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Gwinnett Awakens to Revitalized Communities

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(L to R) Joe Allen, Executive Director, Gwinnett Place CID; Brett Harrell, Executive Director, Evermore CID; Chuck Warbington, Executive Director, Gwinnett Village CID

From Highway 78 in Snellville to Gwinnett Place Mall in Duluth to Jimmy Carter Boulevard in Norcross, Gwinnett's shopping districts are being revitalized, awakening its citizens to "live-work-play" environments.

With additional tax dollars, Community Improvement Districts are able to make these older shopping districts new again.

As an advocate for businesses and the community, the Gwinnett Chamber has been involved with each of the three CIDs – Evermore CID, Gwinnett Place CID, and Gwinnett Village CID – from the very beginning.

"One of the main reasons the CID was started in the southwestern portion of the county was to spearhead revitalization efforts in this area. The Chamber has been a great advocate for building interest, education, and support for the need for revitalization in Gwinnett," said Chuck

Warbington, Executive Director, Gwinnett Village CID.

"The Chamber has also been working as a partner with all CIDs in educating public officials, residents, and businesses concerning the number one issue that affects residents and businesses in the area – traffic congestion," said Warbington.

With the support of the Chamber and other civic-minded community groups, Gwinnett's CIDs are continuing to make progress with new projects on the horizon, along with accomplishments that are allowing the CIDs to benchmark their success.

"From the perspective that the typical traveler into the Gwinnett Place CID would observe, the biggest improvements have been district-wide landscape improvements along the most traveled roads," said Joe Allen, Executive Director, Gwinnett Place CID.

These improvements can be seen on Pleasant Hill Road, Market Street, Venture Parkway, Crestwood Parkway, and a portion of Commerce Avenue, which received new sidewalks to increase pedestrian access to businesses. Additionally, the CID has contracted with landscaping professionals to maintain plantings, mow rights of way and remove trash from the roadways.

Brett Harrell, Executive Director of the Evermore CID, said that their biggest accomplishment thus far is the strong, successful partnerships that they have built at the federal, state and local levels.

"The Evermore CID has secured in excess of \$27 million in additional funding over the past three years that will result in the installation of new technology among other benefits that will enhance the value of doing business on U.S. 78 for years to come," said Harrell. "The Gwinnett Chamber through its economic development efforts is playing a key role in partnership with the Evermore CID to attract new private investment potentially in excess of \$250 million over the next five years."

Two major projects on the horizon for the Gwinnett Village CID involve changing the appearance of the most visible part of the CID.

"A major renovation of the I-85 interchange ramps at Jimmy Carter Boulevard, Indian Trail Road, and Beaver Run Road ceremonially kicked off on March 20. The project will include sodding the entire ramps, and planting trees, shrubs, and flowers in order to provide a welcome mat to those who not only enter Gwinnett Village but Gwinnett County," said Warbington.

The second project of note also centers around I-85. Reported by Warbington, Gwinnett Village officials are in initial discussions with the county and state DOT to replace the Jimmy Carter Bridge over I-85. This long range project will add two additional lanes as well as pedestrian access across I-85.

Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce President Jim Maran says that the presence of CIDs makes a strong statement that businesses care about their community.

"These districts will be re-designed with the latest, most modern materials, new transportation concepts and new architectural beauty," he says. "This enables the community to feel good about the standards that our constituents believe make Gwinnett and our 15 cities a great place to live, work and play."

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