



# The art of selecting a merchant processing service



**Pleasing your customers many times means offering a variety of payment methods.** The Better Business Bureau (BBB) cites that companies forfeit up to 80 percent of consumer impulse buys if they don't accept credit cards. However, business owners need to select their merchant processing service with care. In 2011, the BBB received more than 1,700 complaints against credit card merchant and processing services. Consider these tips when selecting a merchant processing service:

Get at least three estimates and check the BBB Business Review® of the merchant processing service.

- Make sure the merchant processing service has a solid technical support

team. Can you contact them 24 hours a day?

- Don't settle without a trial period. Make sure that the merchant processing service you choose has a 100 percent money-back guarantee before selecting them.
- If you have a question regarding a fee that you were charged, ask! Staying competitive with other merchant services is the name of the game for these processors so they will want to keep you happy.

To learn more, visit [www.bbb.org/us/bbb-news.and.Woodstock](http://www.bbb.org/us/bbb-news.and.Woodstock).

## Warm welcome extended to Hyundai Construction Equipment Americas

## Tourism awards recognize Gwinnett business drivers

The Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau (GCVB) honored the County's top hospitality industry professionals on Dec. 3.

Four hospitality professionals were named **2011 Friends of Tourism**: Barbara Mullin with Exceptional Hospitality; Lindsay Harmon, Gwinnett Braves sales manager; Aryn Bana, owner, Purple Rain Restaurant; and Yajaira Torres, director of sales for Hyatt Place Duluth/Gwinnett Mall.



*Unsung Hero Award recipient Joe Allen pictured with GCVB deputy director Lisa Anders*

Other annual award winners include:

**Industry Professional of the Year:** Malinda Foster, director of sales, Courtyard by Marriott Mall of Georgia

**Sports Partner of the Year:** Suwanee Sports Academy (Mike Eddy)

**Event of the Year:** Norcross Art Fest (Frances Schube)

**Innovative Marketer of the Year:** City of Suwanee (Lynne DeWilde)

**General Manager of the Year:** Kevin Hill, Hampton Inn Sugarloaf

**Unsung Hero Award:** Joe Allen, Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District

**Salesperson of the Year:** Kevin Priger, Atlanta Marriott Gwinnett Place

**Restaurant of the Year:** Purple Rain Restaurant, Duluth

**Industry Partner of the Year:** Dave & Buster's, Sugarloaf

**Rate continues to be an ongoing challenge for the hospitality industry.** While hotel occupancy is repairing itself, with Gwinnett's occupancy up over 10 percent from 2010, hotels struggle to maintain and increase rate because consumers are so attuned to looking for coupons or huge discounts.

**Many who live and work here don't recognize Gwinnett's 'meetings market' advantages.** There is a lot to do in Gwinnett for both visitors and residents, particularly in our small towns. We have Georgia's premier mid-sized Convention Center and Arena, one of Atlanta's only LEED-certified meeting venues at the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center (that plans a large meeting room expansion), great hotels and some of the best shopping around.

**The GCVB relies heavily on social media to market events.** With a very active Facebook/Twitter presence, we do a lot of grassroots event promotions solely via social media, email or text marketing. We have a mobi website and plan to expand our mobile marketing presence quite a bit in 2012.

**Norwood Davis, chief financial officer of 12Stone@ Church**



**12Stone Church has launched its fourth campus,** meeting temporarily at Peachtree Ridge High School while we construct our Sugarloaf Campus

and the John Maxwell Leadership Center (JMLC). In May 2012, we anticipate breaking ground and completing construction in late 2013. JMLC will join forces with a number of different leadership development initiatives already in the community to train next generation ministry leaders from around the world to serve and lead in the context of the local church, non-profits and the business world. Also, a site feasibility analysis is currently in the works for our Hamilton Mill Campus with an expansion

**Joe Allen, executive director of the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID)**



**The Pleasant Hill Rd. diverging-diamond interchange project at Interstate 85 will begin in 2012.** Additionally, the CID will initiate four streetscape projects throughout the district to add sidewalks, lighting, benches and other pedestrian-centered improvements to greatly enhance walkability, access and overall area aesthetics. It will continue to fund efforts like the optimization of area traffic signals, maintaining daily community patrols to keep the area secure and professional landscaping, litter and debris pick up along all the interior roadways and Interstate areas.

**From local to global, Gwinnett Place is repositioning itself to become the market portal for business and investment growth.** We encourage every commercial property owner, business owner/operator and member of the general public to come experience all the benefits and resources of greater Gwinnett Place - the county's central business district. The CID continues to see reinvestment in this area with a surge in new businesses and improvements and expansion of existing businesses. From brands that shoppers instantly recognize to a world of international tastes, the greater Gwinnett Place area remains a vibrant marketplace of many distinct cultures and experiences.

**Laurie McClain, managing partner of McClain & Company, P.C.**



**I envision that 2012 will be an enormous growth year for McClain & Company as we expand our capabilities.** We plan to expand our staff for tax season and we are currently working on some projects that will free up additional capacity for some targeted clients.

the economic fog we are in right now. I am excited about the possibilities and look forward to watching great things happen in 2012!

**John Boyce, director of operations and finance for Innovative Outdoors LLC**



**People staying put, for whatever reason, is a good situation for our type of business.** This goes against the current mindset that because we're

in construction our business must be slow. We cater to high-end home renovations and focus on creating outdoor rooms that are an extension of a living space. To inspire customers and prospects even more, we plan to start a blog in 2012 on our web site that highlights interesting projects in progress, and to introduce unique styles and materials.

**One thing I'd like folks to consider is for any construction work you need done, don't fall prey to treating your contractor with the preconceived idea of, 'How are you going to take advantage of me?'** Give your contractor the benefit of the doubt. Most contractors are reliable and do what they say they will do. Our firm is over the top with honest, open communication.

**David Greer, president of Tillman Allen Greer**



**I love the mantra, "Change can happen in an instant."** To me, that means that any of us have the power and the will to change our course - that magi-

cal moment where you decide to do something. Add to that recipe another fave, "See it. Believe it. Make it so." To some it may sound like motivational hooey, but for me, it's been a way of life for a long time. What's ahead is the chance to continue building on those core principals that make each busi-