Cover Story ........................................ page 2
The Innovation Economy and You
“Created here” should replace “Built here” as a preferred label, notes the Pew Center’s Mary Jo Waits in a wide-ranging look at the challenges and opportunities of the innovation economy.

Special Feature ........................................ page 3
Exploring Inventors as Untapped Catalysts
Georgia Tech undertakes a pilot program to identify and assist independent inventors statewide with the goal of spurring economic growth.

Partner Spotlight ........................................ page 4
A Q&A with the Economic Development Administration’s Phil Paradice
EDA’s Atlanta Regional Director Phil Paradice discusses his agency’s role in assisting economically distressed communities in Georgia and neighboring states, with emphasis on stimulating innovative, collaborative approaches.

Impact .................................................. page 6
Assessing Strategic Opportunities in Bryan County
Community development specialists at Georgia Tech help Bryan County assess its potential for economic diversification and balanced growth.

In Action .................................................. page 7
In this issue:
Key efforts to help Georgia communities and regions move forward in the global economy.

Elsewhere at Georgia Tech ........................................ page 10
Planning for Economic Recovery
Graduate students in Georgia Tech’s City and Regional Planning Department conduct redevelopment research for two metro Atlanta communities hit by the exit of major employers.

Professional Development Planner ........................................ page 11
Yesterday’s labels won’t work in today’s innovation economy, according to Mary Jo Waits, director of the Pew Center on the States, who spoke at Georgia Tech’s Basic Economic Development Course in mid-March. An area’s identification, she said, should now be “discovered, invented, or designed here” instead of simply “made here” or “grown here.” This change in mindset is a concept heavily studied by the national policy and research center led by Waits, and it underscores the importance of human capital, which produces creative capital.

Where the first two centuries of U.S. economic history focused on who could build the most efficient farm, then factory, the next 100 years will be about ideas and experiences, explained Waits, who succinctly stated, “Knowledge is in.”

When discussing how expertise, diversity, and interaction all feed creativity, Waits described a cyclical process of how ideas generate new products and approaches, entrepreneurship, and collaboration, which result in higher productivity and still more ideas. But this process is not challenge-free.

For example, there’s the matter of talent. Companies and communities need smart, skilled people, and with the number of women entering the labor force leveling off and the younger generation smaller than the baby boomers, Waits agrees with other experts in predicting that labor pools will shrink.

Also in her presentation she noted that the younger set is highly mobile. “These days, it’s as much about the place as it is the job,” she observed, adding that those seeking talent should make sure they know what young, skilled workers want and have what matters to them, such as labor options, start-up “friendliness,” and intellectual vitality.

Waits talked about how poverty and inequality have always held back a community’s ability to compete but even more so in the innovation economy, which comes back to the matter of talent.

There is a new calculation for quality of life, according to Waits, which entails (a) natural environment, (b) distinctive amenities, (c) lifestyle choices, (d) tolerance, (e) innovation and an entrepreneurial culture, and (f) speed, be it using transportation, changing public policy, or getting things to market. There’s a new focus on place, she said, noting that instead of encompassing “inherited assets” such as geography, climate and population, it now comprises “created assets”—top-notch universities, research centers, entrepreneurial culture, networks—elements that can be realized with a strategic focus. Cities such as Austin, Texas, and San Diego, Calif., can serve as models, she said. The notion of “quality of place” equally applies to rural and urban communities, and that concept—as well as community livability issues such as affordable housing, health care, education, and recreational amenities—is determining where talent chooses to call home.

And the definition of success is less about population growth and more about income growth, or prosperity, according to Waits. Company CEOs want to know where to put their money and they’re seeking places boasting college-educated residents, professional jobs, business services, and a creative class of workers, she explained. Waits also pointed out that sprawl detracts from community appeal, adding that single-use facilities are outdated, yielding to mixed-use, synergistic places. She suggested retrofitting traditional office parks to accommodate these new elements and trends.

Waits noted that investments in “buildable” features take considerable time and that the attention span of citizens and their public officials is short. One solution she offered is to look at local universities, hospitals, foundations, and other long-term stakeholders as stewards of the long-term process.

Traditional incentives may lack appeal, according to Waits. Some firms, she said, seek talent pools and collaborative possibilities instead of tax breaks. “You can’t do a thing without partnerships,” she said, urging her audience of public officials and economic developers to consider interaction with other communities, agencies, and educational institutions.

