

SUMMER
2011

The Executive



Setting the **Pace** for Innovation

*Brand Mortgage
Thrives with Common 'Cents'
Approach to Running
a Business*

Executive Strategy

*Keeping Customers
and Communities First
Leads to Success
for Wells Fargo*

Bottom Line

*Billboard Advertising:
Same Road.
New Path.*

News & More



The Executive

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1 — SUMMER 2011

A Quarterly Publication for
Members of the Gwinnett
Chamber Chairman's Club

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On the cover—Greg Shumate, President/Managing Partner, Brand Mortgage

From the C-Suite

JIM MARAN, PRESIDENT & CEO



The Executives of Gwinnett

The late Thomas J. Watson, Jr., President of IBM from 1952-1971 summarized executive leadership this way “Nothing so conclusively proves a man’s ability to lead others as what he does from day to day to lead himself.” What you might not know about Watson was that he led IBM to the height of its innovative leadership with this mentality, and for it, was heralded the “greatest capitalist in history” and named to TIME magazine’s 100 most influential people of the twentieth Century (June 2010 edition). He was an entrepreneur, a businessman and an EXECUTIVE.

The term “executive” is often equated with the enforcing branch of government or a high-level VIP in corporate America. Although both of these are accurate analogies to the word, they are by no means fully encompassing of those who hold this title and hold it with a deserving hand. When I look around Gwinnett County, I see those who “lead themselves” in every stage of business. From the successful entrepreneurs leading themselves through innovation of a new product or service to the medium business owners leading themselves through risk-taking and perseverance and the corporate officers leading themselves through leading others – these are Gwinnett’s executives and the reason why Gwinnett can truly claim that success lives here.

In this new publication for our VIP Chairman’s Club members, it is the goal of the Gwinnett Chamber to not only inspire leadership that has already taken our Chairman’s Club members to great heights, but also to provide them with valuable information on peer best practices, economic trends and business-related news affecting every executive. We’ll also include reminders on upcoming Chairman’s Club events and opportunities for B2B relationship building.

In this particular issue, you’ll hear how a local company, Brand Mortgage, expanded to create 100 new jobs in the last two years of economic unrest. You’ll also get real advice from local business owners and executives on advertising strategies and hear from the Technology Association of Georgia on the current State of Technology and where this industry is headed.

Your Gwinnett Chamber understands the business environment that you lead every day. We know what pressures befall you, how rewarding even the smallest achievement can be, and why you persevere day in and day out in the name of success. At the Gwinnett Chamber, our Chairman’s Club members aren’t just another group of VIPs; they’re respected leaders, influential visionaries, self-motivators. They are executives.

Thank you for your contribution to Gwinnett and we hope you enjoy this inaugural issue of *The Executive*.

Sincerely,

Jim Maran

Setting the Pace for Innovation

After starting his first job at a grocery store in 1976 in Snellville, GA, Greg Shumate, now the CEO and Managing Partner of Brand Mortgage, opened his first savings account with a small, hometown bank – The Brand Banking Company. Impressed with that experience, Greg logically went back to Brand Bank when he needed a loan for his first car. These two small but important milestones marked

the beginning of an important relationship that

new jobs. This, combined with their recent expansion in Gwinnett and being named one of the top places to work in metro Atlanta by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, earned Brand Mortgage the Gwinnett Chamber's first-ever Pacesetter Award. Awarded in April at the Pinnacle Small Business Awards, the Pacesetter Award honors companies that display extraordinary innovative practices and determination. The ability to grow at a record-setting pace while maintaining focus and providing a quality service has allowed Brand Mortgage to overcome adversity and stand

Brand Mortgage Thrives with Common 'Cents' Approach to Running a Business

would lead to great things not just for Greg, but also for the communities and citizens of Gwinnett and metro Atlanta.

As a Senior Vice President and Regional Manager, Greg helped grow the company he worked for to a top 5 Atlanta firm and opened over 15 offices in Georgia and Florida.

When the company relocated to Marietta,

Greg decided to try something different. With a young family at home, Greg thought the opportunity and timing was right to start his own mortgage firm with his longtime friend and business partner, Bartow Morgan, CEO of

Brand Bank. So, in 2006, after an hour and a half conversation between Bartow and Greg, Brand Mortgage was born.

Even on the verge of the subprime mortgage crisis, Brand Mortgage got off to a healthy start. In the past two years alone, the company has achieved a staggering 198 percent growth rate and added over 100

out in a crowd earning them this distinctive award.

