

From: Sasha Ugi [sugi@gwinnettchamber.org]
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Partnership Gwinnett Holds Annual Community and Economic Development Summit

Event focused on education, entrepreneurs, young professionals

(GWINNETT- METRO ATLANTA) November 16, 2012— Partnership Gwinnett and Gwinnett Chamber Economic Development held its annual Partnership Gwinnett Community and Economic Development Summit today at Gwinnett Technical College's Busbee Center. Presented by T-Mobile, the event highlighted the initiative's achievements over the past five quarters and was attended by more than 175 community and business leaders. Local and regional speakers presented on topics ranging from education to entrepreneurship, with the central theme of recruiting and retaining young professionals in Gwinnett County.

Gwinnett County Commission Chairman Charlotte Nash, who delivered opening remarks, commented, "Gwinnett County has experienced yet another successful year, now celebrating 41 consecutive months with the lowest unemployment of the five core metro Atlanta counties. This is through the coordinated efforts of community individuals and businesses working together."

Since July 2011, Partnership Gwinnett launched 116 new projects, conducted more than 130 existing industry visits, received the 2012 International Economic Development Council's Gold Excellence Award for best

Entrepreneurship program, and hosted inaugural programs including the Movers & Makers Awards, Redevelopment Bus Tour and Healthcare Summit.

"This annual Summit provides the perfect stage to showcase the commitment of Partnership Gwinnett and the community," stated Philip R. Wolfe, CEO/President of Gwinnett Medical Center and 2012 Partnership Gwinnett Chairman. "These achievements represent the support and collaboration of Partnership Gwinnett's many public and private partners, whose dedication is essential to the initiative's continued success."

The event also offered a platform for the release of two supporting publications: the Partnership Gwinnett Annual Report and the Atlanta Business Chronicle's Gwinnett Market Report. Both pieces highlight Gwinnett's competitive edge in technology, entrepreneurship, education and global business, and spotlight the area's quality of life offerings.

Summit sessions focused on growing trends and best practices in education, entrepreneurship and community development. Dr. Christopher Ray, Principal of the Gwinnett Online Campus, addressed participants from his virtual classroom during the education session that explored how education and business leaders are preparing students to be a part of the future workforce.

A panel of entrepreneurs and small business owners discussed innovations, trends and news in the evolution of entrepreneurship during the "Cultivating Entrepreneurs, Getting a 'Jumpstart' on the Future" session. Among the panelists was Sanjay Parekh, founder of Startup Riot, a networking event focused around startup pitches to an audience comprised of recent grads, technology investors and other startups.

The final session, "Community First, Job Second" focused on what Gwinnett communities are doing to address the fact that young professionals are increasingly choosing the place they want to live before the place they want to work.

Moderating this discussion was Joe Allen, Executive Director, Gwinnett Place CID. "It is vital for Gwinnett County to take action to ensure young professionals will still continue to live, work, and play in our community now and in the future. This includes putting in place policies and practices that attract, recruit and retain this demographic."

The keynote address, "Our Community at a Crossroad—Where are Tomorrow's Leaders Today?", featured Brian Leary, the creative mind behind the redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel property, now known as Atlantic Station. The project, which has become a national model for smart growth, represents the creation of a complete live-work-play community. Leary discussed methods for cultivating the next generation of leaders in Gwinnett.

The much-anticipated event was possible thanks to generous sponsoring businesses and organizations, including presenting sponsor T-Mobile.

"T-Mobile is proud to be the presenting sponsor of the annual Partnership Gwinnett Summit for a fourth consecutive year," stated Ann Brooks of T-Mobile Engineering, South Region. "Studies show that delivering broadband to a community can increase its per capita income by nearly four percent, as recently reported by FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel. To keep up with the growing demand and new wireless innovations, T-Mobile is making significant investments throughout the country, including upgrades in Gwinnett. By modernizing our network, metro Atlanta communities now enjoy faster data speeds, enhanced quality and better coverage to remain competitive and connected."