Waits recommended that smaller communities think about opportunities to collaborate and to promote amenities, and she urged leaders to ask younger residents what their interests are, to involve community colleges in the civic environment, and to assist and support entrepreneurs. As a concluding piece of advice, she said don’t be afraid to look beyond local borders—after all, “The most important part of innovation is adopting an idea from somewhere else.”
Exploring Inventors as Untapped Catalysts

Convinced that a cache of creative capital resides in Georgia, researchers at Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute have launched an initiative to identify potential innovators statewide and determine ways to assist them. This entails independent inventors not associated with a company, academic institution, or other organization who are holding patents not yet assigned for products not yet commercialized.

Efforts to date have revealed that independent inventors residing in Georgia as of 2006 totaled 6,845, and although the numbers were highest in metro Atlanta counties, 41 percent were located outside the region’s five largest counties. Indeed, researchers found that all but seven of the state’s 159 counties housed at least one such potential innovator. The state’s independent inventors have obtained more than 9,000 patents since 1975, according to examination of U.S. Patent & Trademark Office data, with some 4,400 in the past 10 years.

Surgery-related products account for the largest number of patents issued to Georgia inventors. Static structures and electrical communications round out the top three classifications of products. Researchers have observed this to vary around the state. For example, the top three in Valdosta-Lowndes County were fluid sprinkling/spraying (21), electrical currents (17), and closure fasteners and drugs (16 each). But in the Middle Flint area, the top categories were data processing (16) and freight accommodation and presses (15 apiece).

Why reach out to independent inventors? Project leaders note that collectively these inventors account for a larger share of patents than those owned by a single corporation or entity, including major research universities, and that these individuals live across the state. Also, patent generation is accelerating among independent inventors, and researchers feel there may be untapped potential for commercialization and business creation whether it be through starting a company or partnering with an established entrepreneur, licensing the product and partnering with a manufacturer, or selling the patent outright.

The two-year pilot program sponsored by the U.S. Economic Development Administration consists of several phases:

- Surveying Georgia’s independent inventors
- Profiling inventor assistance programs
- Developing an online self-help kit
- Developing and delivering workshops
- Connecting inventors to Georgia Tech and other resources.

The team already has uncovered some preliminary findings. For example, some inventors feel isolated, and many would appreciate networking opportunities and better understanding of available resources, to say nothing of help with product development and various business-related issues. Also, many inventors don’t see themselves as entrepreneurs.

Inventors could benefit from all types of assistance, including evaluation of technical, commercial, and intellectual property aspects; assistance with design, prototyping, and testing; and patent searches, legal consultation, and patent application. Then there are critical business factors ranging from planning and marketing to financing and manufacturing.

Local communities can boost inventors’ efforts, such as providing a point of contact for resources and referrals, doing an inventory of appropriate assets to assist inventors, encouraging networking and service matching, and establishing links between inventors and relevant industries, and determining to what extent local-inventor activity relates to a region’s strategic industries.

For more information on this program, contact Joy Wilkins, CEcD, (404.895.6115, joy.wilkins@innovate.gatech.edu).
A Q&A with EDA’s Phil Paradice

Phil Paradice is director of the Atlanta Regional Office for the U.S. Economic Development Administration, which serves eight Southeastern states. An Atlanta native, he holds an undergraduate degree from Georgia Tech and an MBA from Georgia State University. Here he discusses EDA’s efforts to foster growth and help communities meet the challenges of the global economy.

FOCUS: What is the chief mission of EDA?

PARADICE: EDA’s mission statement – To lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy – clearly declares how EDA views its domestic role in the new, global economy. EDA fulfills its mission by fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and productivity through investments in infrastructure development, capacity building, and business development to attract private capital investments and higher-skill, higher-wage jobs to regions experiencing substantial and persistent economic distress.

EDA understands that the private sector, not government, creates jobs and private investment. EDA works in partnership with regions to address problems associated with long-term economic distress as well as with regions experiencing sudden and severe economic dislocations, such as those resulting from the loss of major employers, natural disasters, conversions of military installations, changing trade patterns, and depletion of natural resources.

FOCUS: In what ways has EDA changed its approach?