Brand Mortgage's innovative strategy that has allowed them to excel in the toughest of markets, particularly for the mortgage industry, is really nothing new, but rather something most companies in the industry have a hard time doing during these tough times – maintaining a positive approach to doing business.

"Our strategy has been to simply outwork everyone and do it with a bigger smile than everyone else," said Greg.

This culture of support and hard work starts with Greg and permeates throughout the entire organization and its 170 plus employees. "I have a career built on what other people think of me and I want that to be a positive impression," said Greg. "At Brand Mortgage, the employees and I strive to do the right thing with every decision we make. We work hard and support each other and our customers can see that."

On top of Brand Mortgage's strong work ethic that keeps the company running strong, Greg attributes much of their success to their tie to the not-so-small anymore, but still hometown bank, Brand Bank.

"Having the backing of The Brand Banking Company with a strong and reliable funding stream has been essential to our success. Since 1905, Brand Bank has been



Key leaders at Brand Mortgage such as Mack Mullins, EVP Capital Markets; Alex Koutouzis, President; and Stephanie Kennedy, EVP Operations work closely with Greg to keep the company running strong.

committed to providing common-sense lending in our community.”

With recent expansions at their headquarters in Duluth, Ga with two floors now covering 16,000 square feet of space and in Cobb County with the opening of a 10,000 square foot facility, Brand Mortgage is ripe for continued success. In addition to these recent expansions, Brand Bank also recently received a \$200 million capital infusion.

According to Greg, this substantial capital infusion will allow Brand Bank and Brand Mortgage to go back to being bankers and lenders. “This will give us the ability to

maintain our proactive strategy and make good loans to good people.”

“Because of our common sense approach to banking and lending, Brand Mortgage has had the unique opportunity to take advantage of the downfall,” said Greg. “We will continue to bring on new employees and grow our products and services as we expand in the Southeast as long as we can maintain high quality products and processes and uphold our high degree of work ethics that our customers expect.”

Along with giving a forecast of Brand Mortgage’s future, Greg is quick to offer his

outlook for the mortgage industry, giving some hope. “It is slowly getting better day by day,” said Greg. “Rates are low, purchase opportunities are available at record lows and the Gwinnett and metro Atlanta area in particular have a lot of upside potential.”

As a pacesetter in the metro Atlanta region with their positive, common-sense approach to doing business, expect more to come from Greg and his team at Brand Mortgage with new opportunities for customers, more jobs, continued expansion in the Southeast and increased support for the local community.

The Executive Edge

Russell Landscape Group President & CEO Bill Russell, PhD

Over the past couple of years, the landscape industry was hit with increasingly high gas prices, employment challenges, and traffic issues. With only one operational location in Gwinnett, Russell Landscape Group - a 24 year old family-owned and managed commercial landscape company – was at a crossroads with large expenses in gas and labor sitting in trucks slowly moving through metro Atlanta traffic. While other companies were cutting back expenses, Russell Landscape Group was busy expanding to four different locations in metro Atlanta to reduce gas and labor costs. This strategy was proven successful with revenues over \$20 million and listed in the top three landscape companies in metro Atlanta by the Atlanta Business Chronicle. Most recently Russell Landscape Group President & CEO Bill Russell, PhD, is exploring foreign trade opportunity made possible in part by the Gwinnett Chamber economic development’s Global Business Missions where he discovered significant opportunity in the area of landscape services and trade & development of his business in China.

Fellow Chairman’s Club member Dr. Daniel J. Kaufman, president, Georgia Gwinnett College, had the opportunity to ask Bill Russell a few questions on how Russell Landscape Group has achieved such success and what the future holds for this long-running, thriving landscape company.

Dan: What are some of the most significant strategies and tactics that were put in place at Russell Landscape Group that enabled your company to thrive in an economic downturn on top of high gas prices, employment issues and traffic challenges?



Bill: The commercial landscape contractor industry has been adversely affected during the past three years due to drought, the down economy, double digit healthcare insurance premiums increases, immigration reform legislation, and astronomical increases in fuel costs.

Russell Landscape Group Inc. (RLG), a 24-year-old family-owned company and Georgia’s largest independent landscape firm, has significantly minimized the affects of high fuel costs among many other adversities by strategically establishing three new branch locations throughout the metro Atlanta region. These new locations removed the variable of company vehicles and employees being stuck in congested traffic resulting in reduced travel distance and time to and from client job sites while improving

landscape service quality.

