

## International Relations

Georgia Tech's Economic Development Institute, the Georgia Tech School of Public Policy, and the Georgia Department of Industry Trade and Tourism are fostering innovation-based economic development in Georgia's mid-sized cities, and the effort bears a decidedly international flavor.

The initiative entails matching **Augusta, Columbus, Macon** and **Savannah** with European counterparts—Cork, Ireland; Dundee, Scotland; Heilbronn, Germany; and Pisa, Italy—based on similarities in tradition and aspiration. For example, Augusta and Dundee have depended on textiles, but are now looking toward biotechnology for economic development in the new knowledge economy.

For four days in June, some 30 representatives of the eight cities, including researchers, tech transfer specialists and economic developers, were involved in workshops, facility tours, and discussions in Atlanta and then in Augusta. The interchanges concerned incubators, technology licensing, state government partnerships, developing research capabilities in mid-sized cities, best practices, benchmarking and more. Future possibilities include exchange of technology transfer professionals and ongoing network activities to develop technology clusters and new innovation centers in Georgia's mid-sized cities.

[www.cherry.gatech.edu/mid](http://www.cherry.gatech.edu/mid)

## Incubator for Columbus

The expertise of Georgia Tech's Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC)—one of the nation's top technology incubators—will now be available to help southwest Georgia entrepreneurs through the new Columbus Regional Technology Center (CRTC). Blair Carnahan, an ATDC staff member, was named director of the center July 18.

Scheduled to begin construction in August, the CRTC grew out of a partnership between the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce; Columbus State University and the ATDC. It is part of the



*Rendering of Columbus Regional Technology Center to be constructed at Columbus State University.*

## Forward in Fannin

In late May, an EDI team presented findings and recommendations from a series of economic development assessments of **Fannin County**, with some 150 people attending, including representatives of Senators Zell Miller and Saxby Chambliss as well as state representatives and members of various state and regional economic development agencies. The recommendations will serve as a basis for the county's strategic plan.



The assessments, which began in January, covered diverse topics, from existing industry support and infrastructure to technology and tourism opportunities to entrepreneur readiness. Among the recommendations:

- Shift focus from industrial recruitment to assisting the county's potential and existing growth entrepreneurs.
- Develop a small business and industry site with appropriate location and infrastructure.
- Expand efforts to support existing businesses and industries and help with their expansion needs.
- Expand efforts to (1) grow a quality tourism base, (2) raise public awareness and (3) engage in strategic promotion activities.

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state's "Greater Georgia" initiative aimed at developing innovation centers in mid-sized cities where potential has been identified for technology development.

The **Columbus** initiative will be the second of its kind in the state, following creation of a similar program in **Savannah**

last year, and it will make Columbus the fourth community served by ATDC. Georgia Tech's Economic Development Institute conducted the study that identified

technology strengths in Savannah, Columbus, **Augusta** and **Macon**. [www.atdc.org](http://www.atdc.org)



## Delivered in Dublin

In late spring, EDI's **Dublin** IT Solutions Center and the Georgia Rural Economic Development Center hosted a conference for owners of small apparel companies in the area. Eight firms representing more than 500 employees attended, and two of them presented strategies for survival, focusing on innovation in new products and markets.

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and EDI discussed cooperatives and industry associations as proven means of working together. Sessions on niche marketing and use of the Internet as a marketing tool rounded out the conference.

[www.edi.gatech.edu](http://www.edi.gatech.edu)

## Expanding E-Commerce Capability

A recent assessment by Georgia Tech's Electronic Commerce Resource Center (ECRC) revealed a lack of e-commerce knowledge and capability by small and minority businesses and service providers. As a result, ECRC initiated remedial efforts, including:

- Convened a "lunch and learn" session with the Governor's Office that focused on helping small businesses understand how a new portal implemented by the state will affect future business operations.
- Assisted **Cobb County** micro businesses with a better understanding of e-commerce and with training to help start-ups do business with the state.

## That's Cool

On April 10, Lanier Technical College in **Oakwood** observed the first anniversary of its Georgia Ammonia Refrigeration Program (GARP), which in its one year of existence has seen 350 trainees from 50 companies and 20 states go through the program.

GARP was started a couple of years ago with funding from Georgia's Traditional Industries Program for the food processing industry to meet a pressing need for trained ammonia refrigeration operators. A feasibility study by EDI was instrumental in locating the program at Lanier Tech, and Georgia Tech environmental specialists assisted in GARP's establishment at the college.

- Supported a business symposium at Ft. McPherson in **Atlanta** last fall to help small firms operate in the federal electronic marketplace.

Economic growth today, according to ECRC, requires e-commerce tools and skills, which are even more critical when the economy sputters and business downturns put additional strains on state resources.

The ECRC assessment, funded by the Economic Development Administration, involved surveying a sample of state vendors, doing a literature search, holding a meeting to gather additional data and conducting training sessions for small and minority vendors and service providers.

[www.ecrc.gatech.edu](http://www.ecrc.gatech.edu)

## Around the State

■ In **Columbus**, EDI's lean manufacturing specialists helped Pratt & Whitney's Columbus Engine Center with a new plant layout. Assistance for the airline engine overhaul and repair shop included a series of detailed layouts, value-stream mapping exercises and kaizen blitzes—a fast and focused means of improving some component of a business, such as a product line, machine or process.

■ An Advance Auto Parts distribution center in **Thomson** was struggling with its move to a new bar coding software system. After taking EDI training, an Advance manager designed a suitable program. The new system has boosted this function's productivity by 50 percent, and management plans wider installation of it in the firm's warehouses and distribution centers.

■ An **Atlanta** dentist who invented a face mask that eliminates fogging of goggles and protects against splashes sought assistance from EDI. He received help with product design, materials and possible manufacturers. A Connecticut firm is preparing to launch the new product, looking at a global market for dental masks of 150 million annually and planning to market the mask to other industries, too.

## Georgia Tech's Regional Office Network

Albany.....	229/430-4188	Dublin .....	478/275-6543
Athens .....	706/542-8900	Gainesville.....	770/531-4550
Augusta .....	706/737-1414	Griffin .....	770/412-4081
Brunswick.....	912/634-4860	Macon .....	478/751-6190
Carrollton .....	770/836-6665	Newnan .....	770/254-7592
Cartersville .....	770/387-4002	Rome .....	706/295-6008
Columbus.....	706/649-1661	Savannah .....	912/651-2551
Dalton.....	706/272-2702	Warner Robins .....	478/953-3155
Douglas.....	912/389-4717		



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• Assistance to Georgia businesses, communities and economic developers: [www.edi.gatech.edu](http://www.edi.gatech.edu) • Assistance to start-up technology companies: [www.atdc.org](http://www.atdc.org) •

• Commercialization assistance to Georgia Tech faculty: [www.venturelab.gatech.edu](http://www.venturelab.gatech.edu) • Applied research: [www.gttri.gatech.edu](http://www.gttri.gatech.edu) •

• Continuing education: [www.gtconted.org](http://www.gtconted.org) • Georgia Tech home page: [www.gatech.edu](http://www.gatech.edu) •