PARADICE: The biggest changes are in how we view agency performance and analyze potential investments, such as grant proposals presented to EDA for funding. EDA’s grant investments process has always been competitive, but now the agency thinks in terms of outcomes and results, not outputs.

To compete today, applicants for EDA funding must present proposals fully demonstrating they: (1) are market-based and results-driven; (2) have strong organizational leadership; (3) advance productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; (4) look beyond the immediate economic horizon; and (5) demonstrate a high degree of local commitment. They must have documented jobs created and private-sector investment. And they must be consistent with EDA’s funding priorities, which include taking a collaborative regional economic development approach, supporting innovation and competitiveness, and encouraging entrepreneurship.

FOCUS: Is the Southeast keeping pace with the rest of the nation in terms of competitiveness in the global economy? Why or why not?

PARADICE: The Southeast is making progress, but it is not there yet.

The region has captured a significant portion of the foreign automotive industry that has established assembly plants in the country. We see biotech, nanotech, health sciences, and advanced technology clusters forming and expanding as a result of Southeastern states making these an economic development priority. And the Southeast—with its ports, airports, and transportation linkages—is taking advantage of import and export growth in the Americas, Africa, and Europe.

That said, a recent study by the Southern Growth Policies Board, its 2006 Report on the Future of the South – Innovation with a Southern Accent – identified challenges and opportunities facing the South. This report referenced the prior year’s report, The New Architecture of Rural Prosperity, noting, “the South as a region has not held its own economically since about 1980. In fact, the South as a whole lags the nation in economic growth, academic achievement, research and development capacity and venture capital investment, just for starters.”

The Southeast still struggles with persistent economic distress, migration of educated and skilled workers from rural areas to urban centers, loss of low-skill manufacturing jobs, and education and workforce challenges. These must be fully addressed before one can say the region is as competitive as it can and must be.

FOCUS: What do you see as some of the greatest challenges or barriers affecting the Southeast’s ability to compete in today’s international marketplace?

PARADICE: The Southeast must bring to bear all of its assets to compete on a global scale. The Southern Growth Policies Board’s 2006 Report concludes, “Several locations within the South have developed significant innovative capacity, but the region as a whole has not made a full turn towards a knowledge-driven, innovation economy.” Six major themes to address the shortfall emerged in discussion forums held across the South: (1) strengthen math and...
science education; (2) create a culture of innovation and learning; (3) increase awareness of career options, including entrepreneurship; (4) ensure broadband access and computer literacy; (5) promote innovation across business sectors; and (6) target regional strengths.

These themes are consistent with what is probably the Southeast’s single greatest challenge—creating and maintaining a competitive workforce. A relocating firm wants a workforce with the skills and knowledge to do the job. This means a workforce that has math and science knowledge, is computer literate, can apply technology, can read and comprehend, will show up to work, and is ready, willing, and able to continue learning throughout a career.

FOCUS: What do you see as regional communities’ strategic opportunities for innovation?

PARADICE: That is the question each region’s leadership must ask. Innovations can be applied within any region and to any business to make it globally competitive.

The EDA funded research conducted by The Council on Competitiveness entitled, Measuring Regional Innovation – A Guidebook for Conducting Regional Innovation Assessments, which noted that “approximately 50 percent of U.S. annual GDP growth is attributed to increases in innovation.” The National Innovation Initiative (NII), the Council’s two-year study of America’s innovation system, concluded that innovation has become faster, multidisciplinary, collaborative, democratized, and global. Clearly, innovation is the key and it presents us with a complex challenge to stay on top.

EDA views innovation as America’s sustainable, competitive edge in global competition. The loss of manufacturing jobs in this country is evidence of the competitive impacts of advances in technology, logistics, communications, and increased job skills in developing nations.

The increasing engagement of higher education in the commercialization of new technologies and innovations is full of promise. We are seeing an increased emphasis among the region’s institutions in outreach, economic development, and engaging the private sector. One such example is an EDA investment supporting innovation commercialization and entrepreneur development with Georgia Tech (see page 3).

Not long ago we viewed innovation as applying technology, science, communications, and many other things in new and creative ways.

The simple phrase to remember is, “Plan your work, and work your plan.” Not every region can be a biotech center, a nanotech center, or health sciences center. But each region can identify what resources it has to build upon, assess the marketplace, and pursue a comprehensive strategy to leverage its particular strengths and resources to achieve economic prosperity.