Dan: How has this enabled you to think differently about how you run your business?

Bill: The many recent local business challenges have forced RLG’s ownership to evaluate and then pursue other southeastern landscape markets — such as Nashville, Charleston, and Birmingham — that have been less harshly affected by “The Great Recession.” Additionally, our company leadership devotes considerable time each week to evaluate each line item including payables and receivables to ensure that each company branch and division is successfully generating acceptable bottom-line profit. As a result of these efforts, RLG has been successfully able to afford its management team and workforce both raises and bonuses each year of the down economy.

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Chairman's Club **New Members**



The Brainy Baby Company
Dennis Fedoruk
President & CEO

Since 1996, Brainy Baby® has proudly been an industry leader in educational products for kids ages nine months to five years. By offering a complete line of complimentary and interactive DVDs, CDs, books, toys, games, puzzles and more that are also entertaining, Brainy Baby is No. 1 in parent satisfaction. Guaranteed!



Cadillac Jack
Gene Chayevsky
CEO

Cadillac Jack is a leading developer of games and technology for the global gaming industry. Using cutting-edge technology, Cadillac Jack designs, manufactures and markets innovative and entertaining electronic games for the US and international markets. The company employs more than 300 individuals globally, with 170 engineering, game design, customer service, marketing, finance and management professionals located at the Duluth headquarters. For further information, please visit www.cadillacjack.com.



Frazier & Deeter LLC
Chris Kyriakakis, CPA CISA CIA
Partner

Founded in 1981, Frazier & Deeter helps businesses and individuals succeed in a changing marketplace. We will help watch over your future by providing a wide range of tax, audit, accounting and advisory services that are tailored to address the specific challenges that not only face you today, but well into tomorrow. With Frazier & Deeter you will have client-focused professionals who are knowledgeable, innovative, and committed to your financial goals. Because of this we remain a well-respected Atlanta CPA and Advisory firm.



Golden State Foods
Larry McGill
President, Food Processing Groups

Golden State Foods is one of the largest diversified suppliers to the foodservice industry, servicing more than 20,000 restaurants from three continents. Founded in 1947, the \$4.5 billion company is value based with proven performance in superior quality

and customer service in both manufacturing and distribution. With approximately 4,000 employees worldwide, GSF's core businesses include: processing and distribution of liquid products, meat products, produce, bakery and other services, providing a variety of networked solutions for the total supply chain spectrum. The Company also runs the GSF Foundation for kids, a non-profit organization to help children and families in need.



HB Retrofit, LLC
Trevor Brown
President

Established in 2009, the owner of HB Retrofit has over 25 years of experience engineering, designing and manufacturing energy efficient lighting systems. HBR is an industry leader in the energy efficient marketplace, specializing in lighting solutions, utilizing innovative designs and applying leading edge technologies. We offer a comprehensive product line of new energy efficient fixtures, daylighting products, and retrofit solutions for all your lighting needs. A complete engineering team will assure your individual project goals are met, while utilizing the most energy-efficient technologies available in the market place today.



IronStone Bank
Robert A. Mann
Area Executive GA East

IronStone Bank is a division of First Citizens Bank, which operates more than 440 branches in 17 states and the District of Columbia. IronStone's 58 branches deliver financial services to individuals and the small business, medical, professional and retail markets. Headquartered in Raleigh, N.C., First Citizens Bank is the major subsidiary of First Citizens BancShares Inc. (Nasdaq: FCNCA), which has \$20.8 billion in assets. BancShares recently ranked fourth-best in the nation on a Forbes' list of the 100 largest banks and thrifts. The bank has received multiple national awards for customer satisfaction and overall stability and security.



MN Aerospace
Mike Nance, II
CEO

MN Aerospace is a Georgia based aerospace sheet metal fabricator. MN Aerospace uses the latest technology and software to manufacture aerospace components. MN Aerospace's customer base ranges from jet engine to air frame manufacturers. MN Aerospace is owned by the MN Group which also owns MNIndustries, Inc. MNIndustries has operated in the Atlanta market for over fifteen years. During that time investments have been made to ensure not only that we have the latest equipment, but to also have the means to grow and meet our customer's expectations.



Monty Chiu & Associates, PC
Pei-Yao (Monty) Chiu, Esq.

