Good afternoon, and welcome to this presentation of the Atlanta-Columbus Research Triangle Area Clusters Study, which is part of the National Clusters of Innovation Initiative. I am delighted to see so many of our community leaders in attendance.

Before we begin, I would like to introduce several special guests. We are honored to have several state legislators with us, including:

- Senator Terrell Starr
- Senator Charlie Tanksley
- Senator Sonny Purdue
- Senator Pete Robinson
- Senator Phil Gingrey
- Senator David Scott

We are pleased to welcome several key government officials, including:

- Elsie Hand representing U.S. Senator Max Cleland
- R.K. Sehgal of the Ga Dept of Industry, Trade and Tourism
- Annie Hunt-Burriss representing the University System

I am also very pleased to welcome the co-chairs of this initiative, Duane Ackerman, the chairman and CEO of BellSouth Corporation and Michael Porter of Harvard University, and we will have the pleasure of hearing from both of them. The Atlanta-Columbus Cluster Study was also advised by a steering committee, and I want to recognize the committee members who are here this afternoon:

- Milton Jones
- Bill Todd
- Rick Ussery
- Sam Williams

The study was made possible by donations from a number of corporations and organizations, and I want to recognize and thank them:

- Bell South
- Delta Airlines
- UPS
- Georgia Tech
- Total Systems

Since Georgia Partners, which includes the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and supporting industries and organizations.

Finally, I want to thank all those who filled out surveys and participated in interviews. This has truly been a community effort.
As many of you know, Atlanta and Columbus were one of five regions across the U.S. chosen to participate in the Clusters of Innovation Initiative. This effort was spearheaded by Professor Michael Porter; the Council on Competitiveness; Monitor Group, which is a Cambridge-based competitive strategy firm; and its affiliate ontheFRONTIER.

The study began about a year and half ago with a local event that brought together 40 individuals from business, academia, government, and associations. This meeting set out the project objectives and allowed us to provide input on the industry sectors to be studied.

Today, Dr. Porter will share the current findings of an in-depth analysis of the Atlanta-Columbus regional economy, its financial services, information technology, and transportation and logistics clusters. We hope to gain some unique insights of where we did well, where we need to improve, and what new opportunities and emerging clusters we can build on. Given the current economic outlook, I cannot think of a better time to receive this insightful and impartial view of our current economy and a roadmap for our future prosperity.

Michael Porter’s co-chair in this endeavor has been Duane Ackerman, and I want to acknowledge his exceptional leadership. Duane has been working his way up through the leadership ranks of Bell South for a number of years. He became vice chairman and chief operating officer of the parent company, BellSouth Corporation, in 1995, the president and CEO of BellSouth in 1997. A year later, he was appointed chairman and CEO of Bell South.

Many of you know Duane from his active involvement in a wide variety of civic activities here in the Atlanta community, but he is also a policy leader at the state and national levels.

He chairs the board of the Georgia Research Alliance, which is a major driver of high-tech economic development for the state, and also served as chair for Governor Barnes’ K-12 education reform initiative, called “The Breakthrough Alliance.”

At the national level, he serves as vice chair for industry of the Council on Competitiveness and will become chair of the Council in 2002.

Without further ado, I am going to turn the program over to Duane Ackerman.
Thank you for that presentation, Dr. Porter. We are now going to open the floor for questions.

(Facilitate Q&A)

At 4:45 p.m.:

We are pleased that Georgia Governor Roy Barnes has been able to join us, and we going to invite him to provide closing comments for this presentation of the Atlanta-Columbus Cluster Study.

Governors face many challenges, from public safety to health and welfare, from education systems to transportation systems. But the solution to almost all of them is closely tied to economic development. And we are fortunate in Georgia to have a Governor who understands that if he creates a strong, diverse, forward-looking economy, the solutions to a lot of other problems are going to fall into place.

Governor Barnes has been an important supporter and partner with Georgia Tech in our efforts to drive economic development and educate a technological workforce for Georgia, and I am pleased to turn the program over to him.

(Barnes speaks)

Thank you, Governor Barnes. Discussing economic development for two hours is enough to make anyone thirsty, so we would like to invite all of you to join us for a reception.