FOCUS: How does EDA help communities address these challenges or take advantage of these opportunities?

PARADICE: EDA has made several investments in Georgia that reflect execution of our mission in the eight-state region. For example:

EDA has recently invested $1.1 million to establish a 10.9-acre biotech research park, Technology Enterprise Park, to be managed by Georgia Tech. This effort is expected to result in $61 million in private investment and almost 300 higher-skill, higher-wage jobs. The park will attract new technology companies that are formed in Georgia and elsewhere wishing to locate close to the leading-edge research and faculty at Georgia Tech, Emory University, St. Joseph’s Medical Center, and other area research institutions.

EDA invested $2 million to the city of West Point for water and sewer infrastructure improvements to serve the recently announced Kia automotive assembly plant, which supports a $1.2 billion private investment and 2,800 jobs. Georgia’s effort to become a player in the expanding automotive industry cluster in the Southeast will result in better jobs in the state’s rural areas.

EDA invested another $2 million to the Liberty County Development Authority in Hinesville for infrastructure improvements supporting Phase One of the Liberty Ridge at MidCoast Business Center, a proposed 5,300-acre industrial park that will serve the coastal counties and many inland counties. It will allow Georgia to be more competitive for import-export business and take advantage of the park’s strategic location near Georgia’s ports and major transportation routes.

FOCUS: What advice do you have for Georgia’s local economic developers preparing their communities for growth?

PARADICE: The single most important message I can convey to is to compete globally, think regionally. Collaborating with each other, establishing partnerships and alliances, and leveraging your combined strengths are the path to successful economic development.
Assessing Strategic Opportunities In Bryan County

Tightly wedged into the arc of coastal Georgia, **Bryan County** has seen steady business and residential growth in recent years, benefiting from advantages such as good schools, access via two high-growth interstates, and proximity to Savannah. Growth itself is not the issue for the community, but rather deciding on the type of the growth to encourage is of top interest.

In 2006, the Bryan County Board of Commissioners and the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center asked Georgia Tech to assess possible opportunities for economic diversification and identify local issues that could adversely affect the potential for balanced, sustainable growth.

Over a five-month span, Tech specialists interviewed some three dozen community stakeholders, as well as 20 state and regional economic developers. They investigated business growth and development opportunities, workforce preparedness, support for business and industry, and the county’s dependence on the U.S. Army’s Fort Stewart, and evaluated some 90 metrics to compile an economic development report card for the county. Specifically, Bryan County’s performance was reviewed within 10 key categories relating to sustainable community economic development including community growth, fiscal capacity, self-sufficiency, economic base, existing workforce, youth development, workforce development, civic and social capital, community health, and innovation potential. The team observed several things about Bryan County, such as, but not limited to:

- Bryan County has experienced steady population growth over the years, growth that is projected to continue significantly. Fueling the county’s growth, and reflecting its high appeal as a place to live, has been a surge of newcomers.
- Residential development has exploded within Bryan County, with an above-average value per unit of new construction.
- Private businesses and net new jobs in Bryan County have climbed steadily. The county’s economic base offers more prosperous opportunities today than it has in the past as wages have increased faster than jobs within Bryan County.
- Bryan County appears to be doing well in terms of the self-sufficiency of its residents, existing workforce, youth development, and potential for innovation.

Recruiting new industry, developing a quality workforce, and helping local businesses sustain and expand their operations were each considered of top importance by Bryan County stakeholders for the community’s economic development strategy. In terms of economic diversification, Bryan County appears to be most competitive for wholesale electronics markets, agents, and brokers; warehousing and storage (i.e., distribution centers); and professional, scientific, and technical firms. In addition, the team identified a number of supplier-void industries that could be strategic for the community to focus development efforts on.

Threats relating to ineffective planning and growth management received top mention among stakeholders when asked to identify what could harm or prevent their community’s economic development. Therefore, beyond diversifying the economy, community stakeholders called for more efforts to ensure Bryan County’s future quality growth and development, and recognized the important role of local government in these efforts.

Bryan County Manager Phil Jones says: “The report contains a great deal of detailed information that will be beneficial for the county’s long-range development plans. It further helps us understand that we are at the crossroads in the development arena and have the right to be selective.”