Monty Chiu & Associates, PC handles full line of US immigration related services and International Business Transactions for Chinese Market. Represents, consult and assists all kinds of immigration petitions, applications, administrative hearings and administrative appeals. Represents Chinese clients for US related business transactions and consultations.



Noah's Ark & Co., Inc.
Shoji Ketchem
Chief Operating Officer

Noah's Ark & Co. is passionate about emergency preparedness and planning. Nearly 8 out of 10 Georgians claim to be unprepared to face natural disasters. If that were true here in Gwinnett county—that could amount to more than 700,000 individuals! Our

non-profit organization is actively reaching out to and partnering with individuals, private and public organizations to encourage emergency preparedness through the use of our free web-based “ARK” called Customized Online Preparedness Plan (COPP).



Schooley Mitchell Telecom Consultants – Bob Zack
Bob Zack
Principal

Schooley Mitchell Telecom Consultants is the largest independent telecom consulting company in North America, with offices from coast to coast. Our Telecom Consultants deliver telecommunications expertise to companies large and small from all industries. We offer a broad range of performance-based professional services that include analysis of existing and future telecommunications needs, assessment of best alternatives and implementation of cost-effective telecommunications solutions.

Call to **Action**

Regional Mobility Matters to Your Business

JANN MOORE, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY

Members of the Gwinnett Chamber hear over and over again about “transportation initiatives” at Board of Director’s meetings, public policy events, and social media streaming from the Chamber. Why do we keep talking about regional and state mobility projects and funding? Isn’t the Gwinnett Chamber a local business organization?

One of the most important roles of the Gwinnett Chamber is to solidly advocate for effective transportation not only of goods and materials, but for the transportation of people. The importance of the successful movement of your businesses customers and employees does impact your bottom line. Much of the messaging about the 2012 regional transportation referendum is in more abjure terms of economic vitality and the creation of jobs. But the direct impact on



your bottom line is why your Chamber is taking a lead role in the funding of over \$8 billion in much needed road and transit projects over 10 years. This will be the largest economic development project in our region’s history.

Metro Atlanta is in the midst of a transportation funding crisis. We have

underinvested in our transportation network for years; metro Atlanta is the third fastest growing region in the United States, yet Georgia ranks next to last in per capita transportation spending. Federal budget cuts will most like result in Georgia receiving much less federal transportation funding than in past years.

As a result of declining revenues and projected cuts, U.S. cities we compete with for jobs have already passed sales taxes for transportation improvements: Charlotte, Denver, Salt lake City, Seattle and Phoenix,

just to name a few.

While all these cities are facing increasing traffic congestion, we hear directly from economic development prospects that only Atlanta has no clear plan to counter it. Nick Masino, President of Partnership Gwinnett and VP of Economic Development with the Gwinnett Chamber has stated publicly many times that the number-one reason for prospective companies choosing not to relocate to Gwinnett is the lack of mobility options and congestion.

Currently, leaders are developing the regional project list which includes transit, interstate improvements, arterial road improvements, capacity and safety improvements, sidewalks and bike paths. To ensure every community in metro Atlanta benefits, 15 percent of the proceeds will be allocated to every city and county for projects of local importance. The final project list will be completed and ready for public review by October 15, 2011.

Executive Strategy

Keeping Customers and Communities First Leads to Success for Wells Fargo

ROBERT DOBBS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND AREA BUSINESS BANKING MANAGER

Wells Fargo's changeover from Wachovia marked the largest bank merger in U.S. history. When the union was first announced, the task of integration seemed overwhelming. Now that we are on the other side, I get asked frequently how we did it and how we managed to do it so well.

While every situation is different, I can tell you three strategies that helped us: making customers our first priority; taking our time with the change; and finally, making investments in people, infrastructure and our communities.

Keeping customers in the forefront

Georgia was the first state on the East Coast to make the switch to Wells Fargo. It was an honor to pave the way. From the very beginning, many months before the actual conversion took place, we worked hard to keep our customers at the center of it all.

Our vision is to satisfy all our customers' financial needs and help them succeed financially. Keeping them first meant communicating thoroughly and well in advance, minimizing disruptions and offering them even more choices than before.

Our first communication went to customers more than three months in advance. It was high-level, and was followed with more detail written in customer-friendly language. We also made sure our bankers were fully informed so they could answer questions. We let customers know they could continue to use checks and deposit slips and we grandfathered account features.



