

What: EDI Annual Meeting

Length: 30 minutes, then 10 or 15 more minutes for questions.

Summary of speech: The speech will highlight Georgia Tech's economic role in the state, how EDI contributes to that success, and how EDI can be more effective.

Good morning. It is a pleasure to attend your annual meeting and speak to the staff of EDI.

Before I begin, I would like to take a quick poll. What do you think the average Georgian thinks of when Georgia Tech is mentioned?

- Engineering?
- A high quality technological education?
- Economic development?
- Our Olympic participation?

The answer is ... none of the above. Instead, the average Georgian, when asked about Georgia Tech, usually first mentions **football** before moving on to our other noteworthy characteristics.

Now, don't get me wrong. I am very proud of our football team. But I'm also very proud of the stellar education we provide as well as the outstanding job we do with regard to research and economic development. Our economic development efforts, especially, deserve further recognition.

If asked, most people might suppose that our economic development efforts were a relatively new factor in the history of the Institute. In fact, however, Georgia Tech was founded to further the economic growth of Georgia, and from the very beginning our educational outreach has been tied to economic development.

Tech's foresighted founders looked at a technological institute as a method to lift Georgia out of the economic slump begun during Reconstruction. In a key editorial supporting the need for such an institute in the South, Tech supporter and editor of the Atlanta Constitution Henry Grady predicted: "...the technological school will be recognized ten years from now as the most important factor in the new era that will open gloriously for Georgia."

His optimism was not universally shared. In those days, Georgia was primarily agrarian — and farming rather than manufacturing and technology was seen as the key to a successful future. In fact one Georgia state representative went so far as to

label the idea of a technological school “a hydra-headed monster that should be strangled at birth.”

History does not record where that individual obtained his degree, but I suspect it was somewhere near Athens.

Today, economic development is equally important. Many have called the era ahead the “information era,” and providing access to the information that will fuel the future is an important part of Georgia Tech’s mission.

There are basically three ways that Georgia Tech helps Georgia’s economic development: education, research, and outreach.

I’ll tackle education first. Through education we improve the quality of life and economic condition for thousands of Georgians. As educators, we reach more than 13,000 students each year. Of that number, almost 65 percent of our undergraduates and more than 29 percent of our graduate students come from Georgia counties.

Continuing education courses are also available; residents of Georgia as well as those from other states can even earn a master’s degree without once setting foot on the Georgia Tech campus.

EDI plays an important role in Georgia Tech’s educational offerings. Its training courses allow business people throughout Georgia to access needed information and education—without incurring high fees and travel costs. For example, through StarTech, Georgians can access educational courses in advanced technology and management from 50 of the nation’s leading universities and commercial organizations. So far in 1997, StarTech has delivered 20 National Technological University programs to some 420 participants across Georgia. On a national level, the 30th annual Economic Development course attracted 108 participants from 17 states and Puerto Rico.

As you can see, Georgia Tech’s educational economic impact—from both traditional and nontraditional course offerings— is considerable. Also important is the economic difference we make through research.

The research undertaken by our academic faculty and researchers from the Georgia Tech Research Institute is useful and relevant. Proof can be found in the continuous growth of our research programs as industry and government receive satisfaction from our researchers--and then return for more. In 1996, more than

\$173 million in extramural research support was generated and our research awards from industry doubled in number from the year before.

In fact, many government and industry groups have relocated to Georgia to take advantage of proximity to our research centers and research faculty. Two recent examples are the relocation of Philips Electronics headquarters and the expansion of Lucent Technologies. Both cited Georgia Tech's research as well as its ability to provide a technically trained workforce as one of the reasons behind their decision.

Once again, EDI has been very helpful in this area of economic development. One of EDI's goals is to bring new business to Georgia. This you have done very successfully. Many of you in the audience today can share some of the credit for bringing Philips Electronics to Georgia as well as persuading Lucent Technologies to expand here.

In addition, EDI has been very helpful at linking our researchers with those that need them in the community.

However, EDI makes its presence most felt in the third way that Georgia Tech helps Georgia's economic development: outreach.

Your outreach activities are extensive, ranging from industrial extension to new business incubation to international standards training. In the past two years, you have helped some 2,600 manufacturers, 125 new companies, and more than 100 communities across the state.

Actions during the past year that I would especially like to commend include:

- ATDC being named the Incubator of the Year by the National Business Incubator Association;
- the formation of the Georgia Environmental Partnership to focus on deploying environmental technologies to business and industry throughout the state;
- the Center for Manufacturing Information Technology receiving a contract from the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop an Information Technology Resource Network to provide information technology expertise to all 65 manufacturing extension partnerships in the country;
- and the Center for International Standards & Quality receiving its ISO 9001 registration, making it the first unit of an American public university and the first Georgia state government organization to do so.

This past year and throughout your 30 year history, EDI has consistently made a

difference for Georgia Tech. Because of EDI and its people, Georgia Tech can then make an economic difference for thousands each year.

Success can be measured in the fact that Georgia had the second highest high-tech employment growth between 1990 and 1995 according to a report compiled by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Labor Department, and the American Electronics Association. That same report also states that firms are attracted to Georgia because the cost of doing business is relatively low and also due to our substantial investment in high-tech infrastructure since 1990. Many of those noteworthy investments have been built here at Georgia Tech, including GCATT.

Another success indicator is the number of Georgia communities that consider EDI—and subsequently—Georgia Tech their partner. These satisfied customers are perhaps the best indicator of all.

As we move toward the next millennium, we would like to grow our program of economic aid to the state. This growth, however will be both controlled and strategic. For example, on the education side, our ten-year plan calls for enrollment to not exceed 15,000. With regard to new centers, partnerships will be encouraged, especially collaborations that combine the efforts of industry, government, and higher education.

In the future, I would like more people within the state to recognize Georgia Tech's economic development efforts. As representatives of much of that effort, you can play an important role in promoting our services.

And, as EDI continues its service to Georgia's cities, I hold out hope that the next time I speak to you as a group, I can report that economic development, education, and research—as well as football—are what comes to most Georgian's minds when they are asked about Georgia Tech.

Thank you.