“With the recommendations in hand, Bryan County’s leadership has greater awareness of the issues that require forefront focus,” says Jean Bacon, head of the county’s development authority. “The study has helped identify both our strengths and weaknesses. With these areas identified, we can now move forward toward creating a county atmosphere conducive to attracting and retaining business and industry,” she says.
Helping Troup County Preserve Its Quality of Place

Community leaders agree: Troup County is in a ripe spot at the right time when it comes to leveraging the economic growth coming to the west Georgia region. To explore how best to do so, leaders from the county and the cities of LaGrange, West Point, and Hogansville recently kicked off a two-year planning initiative designed to set the course for a sustainable future.

Troup County leaders will work to develop strategies that will help shape the future and further enhance the community’s places for area residents and businesses. These strategies will be designed in accordance with the county’s community vision and for implementation over the next five years. Georgia Tech—via the Enterprise Innovation Institute and Center for Quality Growth & Regional Development—will assist the county and cities in this effort.

Borrowing from Tech’s successful Accelerator Program, specialists will evaluate conditions and opportunities and provide advice for sustainable development. The goal of the effort will be to identify innovative strategies for maintaining balanced quality growth, fostering healthy economic development, enhancing the quality of life, and protecting Troup County’s sense of place for living, working, recreating, and investing.

Specifically, the strategic plan, based on countywide consensus, will seek to enable the entire community to:

- Best manage new and proposed development around the perimeter of the three cities and throughout the county
- Engage in quality redevelopment in downtowns and underutilized areas of the cities and county
- Develop solutions to address key transportation challenges
- Stimulate development and slow development where appropriate
- Address human services needs
- Prepare a capable workforce for local business today and tomorrow
- Identify a more targeted economic development approach going forward.

Data will be drawn from multiple sources, including interviews with dozens of community stakeholders and external partners, a review of socioeconomic metrics, and several strategic assessments conducted in the field.

The first year of the community’s efforts will focus on strategy development. The second year—focusing on project development and implementation—is designed to help community leaders ensure that the strategic plan does not become a “shelf document.”

“The region is entering an unprecedented period of growth and transformation. I am optimistic that this work will provide a planning framework for the region, based on sensitivity and connectiveness,” says Richard C. Wolfe, chairman of the Troup County Board of Commissioners. “Done well, this could be the most important process in which we have ever participated.”

Adds LaGrange Mayor Jeff Lukken: “With the growth and changes we are anticipating in our community, it is critical we have a plan that will guide our future decisions in a thoughtful and strategic way. I am also gratified that Troup County and the cities of West Point and Hogansville are also engaged in this process. With all of our local governments participating, we will improve communication and end up with a more comprehensive and usable plan for all of us.”

West Point Mayor Billy Head recognizes the growth issue, too. “We know that growth just for the sake of growing is not the right thing to do,” he says. “Our goal is to provide good quality growth, and we will settle for nothing less. We feel that participating in this strategic plan will help us reach our goal as a city.”

Jimmy Jackson, mayor of Hogansville, agrees that the goal is to provide quality growth. “If we ever hope to balance good growth in the municipalities while keeping the other areas of Troup County more rural, we must act soon. And we need this road map, this plan, before we can act,” he says.
Entrepreneur-Friendliness Gets a Boost in Miller County

Georgia Tech worked with the Colquitt-Miller County Chamber of Commerce to assess strategic opportunities for furthering an entrepreneur-friendly culture in the area. Local leadership wanted to expand the economic base by attracting and developing entrepreneurial firms that will complement efforts to expand tourism and other industries.

These leaders also sought ways to stimulate economic growth and opportunities to retain current residents and attract new residents and visitors, the idea being to build a creative community by promoting diversity and innovation.

Georgia Tech’s plan for the project, a follow-on to the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s entrepreneur-friendly process, included conducting an incubator readiness assessment. It also entailed identifying opportunities for (1) creating and growing new firms, (2) recruiting new businesses, (3) expanding existing entrepreneurial enterprises, and (4) identifying opportunities for implementing technology-related solutions.

Building a Winning Workforce

Through the Southern Growth Policies Board, Governors and other key leaders of thirteen states and Puerto Rico jointly investigate economic development issues of high priority across the South. Each year, an issue is selected for in-depth research that results in policy and action recommendations for implementation at local, state, and regional levels. A critical part of the effort to explore the issue is the facilitation of community-based forums. In 2007, the key policy question was “What can we do to build a competitive workforce for the future?”