WELLS FARGO

In business banking—my line of work—many customers did not change over right away. They continued to get the same services as before. But all were offered new choices of products and services, where it made sense, such as equipment financing and new types of lending.

Being deliberate

Another strategy that helped us was choosing to take our time. The merger became official on December 31, 2008. We didn't switch our signs and systems in Georgia until the fall of 2010. Even now, we still have several states in the East left. The entire changeover will be completed later this year.

Being gradual meant we could learn from previous states and get even better. We started with states in the West where both Wachovia and Wells Fargo operated. By the time we got to Georgia, with its 2.9 million customers and 350 locations, we were much better prepared.

Still, customers saw signs of Wells Fargo along the way.

Making investments

In late 2009 and early 2010, we made a major investment when Georgia became the first state in the East to receive Wells Fargo's innovative envelope-free ATMs at 278 bank stores and other bank locations. These machines showed our customers some of what they could look forward to with Wells Fargo – convenience and advanced technology.

We also started offering our customers some of the new products that they would have access to with Wells Fargo, such as

insurance and identity theft protection.

With the switch to the Wells Fargo business model, we invested in people by adding more than 500 jobs in Georgia, something important with unemployment so high.

In Gwinnett County, where we are the No. 1 bank with 29 bank stores and more than 400 team members, we added some 40 jobs. We remodeled every bank store, making them more open and inviting for our customers, and making them more environmentally friendly. At several, we added customized historic murals, deepening the connection to the local area.

Finally, something that was very important to us was to make sure to give back to the community.

To help celebrate our new ATMs in Gwinnett, we gave \$15,000 to the Gwinnett County Public Schools Foundation. In the fall, we asked our customers to help us give away \$120,000 across Georgia by choosing which among a group of non-profit organizations would get the most money. We also provided more than 300 non-profits in Georgia with \$1,000 grants through Wells Fargo's Days of Giving program. Our bank stores and other bankers selected groups to be honored, including 29 based in Gwinnett.

And, to the delight of hundreds of children, the iconic Wells Fargo stagecoach and horses made appearances at five elementary schools across the state, including Rockbridge Elementary in Norcross.

There can never be a one-size-fits-all formula for bringing together two large companies. But if you keep your priorities straight – making your customers and the community No. 1, and taking your time to do things right, you are much more likely to find success.

Line BOTTOM

Billboard Advertising: Same Road. New Path.

DAVID JOHNSON, OLYMPUS MEDIA

On the road of advertising there are many routes to take to reach your destination – the buyer, your customer. Print, online, TV, radio – the options are seemingly endless and there is no one right way to reach your destination. On the road to reaching your buyer consider adding an advertising mainstay but with modern technological enhancements in the form of out-of-home advertising.

Outdoor advertising ranges from traditional, printed billboards to unique motion formats like digital billboards and tri-visions. Billboards are the most traditional form of out-of-home media, yet to this day it remains the most effective and cost-efficient vehicle for delivering advertising messages to a wide variety of consumers. Rising above interstates, highways and surface streets, bulletins impact and inform audiences while directing and influence their purchasing decisions.

According to the 2009 edition of *The Arbitron National In-Car Study*, over 71 percent of travelers notice ad messages on billboards. Another Arbitron study also revealed that 90 percent of people notice messages on digital billboards some or most of the time.

Digital billboards have the unique advantage of offering a powerful impact with high



definition, bright and dynamic visuals and the flexibility of running multiple ads on the same display at no production cost.

With over a 100 percent increase in sales for businesses, tri-visions are “motion signage” billboards of three rotating

louver displays, allowing placement of three separate advertising messages that rotate

every 10 seconds. This type of outdoor advertising uniquely captivates the driving audience with movement of creative designs that naturally draw the human eye towards the ad. In addition, by contracting all three flips, advertisers can employ a “story book” approach and convey multiple messages, highlight various features of a product, and display multiple designs.

