harrell, Joe Allen and Chuck Warbington.



**PartnershipGwinnett** was funded and supported by the following:

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