At the beginning of 2007, the Governor’s Office of Workforce Development, State Workforce Investment Board and the Georgia Department of Labor initiated a broad-based and collaborative partnership for conducting regional discussion forums to gather input on Southern Growth’s policy question in Georgia. These forums were also sponsored by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, hosted by Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) across Georgia, and supported by a university team comprised of faculty from Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia. The forums were facilitated by staff from these two universities as well as from Georgia State University and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

The 2007 forums were conducted in 12 regions across the state and became the platform to generate dialogue concerning key workforce development challenges and to discuss actions and creative solutions, including the Georgia “Certified Work Ready Community” (CWRC) program, for addressing these challenges. As a result of the efforts of the WIBs, Georgia’s forums included approximately 800 stakeholders across the state. Representatives from business, economic development, education, local government, non-profit, and workforce development organizations participated in each forum.

Georgia was one of two states in the South to organize a state-wide effort this year. A report on Georgia’s forums was released at Southern Growth Policies Board’s Southern Workforce Summit in June 2007. A copy of this report, as well as Southern Growth’s Annual Report and previous forum reports, can be downloaded by going to www.southern.org and clicking on the Community Forums link.

(Focus thanks Mac Brown at UGA’s Fanning Institute for contributing to this story.)
Linking Learning to Real Life

Skills related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are vital for competing in the global economy, and many leaders in business, education, and economic development believe improvement in STEM must start in the K-12 years.

With sponsorship from the Georgia Rural Economic Development Center at East Georgia College, Georgia Tech’s Center for Integrating Mathematics, Science, and Computing and Enterprise Innovation Institute have launched a STEM pilot program in Douglas-Coffee County and Swainsboro-Emanuel County. The initiative will serve a diversified group of students and specifically target those at risk for losing interest in or dropping out of school. Also, activities are being shaped according to local economic development goals.

Some phases of the multi-phase pilot will likely occur throughout this school year and next, and involve several enrichment and training activities designed to stimulate students in these two communities and build their excitement about getting to know and use technology.

The program—necessitating partnerships among area educators, employers, and economic developers—will feature field trips, guest speakers, a “technology road show,” teacher internships at manufacturing or research sites, and robotics training. Desired outcomes include increased student enrollment in technology labs and similar electives, changes in absenteeism, and changes in grade-point averages, to name a few.

The Swainsboro program began with a 7th- through 10th-grade field trip to Griffin-based NACOM where the firm’s general manager, Evan Stitt, delivered an inspirational talk to the students on the importance of education to preparing a workforce that could meet NACOM’s needs and help companies, and Georgia, thrive.

Students were also provided guided tours through research facilities at Georgia Tech where they were provided with hands-on opportunities to test some of the latest technological products in development.

A Worthwhile Effort

Moving beyond a community economic development readiness assessment conducted last year by Georgia Tech, Worth County leaders are proceeding with “Worth 2017” with their first step being to define a community wide vision for economic development.

To assist with this effort, in April 2007, representatives from Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute, the University of Georgia’s Small Business Development Center, the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Albany State University, and the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center worked with the Worth County Economic Development Authority (EDA), Chamber of Commerce, Family Connections and Mitchell EMC to conduct four public meetings to engage stakeholder input in the visioning process. Meetings were held in the cities of Poulan, Warwick, Sylvester and the incorporated area of Gordy which are located in each county commission district.

Sixty five stakeholders participated in the process to develop the Worth 2017 vision. A final report on the visioning effort was released earlier this summer.

Make Way for WebFIT

Thanks to the OneGeorgia Authority, Georgia Tech’s nationally recognized fiscal impact program, LOCI, has moved to the Internet. Now, a Web-based version, called WebLOCI, is available to both new and existing users who can access it through the link http://webloci.innovate.gatech.edu. Licensed users of the desktop version of LOCI can upgrade to the Web version by contacting Kimberly Dunn at Tech’s Office of Technology Licensing (404.894.9727).

WebFIT, Georgia Tech’s other Web-based fiscal impact tool, is getting a face-lift. The site is being redesigned with the same “look and feel” as the WebLOCI site, and when completed it will include an online help system. WebFIT is for city and county planners desiring to estimate the fiscal impact of their land use plans, redevelopment projects, or large new developments.