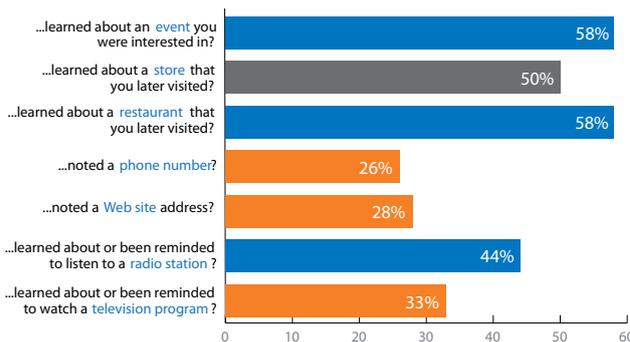
Encompassing all outdoor media, the latest research from Arbitron also shows that the average consumer spends 20 hours a day in the car and travels over 200 miles every week commuting and being exposed to outdoor messages. In addition, 75 percent of US residents aged 18+ who have traveled in the past month report that they notice ad messages each, most or some of the time. The return on investment for outdoor advertising makes this route even more enticing when one considers that for each dollar spent on out-of-home advertising, and average of \$2.80 is received in product sales, according to a new global report.

The bottom-line is that outdoor media serves as a powerful connector between advertisers and their buyers. It breaks through the clutter and captivates the right audience at the right. So, on your road to reaching your buyers, consider adding outdoor advertising to your media mix. With technological enhancements combined with the increasing amount of time consumers spend in their cars, outdoor advertising offers a new path to captivate your audience.

David Johnson is the market manager for Olympus Media, LLC a leader and innovator in out-of-home advertising. They provide quality outdoor coverage for national, regional and local businesses in seven US markets. Their media ranges from traditional outdoor – bulletins, to unique motion formats like digital displays and tri-visions.

MESSAGE AWARENESS AND RECALL

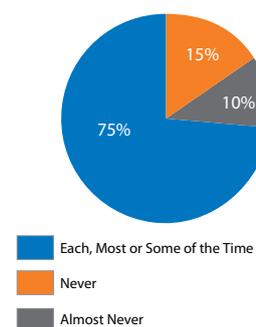
“Billboards Effectively Inform, Direct and Move Your Consumers to a Buying Decision.”



Base: US residents aged 18+ who notice the ad messages on billboards each time, most of the time or sometimes.

HIGH NOTICEABILITY

“Your Ad Messages Will Stand Out And Connect With Your Audience.”



Base: US residents aged 18+ who have traveled in any vehicle in the past month



Technology: Georgia's Secret Economic Weapon

TINO MANTELLA, PRESIDENT & CEO, TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION OF GEORGIA

Technology is poised to lead Georgia out of the recession.

Georgia is home to more than 250,000 technologists and 13,000 technology companies (both producers of technology and tech-enabled businesses). Fourteen Fortune 500 companies are headquartered in our state, including recent technology wins NCR and First Data.

And we were recently ranked by the Kaufman Foundation as the top state in the nation for new businesses (tied for first with Nevada).

Even during the depths of the recession, Georgia's technology industry remained fairly stable and even grew in some segments, including internet, multimedia and telecommunications; this as many other industries, and even the national technology economy, experienced nominal growth and losses.

A quick examination of the tech market in shows it is quickly picking up steam. In TAG's 2010 Technology Decision-Maker's Survey (conducted with partners CMS Research and Internet Decisions), 70-percent of the more than 120 respondents declared plans to expand their workforce in the next year. And, by the end of 2010, technology companies here announced plans for more than one-billion dollars in investment in the state—which is anticipated to generate at least 5,000 jobs.

Technologists are in hot demand. Every month, TAG and partner SkillProof track the number of open technology jobs in the state. In April, there were a record 5,050 technology jobs open (up more than 2,000 jobs from the same time last year).



Positions topping the list were systems engineers, software developers and IT architects/consultants.

The state is taking notice.

Science and technology have not historically been priorities for state lawmakers, but—especially with the stream of recent announcements of technology companies expanding or moving to Georgia—they are starting to take notice. Recently,

TAG worked with Georgia legislators, Sen. Barry Loudermilk and Rep. Doug Holt, among others, to pass Senate Resolution 68 to establish a commission to conduct extensive interviews with technology stakeholders around the state and gather data that will ultimately lead to the creation of a strategic plan for science and technology. This would be the first ever plan of this type for our state, and is an excellent example of Gov. Deal and state lawmaker's commitment to the industry and job creation.

And young companies received a shot in the arm from legislators in the spring of 2010 with the passage of the Angel Tax Credit. Even with such a strong entrepreneurial community, Georgia has been challenged to keep young companies here. The tax credit is designed to provide motivation for early-stage investors in Georgia to support local start-ups and give them the resources needed to grow and thrive in our state.

The combination of technology industry growth and increasing support from lawmakers will have significant impact on both Georgia's technology developers—and the companies who rely on technology to

help their businesses run.

Industry clusters are taking hold.

Georgia's growing technology prowess is strongly tied to particular industries that are expanding at a faster rate than others, including health IT, financial technology, information security, IT communication and logistics. These are the clusters where Georgia leads.

Numerous studies have shown that strong industry clusters lead to further growth for a community because they create increased competition, a more robust talent pool and support the growth of related industries. Combined, our top clusters bring in more than 80-billion dollars in revenue each year. And software and IT communications companies alone supply state with more than 70-thousand jobs—or one-third of the high-tech jobs in our state.

Several other industries in Georgia are picking up steam as well, including SmartGrid, entertainment and interactive marketing. A number of these areas, particularly in gaming and interactive marketing, thrive on innovation driven by the educated, young adults that flock to Atlanta. Georgia is home to more than 60 video game developers and development companies—resulting in more than 1,600 employees around the state in this space. And we've become a hub for many nationally-recognized interactive marketing firms like SilverPop and Definition6.

From high-tech to tech-enabled, the expansion of these industry clusters will lead to new opportunities for Georgia and help fuel our economy.

Don't keep the secret.

Even with our incredible businesses, expanding industries and important assets (including one of the most sophisticated

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

broadband networks in the nation, an affordable cost of living, the fourth-largest university system in the U.S. and access to the world's busiest airport and fastest

growing port in the nation) Georgia's technology industry is still one of our best-kept secrets. But it is a secret that is quickly spreading and one that will prove a key

weapon to battle—and beat—the recession.

For more information on Georgia's technology industry visit: www.tagstateoftheindustry.com.

HeadLines

Sprint and Next Star Communication Supports Impacted Customers Following Tornado Outbreak in Alabama

Sprint and Next Star Communication deployed a service and repair van to Pleasant Grove, Ala. to assist customers impacted by the devastating tornadoes. At the Sprint service and repair van, residents were able to call friends and family, access the Internet, charge batteries, triage their devices and replace and repair as needed, order replacement phones and initiate insurance claims. The Sprint Emergency Response Team (ERT) has deployed Cell Sites on Wheels (COWs) and Satellite Cell on Light Trucks (SatCOLTS) to provide immediate restoration of service and help facilitate wireless and IP communications among disaster relief and emergency response agencies. The Sprint Foundation also donated \$100,000 to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

Gwinnett Daily Post Receives Awards from Georgia Associated Press Association

The *Gwinnett Daily Post* won four awards in the annual Georgia Associated Press Association newspaper contest. Photo editor Jason Braverman won a pair of awards — taking second place in spot news for his pictures of the tornado that hit Buford last year and second place for best photo illustration. Photographer Jonathan Phillips placed second for best portfolio and staff writer Josh Green placed third for beat reporting. The *Daily Post* competes in the category for the state's largest newspapers.

LAN Systems honored with Atlanta BBB Torch Awards

LAN Systems was recently honored with the Atlanta BBB Torch Award for Community

Service and first runner-up for the Customer Service award. The Torch Award honors companies who are leaders in marketplace trust. Each Torch Award winner embodies BBB's vision of an ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other. "LAN Systems supports and encourages volunteerism. We applaud the efforts of our employees to work in the community," said Terry Hart, COO, LAN Systems.

Georgia Gwinnett College Celebrates Largest Commencement in its History

Georgia Gwinnett College marked its largest commencement on June 2, as 95 graduates became the first to march through the college's Arch of Knowledge to claim their degrees. Georgia Governor Nathan Deal was the ceremony's keynote speaker. He evoked the spirit of Sir Winston Churchill with a rousing, "Never give up," message. "Your diploma is only a road sign in your life. It is not a stop sign," he said. He encouraged the graduates to never stop learning or working toward goals and challenges, a key

to long-term success. The event featured the premiere performance of the GGC *Alma Mater*. The song was co-written by Brittany Dertz, Class of 2011, and Alvina Atkinson, associate professor of mathematics, and composed by Thomas Young, retired associate professor of English. The college, which opened its doors in August 2006 to 118 students, expects an enrollment of more than 8,000 this fall.