To learn more about these fiscal impact tools, contact Robert Lann (404.894.3475, robert.lann@innovate.gatech.edu).
Planning for Economic Recovery

As metro Atlanta changes and evolves, its communities must do so, too, if they wish to remain appealing, vibrant places for people to live and work. To manage change from losing major employers, two such communities—Doraville and Hapeville—received help last year from City and Regional Planning students at Georgia Tech.

The closure of GM and Ford assembly plants, which both formed part of the metro landscape for decades, not only meant the loss of thousands of jobs but also raised the issue of what to do with the sprawling acreage occupied by the now-vacated facilities on the north and south side of the city, respectively.

Fourteen second-year planning graduate students participated in studios that studied options for and provided recommendations on site redevelopment. Studios are the capstone course in the City and Regional Planning program’s masters degree curriculum, enabling students and faculty advisors to address real-world planning problems, with the students applying the skills and knowledge they’ve acquired.

“Normally, the studio focuses on one community at a time” says Professor Nancey Green Leigh, “but the announced closings of the two auto assembly plants provided a unique opportunity for a comparative analysis and planning studio. While Georgia has benefited greatly from these plants over the years, the two host communities’ overall development was, in many ways, stymied by them. The studio focused on providing development recommendations that would help to make the two communities whole and recreate their unique positions in the metro area in a manner that improved overall quality of life,” she says.

The 128-acre Ford site sits amid rail lines, an interstate, and Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, and is beleaguered not only by high noise levels but also by hazardous materials storage. Still, a student-led detailed market analysis across several sectors and industries found solid opportunities for redevelopment into uses related to logistics, freight forwarding, offices, retail, expo/conference center, and hospitality given the site’s location and limitations.

Students also studied site subdivisions, which provide adaptable frameworks for development. A major finding here: any effort should complement and enhance the Old Towne neighborhood, Hapeville’s most significant residential development. The Ford site could be a receiving area for tourists and business travelers using the airport’s new international terminal, according to the student team. A resulting plan recommended by the team includes these aspects as well as suggestions for an internal road network, parking, and green space.

In Doraville, the city will receive a 150-plus-acre tract near I-285, Buford Highway, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, and MARTA rail. Like the Ford site, this area faces environmental cleanup, but, according to the students’ research, it also might prove ideal for redevelopment into a town center and an arena. The student team found that (1) the latter would not interrupt established neighborhoods due to the site’s size and (2) it would provide jobs and increase local revenue.

The entire site—with a pedestrian-friendly layout and ample green space—could include housing, office, and retail components, according to the students. The project team determined that it will be important for the redeveloped space to connect to the rest of Doraville, already physically segmented, and that it have the potential to attract/retain young families and professionals.

For more information on Georgia Tech’s City and Regional Planning Department, contact MaLinda Williams at 404.894.2350.

Elsewhere at GT

In Memoriam

Thomas D. Galloway, Ph.D., dean of Georgia Tech’s College of Architecture since 1992, died in mid-March. He was 67.

The college houses units that claim strong and fruitful links with economic development such as City and Regional Planning, the Center for Geographic Information Systems, and the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD). Dean Galloway led the college during a period of growth and expansion, and in his most recent role as co-chair of the Peachtree Corridor Task Force Technical Committee on Planning and Design, he combined his professional knowledge in city planning, his belief in community service, and his commitment to urban issues. At Tech, he spearheaded several key research initiatives, including the establishment of the Advanced Wood Products Laboratory in 2000 and the CQGRD in 2001.

Dean Galloway received his undergraduate degree from Westmont College in California and his master’s and doctoral degrees in urban planning from the University of Washington.
October


November

- IEDC Real Estate Development and Reuse, Atlanta, Nov. 6-7, 2007.

For more information on these and other Enterprise Innovation Institute courses, contact Martha Schoonmaker, CEcD, at 404.894.0332 or martha.schoonmaker@innovate.gatech.edu.

A reminder about Georgia Tech’s Innovations in Economic Development Forums scheduled for the fall 2007 semester:

- September 5 • October 3
- November 7 • December 5

All Forums will be held in the Hodges Room, Suite 335, 75 Fifth Street in Midtown Atlanta.

For more information, contact Jan Youtie (404.894.6111, jan.youtie@innovate.gatech.edu).

Visit us at: innovate.gatech.edu

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