Rudy Bowen Named Chairman of Georgia's Transportation Board

Gwinnett Chamber Executive Board Member, Rudy Bowen, was recently re-elected as Chairman of the Georgia Dept. of Transportation (GDOT) Board. Bowen will lead such efforts as: naming the Commissioner; approving long-range transportation plans; overseeing construction contract administration; and authorizing lease agreements. Elected by majority of a General Assembly caucus from Georgia's thirteen congressional districts, each member serves a five-year term.

Russell Landscape Group

CONTINUED

Dan: How can other companies and business leaders adopt similar strategies for their organizations?

Bill: Other companies and business leaders can achieve this same level of success by adopting strategies that focus on their financial bottom-lines and each key business relationship. RLG's numerous 20 plus year client business relationships have sustained our revenue growth and bottom-line profit both in prosperity and the down economy. Regardless of what the economy is doing, we strive to out-service

the competition with exceptional quality which delivers a win-win situation for both our firm and our client base.

Dan: What is on the horizon for Russell Landscape Group, particularly with your latest ventures in China?

Bill: Russell Landscape Group recently opened its 10th office in its fifth southeastern state in Destin/North Florida area. RLG is also very excited about its future plans to open a landscape design office in the Shanghai, China area by late summer.

UPCOMING Events

July 19

Gwinnett Chamber Business Institute Featuring “Stop Traffic & Sell Your Brand”

Gwinnett Chamber. 8 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Cost is \$35 for Chamber Members; \$20 for Executive Round Table Members; \$45 for NON Chamber Members. Register online at www.gwinnettchamber.org/events.

July 20

General Membership Meeting Featuring Ronald Jackson, Commissioner, Technical College System of Georgia Presenting Sponsor: Rocket IT

The 1818 Club. 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The 1818 Club. Chairman’s Club members receive one complimentary seat; \$45 for members and \$55 for non-members; payment at the door is \$55. Register online at www.gwinnettchamber.org/events.

July 25

**Chairman’s Club Family Night
Stars and Strikes Entertainment Center**
6:30 – 8:30 p.m. 1700 Winder Highway, Dacula, Ga, 30019. Bring your whole family for an evening of fun at Stars and Strikes! RSVP to Meggie Nelson at 770-232-8805 or Meggie@gwinnettchamber.org.

August 11

Gwinnett Chamber Membership & Sponsorship Campaign Kickoff

Gwinnett Chamber. 5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. Join us for Casino Night at the huge Campaign Kick-Off Party at the Chamber! Be there - all members are invited to the FREE festivities! FREE martini bar, loads of great food, games and great prizes! Don’t miss it! For information, contact Donna McBee at 770-232-8810 or donna@gwinnettchamber.org.

August 18

Gwinnett Business Expo & Job Fair Presenting Sponsor: Gwinnett Medical Center

Gwinnett Center. Noon – 5:00 p.m. Don’t miss the Chamber’s annual one-day business tradeshow and job fair featuring more than 230 exhibitors and attracting 5,000 attendees. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.gwinnettbusinessexpo.com.

August 18

General Membership Meeting Held in Conjunction with the Gwinnett Chamber Business Expo & Job Fair Featuring Sam Olens, Attorney General, State of GA Presenting Sponsor: Rocket IT

Gwinnett Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway. 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. A special addition to the Gwinnett Business Expo, the monthly General Membership Meeting is held in conjunction with the event, giving attendees a chance to mix and mingle and enjoy a presentation from a high profile speaker.

Chairman’s Club members receive one complimentary seat; \$45 for members and \$55 for non-members. Advanced registration is required. Walk-ins at the event are not guaranteed a spot at the luncheon. Note: Participants in the Expo & Job Fair must also register in advance and pay for the luncheon. Register online at www.gwinnettchamber.org/events.

August 26

2011 Partnership Gwinnett Community and Economic Development Summit Presenting Sponsor: T-Mobile

Gwinnett Technical College. 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Cost: PG Investors and Chairman’s Club Members - \$35, Chamber Members - \$45, Non-Members - \$55. The Annual Partnership Gwinnett Community and Economic Development Summit is Gwinnett County’s premier event for reporting on the year’s business development successes while focusing on the core elements that support positive change and business growth in the community. RSVP to www.gwinnettchamber.org/events.

August 31

Gwinnett Chamber Business Institute Featuring the Ritz Carlton Leadership Institute

Gwinnett Chamber. 8 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$60 for Chamber Members; \$ 50 for Executive Round Table Members; \$70 for NON Chamber Members. Register online at www.gwinnettchamber.org/events.